



## Article

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## **This Thinking Lacks a Language: Heidegger and Gadamer's Question of Being**

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### **Abstract**

Martin Heidegger's preparation of the question of human existence was the focus of his seminal work *Being and Time*, first published in 1927. This paper refers to Heidegger's phenomenological work through Heidegger's colleague and friend Hans-Georg Gadamer to focus on how Heidegger prepares the question of Being and the problem of language in his later work. In his conversation with the Japanese scholar professor Tezuka, the meaning of language in the west appears to restrict an understanding of Being by conceptualising it ad infinitum. To the Japanese the simple term "what is" appears to be closer to Being because it does not attempt to conceptualise it. Therefore, Heidegger, Gadamer and Tezuka's discussion about ontology concludes that language does get in the way of understanding Being.

**Keywords:** Heidegger, Gadamer, being, ontology, language

### **Introduction**

This paper discusses Martin Heidegger's preparation and question of the meaning of Being inspired by commentary from Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002). A close friend and colleague writing about him in *Heidegger's Ways* (1994), Gadamer's commentary is unique because he was a witness to Heidegger's unfolding thoughts and methodology (Regan 2012). Discussion includes Heidegger's question and meaning of Being, how time and mood shape the question and how Heidegger's extensive research into Greek philosophy opened up his ontological enquiry. Gadamer's insight into Heidegger's analysis balances the critical aspects of this paper to produce a degree of clarity on his discourse and the meaning of Being.

Finally, after a section on linguistic criticism, the paper culminates in a conversation between Heidegger (1982) and Professor Tezuka discussing western and eastern philosophy. In conclusion the inadequacy of western language to an understanding of Being is further developed.

### **Background**

Back in those “heady days” of Heidegger’s radical 1920’s lectures, Karl Jaspers suggested Heidegger’s work was a “...*summons of existence itself...*” (Gadamer 1994, 139). In a chaotic world post First World War one, the issues of history persuaded Heidegger to think about Being which he considered to have been generally forgotten about in western philosophy (Heidegger 2003). As a student of Husserl’s (2001) phenomenological descriptive method Heidegger had begun to question the accepted interpretation of Aristotle’s categories of Being and as a concept he found the 2000 year old answer to be universal, empty and misunderstood (Gadamer 1994). His question of the meaning of Being began to take shape through his study of Greek philosophy to enable a fusion of horizons and for Aristotle to come forward as if a contemporary (Gadamer 1994; Heidegger 2003). Drawing upon Aristotle and metaphysics, Heidegger (2003) developed his critical ideas in his magnum opus *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) first published in 1927. In it he suggests all living beings could be better understood by analysing the human Being through time and history (Gadamer 1994). More about Heidegger’s *Being and Time* after I define the terms in use.

### **Hermeneutic phenomenology**

The term hermeneutics comes from the Greek verb “hermeneuein” referring to Hermes, the divine messenger listening for the content of the message (Heidegger 1982; Palmer 1969). Heidegger’s new approach brought hermeneutics into a contemporary study of Being made available to him through his study of Husserl’s phenomenology (Heidegger 2004). Heidegger developed the basis for his own philosophy and understanding Being promoted as the real foundation of

philosophical inquiry (Gadamer 1994). For Heidegger, Being is spelt with a capital B, even in mid sentence to reinforce the focus of his analysis. The choice of hermeneutic phenomenology as a methodology became clear to Heidegger because of a human's subjective capacity to understand the meaning of experience through language (logos) and thought (Gadamer 1994). Language and discourse therefore enabled Heidegger's analytic to be made manifest through the method of hermeneutics (Heidegger 2003). However, as will be shown through the work of Gadamer and Heidegger's own realisation, language constrained rather than revealed the question and meaning of Being (Gadamer 1994).

### The Question

In *Being and Time* (2003) Heidegger asks the question about the meaning of Being by suggesting we know what it alludes to but we do not "know" what the meaning of Being actually is (25). Although an understanding is always close by because we are, it still remains vague and average (Heidegger 2003, 25). Heidegger emphasised therefore we also do not "know" the "meaning" of "Being" and for that matter "what" "it" "is." With each emphasised word, the complexity of the question he sought to prepare for becomes more apparent (25). Despite the notion of Being perceived as the "...*amniotic fluid our thought naturally moves in...*" (Eco 2000, 20), human life is known and experienced "before" language has the capacity to make sense of it (Heidegger 2003). I will develop this point a little later in relation to a woman's biological capability. So in defining the meaning of Being Heidegger attempted to demonstrate humans state of forgetfulness which at any one time means we are both aware of and yet unaware of it because we are distracted by going about our daily lives (Heidegger 2003). This state of forgetfulness relates to being "thrown" into the world and then having to make sense of it whilst in a pre-reflective awareness and what he called our average everydayness (Heidegger 2003). In this state "...*this Being which we ourselves in each case are...*" (Ricoeur 2006, 354) reveals the reflective conundrum of Heidegger's philosophical analysis. Therefore, his question of Being moved from

Husserl's cogito to Heidegger's dasein, thinking rather than Being (Kisiel 2014).

From the start of *Being and Time* Heidegger identifies the difficulty of his task when asking "what is Being" and we are left with questions about "what" and what "is" signifies conceptually (25). Yet despite, our apparent "vague understanding" of Being, in order to enquire about or ourselves transparently, analysis needed a new frame of reference and so Heidegger referred to an enquiry of Being as "da-sein" (27). With "da" meaning "there" and "sein" meaning "to be" or "being there" (27), the objectification of dasein is considered critical in the search for an objective understanding of Being itself facilitated by "...*being ahead of oneself*..." (Ricoeur 2006, 347). This is because humans are aware first and foremost of Being alive and then we attempt to make sense of life in thought and language (Heidegger 2003). Hence, Heidegger is right to attempt, as a first step towards analysis of Being a need to identify something that "is" here and now before it can be investigated as a temporal phenomenon (Heidegger 2003, 27).

### **Time and Mood**

Heidegger asks the question what is the meaning of Being through an interpretation of time as a "...*primordial...horizon for understanding being*..." (Heidegger 2003, 39). The word "primordial" is significant because it refers to what is "...*primitive, primeval, ancient...distant in time*..." (Oxford English Dictionary, OED, 1A, n. d). Although Heidegger would not have used a contemporary dictionary as I did for his treatise the OED definitions do go back to 1398 and summarise a number of common usage in quotes since then to summarise key words. Perhaps a clearer definition for an understanding about why the word primordial is fundamental to the question of Being is that it "...*constitutes the origin or starting point from which something else is derived or developed, or on which something else depends; fundamental, basic; elemental*..." (OED, 2, n. d). In other words, the "what" some "thing" in itself develops from (Husserl 2001). This something is both temporal and ontological.

### *Time*

The scope of *Being and Time* is disclosed in the very first few pages as temporality, the past now made present which now serves as the connection for a new insight about action (Ricoeur 2003). This required Heidegger to use the rest of *Being and Time* to prepare the way (Gadamer 1994; Heidegger 2003). The notion of time however is not one that we can set our clocks by but the blurring of the past as an event is experienced and gone in the moment (Heidegger 2003; Ricoeur 1990). This temporal lived time interpretation of everyday life is suggested to start with understanding, falling, which is a state-of-mind communicated through discourse (logos). Hence being-in-the world and the effect of others on oneself are considered to be significant because “...every understanding has its mood, every state-of-mind is one of which (*dasein*) understands... (and) projecting (is) essentially futural...” [my words in parenthesis] (Heidegger 2003, 385). Such moods include the feeling and realisation that it is good to be alive on a warm sunny day, smiling at a loved one or thinking about action as it occurs. The everyday interpretation of temporality realises the common human experience of experiencing life, or being-in-the world. For example, the issue of temporality comes alive when thinking about the soundtrack of one’s life, thinking about music that means something to you at that moment in time which is then captured and remembered. From the first experience and every time the music is heard again, the memories come flooding back, only your life has moved on and you hear the music with more experienced and attuned ears in the future (Ricoeur 1990). Therefore, when learning from the past, humans live in a tri-dimensional space of thinking and existing where the past, present and future are constantly informing each other to re-interpret the meaning of life events (Heidegger 2003; Ricoeur 1990).

### *Mood*

Heidegger places *dasein*’s analysis of itself into a practical, everyday meaning of life where *dasein* becomes aware of the moods in which it meets and engages the world (Gadamer

1994). Moods have a time element to them too: the young boxer who in the midst of training visualises his hero or enemy and willing him on to train harder, or the adult son holding his baby spurred on to be a good father, and to be kind, caring and considerate just like his own father or because his father had not been. This mood is evident in Heidegger's choice of Being as a consistent career long focus for study. Visualise Heidegger walking in the hills of the Black Forrest to become a thing amongst other things, and adding his human voice to commentate on the historical nature of Being (Safranski 2002). Perhaps the mood of Heidegger's approaching forties, his need to learn and question, or the mood of his mountain retreat where he felt at home, or thinking of his wife of sixty years Elfride and where his thinking could be at its most focussed, was all pervasive. The mountain captures the insignificance of man and yet dasein wants to be significant and meaningful not to the mountain, but to himself. Perhaps Heidegger's sense of being in the wilderness of academia post world war two when his teaching was suspended due to his early pro national socialist speeches in the early 1930's and dasein being replaced by Nazi regimentation (Collins 2000). Hence, Heidegger's state of contemplative dwelling and place in the mountain hut at Todtnauberg appears to shape his analysis of Being and place (Gadamer 1994; Malpas 2008).

One mood of engagement is typically Heidegger by not dwelling on the delights of love; he dwells on the basic state of mind of anxiety and death (Heidegger 2003). Both thoughts are perhaps understandable and shape the mood of many post world war views, with the re-building of lives and buildings and uncertainty mirrored in all affected countries, with an increasing rise of totalitarianism; fascism, communism and national socialism (Collins 2000). However, in spite of these anxieties, Heidegger suggests we attain our optimal ability only on rare occasions in our lifetimes. One of those rare events is the birth of a baby, but we cannot think or speak of it insightfully until observing another baby's birth, or until we witness or give birth ourselves. Then the other obvious experience is death to which we are more likely to be conscious of as one gets older. In acknowledging our finitude and that we

are not going to live forever, with an increased awareness of age and mortality, our finitude is fundamental to authentic self-objectification (Heidegger 2003). Dasein and existence temporally become manifest towards a human's end of life, and our experience of it means we become at our most capable when taking notice of its impending loss and we cling to its familiarity (Heidegger 2003). Unfortunately, with the human body's general design fault, the body will eventually fail and then be experienced present-at-hand, from a previously unawakened state of not questioning dasein's uniqueness the mind takes notice of the body when the body makes us take notice of it (Heidegger 2003).

Despite a human being orientated eventually to their own finitude, the effects of being surrounded by other people most of our life frequently relates to a state of in-authenticity and experiencing our own limitations when encountering other people (Heidegger 2003). By questioning the state of authenticity dasein becomes motivated to continue or be fearful of exposure and so we find ourselves open to the effects of mediocrity amongst the masses. This is a process of conforming to the expectations of society. Dasein's authenticity then becomes the vehicle to challenge the everyday assumptions of life itself, and itself on life (Heidegger 2003). Heidegger's analysis was not without criticism at the time and since but what is generally not known is that he may have agreed with criticisms of his use of language to analyse the unthinkable (Gadamer 1994).

### **Criticism**

*Being and Time* was a stage of development in Heidegger's thinking, further complicated by Heidegger's difficult and technological language and tendency to commandeer commonly known terms to signify complex and philosophical issues (Gadamer 1994). This led to Heidegger's difficulty when articulating what he wanted to say and he noticed that in his attempt to answer the question of Being he risked further concealing dasein within technical neologisms (Gadamer, 1994). Being literally means existence (Heidegger 2003, 27) but Heidegger's use and over use of dasein is



suggested by Eco (2000) to result in losing sight of its essence and instead his use of language led to confusion and a lack of clarity. Heidegger's unclear and contradictory definition of Being in his early work confuses even more (Gadamer 1994, 22).

Heidegger's (2003) suggestion that the question Being is forgotten is perhaps exaggerated because human beings have always striven to understand the meaning of life, coming to a point where they realise the taken for granted complexities of a moral life is associated closely with the lives of others (Heidegger 2003). Despite science failing to focus on man as a whole and instead preferring to analyse man through the model of a laboratory, Heidegger suggests studying dasein is to analyse the whole of human existence, not its parts (Gadamer 1994).

Analysing dasein may be considered a futile exercise especially if dasein has difficulty meeting the basic needs of life and the question of the meaning of Being is so difficult to articulate, then trying to put it into words may confuse what we already know as tacit knowledge (Eco 2000). In attempting to explicate the meaning of the question the Japanese philosopher Nishida describes man's need for religion, culture and meaning as "*...fragile rafts men build on the open sea and on which they drift through the ages...*" (Safranski 2002, 305). Safranski suggests metaphorically speaking that Heidegger's triumph at completing a raft failed to take notice of the tide and open sea (305). In other words he had become lost in the search for an answer to the question despite it being before his very eyes. Therefore in 1938, Heidegger's ideas about being-as-nothing had begun to be realised, namely the notion of Being withdrawing when attempting to get hold of it, to grasp it, or to conceive it (Eco 2000). Then asking obvious yet profound questions of dasein reinforces a reflective philosophy, and yet dasein is the only entity able to study itself and to name itself amongst other entities it also names (Heidegger 2003; Ricoeur 2006). However, this is suggested to add little to clarify the question of Being (Eco 2000). Eco (2000) questions studying Being and suggests our unique complexity means we are not like other entities at all and so the idea becomes nullified by the name game which reduces humans to a named entity (29).

Again, language intervenes to obscure ontological analysis (Gadamer 1994).

Jackson's (1999) criticism of Heidegger's abuse of language in *Being and Time* refers to his attempt to review Platonic assimilation of Being to the idea, and reviewing the history of ontology whilst also trying to undermine it. This is perhaps evident in the page entitled "...*the task of destroying the history of ontology...*" (Heidegger 2003, 41). Jackson suggests Heidegger relies on a para-history of ontology, a de-constructed and re-constructed analysis leading to his own conclusions of a contemporary ontology (Jackson 1999, 8). Jackson's main thrust is that Heidegger criticises Plato's interpretation of Greek terms as an interpreter who claims to know what the original terms meant, even more than the Greek's at the time (11-14). Jackson identifies a few examples in *Being and Time* where Heidegger "...*reduce(s) most developed terms to perplexing banality...*" (14). According to Jackson, Heidegger reconstructs the original meaning of *logos* to mean "...*to gather together, to collect...*" rather than a reasoned argument, he reduced a powerful Heraclitean principle into another banal account (Jackson 1999, 14). Jackson (14) uses other examples, such as "phys" (nature) and "logos" meaning the same, "noein" usually translated as "thinking" yet for Heidegger it means "apprehension" and other lengthy examples (14). Therefore Jackson suggests Heidegger does not reinforce "...*language (as) the house of Being...*" but instead makes it a prison- house of Being (25). Heidegger in effect imprisoned Being within his manipulation of language (Jackson 1999).

### **Heidegger and Language**

Heidegger would have agreed with his imprisoning Being in language but not perhaps his interpretation of the Greek meaning in language due to his expertise in the Greek language and perhaps understanding the Greeks more than the Greeks did themselves (Gadamer 1994; 2004b). A question may be asked however, did Heidegger make such an implicit concept more complex and the above criticism suggests he did. Heidegger's task was made more difficult by attempting to go

beyond the traditional meta-physical categorisation of Being into uncharted territory and this metaphor helps us to think and analyse the word concepts that indicate difficulty in articulating what is primordial (Gadamer 1994). Perhaps it is the naming issue within language, and the cognitive restrictions placed on language's arbitrary nature of understanding that Heidegger endeavours to move beyond (Gadamer 2004a) and why Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy concentrated on understanding, interpretation and discourse (Regan 2012).

Gadamer (2004a) argues interpretations derived from such understanding always involve a fusion of horizons, from the familiar and the foreign, and language inevitably conceals something that is pre-linguistic. As discussed, Heidegger was well known for his technical manipulation of the German language (Gadamer 1994, 145). However, this seems hardly to matter in contemporary times because language cannot keep up with the advances of communication technology, for example, in the use of the words "ontology" and "temporality" and others used in computer sciences and managing data (Stock, Leibovici, Delazari & Santos 2015). Perhaps this is an example of the inadequacy of language to keep up with changes in the world and an example of its inadequacy to understand what is primordial, ancient and distant in time (Ricoeur 1990). Hence, the signification of language becomes less meaningful because language is incapable of signifying all aspects of life, from computers to having a baby, or breastfeeding. For example, in the case of a mother breastfeeding her baby, one only has to acknowledge the woman's biological ability to first have the baby and then second to make sense of the experience in both the ante and post-natal period through language (Regan & Ball 2013). This is an example of the mind playing catch up and the addition of words to understand new experience fails to communicate its full meaning (Regan & Ball 2013).

According to Gadamer (1994, 146) Aristotle was not adverse to making up the odd word himself and taking a common word to create a new one such as *energeia* and *entelechia* (the most knowable in itself of all possible objects of the intellect). Therefore, Heidegger's study of ancient Greek

philosophy in *Being and Time* gave him a model from which to mirror himself on and to make sense of questioning the meaning of Being (Gadamer 1994). This appears to confirm the inadequacy of language to shape thought about Being otherwise restricted by the language-in-use (Gadamer 1994). The same constraints occurred in Heidegger's preparation of the question of Being and Gadamer gave one example which marked a start in his turn to ontology in the use of the term "...it is worlding..." (Gadamer 1994, 169). Gadamer had been there when Heidegger first used the term "...it is worlding..." (es weltet) in his first lecture at Marburg (1919) entitled *The idea of philosophy and the worldview problem*. Whether it was a new word or an old word re-visited with a new meaning, Gadamer's (1994) thought at the time was how unusual it was to hear the word from Heidegger, a neo-Kantian assistant of Husserl. A stage in his thinking about the "turn" and "clearing" of Being Heidegger was using the term "it is worlding" to identify the world of experience being thoroughly charged with meaning (Kisiel 2014). Moving beyond Husserl and yet using techniques taught by him, in the Marburg lecture Gadamer (1994) recalls Heidegger inviting the students to imagine in their consciousness the precise experience of the lecturn at which he was lecturing. The entire lecture hinged on this one activity and Heidegger remarked "...I see the lecturn...in light...as a background...(an) experience of lecturn-seeing...living in an environment, it means to me everywhere and always, it is all of this world, it is worlding..." (Gadamer 1994, 169). If the lecturn became a manifestation of the world or a symbol of a life experience, the lecturn could replace the experience as if it were the world (Gadamer 1994). Hence, the lecturn activity aimed to ensure the students "grasped" the meaning of his discourse in order to create new meaning.

### **To Think the Greeks More Greek-Like**

Gadamer (1994, 143) concedes he cannot defend some of Heidegger's coercive language in *Being and Time's* and use of pre-Socratic text but on the whole Heidegger's interpretations are as valid as Plato and Socrates interpretations of the incomplete fragments that "shrouded" the beginnings of Greek

thought. Gadamer (1994) reinforced a positive view of criticism when remarking that Heidegger's lectures brought the Greeks to life as if contemporaries, interpreting to clarify what they said and expanding on what they did not say. The process of scholastic immersion is an essential factor in the hermeneutic interpretation of text and Heidegger characteristically elaborated a point by referring to the Greeks, then presenting his ideas as if they would be in agreement of his analysis, with the past brought into the present as proof of his corrections (Gadamer 1994). This has become a common methodology within hermeneutic phenomenology, therefore Heidegger's work in *Being and Time* is based on subjective and enthusiastic interpretation to reinforce his point, and does not detract from his otherwise worthwhile purpose and rigorous analytic (Gadamer 1994).

Despite Heidegger's persuasive and rigorous analytical interpretations of work where he placed his own ideas as being central to the outcome, Gadamer in *The Greeks* (1994, 142) suggests Greek philosophers were Heidegger's true scholastic partners. Gadamer suggests Heidegger viewed Greek thinking as being original and having started the process of categorising the Being of beings, and as a result Greek thought demanded him to think in an even more Greek way, and having to re-think questions he had posed to himself about their work (Gadamer 1994). Heidegger developed an ear for the language of these beginnings and after each immersive analysis it was described by Heidegger like "...coming out of a hot spring..." (143). One example Gadamer (1994) gave of thinking in a Greek way was when Heidegger referred to aletheia (what is true) and seeing not:

*"...so much the unconcealment...of speaking but first and foremost the being itself that showed itself in its true Being, like pure unadulterated gold... thought in a Greek way ..."* (144).

Gadamer (1994, 144) goes on to give many similar examples of Heidegger's original and insightful interpretations as a modern scholar totally immersed and open to the text of antiquity. Heidegger's gift in *Being and Time* was therefore using Aristotle

as a key witness in the analytical task and a process of “...*get (ting) back to the things in themselves, (and Aristotle) testified indirectly against his own ontological biases...*” to spell out what had been un-thought in Greek thinking at the time (145). Hence, a primordial enquiry into Being through the Greek language.

### **The Problem of Naming**

Gadamer (1994) suggests the criticism of Heidegger’s choice of language in *Being and Time* was in part due to Being not being dealt with as a finished product. In defence of Heidegger’s use and abuse of language in *Being and Time*, Gadamer writes in the most extraordinary way about his friend Heidegger:

*“...the language... is struggling to be awakened from the forgetfulness of being and to think that which is worthy of thought. The same man whose words and phrases could have such visual; force and power that they were unparalleled (by contemporaries)... whose words made something spiritual tangible, this same man extracts out of the shafts of language the most peculiar lumps, breaks up the extracted stones so that they completely lose their usual outline and moves around into fragmented word-rocks, searching, checking...” (25).*

For Gadamer *Being and Time* cleared the path and made explicit the conditions of Being as a project in motion and clearly not presented as a finished product but preparing the way. Heidegger (2003) stated the same at the time of its publication in 1927 (25). The single question was posed and explored, not answering it but “preparing” it (Gadamer 1994, 21). However, the difficult and technical language Heidegger used in *Being and Time* was essentially due to the problem of language and this is exemplified in his famous quote from Trakl’s *The word* “...*where the word breaks off, no-thing can be...*” (Heidegger 1982, 60). Language’s inadequacy was suggested to be due to the question’s antithesis and Being withdrawing to nothingness because “...*this thinking lacks a language...*” in the forgetfulness of Being and language

(Gadamer 1994, 25). Heidegger therefore in his later work moved away from his deconstructed use of language within *Being and Time* into analysing poetry and using well known words to conceptualise his thoughts which seemed the only way to expand on the inarticulable, the unthinkable, the forgotten and primordial nature of Being (Gadamer 1994).

### **A dialogue on language**

An illuminating account of Heidegger's later thinking on language and Being is entitled *A dialogue on language* (Heidegger 1982, 1-54). The transcribed conversation was between Heidegger and a visiting Professor Tezuka from of the Imperial University, Tokyo. From the outset the conversation makes it clear that language may be inadequate for the task of answering their questions. The account was in the form of a conversation between Heidegger and Tezuka where they attempted to articulate the differences of thought and language between East Asian and European philosophy and with the help of Tezuka, Heidegger clarifies his position on hermeneutics, language and Being. Heidegger is pressed on his development of his work on Being by disclosing a pre-occupation with the concept since reading Franz Brentano (1862) in 1907.

Heidegger reinforced the importance of his theological studies being hugely influential in his question of Being and disclosed the fundamental flaw of *Being and Time* in that it ventured too far, and far too soon (Heidegger 1982, 7). Heidegger stated his ideas crystallised years later when he realised the problem of language in articulating the question of Being. Hence, after *Being and Time* he turned to art and poetry, notably Friedrich Hölderin's *The Ister* and Georg Trakl's 1919 poem entitled *The word*, which I have already quoted earlier. In conversation with Tezuka they both refer to the Japanese scholar Count Kuki who had studied with Heidegger in Germany and had translated Heidegger's paper *What is Metaphysics* (2004, 90-114). Tezuka remarked that Kuki had immediately understood where Heidegger was coming from due to the question "what is beyond the senses?" As an example, their conversation turned to the meaning of a gesture in a no-

play (a traditional Japanese play), where a Japanese actor refers to a mountain-scape with the slight of his hand, and the audience encountering emptiness in such a way that a mountain is imagined. Heidegger suggested the inferred emptiness is the same as nothingness, the “...*essential being we add to our thinking, as the other, to all that is present and absent...*” (Heidegger 1982, 19). Tezuka maintained the notion of emptiness is the loftiest name for which Heidegger and westerners mean by the term Being, despite the nihilism and negativity Heidegger had inferred when referring to the notion of “nothingness.” Despite both their scholastic achievements, they both conceded the experiential inadequacy of language’s ability to express truthfully “what is” and the language constantly restricting what their dialogue was about (15).

They both discuss the western habit of conceptualising which may inhibit the thinking process as ideas are categorised and rationalised, without the need for the individual to go through the cognitive motions themselves (Heidegger, 1982). In other words concepts easily mapped out by others to follow. Heidegger’s responses indicate his scholastic priority is to “show” what is the case by seeking to analyse and articulate not what ought to happen as a methodology but what does happen and is the case of hermeneutic analysis (11). Both Heidegger and Tezuka demonstrate that showing the things-in-themselves is an all important path along the way of thinking, and the folly of pushing a prescribed method merely a staging point along the way which risks scholars moving from one concept to another for an intellectual fix. Heidegger (21) suggests such a prescribed method would mean going forward and backwards along the same path leading to the same place in either direction. The way cannot be mapped out like a plan of a road and the builder at times must go back to the construction sites they left behind, in order to tidy up, dismantle, re-shape or build from a new (21). Heidegger’s discussion with a Japanese enable these issues to be discussed because if the conversation had been with a fellow European then the conversation would have been far more predictable. This is because Tezuka identifies that the Japanese language has a lack of words for some things, and the naming of objects can diminish the human



experience. Count Kuki's interest in Heidegger and aesthetics came about as he attempted to Europeanise the Japanese concept of Iki, poetry and art, because the Japanese language had few words to describe the experience in more detail. As Europeans struggle to articulate and understand a concept, the Japanese simply accepts "what is." Hence, Tezuka recalls Kuki's description of Iki as a "...*sensuous radiance through whose lively delight there breaks the radiance of something supra-sensuous...*" (14) and refers also to the experience of Japanese art (14). Heidegger's response was to suggest the aesthetic representation of art corresponds to the supra-sensorial metaphysical doctrines which are perhaps the one and the same (14). Hence, Being becomes manifest in poetry and art and not when attempting to conceptualise it but accept "what is."

### **In conclusion**

*Being and Time* was a stage of development in Heidegger's thinking, made more difficult when thinking about the unthinkable and what is pre-reflectively primordial (Gadamer 1994). As has been discussed Heidegger attempted to analyse the phenomenon of Being from what had been once forgotten in western philosophy to again become part of contemporary discourse. The question of the meaning of Being which Heidegger sought to analyse through ancient Greek and re-conceptualisation of some German terms led to some success. This paper therefore has used Gadamer's (1994) commentary from *Heidegger's Way* to balance out the linguistic criticism of his analysis. *Being and Time* however was a preparation and Heidegger stated this from the start of it (25). What became clear to Heidegger (1982) later on however was the problem of language when preparing the question of Being and that he had gone too far too soon. This primordial Being appears to withdraw from us when applying language to make sense of it (Gadamer 1994). His enthusiasm for the unfolding subject was apparent in his career long focus on the question of Being. The end of the paper then discusses a conversation between Heidegger (1982) and Professor Tezuka, a Japanese scholar and what is remarkable and revealed in their conversation, despite linguistic limitations in the west, is that ontology is easier to

understand and accept as “what is” in the east. This is because Being is known pre-reflectively prior to searching for an answer in language and the west’s larger language was agreed to restrict its conceptualisation. In the Japanese language, Being is accepted simply as “what is” and any further western interpretation may serve to miss the point entirely.

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