RETHINKING GERMAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

by

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that the educational value of German language study would be improved by a hermeneutic approach. Language educators have for some time had difficulties forging a common approach. In my view, language pedagogy should concentrate on the transformation of the familiar by the unfamiliar, or the change in self-understanding made possible by the learning of a new language. My original contribution to this discussion is to show how the philosophy of Martin Heidegger could be usefully applied.

Chapter One gives an overview of contemporary language education in terms of its recent developments. In my account, the recent cultural turn has led to an impasse over the very concept of culture. My suggestion is that, in order to educate students better to reach current goals, a more productive approach would be to encourage the turn from one's own, familiar language to another, unfamiliar one. Greater knowledge of other languages is an important step on the way to greater knowledge of the world.

Chapter Two introduces my claim that Heidegger's hermeneutics specifically should be applied to language education. Of course many writers have promoted Heidegger's importance for general education, but an historical overview of his contributions reveals how the possibility of applying his work to German language education has emerged.

Chapter Three develops a model of Heidegger's hermeneutic philosophy. The two main features of this model are authentic understanding and poetic

thinking. Chapter Four explores the claim that a more hermeneutic model of teaching and learning, especially if derived from Heidegger's reading of Plato, would lead to a crucially different understanding of language teaching and learning. Chapter Five contrasts three different first-year German language programs from the perspectives of authentic understanding and poetic thinking. The aim in this chapter is to recommend new ways of conceiving German language programs more generally.

My conclusion underlines the importance of language study for post-secondary education today.

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Acknowledgements

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Chapter I Hermeneutics and Pedagogy

The relationship between pedagogy and hermeneutics, theories of learning and of understanding, is an ancient one. Aristotle dealt with the grammatical structure of statements in human speech in a work entitled *Peri Hermeneias*. He implied an inherent relation between pedagogy and hermeneutics in his *Nicomachean Ethics* when he observed that: "We frequently use the words learning and understanding synonymously."[1] In this chapter I will examine the relationship between learning and understanding in its practical expression within a specific context: the role of understanding in the learning of another language.

This chapter will be guided by a three-part division of inquiry and analysis. I will begin by reviewing briefly the shifts in paradigm that language learning has undergone during the twentieth century, in order to arrive at a contemporary characterization of the discipline. In my opinion, language study today offers an unprecedented opportunity for constructive contribution as part of post-secondary education within the twenty-first century. It is my purpose in this work to affirm and advance that role through philosophical hermeneutics. The tradition of hermeneutics also has a long, complex history and the term is used in many senses. Consequently, I will extend my argument by attempting to arrive at a current conceptualization of hermeneutics. The chapter will conclude

[1] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. and ed. Roger Crisp (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

by exploring the traditions of learning and understanding within the specific context of the language classroom.

1.1 Language Study: Ideas, Ideals, Ideologies

Language study has undergone a number of changes in its long history and each new approach has broadened our perspective through its particular contribution. In my survey of this history, I will focus upon the language learning context that is the subject of my dissertation: the foreign language context. In a critical examination of the designations assigned to learning contexts by acquisition researchers, David Block defines the foreign language context as follows:

> The foreign context is the context of millions of primary school, secondary school, university and further education students around the world who rely on their time in classrooms to learn a language that is not the typical language of communication in their community.[2]

In his examination, Block explains how the "foreign language context" is distinguished both from the "second language context" and the "naturalistic context."[3] The "second language context" shares the classroom setting of the "foreign language context," with the important distinction that the second language classroom is situated inside a community where the language to be learned is spoken, rather than outside. The "naturalistic context" distinguishes

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[2] David Block, *The Social Turn in Second Language Acquisition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd., 2003) 48.

[3] Block 48-55.

itself from the foreign in that there is no formal classroom instruction and the language being learned is spoken in the surrounding community.

In his examination of these designations, Block agrees that it is necessary to distinguish between learning contexts, but shows how none of the three contexts are fixed and separate enough to warrant such distinct designations. Block's major focus is upon the use of "second" in second language acquisition. He points out the many ways in which this designation does not accurately represent the experiences of language learners, in the first instance that of multi-linguals, who have learned three or more languages in their lifetimes.[4] According to Block, foreign language contexts also vary immensely, depending on such factors as the international economic position of the country in which a foreign language is studied and various socio-historical factors related to the educational system. Other important factors are the extent to which learners have the opportunity to actually put their knowledge of the target language to use, as well as attitudes in general about foreignness.[5] Block argues that each of the designations misrepresents, to some extent, the learning contexts and experiences of many individuals, and he follows Rampton in his suggestion of such terms as "other" or "additional" as being ultimately more appropriate.[6]

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[4] Block 33.

[5] Block 49.

[6] Block 57.

In this dissertation, I will follow Block by being judicious in my use of the designation "foreign" and refer to the formal classroom learning of "another" language simply as language study. The language classroom to which I am referring is the post-secondary classroom of colleges and universities within North America. My language of reference will be German.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the methods used for the formal learning of a modern language such as German were modeled upon the study of ancient Latin and Greek. The consequent "grammar-translation method" of language learning has since been widely refuted for current language-learning purposes, but it should not be criticized for not doing what it had not set out to do. It was never intended to produce speakers of the target language assessed against the ideal of a (usually highly educated) "native." Rather, its goal was to produce learners who could read and write in the target language by teaching them its rules and applications. Lessons were grammatically sequenced and errorless translations were the expected standard from the outset. Little or no attempt was made to actually communicate in the target language, and instruction was given exclusively in the native language:

> Little value was placed on using the language in its spoken form and limited travel abroad, together with more restricted foreign trade than there is today, meant that there was no social or economic pressure for language proficiency to have a communicative element.[7]

During the Second World War and after, however, the necessity of fostering communication between nations changed the approach to language

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[7] Suzanne Graham, *Effective Language Learning: Positive Strategies for Advanced Level Language Learning* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997) 11.

learning in a substantial way. In the United States, for instance, large numbers of service personnel needed to be trained in other languages and especially in oral language use, and the grammar-translation approach was thought to be inappropriate for them. In addition, increased travel, trade, scientific and cultural exchange, and migration on a world scale made language learning under the most varied circumstances necessary. To attain or approximate the oral proficiency of the "native" speaker became the new ideal of most modern language teaching approaches and, although there has been much argument and debate within the field, this debate has usually focused upon methods. Although the ideal of the "native" speaker has been contested by many writers, some of whom I will mention in this historical survey, it still influences our thinking even today.[8]

In regard to the methods used to attain this ideal, they are in part a reflection of the prevailing view of learning at a given time. In the 1950's it was the behaviourism of, among others, B.F. Skinner, that was particularly influential.[9] Skinner's behaviourism held that language acquisition was a product of habit formation. Language learning was thus viewed as a process of internalizing the habits of the target language. This was to be accomplished through the pedagogical practices of dialogue memorization, imitation and pattern practice. Structures of the target language were carefully ordered and dialogues were repeated in an attempt to develop correct habits of speaking.

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[8] H.H. Stern, *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 103.

[9] B.F. Skinner, *Verbal Behavior* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957).

Listening and speaking skills now took precedence over the reading and writing skills of grammar-translation; however, attention was paid primarily to correct pronunciation rather than the independent production of language. Practice sessions focused upon aural-oral skills and frequently took place in so-called "language laboratories"; consequently, this approach to language instruction came to be known as the audio-lingual method.[10]

By the early 1960's Noam Chomsky and his adherents were insisting that language development was too complicated a phenomenon to be explained through the tenets of behaviourism alone.[11] Instead, Chomsky proposed the idea of an innate, genetically programmed mental structure which he called the "language acquisition device" (LAD). From this developed what is commonly known amongst linguists as a transformational grammar: sentences are 'transformed' into other sentences by application to phrase structure rules. Such a process was presumed to be consistent with the innate ordering and processing mechanisms that Chomsky posited.[12]

Transformational grammar gave a new slant to grammatical drills. Language teachers using a transformational model believed that by teaching a finite set of phrase structure rules and expanding them via the application of transformations, learners could understand and produce new sentences. These newly created sentences would have been neither produced nor understood had

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[10] Patricia A. Richard-Amato, *Making It Happen: Interaction in the Second Language Classroom* (New York: Longman, 1988) 11.

[11] Noam Chomsky, „A Review of B.F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*," *Language* 35 (1959) 26-58.

[12] Graham 12.

they been limited merely to repetitive imitation, as had been the case with the behaviourist approach. Because the sentence recombining and other kinds of exercises centered on form, however, the resulting sentences were neither temporally ordered nor logically motivated; in other words, they were based on an understanding of language that was ahistorical and uncontextualized. Their reason for being was to demonstrate the use of some grammatical structure or other in an effort to aid the development of linguistic proficiency. Approaches to language learning that focused on such metalinguistic analysis and understanding were referred to as cognitive approaches.

Chomsky's transformational grammar was used to justify and perpetuate a focus on structure and cognitive processes in language teaching. However, by the mid-1970's this approach was criticized by those who emphasized the social aspects of language (Hymes, 1970; Wilkins, 1976; Widdowson, 1978; Halliday, 1979). It was argued that the more a grammar system can be related to meaning within social contexts, the more insight will be gained into language systems. Out of this approach came the idea of constructing a notional-functional syllabus as the basis for language learning in the classroom (Wilkins, 1976).

The notional-functional approach is concerned primarily with helping the learner meet specified communication needs. These needs are organized around a set of notional categories which form the basis for a syllabus: semantico-grammatical categories (time, quantity, space, matter, case, deixis), and categories of communicative function (modality, moral evaluation and

discipline, persuasion, argument, rational inquiry and exposition, personal emotions, emotional relations, interpersonal relations). Syllabi based on a notional approach often include such topics or speech acts as accepting or rejecting invitations, requesting information, and expressing needs or emotions of various kinds.[13]

Notional-functional approaches broadened the challenge of the learner from attaining grammatical competence to what came to be known as communicative competence. The emphasis in communicative approaches is upon actual *active* use of the language as a technique for learning. Examples of such active learning include role-play, simulations, games, problem-solving, and group work. Instead of sentence recombining exercises centered on form, or content subdivided into serialized categories of functions, it became crucially important for learners to use and engage with 'authentic' language. Central, however, is that through the many verbal activities, learners are introduced to language as a form of social interaction.

This new emphasis on the social, interactive nature of language can be said to characterize communicative approaches and is attributable in part to events occurring outside of the pedagogical sciences, most particularly the substantial increase in the migration of people around the world from the 1970's until today. Immigrants to new societies had to be given a basic level of competence to function within their newly adopted societies as quickly as possible. As a result, a principal focus of this approach is linguistic proficiency in

[13] D. A. Wilkins, *Notional Syllabuses* (London: Oxford University, 1976) 92.

what are regarded as universal, pragmatic needs: requesting directions, ordering a meal, using the telephone, getting a job.

Communicative approaches may work well for the goals they have set out for themselves, but task-based, pragmatic notions of language acquisition have their limitations. The efforts of these approaches are directed primarily at making foreign language more relevant to everyday life, so they endeavour to empower learners to use words in order to have their practical needs fulfilled. Communicative approaches have been criticized, however, for valuing the exchange of information over other purposes and goals. For example, David Block (2003) points out that the communicative approach doesn't foster enough accuracy in language learning. Instead, teachers are interested mainly in having students talk, and direct activities in the classroom towards this goal. But according to Claire Kramsch, a leading scholar in the field of language pedagogy:

> Our major task is not... to find ever better ways of 'making students talk', but to understand in ever more sensitive ways why they talk the way they do, and why they remain silent . . .[14]

Kramsch's call for a more "sensitive" understanding relates to additional important components frequently missing from communicative pedagogies: the dimensions of critical questioning, attention to learner identities, and awareness of power relations within target language communities. Bonny Norton, for example, insists that a "limitation of communicative language teaching methods is that many do not actively seek to engage the identities of language learners in

[14] Claire Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 245.

the language teaching process."[15] I will describe below the important role of identity formation as part of the broader educational aims of language learning.

Communicative course books are generally designed for learners of all countries and are based on a kind of immersion in the target language that includes a considerable amount of mimetic learning. Learners are supplied with enough "native" speech patterns and social practices to enable them ostensibly to function appropriately within an unfamiliar society and to ease their integration into that society. However, these approaches do not generally encourage learners to question those practices or to try to understand their social and historical contexts. For instance, practical, skill-oriented tasks such as ordering a meal, or asking for directions, do little to reveal the subtle, more intricate vagaries of social contexts that make social interaction so open to interpretation – and contradiction. Indeed, following Kramsch's point, communicative approaches tend to overlook the potential for speakers to be silenced within language communities. Proceeding from the standpoint of social consensus, communicative approaches do not address the conflict, or even the ever-present possibility for misunderstanding, that can arise from cultural diversity and difference.[16]

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[15] Bonny Norton, *Identity and Language Learning: Gender, Ethnicity and Educational Change* (London: Pearson Education, 2000) 139.

[16] Claire Kramsch and Linda von Hoene, "The Dialogic Emergence of Difference: Feminist Explorations in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching," in *Rethinking the Disciplines: Feminism in the Academy,* D. Stanton and A. Stewart eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995) 13.

Through the use of authentic language as material from which to learn, and through such activities as role-play and simulations, communicative approaches offer an opportunity to learners to have the experience of communicating in another language in the classroom. Still, the experience of the classroom can never be more than a simulated version of using the language in the target culture. Moreover, the primary focus in many programs remains on the learner accuracy that communicative approaches do not foster. A value of institutionalized learning is the criterion of measurable success. Educational excellence is often equated with achieving higher levels of cognitive knowledge as measured by standardized test scores. In the case of language proficiency, results may be too strongly affected by the testing method. They do not reflect what a subject can do in the local settings of a culture and they certainly do not meet the demands of creativity and spontaneity required by that setting. In this respect, classroom experience may misrepresent language use in the real world and the learners may be ill-served by communicative approaches.

They are ill-served at a time when the role of language study for social and political realities has an unprecedented relevance. The twentieth-century revolution in communications, the rise and pervasiveness of mass media, mass tourism, and mass migration, have served to bring more peoples and cultures into contact with each other more often than ever before. With the advent of global markets and global information technologies has come a corresponding need to communicate across nations and cultures. In order to become an aware

citizen of this global community, individuals began to need an understanding not only of their own culture but also of other cultures in the world. Consequently, successful communication across cultures has come to be seen as a new ideal for language teaching. This goal required much more comprehensive ideas about language acquisition, about language pedagogy, and about culture than previous approaches. Some of these were identified by H.H. Stern in "Language Teaching and the Universities in the 1980's."[17] Stern envisioned programs of language study assuming a leadership role at the forefront of scholarly inquiry and research. To realize this role, however, he claimed that language teaching and learning had to be viewed as more than an "ancillary skill."[18] The study of languages had to become the study not of "language alone or language and literature, but a knowledge of language in relation to society and culture."[19]

The recognition that language proficiency cannot be equated with cultural proficiency was an important first impetus for change. Understanding an unfamiliar culture and making oneself understood in that culture requires more than the acquisition of technical, linguistic skills. According to Lothar Bredella: "we should not conceive of cultural competence as a skill analogous to linguistic competence which allows us to decide which sentence is correct and which

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[17] H. H. Stern, "Language Teaching and the Universities in the 1980's," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* (1981): 212-225.

[18] Stern 218.

[19] Stern 219.

sentence is wrong."[20] For Bredella, it was not enough to have a command of grammar and vocabulary and to be able to construct grammatically correct sentences. If language study were to make a genuine contribution to post-secondary education, the emphasis had to shift away from the idea of language learning as merely skills training. A more educated awareness was needed to consider the complexities, contradictions, and tendencies towards both intercultural understanding and misunderstanding.

Extracting a language from its cultural whole in order to concentrate the learners' minds on it has been relatively standard practice within language teaching; however, this practice, too, required reassessment. Culture is not a detachable attribute of language. To treat language as independent of the cultures from which it derives is to disregard the nature of both, language and culture. Cultures are largely contained and constituted in language. Language embodies the values and meanings of a culture, informs people's cultural identity and shapes cultural artifacts and practices. It is not surprising, therefore, that applied linguists, especially researchers in sociolinguistics and pragmatics, began working with views of language implicitly connected with views of culture, with social interaction and even with issues like identity formation and the 'self':

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[20] Lothar Bredella, "The Significance of Intercultural Understanding in the Foreign Language Classroom," *The Notion of Intercultural Understanding in the Context of German as a Foreign Language*, Theo Harden and Arnd Witte eds. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2000) 146.

"We add new dimensions to our Selves; we expand, through use of the language, our repertory of possible identities and ways of being human."[21]

Approaches to language study which understand proficiency as cultural competency, that is, as knowledge of other and self, can be seen as potentially transforming identity – not just grammatical patterns. By contrast, approaches committed to a view of language proficiency as linguistic proficiency, tend to evaluate their success by comparison to the native speaker. Not only does such a comparison undermine the confidence of learner and teacher alike, it equates cultural competency with linguistic competency, and contributes to the idea that language learning is a form of skills training. This is not to dismiss the common sense relevance and usefulness of learning another language as a skill, but if language learning were to address the broader aims of post-secondary education, the long-standing, undisputed ideal of native speaker proficiency had to be re-assessed and was re-assessed by Claire Kramsch :

> The teaching and learning of foreign languages has traditionally been divided over pedagogical methods, approaches and techniques based on powerful but no less controversial theories and models of language acquisition, but it has not put in question its one common goal: the attainment of a recognizable standard of native-speaker competence. Indeed, it has assumed that it is possible, even desirable, for learners to reach that standard.[22]

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[21] Jay L. Lemke, "Multiple timescales in the social ecology of learning," *Language Acquisition and Language Socialization. Ecological Perspectives*, Claire Kramsch, ed. (London: Continuum, 2002) 84.

[22] Claire Kramsch, "Redrawing the Boundaries of Foreign Language Study," M.Krueger and F.Ryan eds., *Language and Content: Discipline-Based Approaches to Language Study* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co, 1992).

To stop striving for the unattainable ideal of the native speaker immediately frees up the time needed to pursue other goals and activities. This does not mean, however, that a new approach can disregard the field's parameters of reference. It is necessary, for instance, to identify the broader educational aims of which a new approach will form a part, to establish the theoretical foundations upon which it will stand, and to devise the forms of mediation through which it will be structured. Of these considerations, the educational value of language learning within education as a whole is the first area of inquiry.

1.2 Philosophies of Education

Not everyone agrees either on the nature of learning generally or the goals of education specifically, and it is not my purpose here to provide a complete inventory of positions. My intent rather is to place language study within the broader contemporary discussion. I'll begin with the approach to education which consists primarily of learning to solve problems. In this instance, the actual content of pedagogy has little inherent value but rather receives its value when it is brought to bear upon the resolution of a specific issue or situation. The focus is on utility and in many cases this is explicated in terms of learning how to deal with the environment. Such an approach to learning is usually referred to as pragmatic or instrumentalist and finds its concrete expression in the model of the modern sciences and their emphasis on

method. In the case of language study, this approach would align with an approach to language acquisition as skills acquisition.

There are, of course, those approaches which characterize learning from a more humanistic standpoint. Two generally acknowledged pedagogical approaches form the basis for the discussion: cultural literacy and critical thinking. Both of these approaches reflect particular historical developments. With regard first to the contemporary discussion of cultural literacy, it has been focused primarily upon the book of the same title, published in 1987 by the American educator E.D. Hirsch. According to Hirsch: "the basic goal of education in a human community is acculturation, the transmission to children of the specific information shared by the adults of the group or *polis*."[23]

A decade later, this goal continued to be affirmed not only in the United States, but in Canada as well. In *The Educated Mind*, Kieren Egan described cultural socialization as the "first idea" of education: "Central to any educational scheme is initiation of the young into the knowledge, skills, values, and commitments common to the adult members of the society."[24] It was most recently reiterated by Paul Smeyers: "Liberal education is concerned with the initiation of the learner into forms of thought and understanding which are part of the cultural heritage."[25]

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[23] E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987) xvii.

[24] Kieran Egan, *The Educated Mind. How Cognitive Tools Shape Our Understanding* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 10.

[25] Paul Smeyers, "The Origin: Education, Philosophy, and a Work of Art," *Heidegger, Education and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002) 88.

Educational values such as those expressed above are based on the premise that one cannot get along in one's social, political and cultural world without first possessing the concepts that constitute literacy for that world. This approach has hermeneutical support as well. It was the view of Friedrich Schleiermacher, the German "Father of Hermeneutics" that education serves as the means by which the cultural traditions of a society or nation could be passed on to the next generation.[26] For Schleiermacher, to be culturally literate means to possess the necessary information needed to function and preferably thrive within a given culture and to communicate effectively with other members of that culture.

Despite the considerable support that this approach enjoys, educators have not failed to recognize some of its inherent contradictions. In her comprehensive work entitled *Rethinking University Teaching*, Diana Laurillard refers to one of these contradictions as "the paradox" of the teaching profession: "We want all our students to learn the same thing, yet we want each to make it their own."[27] Claire Kramsch acknowledges the necessity of such a program and points out a "paradoxical dilemma" of all pedagogical systems which must "both socialize learners into the social order and give them the means to change that order."[28]

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[26] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Part 3, vol. 9, "Zur Pädagogik," p. 40; cited in Shaun Gallagher, *Hermeneutics and Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 213.

[27] Diana Laurillard, *Rethinking University Teaching. A Framework for the Effective Use of Educational Technology* (New York: Routledge, 1993) 3.

[28] Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, 236.

Certainly one of the most comprehensive critiques of the approach of cultural reproduction within education is that of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in their study of the French educational system, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture.* The conclusions of Bourdieu and Passeron are based on empirical studies which show complex interactions between certain social factors (race, class, gender) and factors of educational success. Consistent with the cultural literacy approach, Bourdieu and Passeron identify the transmission of cultural and social structures as the "essential function of education."[29] Indeed, for Bourdieu and Passeron, pedagogic action operates as the "chief instrument of the transubstantiation of power relations into legitimate authority."[30] How a society selects, classifies, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control within that society. In other words, the educational system transmits the constraints of the dominant social order through the educational experience.

The educational theory of cultural literacy as presented by Bourdieu and Passeron leaves little opportunity for change within the educational context. What gets reproduced in educational experience is the dominant culture. The social order and its individual citizens are determined in a process that precludes any possibility of the self-creation or social transformation that

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[29] Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice (London: Sage, 1977) xiii.

[30] Bourdieu and Passeron 15.

Laurillard and Kramsch claim as a necessary and inevitable dimension of pedagogy.

Educators like Laurillard and Kramsch, who dispute this strictly deterministic conception of pedagogical experience, usually emphasize instead the acquisition of thinking skills, specifically, 'critical' thinking skills as the goal of pedagogy. In approaches promoting critical thinking there is a clear emphasis on method rather than content, and on the acquisition of transferable skills rather than the transmission of information. Critical thinking claims to effect a methodological disconnection from ideological standpoints and thus to escape political or social interests. Through critical thinking, the legitimacy of any ideology may be challenged, either on the basis of its own standards or according to standards of an ostensibly neutral rationality.

In *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking, and Education*, Harvey Siegel argues for the ideological neutrality of critical thinking. He conceives of critical thinking as a pure, instrumental rationality prior to and independent of any ideological commitment or prejudice.[31] Yet even Siegel admits that reason is embedded in particular traditions:

> . . . rationality cannot be taken simply as an abstract and general idea. It is embodied in *multiple evolving traditions*, in which the basic connection holds that issues are resolved by reference to reasons, themselves defined by *principles* purporting to be impartial and universal.[32]

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[31] Harvey Siegel, *Educating Reason: Rationality, Critical Thinking, and Education* (New York: Routledge, 1988) 59-60.

[32] Siegel 74-75.

Here we are confronted by a fundamental philosophical problem concerning the nature of rationality. This problem forms the basis for hermeneutical reservations regarding the privileged status accorded to critical thinking. If rationality always functions under the influence of particular traditions, does not such influence limit the claim for objectivity in critical thinking? We will consider this question again, as well as the question concerning cultural reproduction, within the hermeneutical context depicted in the following section of this chapter.

Cultural literacy and critical thinking are generally understood as representing two differing approaches to learning, each determining how pedagogical programs will be carried out. The two approaches appear to be in agreement concerning the purpose of education; that is, both aspire to prepare the learner to live in our modern, technologically oriented world – they just disagree about how to do it. With this as our point of departure, we will look at a further paradigm that incorporates both approaches.

In "Intercultural Pedagogy: Foundations and Principles," Michele Borrelli observes that traditional pedagogical paradigms valuing the ideal of a "cultural literacy" were developing side by side with others promoting what he referred to as an "intercultural" paradigm of literacy.[33] Borrelli maintains that, because the conventional "cultural literacy" approaches are "nationally-oriented pedagogies,"

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[33] Michele Borrelli, "Intercultural Pedagogy: Foundations and Principles," *Mediating Languages and Cultures: Towards an Intercultural Theory of Foreign Language Education* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1990) 273-286.

they are basically "racist-oriented"[34] and therefore not consistent with the mandate of all education:

> Education strives for humanity in two different ways, one being an individual act of liberation towards oneself, the other as a collective act of liberation towards the societal whole. . .[35]

According to Borrelli, what distinguishes the cultural educational paradigm from the intercultural and makes the latter preferable, is its emancipatory function for all of humankind. The educational theorist Shaun Gallagher agrees with Borrelli that the "ideal educational situation" is one which may be characterized as "productive of self-understanding and responsibility and involving an ethical dimension defined in terms of freedom or autonomy."[36] The viewpoints of Borrelli and Gallagher are echoed by those of Manuela Guilherme: "our multicultural societies are in great need of citizens prepared to interact across cultures with the revitalization of the democratic society in mind."[37]

To emphasize such goals may be seen again as a reflection of the ever-increasing globalization of economic, social and political life. It can be attributed to the fact that most of the problems that concern humankind call for some form of intercultural cooperation: the protection of the environment, the maintenance of human health, the development of a world economy and, of

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[34] Borrelli 281.

[35] Borrelli 282.

[36] Shaun Gallagher 259-260.

[37] Manuela Guilherme, *Critical Citizens for an Intercultural World. Foreign Language Education as Cultural Politics* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2002) 167.

course, the accessibility of education. It is especially true of the most fundamental problem the world faces, that of ensuring peace:

> Increased contact with other cultures . . . makes it imperative for us to make a concerted effort to get along with and understand other people who are vastly different from ourselves. The ability, through increased awareness and understanding, to coexist peacefully with people who do not necessarily share our backgrounds, beliefs, values or life styles can not only benefit us in our own neighborhoods but can also be a decisive factor in forestalling nuclear annihilations.[38]

At times of threatening global crises on the one hand and shifting political boundaries on the other, intercultural objectives of tolerance and understanding are becoming more important every day – all of which brings us back to language study and its role within this setting. How consistent are the objectives of language study with those of post-secondary education?

According to Claire Kramsch: "The new directions in the study of foreign languages . . . stem from a desire to recapture the essential relevance of foreign languages and all aspects of foreign cultures to international peace and understanding."[39] Jörg Roche identifies tolerance, empathy and understanding as "the unchallenged and generic goals of language instruction."[40] This is affirmed by George F. Peters, who claims that "the goals of racial and ethnic tolerance are inherent in what we do."[41] The link of language pedagogy to the

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[38] Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter, *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (Belmont: Wadsworth Pub. Co., 1997) 1.

[39] Claire Kramsch, "New Directions in the Study of Foreign Languages," *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol.21, No.1 (Fall 1989) 9.

[40] Jörg Roche, *Interkulturelle Sprachdidaktik. Eine Einführung* (Tübingen: Narr, 2001) 114.

[41] George F. Peters, "Dilemmas of Diversity," *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol.25, No.2 (Winter 1994): 5.

concept of a "global education" is affirmed by Azade Seyhan in her assertion that "foreign language study is central to a globally conceived international education."[42] Gerhard Neuner is convinced that language educators can do much to contribute to "a world free of power, suppression and violence where mutual understanding and living together in friendliness and peace can be realized."[43]

Conventional wisdom within the field holds that learning another language constitutes a form of emancipation, a freeing of learners from the confines of their customary ways of thinking and being. This idea was confirmed by Alan C. Frantz in a questionnaire on the value of language study.[44] The questionnaire was initially comprised of a list, in no particular order, of fifteen values taken from recent books and articles published in the United States on language education. According to the over three hundred scholars who responded to the questionnaire, the primary value of language study is that it "liberalizes one's experience (helps expand one's view of the world)."[45] These results were more recently affirmed by Lothar Bredella: "Such a concept of language implies that foreign language learning is an educational process: we acquire a new world view in learning a new language and become aware of the relativity of our own

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[42] Azade Seyhan, "Language and Literary Study as Cultural Criticism," *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol.26, No.2 (Winter 1995) 9.

[43] Gerhard Neuner, "Socio-cultural Interim Worlds in Foreign language Teaching and Learning." *Intercultural Competence*, ed. Michael Byram (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2003) 57.

[44] Alan C. Frantz, "Seventeen Values of Foreign Language Study," *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol.28, No.1 (Fall 1996) 44-49.

[45] Frantz 45.

world view."[46] The field of language study thus affirms and endorses the educational aims of an intercultural, global approach to education: the individual's personal development and emancipation extrapolated to the social whole.

1.3 Intercultural Approaches within Language Study

The above points notwithstanding, neither intercultural paradigms of education generally, nor those of language education specifically, constitute a uniform set of theories or goals. In the case of language study, this contrasts with previous approaches which did have a generally agreed-upon and well-defined goal: native speaker proficiency. But if the ideal of the fluent speaker comfortable in most language situations has been clear to language learners, a corresponding ideal is not so clear to culture learners. Are learners culturally proficient, for instance, when they act, voluntarily or unconsciously, in a way that makes them indistinguishable from members of the community? Such an ideal would be akin to that of native speaker proficiency, but does that make it either desirable or appropriate? Certainly, learning to speak a language without thinking about grammatical descriptions or vocabulary lists is not the same as learning about a culture and practicing that culture without thinking.

The lack of clearly identified and generally accepted goals distinguishes intercultural approaches from previous ones. This, in turn, contributes to a continuing debate over appropriate forms of mediation. In regard to the

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[46] Bredella 148.

transmission of culture, for example, it had generally been assumed that language learning would lead to some kind of cultural learning automatically or incidentally. As was noted previously, however, cultural competence is not an automatic consequence of language ability, such that "the integration of culture and language teaching remains a challenge."[47] It is evidently possible to acquire a language through simulation, to learn the forms and words and play at speaking it, but the presence of a speech community can invalidate that kind of knowledge. The learning of a language will likely result in some form of culture learning, but such learning will not be inevitable, let alone useful or relevant.

All of this is not to claim that previous approaches have never undertaken the methodical transmission of the cultures of other languages. In the grammar-translation method, language learning was regarded as intimately connected to culture; however, the concept was understood very differently from today. The texts of the target language were selected in accordance with a definition of 'high culture' that assessed their status as exemplary and valuable historical artifacts. There was also the notion that literature, though not the only manifestation of culture, was linguistically the most important one.[48]

The audio-lingual method took a very different approach to culture. With the emphasis on grammar and pattern drills, the texts used for instruction were neither literary nor historical, but highly didactic and artificial. Cultural

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[47] Alice Omaggio Hadley, *Teaching Language in Context.* 3rd Ed. (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2001) 346.

[48] Theo Harden, *The Notion of Intercultural Understanding in the Context of German as a Foreign Language*, Theo Harden and Arnd Witte eds. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2000) 10.

information was included, but derived implicitly from the context of highly contrived, everyday speech acts.

Communicative approaches extended the role of culture within language learning beyond mere contextual knowledge and explicitly integrate cultural information within communicatively oriented textbooks. Within the German context this form of inclusion occurs under the rubric of "Landeskunde" or "Kulturkunde". It is analogous to the "4-F Approach" characterized by Galloway: folk dances, festivals, fairs, and food.[49] This approach consists primarily in the depiction of straightforward historical or geographical information and the description of typical events and activities.

In the context of intercultural language teaching, however, simply describing the various and sundry details of daily life in the unfamiliar culture is insufficient. Such a description reduces the other culture to a compilation of facts. Moreover, the separate treatment of culture implies that language and culture exist independently. Even where the concept of "Landeskunde" has been expanded to include comparative studies between the target and native cultures, such an approach is insufficient. This is because such studies generally involve the "benign" comparison of apparently similar phenomena in the respective cultures. Such comparisons tend simply to affirm the status quo

[49] Vicki Galloway, "A Design for the Improvement of the Teaching of Culture in Foreign Language Classrooms" ACTFL project proposal, 1985; cited in Omaggio Hadley, 348.

in both cultures, reducing inquiry to what Todorov has denounced as: "the paralyzing banality of positive feelings" (my translation).[50]

At this point we need to reconsider the role of critical thinking. For if intercultural approaches to pedagogy are characterized by their emancipatory purpose, then, according to Borrelli, structured comparative study between cultures must incorporate techniques that enhance critical reflection: "in order to minimalize cultural affirmation . . . we need a critical, self-reflecting intercultural approach."[51] Thus, the intercultural approach to education puts heavy emphasis on critical thinking. We have already encountered some of the shortcomings of critical thinking within theories of education generally. How are these shortcomings addressed within the specific context of an intercultural approach to language learning?

Critical thinking as a model of reflection is usually aligned with the notion of getting a critical distance from those things that are being interrogated. In order to view cultural forms objectively, for example, we must reflectively distance ourselves from them in our analysis. As was noted in the previous reference to hermeneutical constraints, however, this distancing can never be absolute or complete.

In the case of language study, it might seem that we actually have an aspect of the approach that is indeed implicit. Learners are implicitly endowed with the required distance by virtue of their position outside of an unfamiliar

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[50] "la banalisation paralysante des bons sentiments," Pierre Todorov, "Le Croisement des cultures," *Communications*, No. 43, 1986, 7.

[51] Borrelli 285.

culture. Proponents of the approach caution, however, that this is not adequate. Kramsch, for example, insists that learners must be moved to a position from which they can view not only the other unfamiliar culture but their own familiar culture as well, from the outside, from a distance.[52] In other words, learners should experience their own culture as something 'other' rather than an essential center or norm. Anything less would condemn learners to remaining firmly centered in their own culture, judging the other culture by native standards, and experiencing the unfamiliar culture from little more than a tourist's perspective. Ethnocentric views of what is natural and normal would be reinforced and nothing would hinder a retreat into the simplistic "cultural affirmation" of which Borrelli warns.

Such a decentering of learners from their own culture is certainly not something that happens incidentally. Efforts must be directed at bringing the learner to this kind of experience. A generally agreed-upon first step, one that seems almost implicit to an approach calling itself "*inter*cultural," is to move the learner *outside* their own culture by moving them *into* the other culture, at least initially, in that culture's own terms. In other words, the learner must attain an understanding of the attitudes, behaviours, artifacts and institutions of the people in another culture, in terms of the culturally agreed-upon meanings which they embody for them. In this way, a learner is endowed with more than just a superficial, or outsider's familiarity with the people of another culture. Moreover,

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[52] Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, 210.

it is only in this way that the nature of the intimate relationship between a language and the culture it embodies can be appreciated.[53]

The process of regarding and questioning one's own culture from *without* and participating in and experiencing the unfamiliar culture from *within* characterizes most contemporary approaches to intercultural language study. The prevalence of this process has not, however, served to standardize the plethora of methods and techniques that represent themselves as "intercultural." For teachers of German seeking to legitimate their methods within an institutional setting, this selection has not been helpful:

> There is no dearth of suggested approaches for the teaching of culture (e.g. Bernhardt and Berman; DeCapua and Wintergerst; Galloway; Heusinkveld; Lange and Paige; Peters; Savignon and Sysoyev). However, pedagogical strategies are neither guided by common theoretical constraints, nor by common learning objectives...[54]

The question of the theoretical basis upon which intercultural language study might be grounded at the institutional level is an important one. The alignment with a "parent discipline" has significant bearing not only upon the means used to realize particular aims, but also upon considerations of appropriate content and the mediation and presentation of that content.

Language teaching, insofar as it has been regarded as the teaching of grammar, syntax, phonology, etc. has traditionally looked to linguistics for its

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[53] Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, 233-234.

[54] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, "In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* No. 38.2, (2005): 177.

theoretical and methodological grounding.[55] However, the interactions between teaching languages as a practical activity and the theoretical developments in the language sciences were recognized as less simple and straightforward than they had at first appeared. A number of scholars came to the conclusion that applied linguistics as a mediating discipline between theoretical developments in the language sciences and the practice of language teaching might lead to a more effective interaction. A few influential writers expressed this viewpoint, as for example, Halliday, McIntosh, and Strevens in *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching,* 1964; W.F. Mackey, *Language Teaching Analysis*, 1965; and S.P. Corder, *Introducing Applied Linguistics*,1973. At the same time this group of scholars warned that the role of applied linguistics, although important in some specific areas, was limited in others. For instance, Bourdieu argues that the linguist has only an abstract notion of linguistic competence that does not address real situations: "The linguist regards the conditions for the establishment of communication as already secured, whereas, in real situations, that is the essential question."[56] Bourdieu claims that the approach of the linguist is compromised by the failure to take such critical factors as the prevailing political, economic and other social realities into account.

Increasing awareness of the social dimensions of language has called for forms of analysis able to account for socially specific uses of language, for language in action as communication. Socio- and psycholinguistics have,

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[55] Stern 247-9.

[56] Bourdieu and Passeron 648.

therefore, become an important extension of the linguistic disciplines to which language pedagogy turns. In the literature on language pedagogy of the previous decade are references to Austin, Searle, Hymes and Halliday. In Germany it is the work of Jürgen Habermas that has been used as a theoretical basis. We will look at the contribution of Habermas in the following section on hermeneutics.

In addition to the social meanings carried by the functions of language, it has been argued above that language embodies the values, artifacts and institutions of a culture. In order to understand these culturally specific realizations of referential meaning, a form of analysis is required that allows for a combination of socio-linguistics with cultural and intercultural analysis. In other words, the expanded mandate of foreign language didactics demands an expansion of the field's horizons. The epistemologically-oriented social sciences to which it has traditionally turned need to be supplemented by more interpretively-oriented disciplines adept at the analysis and explication of culturally constituted meanings.[57]

Here we have the entry of hermeneutics as a relevant discipline and in this regard, it has been the hermeneutical approach of Hans-Georg Gadamer, the contemporary "Father of Hermeneutics," which has served as the primary theoretical frame of reference. In his article "Identity or Alterity: American Germanistik and Hermeneutics," H.-J. Schulz acknowledges the "positive theoretical impulses of Gadamer's hermeneutics for the practice and description

[57] Stern 259.

of intercultural hermeneutics."[58] Schulz nevertheless claims that Gadamer's hermeneutics has "influenced the development of a theory of intercultural hermeneutics primarily by negative example."[59] A discussion of Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy, its role in the search for an intercultural hermeneutics, and its appropriateness as a point of departure for such a hermeneutics, follows in the next section of this chapter.

That contemporary language study finds itself looking much further afield than previously, derives primarily from its own efforts to redefine itself, but it is also a reflection in part of the ideological tenor of our time. The interest in critical theory, coupled with the intense attention of post-structuralist and post-modernist theories to language, supports efforts to link up language study to other fields of inquiry in the academic community. These efforts derive in turn from changes in the perceptions and attitudes toward all disciplines or fields of study. In particular, the exclusive validity of epistemological forms of knowledge is being questioned and alternative explanations for many phenomena are being sought. The present intellectual ethos, thus, encourages and supports the move on the part of language study to broaden its disciplinary base.

The expanded mandate of language study, its attempts to redefine itself and its efforts to seek new alliances within the intellectual community, bear witness to the vibrancy and dynamism of the field. Yet despite the interest and

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[58] H.-J. Schulz, "Identity or Alterity: American Germanistik and Hermeneutics," *Challenges of Germanistik: Traditions and prospects of an academic discipline*, ed. Eitel Timm, (München: Iudicium, 1992) 9.

[59] Schulz 9.

enthusiasm, despite the wide range of writings and scholarly sophistication of the research, despite the recognition of shared purposes and attempts at academic alliance-building, the innovative advances of the previous decades only rarely found their way into the classroom. In 1993 Kramsch observed:

> German language study today still reflects a concern with individual performance and formal mastery of grammar, syntax and vocabulary, and, despite rhetorical claims to the contrary, it ignores the dialogic, interactional and sociocultural dimensions of language...[60]

There are a number of possible reasons why progressive theories were not being implemented in practice. A first reason is that they appear so daunting. Advocates and theorists draw on a much wider range of scholarly expertise than those in which language teachers have experience, or to which they are usually exposed. Practical expertise has to catch up with theoretical sophistication. A second reason is that teaching and learning practices in the classroom are at least in part a function of available materials. These tend to lag behind theoretical advances. Finally, the practicalities of language learning cannot be understood apart from the institutional context of education generally. Institutional forms and prerogatives will determine pedagogic priorities and pragmatics. According to Diana Laurillard this applies especially to post-secondary institutions, where "the university operates a complex system of departments, curricula, teaching methods, support facilities, timetables, assessment – all of which determine the possible ways in which students may

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[60] Claire Kramsch, "Language Games; Social Linguistic Perspectives on German Studies," GSA Conference, Seattle, Washington, 12 October 1997.

learn."[61] The gap between theoretical and practical expertise, the availability of materials, and institutionally imposed constraints are all reasons why progressive theories emerging from research were not influencing actual practice in the classroom.

It is important to note, however, that the above-noted hindrances to implementation are not specific to intercultural pedagogical approaches. Such impediments are generally prevalent and shared to a greater or lesser degree by all approaches, past and present. In the case of intercultural approaches, however, the difficulties of implementation have proven particularly intractable. By the turn of the millennium these obstacles were engendering claims such as that made by Walker and Noda: "in the study of language, nothing has been discussed more and with less effect than the relationship between language and culture."[62] This is consistent with Lange's observation a year earlier that despite a commitment of over forty years duration to include culture in the language curriculum, "culture still remains a superficial aspect of language learning."[63] And in 2002 Claire Kramsch observed: "Whether it is called international, cross-

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[61] Laurillard 2.

[62] Galal Walker and Mari Noda, "Remembering the Future: Compiling Knowledge of Another Culture" *Reflecting on the Past to Shape the Future* (Lincoln, IL: National Textbook Company, 2000); cited in Omaggio Hadley, 346.

[63] Dale L. Lange, "Planning for and Using the New National Culture Standards," Foreign language Standards: Linking Research, Theories, and Practices (Lincoln, IL: National Textbook Company, 2000); cited in Omaggio Hadley, 346.

cultural, or intercultural, communication between people of different language and cultures has been an obsession of the last century."[64]

In November of 2004, the five members of a Culture Task Force, struck by the American Association of Teachers of German, presented their findings at the ACTFL/AATG Annual Conference in Chicago. Their Report was subsequently published in their professional journal "*Die Unterrichtspraxis*" with the title: "In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom: Recommendations of the AATG Task Force on the Teaching of Culture."[65] The Report declared that the discipline was experiencing considerable difficulties in its attempt to integrate culture in language learning. In their account of those difficulties, explicit reference was made to all of the impediments noted above. It was confirmed, for instance, that teachers are anxious that their skills and training are not adequate to the requirements of the approach: "there is no evidence of a theory-based practical preparation of teachers. . . ."[66] The Report also cited concerns regarding the appropriateness of cultural content and the accessibility of suitable materials: "there is little commonality in which cultural topics are addressed in instructional materials and in how textbooks present culture."[67] Finally, it was confirmed that teachers are

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[64] Claire Kramsch, "In search of the intercultural," *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 6/2 (2002) 275.

[65] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, „In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* No. 38.2, (2005): 172-181.

[66] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 174.

[67] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 173.

hampered in their efforts by the demands of an already overcrowded curriculum: "there certainly is not enough time. . . ."[68] The following citation taken from a survey of students and included in the Report sums it up succinctly:

> (1) teaching culture takes away time from the real object of language instruction, i.e., grammar; (2) teaching culture in a foreign language class devolves into dilettantism, either because of time constraints or because teachers lack expertise; (3) teaching culture is a political issue,... autocratically imposed on classroom teachers and students.[69]

It is interesting to note that, after decades of research and effort directed at developing a basic framework of theory and practice, the Task Force found this basis still missing: "The profession needs to identify some concise, foundational and, of course, realistic objectives as well as principled approaches for the teaching of cultural competence."[70]

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, various attempts had been made within the German context to address all of these issues. To begin, numerous attempts going back a number of years had been made to fundamentally define the meaning of intercultural learning within language study: Bausch/Christ/Krumm (1994), De Florio-Hansen (1994), Knapp, Röttger (1996), Thürmann, (1995). Other issues belonging to this context had also been researched and discussed, for instance, the concretization of learning objectives, Knapp-Potthoff, (1997); a new conception for teaching materials, Liedtke, (1999); suggestions to aid in the practical realization of objectives,

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[68] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 176.

[69] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 176.

[70] *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 174.

Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, (1998); and the question of understanding foreign cultures (*Fremdverstehen*): Bredella/Christ/Legutke, (1997), Hu, (1997).[71]

Attempts have also been made within the North American context to address these issues. Frameworks for designing a cultural curriculum have been proposed by Nostrand and Nostrand (1970, 1971), Seelye (1984, 1993) and Lafayette (1988); a framework for building cultural understanding has been proposed by Galloway (1984), Ortuño (1991) and Harden and Witte (2000); Walker and Noda (2000) have proposed an innovative approach to the teaching of language and culture in an interrelated fashion.[72] Despite these many initiatives, the Task Force insists that intercultural approaches to language learning have yet to establish some of their most basic concepts.

There is a further impediment to implementation that the Report delineates and that has special relevance for my dissertation: student attitudes to the inclusion of culture within language study. The Report cites research showing that learners do not share the discipline's perspective on the importance of culture.[73] Consequently, the Task Force's second recommendation for the AATG is a comprehensive account of the "mismatch of

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[71] Adelheid Hu, "Intercultural Learning and its Difficult Aspects – An Analysis of the Criticism in Relation to a Controversial Concept," *The Notion of Intercultural Understanding in the Context of German as a Foreign Language*, Theo Harden and Arnd Witte eds. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2000) 80.

[72] Omaggio Hadley 349-358.

[73] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis,* 176.

student and teacher perceptions regarding the place of culture."[74] This is noteworthy because student disinterest and even hostility has been explicitly identified by Hadley as one of the three basic problems in the teaching of culture.[75] Both sources make reference to the generally narrow view of culture taken by students. Student attitude to language and culture learning plays an important role within my project. I will offer an explanation for the tendency of students to resist the integration of culture and offer an approach that draws on this resistance as a source of pedagogical benefit.

By way of summarizing the Report, the members of the committee identify five specific issues in need of professional consensus: Definitions, Contents, Objectives/Assessments, Approaches/Materials, Teacher Development.[76] For each of these issues, the Task Force has posed a number of specific questions that need to be addressed. In Chapter Four and Chapter Five I will return to each of these issues and questions, delineate them in detail, and offer the pedagogical implications of a different perspective. I am undertaking this initiative because, despite all the difficulties, the Culture Task Force has not abandoned intercultural understanding as a worthwhile objective of the discipline: "It seems that especially during war times or times of

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[74] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 176.

[75] Corinne Mantle-Bromley, "Preparing Students for Meaningful Culture Learning," *Foreign Language Annals*, 1992); cited in Omaggio Hadley, 347

[76] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 176-178.

international crisis we are reminded that FL teachers make, or should make an important contribution in developing cross-cultural understanding."[77]

I believe that this commitment is shared by *most* members of the discipline; however, it must be acknowledged that not *all* language educators share this attitude. For instance, by 1998 the preoccupation with the intercultural had become so obsessive that the linguists Willis Edmondson and Juliane House questioned its practical usefulness and deemed it a superfluous concept. In a much cited and highly debated article entitled "Intercultural Learning: A superfluous Concept" they argue that language learning is inherently intercultural and this new emphasis on the implicit educational goals of tolerance and empathy, deflect our attention from the explicit linguistic goals proper to the discipline. According to Edmondson and House, the discipline should return to the concept of communicative competence as a workable objective for language study.[78]

I disagree strongly with the view of Edmondson and House that the goals of an intercultural approach are already inherent in the discipline, and have already shown how much evidence there is to the contrary; still, I can appreciate their frustration. The concept of culture is a highly complex and contested issue both in the real world and as a theoretical construct. It remains to be seen, for instance, if the notion of culture can serve as a positive transformative principle

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[77] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 172.

[78] Willis Edmondson and Juliane House, "Interkulturelles Lernen: ein überflussiger Begriff," *Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* 9/2 (1998): 161-181.

within our political and national world order. It also remains to be seen how well culture can serve as a new conceptual value within models of pedagogy and education. Within the discipline of language study, the challenges are not limited to the contentiousness around culture. As we have seen, the concept of culture within language study is inherently linked with that of understanding, itself a concept as highly complex as culture and almost as highly contested.

In 1993, in *Context and Culture in Language Teaching,* Claire Kramsch put forth the claim that the new cultural goals and values in language pedagogy required a new approach to the role of understanding. She explained that language teaching had always been predicated upon the idea that we can understand one another if only we share the same linguistic code. It was a greater awareness of the role of culture particularly that had made us aware of the difficulties and limitations to achieving understanding. But even at the optimistic outset of the interest in culture, Kramsch did not take understanding for granted. Instead, she regards understanding as "a small miracle, brought about by a leap of faith."[79] In this she is supported by Friedrich Schleiermacher, who over 200 years ago said something similar about understanding:

> The more lax practice in the art (of interpretation) proceeds from the standpoint that understanding arises of itself... the more rigourous practice proceeds from the standpoint, that misunderstanding arises of itself and that understanding must be desired and sought at every point. (my translation)[80]

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[79] Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, 2.

[80] „Die laxere Praxis in der Kunst geht davon aus, daß sich das Verstehen von selbst ergibt. . . Die strengere Praxis geht davon aus, daß sich das Mißverstehen von selbst ergibt und das Verstehen auf jedem Punkt muß gewollt und gesucht werden." Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1993) 92.

In addition to the support of Schleiermacher, Kramsch has some contemporary support for her claim that the field's quest for new goals and approaches needs to be addressed from the perspective of a philosophy of understanding. In his article "Toward a Cultural Hermeneutics of the Foreign language Classroom: Notes for a Critical and Political Pedagogy," Jeff Peck observes that language and literature departments have failed to utilize the productive critical potential of the language classroom, a potential which Peck claims derives from a reciprocal relation between the activity of learning a another language and the activity of understanding: "Learning a foreign language becomes a paradigm for reflecting on the conditions of understanding, in short, on how one understands at all."[81]

Considered from within the larger educational context a third confirmation of the importance of understanding in the relation between learning and language comes from Marion Crowhurst who argues in *Language and Learning Across the Curriculum* for the place of understanding over knowledge as the contemporary currency of learning:

> For most of the century, education has been dominated by an inadequate view of teaching and learning. According to this traditional view, learning is a matter of knowledge and skill acquisition... Developments in cognitive psychology have led to a different view of teaching and learning, one that emphasizes understanding. . . [82]

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[81] Jeffrey Peck, "Toward a Cultural Hermeneutics of the Foreign Language Classroom: Notes for a Critical and Political Pedagogy," *ADFL Bulletin*, Vol.23, No.3 (Spring 1992), 13.

[82] Marion Crowhurst, *Language and Learning Across the Curriculum*, (Scarborough: Allyn & Bacon, 1994) 4.

Each in their own way, Kramsch, Peck and Crowhurst, advance the notion of an explicit and reciprocal relation between language learning, culture and understanding. Understanding other cultures is certainly a highly desirable objective in language learning and in the world, particularly when the world appears on the verge of becoming the 'global village' that Marshal McLuhan prophecized (1962). It appears more recently, however, that humankind has not made any substantial advances in the understanding of anything that is perceived as other or unfamiliar. Along with the positive expectations for an enlightened world society as regards the environment, peace policy and international understanding, we must also acknowledge that the tendencies towards globalization are producing an increased awareness of the existing differences and potential for misunderstanding and abuse of power.

In *Orientalism* (1978) Edward Said emphatically asserted that we cannot understand others. It is Said's claim that the actual motive behind our desire to understand other cultures is to dominate them.[83] In the same vein, ten years later in a work entitled *The Differend. Phrases in Dispute*, Jean-Francois Lyotard portrays mediation between cultures as an act of violence. According to Lyotard, any comparison between two incommensurable cultures will inflict injustice on one of them and will be experienced as an act of violence.[84] There is doubt, too, within language education that the discipline can actually promote the

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[83] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon,1978).

[84] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend. Phrases in Dispute.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

development of cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding. Educators like Deborah Cameron have expressed their lack of confidence in the ability of the current communication culture to truly bring about understanding across cultural faultlines.[85] And indeed, it has been acknowledged, that there is little if any empirical evidence to support the claim.[86]

Despite the difficulties and challenges, however, members of the discipline express commitment. Educators like Amita Sen Gupta expresses her commitment as an obligation: "it seems as if the intercultural encounter is an inevitable part of the Global Village, and therefore our duty as educators is to strive towards developing a suitable pedagogy for this experience."[87] In "The Limits of Understanding" Theo Harden poses an important question:

> The question is: is it truly possible to widen our understanding by elevating it to a higher level of consciousness, by creating an 'intercultural awareness', or are we confined to our relative narrowness by the specific features which determine our species? This makes it necessary to critically examine – once again – some of the key concepts of 'intercultural communication', 'intercultural awareness', and 'intercultural understanding'.[88]

We have, of course, encountered the concept of understanding at various points of our survey of language learning, but confined thus far to playing an

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[85] Deborah Cameron, *Good to Talk? Living and Working in a Communication Culture* (London: Sage, 2000).

[86] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, *Die Unterrichtspraxis* 173.

[87] Amita Sen Gupta, "Changing the Focus: A Discussion of the Dynamics of the Intercultural Experience," *Intercultural Experience and Education*, Geof Alred, Mike Byram and Mike Fleming, eds. (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2003) 171.

[88] Theo Harden, "The Limits of Understanding," *The Notion of Intercultural Understanding in the Context of German as a Foreign Language*, Theo Harden and Arnd Witte eds. (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2000) 104.

implicit role. Clearly, the role of culture in language learning demands a concomitant shift in our attention to understanding, the acknowledged domain of hermeneutics.

1.4 Hermeneutics: A Historical Overview

It is not yet a familiar term in the standard vocabulary of pedagogy, but hermeneutics already forms the theoretical basis in numerous academic contexts including philosophy, theology, law, literature, history, and the social sciences. In my view, its connection to pedagogy generally is in its mandate to examine human understanding. Its link to language pedagogy specifically is in the proposition that human understanding is linguistic. But hermeneutics is not linguistics.

Hermeneutics has been alternately defined as an art, a science, a methodology and a philosophy. This ambiguity in regard to its designation captures a tension that has animated the hermeneutical enterprise since its inception in ancient Greek thought. The formulation of this tension begins in the etymological connection between the term hermeneutics and the figure of Hermes, the divine messenger of the gods and inventor of language and speech. The symbolism of this mythological origin aligns hermeneutics with speech and story, activities of humankind which are universal and distinguish us from other forms of life on the planet. But it is appropriate as well because an important connection may immediately be drawn between the ambiguity of the term and the ambiguous nature of this particular Greek god, who, as well as

being a translator and interpreter, was also a thief (he stole Apollo's entire herd of cattle), a trickster (he made them walk backwards to disguise their tracks) and a liar (he denied the theft to Zeus, until browbeaten into confessing by Apollo).

Most historical accounts do not begin with the mythological figure of Hermes and do not address the ambiguity of the mythological account. They most frequently begin with Aristotle, proceed through the sacred hermeneutics of Martin Luther and Mathias Flacius, and then go to the humanist hermeneutics of Johannes Clericus and the legal hermeneutics of Johannes von Felde. Enlightenment thinkers such as Christian Wolff and Johann Chladenius relegated hermeneutics to the domain of logic and are frequently omitted; however, no historical account will fail to include the contribution of Friedrich Schleiermacher in the early nineteenth century as constituting a watershed in the development of hermeneutics.[89]

Schleiermacher marks the emergence of hermeneutics as a scholarly discipline promoting an epistemology of "understanding." It was he who first defined hermeneutics as "the art of understanding"[90] in his canonical book *Hermeneutics and Criticism.* Up until the time of Schleiermacher, hermeneutic practice had concerned itself primarily with the interpretation of religious, judicial and ancient literary texts. Schleiermacher continued this tradition by systematizing those methods of textual interpretation which had previously been in use, but he complemented these with a form of psychological interpretation

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[89]Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, *The Hermeneutics Reader*, (New York: Continuum, 1992) 1 – 5.

[90] „Die Kunst des Verstehens" Schleiermacher 75.

which he called "divinatory" or "*divinatorisch*" (93). Schleiermacher realized that understanding a text means more than just understanding the words. It is a writer's unique insight that is the reason a text exists in the first place and that renders each of its constituent parts into a meaningful and unified whole.

What most distinguishes Schleiermacher's hermeneutics from the past and becomes a recurrent theme in the future, in his emphasis on the linguistic dimension of understanding. Schleiermacher claimed that "understanding" or "Verstehen" was analogous to speaking, since both derive from the human "capacity for speech" or "Sprachfähigkeit." In a move that anticipates Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, Schleiermacher describes understanding as the coalescence of the two levels that for him constitute human "Sprachfähigkeit": "Sprache" as the system of "language" in its totality; and "Rede" as the individual utterance or "speech" of a speaker (77). Accordingly, Schleiermacher's interpretative methodology corresponds to this conception of understanding by its division into two parts: grammatical and psychological. Indeed, Schleiermacher's significance within the hermeneutic tradition is usually attributed to his move of complementing grammatical exegesis with psychological interpretation, with the understanding of an "other" (i.e. the author). Deriving from this focus upon the author, and upon "Rede" as the author's unique and distinctive use of the totality of "Sprache," the relationship between individuality and totality, the part and the whole, become central in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Although a translator or reader can only ever begin with a part, it is always this whole that one is after.

Schleiermacher thus described the process of coming to understanding as an apparent part-whole-part movement that has come to be known as the hermeneutic circle:

> Complete knowledge always involves an apparent circle, such that each specific part can be understood only out of the general whole to which it belongs, and the reverse. (my translation)[91]

Schleiermacher's emphasis on the crucial connection between thinking and language – "we cannot think without language"[92] anticipates the "linguistic turn" of the twentieth century. Schleiermacher's legacy endures, however, at least as much for the ambiguities with which he has left us, as for his efforts to achieve correct understanding through the systematization of formal principles. For instance, Schleiermacher does not distinguish in his work between the concept of "understanding" ("Verstehen") and that of "interpretation" ("Auslegung"), using the terms interchangeably. This has resulted in a fundamental ambiguity which is still with us today.

More significantly, although it was Schleiermacher who realized that understanding a text means more than understanding the words, he failed to establish a philosophical-theoretical foundation to support his "divinatory" moment in understanding. He refers to it as "eine unmittelbare Auffassung" or "an immediate comprehension" of what is unique or individual in an author by "transforming oneself" ("in den andern verwandeln") into the author (169). He acknowledges the differences in thinking that must inhere in two distinct

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[91] „Überall ist das vollkommene Wissen in diesem scheinbaren Kreise, daß jedes Besondere nur aus dem Allgemeinen, dessen Teil es ist, verstanden werden kann und umgekehrt." (95)

[92] „wir können nicht denken ohne die Sprache" (235).

subjectivities, residing in two distinct historical periods; still, he claims that "in each desire to understand the other is the assumption that the difference between them is resolvable" (my translation).[93] Schleiermacher admits to presuming "that each individual person carries a minimum of all other people in them" (my translation),[94] but does not elaborate on just how he conceives of this.

In this regard Schleiermacher distinguishes himself from his later admirer and biographer, the philologist and philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey. Dilthey defined understanding as "ein Wiederfinden des ich im Du" or "a re-finding of the self in the other" and devoted his academic life to developing an epistemology of understanding that would provide the methodological underpinnings for those disciplines concerned with humankind: the humanities (die Geisteswissenschaften).[95]

Dilthey's research was beginning just as positivism was emerging as a single methodology of knowledge. For his part, Dilthey accepted the Kantian analysis of valid knowledge for the natural sciences but maintained that the human sciences, those dealing with historical and cultural phenomena, constituted an independent totality of their own, requiring their own methodology. As a non-human system, the natural world could be interpreted

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[93] "in jedem Verstehenwollen eines Andern liegt schon die Voraussetzung, daß die Differenz auflösbar ist." (178)

[94] "daß jeder von jedem ein Minimum in sich trägt" (170).

[95] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Kritik der historischen Vernunft, Gesammelte Schriften* VII, (1921; Stuttgart: B.G Teubner, 1958) 191.

and explained in subject-object terms, but cultural objects must be respected as having a "für uns" or "for us" kind of character, as existing in a distinctly human as opposed to non-human system.[96] Throughout his working life, Dilthey returned again and again to a project that would remain unfinished, and that he called his *Critique of Historical Reason* (my translation).[97] This critique was to form the theoretical foundation of his approach and was grounded upon two main presuppositions. The first is usually referred to as the "Vico-principle" because it received its classical formulation by Giambattista Vico in his *New Science* of 1725. This principle supposes that whatever the human mind has created, the human mind can understand. Anything created by the human is, in principle at least, accessible to successful interpretation since "the subject of knowledge is here at one with its object" (my translation).[98]

The second of the two presuppositions is represented by the much-quoted statement I cited above: "Understanding is a re-finding of the self in the other" ("Das Verstehen ist ein Wiederfinden des ich im Du.") This does not mean that we understand another person by discovering how they are exactly like us. The presupposition here, rather, is that there are some basic human features we all have in common and that these common features make any and all forms of human expression, again, in principle comprehensible: "For everything in which

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[96] Wilhelm Dilthey, *Fragmente zur Poetik, Gesammelte Schriften VI*, (1921; Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner, 1958) 313.

[97] *Kritik der historischen Vernunft.*

[98] "das Subjekt des Wissens ist hier eins mit seinem Gegenstand" (191).

the mind has objectified itself there is contained something held in common by the I and the Thou." (my translation)[99] Dilthey was interested in all the various forms that human social and cultural expression take, and referred to them in their totality as "objective mind" or "der objektive Geist" (155). As an instance of the objectivization of mind, however, one form of human expression is preeminent: linguistic expression. For Dilthey, it is most notably in language that "objective mind" manifests itself externally. Moreover, linguistic expressions combine the individual with the communal, they pre-suppose the involvement of other subjectivities:

> Because our mental life finds its fullest and most complete expression only through language, explication finds completion and fullness only in the interpretation of the written testimonies of human life. (my translation)[100]

Dilthey appears to be following faithfully in the footsteps of Schleiermacher when he singles out "language" ("Sprache") as the preeminent form of human expression in which the totality of cultural phenomena, or "objective mind" could be supposed to reside. Dilthey's perspective does, however, represent a radical shift of emphasis. Whereas "understanding" was for Schleiermacher a process analogous to "speaking," for Dilthey it is a process analogous to "breathing" and has its origin in the process of human living or "Leben." Acts of understanding are "lived" by us, they constitute our "lived

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[99] "alles, worin sich der Geist objektiviert hat, enthält ein dem ich und dem Du Gemeinsames in sich." (208)

[100] "Da nun das geistige Leben nur in der Sprache seinen vollständigen erschöpfenden und darum eine objektive Auffassung ermöglichenden Ausdruck findet, so vollendet sich die Auslegung in der Interpretation der in der Schrift enthaltenen Reste menschlichen Daseins." (217)

experience" or "Erlebnis." By inference to this process of living, Dilthey claimed that all "higher" ("höhere") or more complex manifestations of understanding – including those demanded by the humanities – derived from the "elementary" ("elementaren") or common acts of comprehension that enable human beings to function in the world and to interact with one another everyday (210).

This difference in the perspective of the two scholars is reflected in their methodological approaches. Schleiermacher's methodology emphasizes formal and technical strategies directed towards deciphering grammatical constructions. Lexical aids such as dictionaries, grammars and reference books comprise further tools for understanding. With respect to the author, Schleiermacher's "divinatory" practices consist of considering the biographical circumstances of the author at the time of writing, the relationship between form and content, and the disentangling of "primary and secondary thoughts" ("Haupt- and Nebengedanken" (186-192). By contrast, the primary strategies that Dilthey assigns his reader are those of "empathy, re-creating and re-living" ("hineinversetzen, nachbilden, und nacherleben" (213-214). From this perspective, the primary role of the reader is to re-experience the purposive and imaginative impulse of the author – in other words, to undergo the purely experiential act of discovering "das ich im Du" or "the self in the other".

As a result of this approach, and in ironical contradiction to his intentions, Dilthey is seen as having shifted the reception of cultural phenomena in general, and the literary work of art in particular, into the highly subjective realms of empathy and intuition. The distinction between understanding and

interpretation, objectivity and subjectivity, which had been merely ambiguous in Schleiermacher's "linguistic" hermeneutics, is all but erased in Dilthey's "intuitive" hermeneutics.[101]

In his later years, Dilthey came to appreciate the importance of avoiding psychologistic reasoning in his analyses and pursuing rigorous methodological procedure instead. Along with a number of other philosophers, Dilthey benefited from the new "phenomenological" approach to thinking introduced by Edmund Husserl. Husserl was occupied primarily by providing a secure philosophical grounding for mathematics and logic. He was aware of the critical epistemological function which notions like understanding and interpretation must fulfill in the actual work of the human scientist and humanist. His first major work, entitled *Logical Investigations,* was published in 1900-1901 and marked a new beginning for hermeneutic theory. The *Investigations* comprise much more than an exploration of logic or even the logical syntax of language. They are also concerned with the ontological conditions of meaningful discourse and the structure of those acts of consciousness which make it possible for our words "to point beyond themselves to things in the world."[102]

The significance of Husserl's approach is that it is aimed at disclosing the common ground for the possibility of meaning and understanding in both the verbal and non-verbal realms, the world of actions as well as language. Husserl

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[101] Mueller-Vollmer 27.

[102] Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations* I, trans. J.N. Findlay (New York: The Humanities Press, 1976) 3.

is concerned with the description of intentional acts, in other words, acts whose meaning presents itself only in their actual performance.[103] It is by virtue of these acts in performance that there arises a world for us together with other humans with whom we can communicate. A phenomenological study and description of these performances necessarily involve the interpretation and explication of their implicit meaning – a meaning which is also accessible to other subjects.

In the first of the *Logical Investigations* Husserl offers a probing description of meaning-constituting acts as they occur in us, and presents an outline of a theory of meaning and understanding. This theory is developed from the structures of the subjective phenomenological experience, but it is directed, at the same time, toward establishing the grounds for an intersubjective validity of meaning. Hence there is in Husserl's phenomenological procedure itself a hermeneutic quality of a paradigmatic nature. Indeed, hermeneutic philosophy following Husserl prided itself on establishing the pre-scientific, ontological basis for the human sciences, although it would not have succeeded in this without the contribution of Husserl's most famous student, Martin Heidegger.

A quarter century after Husserl published his canonical *Logical Investigations*, Martin Heidegger published his ground-breaking work entitled

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[103] Mueller-Vollmer 29.

Sein und Zeit (1927), translated as *Being and Time* (1962).[104] In Section 7 of *Being and Time* Heidegger discusses his notion of phenomenon and of phenomenology. He charges phenomenology with the job of uncovering what is not immediately apparent, "something that lies hidden" (BT59). Within the parameters of the work, this means the methodical uncovering of the concealed structures of human existence in the world. In other words, the phenomenological task set forth in *Being and Time* is fundamentally a hermeneutic one. Since my dissertation specifically concerns Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics, I shall explain here only those concepts necessary to indicate the line of development between Heidegger's predecessors Dilthey and Husserl and his successor Hans-Georg Gadamer.

Like Dilthey, Heidegger engaged in a metacritique of Kant's transcendental critiques. Unlike Dilthey, Heidegger went on to scrutinize the underlying body of assumptions which the critiques shared and which formed the foundation for the whole of the Western philosophical tradition. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger no longer grounds his concept of understanding in the autonomous, thinking subject, the foundational category from which philosophy had been operating since Descartes. Instead, he grounds his concept of understanding in the fundamental fact of our "In-der-Welt-sein," our "Being-in-the-world." According to Heidegger, there is a certain primary, existential

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[104] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962); quoted as BT.

understanding that is constitutive of our very existence in the world and which forms the basis for the concept of understanding as a methodological category.

For Heidegger, therefore, the subject and concern of hermeneutics become the disclosure of the basic existential structures of human existence. This approach takes Heidegger far beyond Dilthey and builds on Husserl. Dilthey interpreted the hermeneutic operations of humanist scholars as derivative from certain elementary acts of understanding found in everyday life. Heidegger, in contrast, views all acts of understanding, from the elementary to the most complex kind, as springing from a primordial mode of understanding that is part of our very being in the world. At this point, therefore, Heidegger has hermeneutics taking up that place in traditional philosophy which had thus far been occupied by the Kantian critiques.

As far as speech and language are concerned, Heidegger maintains a distinction between the two and claims that the structures of understanding and interpreting are intimately connected with "Sprache" and especially "Rede, language and speech. We shall see in Chapter Three that, for Heidegger, "Rede" possesses a foundational quality all its own. "Rede" is the ordering and structuring power that dwells in our understanding. Indeed, as did his hermeneutical predecessors, Heidegger argues that understanding itself is of a linguistic nature, though not as linguistics, but as language and its interpretation. Still, the so-called early Heidegger of *Being and Time* does not provide anything resembling a detailed account of the linguisticality of understanding. Having established the relationship between "understanding" and "speech," "Verstehen"

and "Rede," Heidegger proceeds to expose our tendency to resist an authentic understanding of our existence by hiding within "fallen speech" or "Gerede." Only many years later, after his so-called "ontological turn" did Heidegger return to the positive aspects of linguisticality, but then he no longer ventured to speak on this topic with the kind of rigourous attention to detail that characterizes his writing in *Being and Time.* It was up to Heidegger's student, Hans-Georg Gadamer, to develop more fully the notion of the linguisticality of understanding which Heidegger had suggested.

From among the many eminent and distinguished students of Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer is arguably the most illustrious. When Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960) translated as *Truth and Method* (1993)[105] was published, however, he set the hermeneutic enterprise on a very different course from that of his teacher. Whereas Heidegger in *Being and Time* had fashioned hermeneutics into a philosophical tool for uncovering the ontological structure of human existence, Gadamer directed his philosophical hermeneutics towards the more traditional ground of the human sciences and the issues which they faced. To appreciate his approach, and to distinguish it from Heidegger's, it may be helpful first to characterize his relationship to that tradition.

Like his hermeneutical predecessors, Gadamer ascribes primary importance to the concept of understanding. But in contrast to Schleiermacher and Dilthey, whose approaches were directed primarily at overcoming the historical distance between an author and reader, Gadamer insists on the

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[105] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum Publishing Co, 1993); quoted as TM.

historically determined nature of understanding itself. In this he is very much the student of the philosopher of *Being – and Time*! According to Gadamer, any interpretations of the past are as much a creation of the interpreter's own time and place as the object to be interpreted was of its own period in history. The interpreter, Gadamer claims, is always guided in his understanding of the past by his own particular set of "Vorurteile" or "prejudices." Moreover, "prejudices" are not something negative which should and could be overcome in the search for objective truths. On the contrary, Gadamer maintains that prejudice is a necessary condition of all understanding (TM265-300).

For Gadamer, the process of understanding involves two different aspects: the overcoming of the strangeness of the object or phenomenon to be understood, and its transformation into something familiar. This happens when the historical "horizon" of the object and that of the interpreter become united or fused. Moreover, understanding is only possible, according to Gadamer, because that which is to be understood and the person involved in the act of understanding are not two alien entities that are isolated from each other by a gulf of historical time. They are both part of an overarching historical and cultural continuum which Gadamer calls "Wirkungsgeschichte," translated as "effective history." According to Gadamer, it is this historical-cultural continuum that is the ultimate producer of the prejudices that guide our understanding and because this is so, it is these prejudices that should be made the object of hermeneutic reflection. To engage in such reflection, and to thus establish our own hermeneutic situation, is what Gadamer refers to as the development of our

"wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein," our "effective-historical consciousness." This is an explicit consciousness of the effective historical continuum of which we are a part (TM300-307). For Gadamer, therefore, the very first task of understanding is that of self-critique: working out one's own prejudices so that the subject matter to be understood can affirm its own validity in regard to them. What role does Gadamer give language in this dynamic of hermeneutical self-reflection and fusion?

To the reader of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* and many of his other studies, it is quite obvious that his concept of the linguistic nature of understanding deviates from that of his predecessors in some basic ways. For instance, Gadamer does not clearly distinguish, as did these others, between "Sprache" and "Rede," "speech" and "language." Instead, he applies the term "Sprache" to cover a variety of meanings. Yet for Gadamer as much as for his predecessors, the possibility for all understanding rests ultimately in human linguisticality. According to Gadamer, it is the particular function of language to facilitate the fusion of the horizons of the interpreter and of the historical object or event, which characterizes the act of understanding: "The linguisticality of understanding is *the concretion of historically effected consciousness*." (author's emphasis, TM389). How is language able to fulfill this hermeneutic function? "The essential relation between language and understanding is seen primarily in the fact that the essence of tradition is to exist in the medium of language..." (TM389). Understanding and interpretation for Gadamer constitute the mode of being of all our cultural traditions. These traditions are necessarily embedded in

language. It follows, therefore, that understanding and interpretation are events in an historical and cultural continuum that is basically linguistic. In other words, Gadamer conceives of language and understanding as an historical-linguistic event which fuses the interpreter with his object.

With regard to the concrete procedures able to facilitate this fusion, Gadamer depicts these in terms of a dialogue, a process of question and answer that formulates understanding as participation – participation in meaning, a tradition, and ultimately a conversation. Gadamer resists the approach of the human sciences that relies upon method and privileges propositional logic: "Language is most itself not in propositions but in dialogue."[106] This insight represents the epitomy of Gadamer's dialogic conceptualization of understanding.

More recently, the hermeneutical tradition is characterized by a tripartite division, which Roy J. Howard has described as its "three faces."[107] For such contemporary hermeneutical scholars as E.D. Hirsch, hermeneutics is primarily a theory of textual interpretation employed by the human and social sciences to guarantee the objectivity of their conclusions.[108] With his emphasis on methodological validity and rules of procedure, Hirsch's conception of hermeneutics can be seen as aligning most closely with the empirical discipline

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[106] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "*Grenzen der Sprache* (1985)," Gadamer Lesebuch (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992) 98.

[107] Roy J. Howard, *The Three Faces of Hermeneutics. An Introduction to Current Theories of Understanding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, Ltd., 1982).

[108] Howard 26-53.

of linguistics and its attention to the formal and technical aspects of language learning and use.

It is precisely this focus on objectivity through methodology which Gadamer disputes in *Truth and Method*. According to Howard, Gadamer represents a second, basic orientation within hermeneutics which rejects its application as an empirical methodology. Instead, hermeneutics is regarded as a linguistic-philosophical approach directed towards achieving an understanding between individuals regarding our shared world. Howard depicts Gadamer as employing hermeneutics to promote our understanding of cultural ways of knowing, and the production of knowledge as an exchange of worldviews.[109] As I mentioned, it is the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer especially, which have been useful for intercultural approaches to language learning.

A third orientation within hermeneutics aligns with the critical dimension of foreign language learning and is represented by Jürgen Habermas. Habermas' so-called "critical" approach to hermeneutics challenges the idealistic assumptions underlying both hermeneutics as a method of textual criticism and hermeneutics as a more fundamental, philosophical concern. Guided by the demand for unrestricted communication and self-determination, Habermas has defined hermeneutics as: "the art of understanding the meaning of linguistic communication and, in the case of disrupted communication, of making it understandable."[110]

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[109] Howard 121-134.

[110] Howard 91-103.

Before looking at some of the theoretical disputes and questions that these hermeneutical orientations have engendered, I would like first to verify the essential relations between hermeneutics and language pedagogy and identify the nature of their connection. Certainly, the variety that Howard depicts bears witness to the amorphousness of the hermeneutical tradition; nevertheless, all of these orientations identify understanding and interpretation, in their relationship to language and text, as the subject matter of hermeneutics. As we have seen, textual interpretation constitutes the foundation of hermeneutical studies and is paradigmatic for understanding within hermeneutical thought. Even the move to a more philosophical hermeneutics has not relinquished the primacy of language for human understanding. Hermeneutics is the tradition of the 'word' in understanding and as such may be considered intrinsically related to language study.

One of the most comprehensive and sustained arguments for the "essential connections" between hermeneutics and pedagogy is that of Shaun Gallagher in his work *Hermeneutics and Education.*[111] Gallagher depicts the nature of these connections as follows:

> If education involves understanding and interpretation; if formal educational practice is guided by the use of texts and commentary, reading and writing; if linguistic understanding and communication are essential to educational institutions; if educational experience is a temporal process involving fixed expressions of life and the transmission or critique of traditions; if, in effect, education is a human enterprise, then hermeneutics, which claims all of these as its subject matter, holds out

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[111] Shaun Gallagher, *Hermeneutics and Education* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

> the promise of providing a deeper understanding of the educational process.[112]

These numerous affinities serve to establish a connection between hermeneutics and pedagogy. For Gallagher, however, it is not primarily their shared affinities that will yield deeper insights, but rather the philosophical and theoretical impasses that hermeneutics and pedagogy share. These impasses, or "aporia" as Gallagher refers to them, coincide with the three faces of hermeneutics that Howard describes. They merit our attention because Gallagher depicts all three of them as deriving from disputes with Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.

As was noted previously, Gadamerian hermeneutics serve as the dominant theoretical frame of reference in the development of an intercultural hermeneutics. And indeed, these same three aporia will emerge again within the context of an intercultural hermeneutics.

Gallagher describes the first aporia as deriving from the philosophical encounter of Hans-Georg Gadamer with E.D. Hirsch. As we recall from Howard's depiction, Hirsch conceptualizes hermeneutics as a methodology by means of which the human sciences can attain objectively valid conclusions. Given the prejudicial nature of understanding as Gadamer depicts it, it may be possible to achieve a form of intersubjective agreement regarding the interpretation of some object or event, but the question remains whether that agreement makes the interpretation correct? For hermeneutical theorists such as Hirsch, *reproducing* the original meaning of an object of interpretation

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[112] Gallagher 24.

correctly, constitutes the legitimate goal of understanding. To the extent that Gadamer disregards this question of the objectivity and validity of an interpretation, he has precluded the possibility of correct understanding.

Hirsch is not alone in his position. Indeed, this debate over objectivity and methodology is considered by many to constitute the primary impasse within hermeneutics.[113] We have already seen how this impasse plays out within the context of educational theory, for Hirsch argues that education must be based on a similar reproductive activity. Later in this chapter, we shall see how the general terms of this debate are repeated within the context of an intercultural hermeneutics. For now we will continue with Gallagher's second aporia which, as in the case of the first, we have already encountered within pedagogy and which takes Gadamer's hermeneutical philosophy as its point of departure.

This second impasse derives from the dispute between Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas. According to Habermas, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics remains limited insofar as it fails to take into account extralinguistic factors that distort language and therefore distort conversation and understanding. For Habermas, a valid theoretical frame of reference must consider not only language but also such factors as economic elements of labour and class, scientific-technical progress and modes of production, and

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[113] Paul Ricouer, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 47.

social and political processes of domination.[114] Habermas proposes, therefore, that Gadamer's process of hermeneutical reflection should be supplemented with a kind of supra-hermeneutical critique of ideology able to expose the extra-linguistic, built-in distortions operative in understanding.

For his part, Gadamer objects to any conception of critical reflection that claims a privileged ideological neutrality. In response to his critics, (Habermas especially), who accuse Gadamer of failing to recognize the power of reflection, Gadamer states:

> My objection is that the critique of ideology overestimates the competence of reflection and reason. Inasmuch as it seeks to penetrate the masked interests which infect public opinion, it implies its own freedom from any ideology; and that means in turn that it enthrones its own norms and ideals as self-evident and absolute.[115]

As in the case of the first aporia, we have seen this particular impasse reflected within the educational context. It concerns the question about the capacity of reflection to reveal and counter structures of power and authority within educational processes and institutions. Within the hermeneutical context, it is a question of the extent to which various authority or power structures are necessarily reproduced within traditions of understanding, and the extent to which these traditions can be transformed through the hermeneutical experience. If Habermas is right, then the Gadamerian process of

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[114] Jürgen Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's 'Truth and Method'," *Understanding and Social Inquiry*, ed. Fred R. Dalmayr and Thomas A. McCarthy (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977) 360-361; cited in Gallagher, p. 17.

[115] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reply to my Critics," trans. George H. Leiner, cited in Gallagher p.18.

hermeneutical reflection has run into one of its limitations, a limitation that will be encountered again in the search for an intercultural hermeneutics.

Whereas Gallagher depicts the first aporia as the debate of Hirsch with Gadamer over objective reproduction, and the second aporia as the debate of Habermas with Gadamer over transformation and limitation, the third impasse or aporia involves the debate of Gadamer with the French deconstructionist philosopher Jacques Derrida. The way Derrida sees it, Gadamer's conception of hermeneutics as the search for some sense of truth, meaning or consensus based on a model of conversation or dialogue, reflects a trust in communication that is ill-founded. Indeed, Derrida starts out resembling Habermas in his claim that Gadamer is too trusting in dialogue and that distorted communication demands suspicion. But whereas Habermas still posits the possibility of exposing distortive forces, and thus of attaining to some sense of truth, Derrida insists that there is no escape from these forces, and that the whole metaphysical concept of truth requires deconstruction. Ironically enough, this latter claim derives originally from the self-same thinker who inspired Gadamer's approach: Martin Heidegger. David Couzens Hoy points out this ironic dichotomy in his article entitled "Heidegger and the hermeneutic turn":

> Two thinkers in the second half of the twentieth century whose work would not have been possible without Heidegger's account of understanding in *Being and Time* are Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida. Yet the hermeneutic theory developed by Gadamer and the deconstructive movement fathered by Derrida take the Heideggerian account in different and apparently opposed directions.[116]

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[116] David Couzens Hoy, "Heidegger and the hermeneutic turn," *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Charles Guignon, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 188.

In contrast to the Gadamerian move to recover and reconstruct meaning through consensus based on dialogue, Derridean deconstruction proceeds by questioning this faith in the unity of meaning and the primacy of conversation. In light of this debate, we face the question as to whether understanding should be reconstructive or deconstructive in intent. Gallagher poses this question in terms of Ricoeur's distinction between a "hermeneutics of trust" and a "hermeneutics of suspicion" and depicts this third aporia as that of conversation being caught between trust (Gadamer) and suspicion (Derrida).[117]

As could be expected, the hermeneutical aporia of conversation is reiterated within the context of education. If it is in the nature of education to involve more than the reproduction of knowledge; that is, if education must always involve some form of transformative activity, as Kramsch, Laurillard and the critical educational theorists would insist, must that transformation necessarily involve a suspicion of all conversation? Gallagher is especially concerned with the pedagogical implications of this aporia, because the conceptualization of education as the "conversation of mankind" serves as a widespread ideal and model for pedagogy.[118] It certainly qualifies as the prevailing concept and model within an intercultural approach to pedagogy, making the aporia of conversation a particularly relevant and compelling concern within an intercultural approach to hermeneutics. An aspect of this aporia which

[117] Gallagher 21.

[118] Gallagher 22.

language pedagogy reveals as particularly significant is the role of the word in the world.

If we characterize hermeneutics as the study of human understanding, and this understanding is seen as essentially language-based, then an accompanying claim must be that our understanding of the word constitutes our understanding of the world. And indeed nothing less than this has been claimed by Jacques Derrida in his pronouncement "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" or "There is nothing outside the text."[119] There are only texts, and one text can refer only to another text. For his part, Gadamer also claims "Sein, daß verstanden werden kann, ist Sprache" or "Being that can be understood is language" (TM474). If this hermeneutical stance does not say that "there are only texts," it does seem to imply that everything, not excluding "being" itself, is textual, that is, in language and available to be read. Insofar as the world has significance for the human being, the world is a text which calls for interpretation.

The question arises, of course, whether this model of the *word* as analogous to our understanding of the *world* is always appropriate. By basing its model of understanding upon language, hermeneutics reduces all forms of understanding to one – linguistic. From this perspective understanding, whether it is understanding a person or an event, the natural world or the cultural one, is always an exercise in language. In hermeneutics as a methodology for textual interpretation, language is properly the subject matter. Even in its manifestation as a philosophy of understanding generally, language justifiably plays a central

[119] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976) 158.

role; however, I believe it seriously diminishes the potency of the tradition if it remains the exclusive focus of philosophical hermeneutics. After all – and here we have a first indication of the nature of their reciprocal relation – have the new directions in language study not developed specifically out of the realization that linguistic proficiency is not enough to ensure understanding? That understanding the 'other' involves more than understanding his or her linguistic code? Language study has shown us that it is insufficient to turn to language to solve all hermeneutical problems, all problems of understanding. So where does that leave the relationship between hermeneutics and pedagogy and the stated purpose of my dissertation?

1.5 Understanding in Learning: From Theory to Practice

As stated at the outset, my purpose in this dissertation is to promote the role of language study within a general education for the twenty-first century. My intention is to engage philosophical hermeneutics in the service of this effort. With this relation as my point of departure, I will proceed on the basis of the two propositions that follow.

First, it will be my guiding focus in this effort to regard the learning of languages as an educational value. By this I mean that my approach to the discipline will have little in common with utilitarian approaches that confine language study to the acquisition of a skill. When language learning is considered part of a general education, there is much more to it than the mere acquisition of skills. Language learners fulfilling program requirements in an

institutional setting may rarely or even never require an additional language, either for career or travel purposes. Moreover, if their learning experience consists of nothing more than the technical formalities of a language, what will they be left with after they've forgotten how to decline an adjective or conjugate a verb? Linguistic proficiency should remain an immediate and concrete goal of language pedagogy, but it is for broader, more enduring competencies that the discipline must ultimately educate. Of course, we cannot hope for unequivocal agreement as to what these might be. The new directions in language study are consistent, however, with what I established previously as two of the fundamental values and objectives of education today: self-understanding and an explicit awareness of one's own identity as a culturally and socially-defined individual. This is the mandate for contemporary language study from which I will proceed.

Second, aligning the objectives of language learning with those of education generally means bringing these objectives to realization within an institutional context. Such a context necessarily implies theoretical and methodological considerations. Contributing to these is my designated role for hermeneutics. As we have seen, attempts to establish a theoretical base for language study have already been far-reaching, confined neither to the traditional linguistic sciences nor to the traditionally epistemological ones. As we have also seen, the new approaches in language study involve a new conceptualization of understanding, and in this regard, theoretical inquiry can rightly turn to the closely allied and well-established discipline of hermeneutics.

But what of the vexed questions and seemingly incommensurable theoretical impasses with which the tradition grapples? It is beyond the parameters of my dissertation to attempt to resolve these disputes; rather, it is my intention to pursue other possibilities and directions within the tradition that I believe remain un(der)developed. In the manner of an introduction to these possibilities, however, I will respond to the question of the appropriateness of the textual paradigm within hermeneutics. I will then transpose Gallagher's three hermeneutical aporia into the terms of an intercultural hermeneutics and conclude the chapter by identifying the other possible directions that the tradition offers.

1.6 The Aporia of an Intercultural Hermeneutics

Beginning with the hermeneutic emphasis upon language within understanding, I would argue that this emphasis is a distortion of the tradition. It obscures what has always distinguished hermeneutics from other forms of philosophy: its foundation and grounding in the actual activity of human living. For example, Schleiermacher is known for having systematized the methods of grammatical interpretation that had been the mainstay of hermeneutical practice, but his real significance resides in his having complemented this traditional grammatical exegesis with psychological interpretation, with the understanding of another human being, the writer. Schleiermacher realized that understanding a text means more than just understanding the words. His hermeneutics viewed a text as the expression of a writer's individual experience and insight. This

combination of insight and experience is the reason why a text exists in the first place and it is this which renders a text into a meaningful, comprehensible unit.

Dilthey believed that it is in language that the human spirit finds its most complete and objectively comprehensible expression, but language does not make sense, is literally meaningless, apart from the all-important factor of "Erlebnis," of actual "lived experience." Moreover, understanding was for him a process that had its origin in the daily activities of human living. By inference to this process of living, Dilthey claimed that all complex manifestations of understanding derived from the common acts of comprehension that enable human beings to function in the world and to interact with one another every day.

Heidegger referred to language as "das Haus des Seins" or "the house of Being,"[120] but if experience is not really meaningful until it has found a home in language, experience is also the reason for the existence of language. St. John proclaimed that when all things began, the word already was, but Heidegger would counter that for all things to begin, there had to be existence already. Heidegger's hermeneutics in *Being and Time* are firmly grounded in the existential world of everyday human experience. He pays careful attention to the modes in which human beings exist and the manner in which things are actually encountered in the world.

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[120] Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den Humanismus," *Wegmarken* (1947; Frankfurt/Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1967) 145.

As we have seen, Gadamer relies heavily on the work of Heidegger, or, more properly, his particular interpretation of Heidegger's work. As Gadamer sees it, it was Heidegger's radical breakthrough to reveal the connection between language and world. According to Gadamer, language is the way in which we, as humans, experience what we call reality. It is the way in which reality exists for us. But if our encounter with the reality of the world is always through language, Gadamer nevertheless insists that it is "something that the thing itself does and which thought 'suffers'. This activity of the thing itself is the real speculative movement that takes hold of the speaker" (TM474). Moreover, clarifying the relation between understanding and practice is an important task in Gadamer's hermeneutics, and his idea that application is implicit in all understanding plays a central role.

I would argue that a textual paradigm of understanding constitutes a distortion of the hermeneutical tradition. All of this notwithstanding, more attention is presently being paid to the epistemological and linguistic dimension of hermeneutics, than to the ontological and existential. I agree with Heidegger that human understanding is expressed first and foremost in average, everyday practices; in what people do, not just in what they say. Moreover, I wish to expand upon this with a specific proposition: namely, that hermeneutical practice does not follow Heidegger sufficiently in focusing upon ontology rather than epistemology; that is, in viewing understanding primarily as a mode of being rather than a mode of knowing. Therefore, a direction within hermeneutics I intend to pursue is a hermeneutics that reasserts the relevance of Heidegger

and his emphasis on the connection between self-understanding and daily human existence.

Of course, Heidegger is only one in a long line of thinkers who founded his philosophy directly on our living as we experience it; however, among those philosophers who may be designated as hermeneutical, Heidegger is different. I mentioned that historical accounts of hermeneutical philosophers and philosophy almost always begin with Friedrich Schleiermacher. He was the one to provide a systematic theory of understanding and attempted to work out a general discipline to embrace the various specialized branches of hermeneutics existing at his time. It was, therefore, both easy and legitimate for almost everyone – Heidegger is the exception – to take Schleiermacher as a bench mark of hermeneutical theory. Schleiermacher's textual hermeneutics became the measure of all hermeneutical theory and the text itself became the paradigm of hermeneutics. What Heidegger understood and others didn't is that Schleiermacher's move from specific to general theory within a textual hermeneutics is radically different from the later move to a more universal, philosophical hermeneutics where not all understanding is reduced to textual understanding.

Of course, insofar as the process of learning is concerned, we cannot fail to acknowledge that textual interpretation does take place in learning. Still, it is equally obvious that this is not how all learning takes place. Indeed, since one must learn how to read and understand written texts, a certain priority must be given to a kind of learning other than learning by textual understanding. To my

mind, both the learning process generally, and the learning of another language specifically, can benefit by retrieving the existential dimension of understanding which Heidegger put forth and which has been obscured by textualism.

As we have seen, however, it is not the hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger but those of this student Hans-Georg Gadamer that have served as the primary point of departure in the search for an intercultural hermeneutics. As we have also seen, his has not always been deemed the most fruitful or productive approach. The claim by the American Germanist H.-J. Schulz that Gadamer's hermeneutics may not be the most appropriate, was prefigured by the German Germanist Alois Wierlacher in an article entitled "With Foreign Eyes or: Foreignness as Fermentation. Thoughts on the Foundation of an Intercultural Hermeneutics of German Literature" (my translation).[121] Published in 1990, this work has since assumed almost canonical status within the field.

Within the frame of reference of an intercultural hermeneutics, it is primarily Gadamer's concept of a "fusion" which is troubling to Wierlacher. Wierlacher claims that in Gadamer's description of the unity of the one and the other which comes about in the hermeneutic "fusion of horizons," the dissolution of the one in the other is suggested:

> But the success of historical understanding resides in the unity of the one and the other produced through a fusion of horizons that comes dubiously close to the dissolution of the one in the other. (my translation)[122]

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[121] Alois Wierlacher, "Mit fremden Augen oder: Fremdheit als Ferment. Überlegungen zur Begründung einer interkulturellen Hermeneutik deutscher Literatur." *Hermeneutik der Fremde*, Dietrich Krusche & Alois Wierlacher, eds. (München: Iudicium 1990).

[122] "Aber das Gelingen geschichtlichen Verstehens besteht letztlich in der Herstellung einer horizontverschmelzenden "Einheit" des Einen und Anderen, die der Auflösung des Anderen im Einen bedenklich nahe kommt." (58)

According to Wierlacher, this hermeneutic merging of subject and object is a form of appropriation, one of the other, and therefore should not be the model for intercultural teaching or the description of intercultural reception. Instead, it resembles the despotic attitude of the nineteenth century "that imperially liquidates cultural foreignness" (my translation).[123] It is Wierlacher's contention, in any case, that the possibility of successfully attaining such a fusion has been overestimated and he cites such respected German thinkers as Goethe and Lessing to support his argument.

An abiding theme for Wierlacher in this article is the relationship between an understanding of "the foreign" and self-understanding. He speaks of the "interdependent development of self and other"[124] and regards "understanding "the foreign" as a mode of understanding the self (my translations)."[125] In terms we have already encountered during our look at language study, he speaks of the power of "the foreign" to help us see our native culture differently, to get "a new view of what is one's own (my translation)."[126] He even supplies us with something of a model for how this might happen, when he claims that in the encounter with the foreign "the willing reader comes up against their own

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[123] "die kulturell Fremdes imperialistisch liquidiert" (58).

[124] "Interdependenz von Selbst- und Fremdentfaltung" (65).

[125] "Fremdverstehen als Modus des Selbstverstehen" (66).

[126] "eine neue Sicht auf das Eigene" (66).

concepts, habits, and behaviour patterns" (my translation).[127] In this, however, he appears to be reverting to a Gadamerian dynamic since these "concepts, habits and behaviour patterns" may be understood as the implicit pre-judgments that shape understanding and which, according to Gadamer, it is the function of hermeneutic reflection to make explicit. Moreover, Wierlacher recommends the notion of "Spiel" or "play" as it is developed by Gadamer in *Truth and Method* (TM101-110) as an appropriate means of facilitating this sight "with foreign eyes" or "mit fremden Augen" (68). Finally, although Wierlacher singles out the approach of Helmuth Plessner and his notion of "becoming close from a distance"[128] as appropriate for intercultural understanding, Wierlacher's depiction of such understanding is again characteristically Gadamerian: "Where this way of seeing can penetrate through to its own historical conditions, and can work out an appropriate methodology, a community of shared understanding will be possible..." (my translations).[129]

Whether or not Wierlacher's references to a "Sehweise" or "way of seeing" and to "geschichtlichen Bedingungen" or "historical conditions" could be considered characteristically Gadamerian is debatable; however, his image of understanding as a "Verständigungsgemeinschaft" or a "community of shared understanding" places understanding under the obligation of consensus and that

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[127] "stößt der sich einlassende Leser auf seine eigenen Konzepte, Gewohnheiten und Verhaltensmodelle" (67).

[128] "Vertrautwerden in der Distanz" (68).

[129] "Falls diese Sehweise zu den geschichtlichen Bedingungen ihrer selbst durchdringt und eine entsprechende Methodologie erarbeitet werden kann, wird eine Verständigungsgemeinschaft möglich..." (68).

makes his image distinctly Gadamerian. Despite Wierlacher's explicit rejection of Gadamerian hermeneutics, they provide the implicit frame of reference for his account. And yet, if the above quotation verifies the connections between the two thinkers, it also attests to what divides them and, indeed, to what aligns Wierlacher with Hirsch and the question of objectivity in hermeneutics.

In the above quote, and throughout the article, Wierlacher is concerned to find a methodology able to give expression to the "way of seeing" that he considers appropriate for intercultural understanding. Wierlacher's search for a methodology is consistent with his rejection of Gadamer's concept of understanding as a process of fusion. I see this as consistent because it is a characteristic feature of methods to strive to preserve the autonomy of the entities they have isolated, and Wierlacher is very concerned to have the autonomy of the foreign subject matter preserved. It is, of course, an open question as to whether such an isolated and atomic condition can be achieved; nevertheless, Wierlacher's formulation of the intercultural exchange in terms of a subject-object encounter, and his turn to method to bridge the gap that inheres in such a formulation, aligns Wierlacher with Howard's methodological "face" of hermeneutics and Gallagher's impasse involving the legitimacy of an interpretation in terms of correct reproduction.

An aspect of Wierlacher's formulation that remains operative within the field is his claim that the encounter with "the foreign" facilitates a greater understanding of self. I agree with Wierlacher; indeed, I am proceeding from the proposition that self-understanding is a value and goal of education and that the

study of another language has a unique capacity to enhance self-understanding because of the experiential role of what is "foreign" or unfamiliar to the learner.

H.-J. Schulz cites Wierlacher's article and acknowledges Wierlacher's critique of Gadamerian hermeneutics in his own critique of Gadamer. With regard to that critique, Schulz seems to show a greater awareness of the implicit presence of Gadamer's model of hermeneutics in the development of an intercultural model of reception and a greater appreciation of its positive implications. Schulz recognizes, for instance, that regardless of its historical context, Gadamer's emphasis on "application" within understanding foregrounds current concerns with respect to a particular subject matter, makes that subject matter relevant, and works against the establishment of a fixed or closed interpretation. Still, Schulz recognizes the negative implications as well.

According to Schulz, one shortcoming of Gadamerian hermeneutics for the development of a theory of intercultural hermeneutics, is that Gadamer's analysis of the hermeneutic process unfolds within one living tradition, rather than between traditions: "Gadamer's system of hermeneutics is 'mono-lingual' in nature and therefore understanding is fundamentally not at risk" (10). Although showing obvious disregard of Schleiermacher's warning about the ubiquity of misunderstanding, Schulz nevertheless has a valid point. He goes on to make the claim that this constitutes a limitation of Gadamer's hermeneutic model. To support his argument, Schulz turns to a figure we have already encountered in regard to the limitations of Gadamerian hermeneutics, Jürgen Habermas.

In our previous encounter with Habermas, he was depicted as representing the social-critical "face" of hermeneutics. In other words, it is not so much understanding as the impairment of understanding which is crucial for Habermas. Schulz affirms this representation when he depicts Habermas as focusing primarily on those instances where understanding is "blocked" (10). As support, Schulz cites Habermas' response to Gadamer's claim of the universality of hermeneutical consciousness: "The hermeneutic consciousness is incomplete as long as it has not incorporated the limits of hermeneutic understanding" (10). For Habermas, the issue of limits revolves around a problem we have already encountered in its pedagogical guise: the capacity of hermeneutical reflection to free individuals from the consensualizing pressures of a tradition and enable them to change that tradition. Habermas criticizes Gadamer's privileging of an authoritative historical consensus as a given consensus and insists that it takes the experience of the limits of hermeneutical understanding to confront tradition critically. For Schulz the limits of hermeneutical reflection are crucial for an intercultural hermeneutics because it is precisely those limits which constitute the point of departure for "recipients" of an unfamiliar culture:

> Here... the recipient does not achieve the limits of hermeneutic understanding as the result of extensive reflection but *begins* [author's emphasis] with an experience of these limits and works "backwards" from it. She stands outside the tradition whose concretization the text is, she stands within her own hermeneutic universe, one alien to the text. (11)

By way of an elaboration Schulz describes how "on the one hand" the intercultural recipient stands over against the object of understanding as one

with neither history nor authority, since the recipient does not share in the "effective-historical consciousness" that authorizes the text. In this case, the object simply disappears into "non-negotiable cultural difference" (11). "On the other hand," Schulz continues his depiction, the recipient does have access to pre-structures of understanding to appropriate the text, it is just that these are the pre-structures of another cultural tradition. In this instance, the object is "authorized" in a manner that deprives it of its otherness. Schulz concludes that for an intercultural hermeneutics to take place under the authority of any notion of consensus would reduce otherness to the status of a "removable impediment" (12). But what then, he asks, "is the nature of authority in the limit-experience with which an intercultural hermeneutics may begin?" (12).

According to Schulz, the process of understanding within the context of an intercultural hermeneutics may well be described in what he refers to as "Gadamer's Heideggerian terminology"; specifically: "the unresolved simultaneity of epistemological and ontological hermeneutics" (11). Unfortunately he does not expand on this conclusion and indeed admits: "I know of no comprehensive and theoretically well-founded mode of explaining and describing such processes..." (12). In other words, Schulz is not very optimistic that this process can be expressed methodologically. What he does give us is the formulation of the process in terms of a dialogue: "Obviously, the intercultural hermeneutic process, if it is a sustained one, is a complex dialog between ontological and epistemological responses" (12).

We have, of course, encountered such a formulation before. It coincides with Gallagher's third aporia of "conversation" and the question of whether we should pursue a "hermeneutics of trust" or a "hermeneutics of suspicion" where dialogue is concerned. This is not a question that Schulz explores. When he refers, however, to Gadamer's terminology of ontological and epistemological hermeneutics as being "Heideggerian," we end up with one and the same figure at the nexus of the impasse, Martin Heidegger. It is time to take a closer look at this figure whose thinking has so diversely inspired hermeneutical thought and with whom, I believe, the contribution of the hermeneutical tradition for language learning resides.

Chapter II Heidegger, Hermeneutics, Education

This dissertation brings together two intellectual disciplines whose relation was once thought obvious by the ancients, but whose connection is more tenuous today: pedagogy and hermeneutics. It is my thesis that language study, aligned with philosophical hermeneutics, has a constructive role to play in educating for critical self-understanding in the twenty-first century. This dissertation will examine and develop one form this alignment might take and the implications for language study within post-secondary education.

We saw in Chapter One that the project of combining language pedagogy and philosophical hermeneutics is but one example of many efforts to relate language study to other fields of inquiry in the academic curriculum. Moreover, it is clear from the overview of these two disciplines that mine is only one of many attempts to connect hermeneutics and language pedagogy. What makes my effort distinctive is my specific attention to the philosophical hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger. That such an alignment should be distinctive calls for some explanation on my part. Why has Martin Heidegger not figured in such a discussion before? Indeed, why has the reception of his work only recently included education? From among the greatest thinkers within the hermeneutic tradition, Martin Heidegger is arguably the most prominent. References to his work are regularly prefaced with accolades. Yet Heidegger receives no more than passing mention in the scholarly research on hermeneutics and pedagogy. Why is the work of as great a thinker as Heidegger only beginning to attract

attention within education? My intention in this chapter is to account for the selection of Martin Heidegger as an appropriate thinker for this undertaking.

2.1 Heidegger as Philosopher and Teacher

The work of Martin Heidegger has been attributed by David Couzens Hoy with creating "a revolution in the history of thought."[1] In his early writings and in his major work *Being and Time*, Heidegger developed a unique and conceptually rich approach to understanding that intersected all areas of philosophy and had an enormous influence on contemporary thought. Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Emmanuel Levinas were among many French thinkers who derived concepts and arguments from Heidegger. Sartre is the most well-known of this group and is usually attributed with developing Heidegger's ideas into the body of thought known as Existentialism. Sartre and existentialist thinking dominated French intellectual life. As he grew older, Sartre grew more politically active, whereas Heidegger emphasized the primacy of language.

From early in his career, Jacques Derrida doubted that he could write anything that had not already been thought by Heidegger.[2] From the 1960's until his death in 2004, Derrida consistently worked closely with concepts from Heidegger. It might even be fruitful to consider Derrida's *Monolingualism, or the*

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[1] David Couzens Hoy, "Heidegger and the hermeneutic turn," *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Charles Guignon, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 170.

[2] Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World. A Commentary on Heidegger's 'Being and Time', Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) 9.

Prosthesis of the Origin, for its use of arguments from Heidegger to material useful for language pedagogy.[3] Pierre Bourdieu wrote that in philosophy Heidegger was his "first love" and he acknowledged a debt to Heidegger for his own important concept of the social field.[4] Jürgen Habermas also began his work under Heidegger's influence and although he later distanced himself, Habermas judged *Being and Time* to be "probably the most profound turning point in German philosophy since Hegel."[5]

Many commentators credit Heidegger with influencing numerous disciplines in addition to philosophy. Hubert L. Dreyfus, Professor of Philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of a definitive commentary on Division I of *Being and Time*, emphasizes the everyday, practical implications of Heidegger's work: "Wherever people understand themselves and their work in an atomistic, formal, subjective, or objective way, Heidegger's thought has enabled them to recognize appropriate alternative practices and ways of understanding...."[6] In his account of the attendance at an international conference held at Berkeley in honour of Heidegger, Dreyfus observed that not only philosophers but also "doctors, nurses, psychotherapists, theologians, management consultants, lawyers, and computer scientists took part in a

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[3] Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism, or the Prosthesis of the Origin*, trans. Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
[4] Dreyfus 9.

[5] Jürgen Habermas, "Work and Weltanschauung: The Heidegger Controversy from a German Perspective," in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians Debate* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990); cited in Dreyfus, 9.

[6] Dreyfus 8.

discussion of the way Heidegger's thought had affected their work."[7] In addition to the broad application of his work generally, Heidegger's philosophy has become increasingly recognized and applied within education specifically. For instance, he was included in the 2001 edition of *Fifty Modern Thinkers of Education*. Michael Bonnett, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy of Education at Homerton College, Cambridge, contributed the chapter on Heidegger and wrote: "...because of the profundity of his insights into the human condition and into the nature of learning, thinking and understanding, the field of education is one in which his ideas have the potential to make a huge impact..."[8] Yet this impact is really just beginning to be felt.

Just one example of this impact is an anthology on Heidegger and education published in 2001 and entitled *Heidegger, Education and Modernity*.[9] In this anthology edited by Michael Peters, twelve international scholars explain the significance of Heidegger's work for educational thought. It is still one of only a very few works in education devoted to Heidegger.

In addition to the broad application of his work generally, and his relevance for education specifically, there is one more reason why Heidegger belongs in a consideration of hermeneutics and pedagogy: he was by all accounts an outstanding teacher. In his book entitled *The Young Heidegger*.

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[7] Dreyfus 9.

[8] Joy A. Palmer, ed. *Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education. From Piaget to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2001) 24.

[9] Michael Peters, ed., *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002) 4.

Rumor of the Hidden King, John van Buren describes Heidegger as nothing less than a teaching phenomenon:

> Through his teaching, the commerce in transcripts of his courses, and the indirect dissemination of his ideas, Heidegger helped to shape a whole generation of scholars who went on to dominate the German intellectual scene for decades... Gadamer's hermeneutics, Arendt's practical philosophy, Becker's mathematical theory, Rudolf Bultmann's existential theology, Habermas' critical theory, and more recently John Caputo's "radical hermeneutics."[10]

Van Buren's depiction of Heidegger is supported by Hannah Arendt who wrote that Martin Heidegger's reputation as a teacher during the early 1920's traveled throughout Germany "like the rumor of the hidden king."[11] The hermeneutical philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, perhaps Heidegger's most well-known student in academic philosophy, had the following to say about his famous teacher:

> It was remarkable: the personal attention to and awareness of the student which we saw particularly in Heidegger... Heidegger, during his early years prior to *Being and Time*, the years of the growth of his thought, was truly amazing, even fantastic, in his interaction with students.[12]

Heidegger was not only famous as an outstanding teacher. Many commentators on his work claim that his teaching was absolutely central to his thinking in general. In his introduction to *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings* the editor, David Farrell Krell, claimed that Heidegger's teaching was "at the very

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[10] John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger. Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994) 4.

[11] Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," in *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy*, Michael Murray, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978) 293.

[12] Dieter Misgeld and Graeme Nicholson, eds., *Hans-Georg Gadamer on Education, Poetry, and History. Applied Hermeneutics*, trans. by Lawrence Schmidt and Monica Reuss (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992) 5-6.

center of his intellectual life."[13] J. Glen Gray, the translator of Heidegger's *What is Called Thinking?* observed that: "Heidegger is above all else a teacher. It is no accident that nearly all his publications since *Being and Time* (1927) were first lectures or seminar discussions. For him the spoken word is greatly superior to the written, as it was for Plato. In this book he names Socrates, a teacher not an author, 'the purest thinker of the West'."[14] Though Heidegger does not often devote entire texts to the discussion of teaching, it is clear that lecturing and teaching, the exchange of ideas with others, were crucial for Heidegger's thinking.

These commentators are supported by the personal experience of Hans-Georg Gadamer:

> Actually, the character of academic teaching was changed fundamentally by Husserl and Heidegger... I saw the very evident contrast by comparing a figure like Nicolai Hartmann who, after all, had also taught in Marburg, with the teaching style of Heidegger. Hartmann was a person who devoted the full force of his interest to his publications and saw teaching as a secondary form of activity. Now with Heidegger, it was the exact opposite. In fact, we can see today that after *Being and Time* he didn't even write any more books actually. Those were all more or less university lectures or seminars – the Nietzsche lectures and so on.[15]

It is a matter of historical record that Heidegger was intensely involved in teaching for much of his life. Most of his published work was first delivered in lectures. Indeed, given Heidegger's preference for the lecture and seminar it could be argued that his thought has an essentially pedagogical form. Over

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[13] David Farrell Krell, *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992) 5.

[14] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glen Gray (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 5.

[15] Gadamer, *Applied Hermeneutics*, 5.

many years, Heidegger's thought consistently takes place in settings and is delivered in forms that encourage discussion, exchange, debate.

We have these three reasons to apply the work of Martin Heidegger to language pedagogy: his stature within philosophy and philosophical hermeneutics specifically; the relevance of his themes for educational work generally; and Heidegger's practical relevance in providing a model of an outstanding teacher. Still, Heidegger's work has been neglected within education. Why?

2.2 Heidegger: The Controversy

I might turn to any number of commentators for a response to this question, but Michael Bonnett expressed it as well as anyone. In his contribution on Heidegger to the *Fifty Thinkers* edition, Michael Bonnett began his contribution as follows: "It would be difficult to overstate the significance of Martin Heidegger for the thinking of the twentieth century. He was without doubt one of the most influential – and *controversial* – philosophers of his time... [16] The editorial commentary for the Michael Peters anthology begins with the line: "Martin Heidegger is, perhaps, the most *controversial* philosopher of the twentieth century."[17] The italicization of the term "controversial" is in both instances mine.

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[16] Palmer, *Fifty Modern Thinkers,* 23.

[17] Peters, *Heidegger, Education and Modernity*, 2002.

What makes Heidegger such a controversial figure? Michael Peters offers three reasons in his introduction to *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*:

> ...first, his work is deemed to be too complex, and English-speaking philosophers of education, accordingly, have been discouraged from reading his notoriously neologized texts; second, ever since Carnap's attack upon Heidegger's metaphysics, analytic philosophers have been "taught" or conditioned to despise him for his "opacity" and "nonsense," ... and third, Heidegger's association with and support for the Nazis' cause during the year of his rectorship at Freiburg, and after, have rightly offended many scholars and had the consequence of making Heidegger both a risky and unappealing figure in which to intellectually invest, until very recently.[18]

Regarding Peters' first point, proponents and critics alike would agree that Heidegger's style of language is highly individualistic, extremely complex, and more than occasionally obscure. Nouns become verbs, and verbs become nouns; new words are coined and old ones are used in unfamiliar senses. Perhaps most vexing of all is the frequency of such hyphenated assemblages as "ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within-the-world)" (BT237) and such tautological expressions as "the worldhood of the world" (BT92). In Heidegger's earlier writings, readers must endure the frequently ponderous vocabulary of phenomenology, while some of his later work will seem more akin to the incantations of a mystic poet. It might seem, then, that aligning Heidegger and language pedagogy is incongruous at best and absurd at worst.

It is my opinion that within the English language, it is in part the poor quality of the translations that make Heidegger's thinking such a challenge to understand. In this I am supported by Miles Groth, author of *Translating*

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[18] Peters 3.

Heidegger. Groth claims that Heidegger has not been fully appreciated by mainstream academia due to "the near inaccessibility of his thought in even the best of the available English translations of his works."[19] In any case, I believe that the penetrating insight of Heidegger's early thinking on our everyday life and the esoteric beauty of his mature thought are well worth the investment of effort to read him. Moreover, he compels us to think about language and to take it seriously as an issue in our lives.

Regarding Peters' second point, there is no doubt that during the 1930's and '40s, Heidegger was a favourite target of the Logical Positivists, with the most damaging attack coming from Rudolf Carnap. The influence of Carnap's critique on the philosophical community is in evidence to this very day in academic departments oriented towards analytic philosophy. In an effort to "protect" their students from Heidegger's thinking, he is either missing entirely from their curriculum, or appears only in passing in a course on existentialism that suffices for obligatory coverage of continental philosophy. Because of the significant influence of Carnap's critique, it figures prominently in the reception of Heidegger's work that comprises the following section of this chapter.

But it is probably Peters' third point that is of the most widespread special interest, the matter of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism during the nineteen thirties. As has been noted, Heidegger wrote on a large and very diverse range of topics, many with a direct bearing on educational issues. One example of such writing constitutes a particularly regrettable instance. Upon his

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[19] Miles Groth, *Translating Heidegger* (New York: Humanity, 2004) 17.

appointment in 1933 as the Rector of the University of Freiburg, Heidegger wrote the now infamous inaugural speech entitled "The Self-Affirmation of the German University" ("*Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*").[20] By the time of this speech, Heidegger had become a member of the Nazi party and the speech is interpreted as reflecting Nazi attitudes and sentiments. Worse yet, the speech develops a disturbing picture of the potential role for university education within the Nazi framework.

Needless to say, Heidegger's involvement in National Socialism has troubled scholars of his work from the outset. Discussion began shortly after the war with defenders and detractors debating the degree to which Heidegger had been involved with Nazism. The parameters of the debate assumed new intensity in 1987 with the publication of a work by Victor Farias entitled *Heidegger et le nazisme (Heidegger and Nazism)*.[21] This was followed by numerous other publications documenting not only the considerable extent of Heidegger's involvement with the movement, but also his reluctance to speak of his support for the Nazi cause, his attempt to minimize his involvement with Nazi ideology, and his silence on the Holocaust.

It is beyond the scope of my account to engage in a prolonged examination of this controversial issue. Many excellent works on the subject are

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[20] Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1933).

[21] Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, trans. Paul Burrell and Gabriel Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple University Press,1989).

widely available for that purpose.[22] At the same time, Heidegger's politics are the point at which his philosophy most directly intersects with his views on education. Iain Thomson has written widely on Heidegger and especially on the topic of Heidegger and education. In *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, Thomson offers a sustained treatment of the controversy from the explicit perspective of its relation to education. Moreover, Thomson is one of the very few writers, including Otto Pöggeler and Jacques Derrida, who ask a critical pedagogical question: Did Heidegger learn anything philosophically from (what he called) his terrible "political mistake"?[23] It is due to this explicit connection that I will briefly summarize Thomson's argument here.

Thomson succinctly expresses the dilemma experienced by scholars in his question: "How do we come to terms with the fact that the man who was probably the greatest philosopher of the twentieth century threw the considerable weight of his thought behind what was certainly its most execrable political movement?"[24] It is a complex question and Thomson is not alone among commentators in his criticism of the factionalism that characterizes the discussion. By confining the parameters of the debate within a simplistic "accuse or excuse" dichotomy, scholars feel compelled to take sides. And it is useful to remember some of the many other great artists or thinkers who lived immoral or unseemly lives, from Plato to Ezra Pound. In order to deflect

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[22] Victor Farias, *Heidegger and Nazism*, trans. Paul Burrell and Gabriel Ricci (Philadelphia: Temple University Press,1989).

[23] Iain D. Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology. Technology and the Politics of Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 80.

[24] Thomson 78.

attempts to use Heidegger's politics to dismiss his thought outright, his defenders have taken the position of strictly separating Heidegger's philosophy from his politics. His detractors meanwhile argue that Heidegger's philosophy is inherently political and that his politics emerge organically from his philosophy.

For his part, Thomson claims that there *is* a direct relationship between Heidegger's philosophy and his politics, and it turns on his long-developed philosophical vision for a radical reformation of the university:

> ...when one cuts through the haze of hermeneutical distortions surrounding the "Heidegger controversy" and critically examines Heidegger's concrete political interventions circa 1933, it becomes clear that these consist almost entirely in attempts to transform the German university and, through it, Germany itself.[25]

Thomson depicts a line of development in Heidegger's critique of higher education that begins in 1911 when Heidegger was still a student at Freiburg University and ends with his assuming the Rectorship of that University in 1933. Heidegger's disillusionment as a student with a discipline content to do no more than solve logical puzzles instead of seeking "fulfilled, fulfilling answers to the ultimate questions of being..."[26] intersected in 1919 with the disillusionment of the nation following their defeat in World War I. Already in the grip of an intense political and historical crisis, the loss of the war was regarded by many intellectuals as a profound spiritual crisis that demanded their response. Inspired by the thought of Oswald Spengler, who was himself greatly influenced by Nietzsche, Max Weber, Ernst Jünger and above all his teacher, Edmund

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[25] Thomson 87.

[26] Thomson 88.

Husserl, Heidegger began to see himself as the leader who could bring about a spiritual and cultural renewal of the nation through the revitalization of the German university. His attitude at that time might be compared with that of Plato in the *Republic*, for there, as in the Germany that Heidegger anticipated, it is not only that the greatest servants of the State are philosophers, but the State owes much of its glory to being a fit place for philosophy to flourish within.

In Thomson's opinion, Heidegger's project failed so abysmally because he attempted to put it into action before he had sufficiently developed and clarified the philosophical position upon which his plans were founded. Heidegger's position involves his conception of science, the historical development of the university as an institution, and the contemporary relation of this institution to the nation as a whole. I will articulate Heidegger's approach to these issues more fully in the course of this chapter. In any case, the optimism of the Rectoral Address, in which Heidegger hoped for a renewal of the nation through a new movement, National Socialism, under the guidance of universities that had rediscovered their philosophical roots, faded quickly. Heidegger resigned the Rectorship ten months later, possibly having learned from his mistake. Thomson insists that Heidegger did learn from his mistake, and in this he has the support of both Pöggeler and Derrida.

Fairly or not, judgment of Heidegger the thinker has come to be dictated by judgment of Heidegger the man, and even people who are not familiar with his thought feel entitled to weigh in with their opinion. Pádraig Hogan is fully conversant with Heidegger's writing and thinking and addressed the question of

Heidegger's connection with Nazism in his consideration of Heidegger's relevance for education. Hogan has the following response:

> If Heidegger's prose were unparalleled in its difficulty, or if he ranked among the most notorious of political reactionaries, neither of these points would change the fact that his work, like that of Hume or Kant, confronts philosophy with arguments of exceptional incisiveness and insights of remarkable originality.[27]

I agree with Hogan's position and will develop its implications. Martin Heidegger is a philosopher of singular originality and discerning insight. His thought challenges ways of thinking and acting that have become entrenched within the thought of Western civilization. In my opinion, we should not turn our backs on the potentially constructive contributions that his thought offers. Certainly, a thinker of his stature deserves the hermeneutic humility of trying first to understand his position before judging it. And this returns us to a primary theme in my argument: understanding.

As was previously noted, much of Heidegger's writing deals with topics of direct educational significance, such as the nature of thinking and understanding, and thus by implication, learning. He also presents views on language that have considerable implications for education generally, and, in my opinion, for language study in particular. Much of this writing derives from lectures during the decade or so after *Being and Time* (1927), although Heidegger continues to address the subject in the relatively late series of lectures entitled *What Is Called Thinking?* (1954). In my examination of Heidegger's implications for language pedagogy, I will limit my analysis to those

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[27] Pádraig Hogan, "Learning as Leavetaking and Homecoming," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael Peters (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002) 212.

texts that constitute Heidegger's most specific educational writing and are the most directly relevant for my purposes. However, the full force and depth of Heidegger's significance for language study can only emerge when the texts relevant for my analysis are set within the context of his wider philosophy and its reception. The following account gathers the relevant critical response to Heidegger's work through which we can gain an understanding of his thinking generally. The survey will focus on language as a specific topic within the context of that research. An account of Heidegger's reception within education specifically will follow.

2.3 Heidegger: The Critical Reception

My overview of Heidegger's philosophical approach can give little indication of the breadth and intensity of his philosophical work, nor of its impact on the intellectual scene within Europe. The publication of *Being and Time* in 1927 transformed Heidegger from a well-known charismatic lecturer within German academic life into a figure of international significance. I am not emphasizing this to glorify Heidegger, but to point out the scope of his reputation and the range of his potential contributions. A steady stream of lectures, seminars and publications during the decades that followed, broadened and intensified his influence. As has been mentioned, the philosophical hermeneutics and practice of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and the deconstructive movement of Jacques Derrida both grew from the matrix of Heidegger's thought. His thought also inspired the comprehensive responses of Logical Positivism,

Sartrean Existentialism, and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. For some, Heidegger's philosophical preoccupations, and more importantly, the manner in which he thought and wrote about them, signified only pretension, mystification and charlatanry. For many others, however, the tortured intensity of his prose, its breadth of reference within philosophy, and the exciting implication that nothing less than authentic human life was at stake in his thought, signified that philosophy had finally returned to its true concerns in a manner that justified its traditional claim to be the queen of the human sciences. My point here is of special significance for educational theorists: there is a great deal in Heidegger's thought that can be helpful for education.

In addition to the seminal quality of Heidegger's writing, there is its sheer volume. The most comprehensive bibliography of the early period of research on Heidegger, which deals with those works written before his death in 1976, was compiled by Hans-Martin Sass and contains more than 3,700 entries.[28] For an overview of the main lines of early research into Heidegger's work, there is the groundbreaking work by Otto Pöggeler, which was completed in 1969.[29] What does not yet exist is a clear, comprehensive and informed survey of the main lines of Heidegger research to the present day. This could certainly be a project that would follow from my current one.

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[28] Hans-Martin Sass, *Martin Heidegger: Bibliography and Glossary* (Bowling Green,Ohio: Bowling Green State University, Philosophy Documentation Center, 1982).

[29] Otto Pöggeler, ed., *Heidegger. Perspektiven zur Deutung seines Werkes* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1969).

It goes without saying that the intensity of response to Heidegger's writing and thought is a complicating factor. Quite aside from the factionalism that characterizes the political controversy, commentators generally tend to be either vehemently opposed to or vehemently in favour of Heidegger and his thinking; moderate positions are not so common. Fortunately, the conflicted nature of the response has been for the most part productive, leading to new insights into Heidegger's philosophical thought in particular, as well as philosophical thinking in general.

There is, I believe, a general consensus that the commentary on Heidegger can be divided into two phases. The first phase begins from the publication of Heidegger's opus magnum *Being and Time* in 1927 and lasts until his death in 1976. The second phase follows upon his death and extends to the present day. The first phase is characterized by a general scarcity of definitive textual editions and the second by a remarkable proliferation of new and more definitive publications.

Despite the relative scarcity of texts from the first or early phase of Heidegger reception, four more or less distinctive perspectives arose that can be distinguished in relation to Heidegger's work and to each other. The first is the approach of Logical Positivism. This includes the "Vienna Circle" around Moritz Schlick in the 1920's and is most notably represented by Rudolf Carnap's essay of 1932, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of

Language."[30] A second critical approach to Heidegger's thought comes from the philosophical movement known as Existentialism and includes such thinkers as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus and Hannah Arendt. Following close upon Existentialism is the response of the so-called "Frankfurt School of Critical Theory" that developed around Max Horkheimer in the 1920's in Frankfurt and is most often represented by T.W. Adorno's 1964 book *The Jargon of Authenticity.*[31] Finally, there is the approach of contemporary philosophical hermeneutics represented primarily by Hans-Georg Gadamer and his *Truth and Method* from 1960.[32]

In the past few decades a number of events have brought about a wider reception in North America. The writings of such influential figures as Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991), Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (1991), and H. L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (1991) have helped us to see Heidegger as the seminal figure in what David Hoy calls a "hermeneutic turn," a new orientation with profound repercussions for such issues as the nature of the human sciences, the possibility of artificial intelligence, and the prospects for a post-foundationalist culture.[33]

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[30] Rudolf Carnap, "Die Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache," ("The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language") first published in Erkenntnis, II, 1932.

[31] Theodor W. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Kurt Tarnowski and Frederic Will (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

[32] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum Publishing Co, 1993); *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960).

[33] Hoy, "Heidegger and the hermeneutic turn," 170-194.

Because of the significance of Carnap's response to Heidegger, and its more direct relevance, I will present Carnap's argument in detail here.

2.3.1 Logical Positivism: Heidegger and Rudolf Carnap

The term "logical positivism" arose in the late 1920's to describe the perspective of a group of philosophers, scientists and mathematicians who referred to themselves as the "Vienna Circle." The "Vienna Circle" came to life in the early 1920's when Moritz Schlick left Kiel to become professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna.[34] In addition to Schlick, a number of leading philosophers, scientists, and mathematicians gathered in Vienna for regular meetings. These included the philosophers Rudolf Carnap and Otto Neurath, and the mathematicians Kurt Gödel and Hans Hahn. Among its contemporaries the group itself drew on or highlighted Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein for their fundamental contributions. The group's approach was characterized by a commitment to logical procedure, empirical evidence, and rational analysis as the means to valid knowledge; metaphysics and mysticism were rejected outright. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* was claimed as a central text for the arguments of the Circle.

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[34] A.J. Ayer, ed. *Logical Positivism*, Editor's Introduction (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1959) 3.

The central text for looking at logical positivism in relation to Heidegger and language pedagogy, however, is the essay of 1932 by Rudolf Carnap.[35] Carnap's essay is the clearest and perhaps most influential attack on metaphysics to have arisen from the group. Certainly, it is the most direct attack on Heidegger from the Vienna Circle. In it Carnap valiantly defends the virtues of logical analysis. A brief discussion of the essay will reveal its proximity to the topic of language and Heidegger's thought.

Carnap begins with the central thesis of his argument:

> In the domain of *metaphysics*, including all philosophy of value and normative theory, logical analysis yields the negative result *that the alleged statements in this domain are entirely meaningless*. Therewith a radical elimination of metaphysics is attained. (60-61; his emphasis)

From Carnap's perspective, assertions are meaningless if they do "not, within a specified language, constitute a statement" (61). Carnap calls words in a sequence that resemble a statement but which are in fact meaningless "a pseudo-statement" (61). Such a line of argumentation could find resonance in any number of approaches to language study; however, Carnap has a very different objective in pursuing it. His purpose is to show that "metaphysics in its entirety consists of such pseudo-statements" (61). For Carnap, metaphysics is empty of meaning, and Heidegger is essentially a metaphysician.

The argument hinges on how Carnap arrives at "meaning," and here he makes a fundamental move: "the meaning of a word is determined by its

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[35] Rudolf Carnap, "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," trans. Arthur Pap, *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J. Ayer (New York: Macmillan, 1959) 60-81. (first published in Erkenntnis, II (1932).

criterion of application" (63). Carnap appeals here to the necessary and sufficient conditions for meaningful words and sentences. For him, these conditions lie in logical criteria which can be stipulated and applied to statements. So meaningful words and sentences, for Carnap, actually depend on pre-existing logical criteria. In order to determine meaning, all that one must do is to inquire into the logical criteria applied. In accordance with Carnap's argument, a language user would actually have relatively little freedom to decide what they mean by a word; the "criterion of application" will have decided it in advance. It is not the context which determines meaning, but the logical criteria embedded in the statement. Conversely: "if no criterion of application for the statement is stipulated, then nothing is asserted by the sentences in which it occurs, they are but pseudo-statements" (64). A "pseudo-statement" for Carnap resembles mere noise, and should be either reduced or eliminated from discourse.

According to these requirements, not only is all of metaphysics meaningless, but Heidegger's writing is as well. Carnap takes special offense at a few passages from a paper Heidegger delivered in 1929 entitled "What is Metaphysics?"[36] Carnap appears especially perturbed by the passage: "What about this Nothing? – The Nothing itself nothings." (69) Carnap finds "gross logical errors" (71) in this passage and, in a sequence of explanatory moves resonant with grammar instruction, he claims that in these sentences the word

[36]Martin Heidegger, What is Metaphysics? in *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992) 89-110.

"nothing" can be understood neither as a noun nor as a verb. It is not a noun, because it cannot be introduced as a name or description of an entity, nor even an emotional state. It is not a verb, because it describes neither a state of being nor an activity. It does not, in fact, refer to anything, and hence can neither be verified as to its existence, nor confirmed as to its reference. Heidegger's sentences, therefore, "would be contradictory, hence absurd, if they were not already meaningless." (71) For Carnap, Heidegger's sentences cannot be verified, and thus they cannot be understood: "no information has been communicated to us, but mere verbal sounds devoid of meaning though possibly associated with images." (73) Carnap is about to reject Heidegger outright as a bad poet.

Once he has completed his denunciation of Heidegger, Carnap goes on to reproach the entire metaphysical tradition, including "Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Bergson." (80) Metaphysics in general should be rejected as an unreliable form because: "through the form of its works it pretends to be something that it is not." (79) It resembles a theory, because it seems to make claims about truth and falsity, yet it is not a theory, because it does not make use of premises and conclusions, as a theory should. There is only the "fiction of theoretical content." (79). Instead of a theory, it simply serves as "the expression of the general attitude of a person towards life" (78). The metaphysician expresses something similar to what an artist does, nothing more. Indeed, artists are preferable, because at least they do not suffer from the delusion that they have a real theory. Carnap's example of someone who knows the real differences between

metaphysics, poetry, and theory is, of all people, Friedrich Nietzsche: "...in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, he does not choose the misleading theoretical form, but openly the form of art, of poetry." (80) For Carnap, metaphysics should be left to poets. It is not the domain of philosophers.

To the best of my knowledge, Heidegger never responded to Carnap directly, so it would be largely speculation to imagine what he would have said. Nevertheless, a few points can be made to clarify the relations between the two approaches. It is evident from his writing and his participation in the "Vienna Circle" that Carnap relies on such epistemological devices as logic, analysis and scientific verification to attain to reliable knowledge. As I have already mentioned, Heidegger's approach de-structures logic, delimits science and promotes understanding. Though Heidegger's work may at first seem difficult to understand, I will show how it can be understood. Where Carnap would have a theory based on premises and conclusions, or at least a method, Heidegger resists the distinction between theory and practice altogether. Where Carnap tries to pin down meaning according to the "criterion of application," Heidegger insists that only dwelling in our linguistic practices reveals their sense. Indeed, this source of meaning is just what is inaccessible to detached philosophical reflection. Heidegger would reject Carnap's "logical criteria" as irrelevant for meaning in language, and insist instead on the primacy of context.

There are, nevertheless, points at which the two thinkers intersect. No one would disagree with Carnap that Heidegger has neither a theory nor a method to recommend. Instead Heidegger promotes something more akin to a

sensibility, a particular attitude towards living and learning that serves to bring both to their fullest potential of expression. Likely no one would disagree with Carnap that Heidegger's thinking unfolds like, and as part of a sustained reflection on, poetry. Heidegger clearly recommends understanding over logic, and a more holistic approach towards thinking that includes, but does not restrict, thinking to a strictly scientific form. What are weaknesses to Carnap, however, are strengths to the proponents of the Heideggerian approach. Rather than a strictly logico-scientific approach to education, his proponents would recommend a more dynamic and flexible attitude or assemblage of attitudes. A hyperscientific view seems too committed to Platonic, ahistorical assumptions about language and meaning. In short, by restricting himself so rigidly to logic, Carnap is insufficiently responsive to the vagaries of history and chance and to the faculty of understanding as social practice in historical situations. We shall see how important this faculty is for Heidegger in the following section.

2.3.2 Heidegger, Understanding and Philosophical Hermeneutics

The traditional philosophical stance towards understanding tends to associate it with the pursuit and acquisition of something at the heart of pedagogy: knowledge. Heidegger's starting point, however, is existence or "Being" rather than "knowledge." Though not all commentators do, I will follow the practice of capitalizing "Being" according to Heidegger. His aim in *Being and Time* is "to work out the question of the meaning of *Being* and to do so concretely" (BT1). By making "Being" rather than "knowledge" his point of

departure, Heidegger calls into question some of the longest held and most pervasive assumptions of traditional philosophy. In his commentary on Division I of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Hubert Dreyfus depicts five of them.[37] Not only do these five assumptions include the three aporia we have identified as plaguing philosophical hermeneutics, Dreyfus depicts the disruption of these assumptions in terms of a dialectic between epistemology and ontology:

> Heidegger breaks with... tradition by substituting epistemological questions concerning the relation of the knower and the known for ontological questions concerning what sort of beings we are and how our being is bound up with the intelligibility of the world.[38]

According to Dreyfus, Heidegger accomplishes this substitution by disputing two fundamental philosophical presuppositions: the Platonic presupposition that human experience can be explained in terms of theory, and the Cartesian presupposition that it can be explained in terms of a relation between autonomous subjects and isolable objects. According to Heidegger, the Platonic-Cartesian approach takes for granted the background of everyday language, roles and practices into which every human being is socialized, but which we do not represent in our minds. Heidegger argues that these functions and practices operate in every aspect of our lives, from doing the laundry to doing science, but that they cannot be understood as a representation in the mind that corresponds to the world.

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[37] Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World. A Commentary on Heidegger's 'Being and Time' Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) 4-8.

[38] Dreyfus 3.

The notion that our social functions and practices amount to an ontology is an unfamiliar idea. A description of how Heidegger envisions this process and how it relates to language study will follow in the next chapter. In order to focus this analysis on the matter at hand, however, I will first draw the parallels that I see existing between the assumptions that Dreyfus depicts as deriving from Heidegger's epistemological/ontological representation, and the three aporia of philosophical hermeneutics.

The first hermeneutical impasse, the one that Ricouer[39] declared as constituting the central impasse within hermeneutics, and the one which emerges in Wierlacher's concern that we maintain the autonomy of the other, is an impasse that Dreyfus claims we have inherited from the Greeks. Deriving from the Platonic presupposition that we can obtain theoretical knowledge of every domain, it is assumed that the detached theoretical viewpoint is superior to the involved practical viewpoint. According to the epistemologically-oriented philosophical tradition, it is only by means of detached, and therefore objective, contemplation that we can discover "the truth" about reality. This same assumption underlies the quest within theoretical hermeneutics for correct interpretations attained through the application of formal models and methodologies. If we recall, this is the approach of such hermeneutical thinkers as E.D.Hirsch, who attempts to identify context-free elements, attributes, and factors, and relate them through rules, methods or principles. By contrast, Heidegger's emphasis on the social context as the ultimate foundation of

[39] Paul Ricouer, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

intelligibility, implies that the organization and everyday social practices of a culture must be taken as the basic condition for the pursuit of knowledge.

From the classic assumption that principles and theories underlie and explain external phenomena comes a further assumption of Western thought that begins with Socrates and extends all the way to our representative of critical hermeneutics, Jürgen Habermas. Proceeding from the standpoint that we know and act by applying principles and theories, critical thinkers claim that we should get clear about these principles so that we can gain enlightened control of our lives. According to Heidegger, however, we can never get complete clarification about these beliefs because, for the most part, these functions and practices do not arise from rules or principles, but are embodied in our behaviour and embedded in our language. I take Heidegger to mean that we dwell in our understanding like a fish in water. Indeed, Heidegger claims that our understanding functions successfully precisely because the shared language and practices into which we are socialized remain in the background. Critical reflection is necessary in some situations where our ordinary way of functioning is insufficient; however, because our language is constitutive of our understanding, attempting to articulate that understanding by way of our language would be like trying to see sight itself, or hear hearing. What is most basic in our lives can never be completely articulated and can, therefore, never be fully accessible to critical reflection. This recognition brings us to the third aporia within philosophical hermeneutics.

It is the everyday, smooth functioning of the language and practices into which we have been socialized that enable us to dwell in our understanding like fish in water. Indeed, these capacities are so fundamental and operate so transparently, that we misunderstand them as representing our essential human nature, or the basic structure of human rationality, or some other ultimate ground upon which to base our being. In other words, they provide us with a source of stable meanings that make us feel secure and "Zuhause" in belonging to a certain culture, nation or race. According to Heidegger, however, we plunge into making ourselves feel "at home" (233) in order to avoid or mask the painful truth that we are not. In *Being and Time* Heidegger gives us an account of the human condition as devoid of any absolute or ultimate ground. He refers to this condition as "unheimlich," a German term which links the idea of "not-being-at-home" with a sense of the "uncanny." (BT233) It is this conception of the "unheimlich" that links Heideggerian hermeneutics with the third aporia of philosophical hermeneutics, the impasse over a hermeneutics of "trust" or of "suspicion."

In Heidegger's terms, one must always practice hermeneutics from within a hermeneutic circle, and *Being and Time* is a case in point. It is Heidegger's objective in *Being and Time* to lay out the basic existential structure of human beings. He does this by showing how human beings are constituted through meaningful social practices, and by explaining the way in which these practices give rise to intelligibility. But Heidegger goes further and does not take even these fundamental structures at face value. Because our understanding of our

being is not only pervasive but distorted, (serving to disguise our existential condition), Heidegger does not attempt to access that understanding directly by way of our practices. In order to force into view what we wish to avoid or conceal, he points out those aspects of our everyday activities that those activities themselves make it difficult for us to see. Thus, as introduced by Heidegger, the existential hermeneutical methodology combines the "trustful" dimension of the more traditional hermeneutic circle with a new rigor deriving from the "suspicion" of concealment and distortion.

The conventional hermeneutic circle refers to a process whereby one moves back and forth between an overall, general interpretation of a written text and the specific details that a given reading reveals as important. This circular process will yield a fuller if not "correct" understanding of the text insofar as any new significant details will modify the overall interpretation, which will in its turn reveal yet other specific details as valid or important. As we shall see, Heidegger extends this traditional hermeneutical dynamic, between a written text and its reading, down to the most primordial level of human existence. In addition, he augments this dynamic in three ways. First, because Heidegger proceeds from the standpoint that we must begin any analysis from within the functions and practices we are seeking to understand, he insists that our choice of a particular entity or phenomenon to interpret will always already be determined by that understanding. Second, because that understanding consists of what is difficult to notice, we cannot take any interpretation at face value. Indeed, our conventional understanding will in all likelihood have passed

over what is crucial. Therefore, three, we must be prepared to revise radically the fundamental understanding we have of subjects, objects, space, time, truth, language, reality and so on, on the basis of the phenomena revealed by our interpretation.

In pursuing such a rigorous hermeneutical dynamic, Heidegger provides an alternative to the tradition of critical reflection. He does not presume some privileged or detached position outside the circle of understanding, but seeks to point out and describe our understanding of Being from within that understanding.

There are three ways in which Heidegger's hermeneutics provide an appropriate approach within language study. First, Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics is an interpretation of human beings as being themselves essentially self-interpreting. According to Dreyfus, Heidegger regards human beings as "interpretation all the way down."[40] Moreover, Heidegger acknowledges that this claim is itself an interpretation: "We shall proceed towards the concept of Being by way of an Interpretation..." (63) This implies that interpretation, rather than objective or critical contemplation, should be our first approach in the study of human beings. Current practice in language study reflects the reverse, in the sense that grammar is often presented first as objective, as if it were the fact of the language, and cultural contexts are presented second, as if they were illustrations or ornaments of the grammar.

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[40] Dreyfus 25.

A second reason why Heidegger's existential account is appropriate for language study, is because he does not discuss what it means to be a human being in one specific culture or historical period. It is Heidegger's objective in *Being and Time* to lay out the general, cross-cultural and multiple historical structures of our self-interpreting way and to explain how these structures account for all modes of intelligibility. This makes his approach applicable for the study of various languages and cultures and provides a basis for comparison across languages and cultures. According to Dreyfus, the Heideggerian approach to understanding has become the approach of choice in many different disciplines involving an investigation of culture. Dreyfus claims that Harold Garfinkel in sociology, Charles Taylor in political science, and Clifford Geertz in anthropology, "each in their own way pursue Heidegger's form of hermeneutic concern."[41]

Finally, it is my contention that Heidegger's philosophical goals in *Being and Time* are consistent with the objectives I previously identified as being pedagogical. According to this philosophy, it is only in what Heidegger calls our *authentic* condition, when we are sufficiently transparent to ourselves, that the structure of our existence is most fully transparent to us. According to Heidegger, authentic understanding does justice to the nature of existence because it carries us beyond an implicit or merely theoretical understanding of these structural features and allows us to grasp them explicitly in the clarity of their authentic mode. And this grasp reveals to us Being – not only our own, but

[41] Dreyfus 34.

also that of the entities which are disclosed to us on the basis of our own. This is the positive possibility that Heidegger designates to philosophy and that I will link to my pedagogical enterprise in Chapter Three.

2.4 Heidegger and Education

In comparison with other fields of study, relatively little has been written on the significance of Heidegger's work for educational thought and practice. My analysis of this writing indicates that the scholars who have published on Heidegger and education have done so from within the context of three approaches. The most prevalent of these is to view Heidegger's contribution as a response to an historical crisis within education. The nature of the crisis is sometimes derived from current critiques of education that are examined within a Heideggerian framework of analysis. More usually writers proceed from the crisis Heidegger himself saw as plaguing the university and higher education. The crisis of the university, for Heidegger, involved the fragmentation into many different specializations, the overwhelming importance of science or theory, and the lack of any methodological clarity across disciplines. Writers claim for Heidegger a prescient insight into what ails the university today, and go on to use Heidegger's thought to propose solutions.

A second approach to Heidegger and education includes those writers who address some specific issue, problem or question within education. The issue of technology is a frequent theme, the problem of performativity in education is another, the ethical task of education still another. Sometimes the

topic being addressed originates outside the university, but is one in which education is considered to have an important role. The question of the environment is a case in point.

Finally, there is the approach of utilizing Heidegger's thought to offer new conceptions of education. My thesis belongs to this group. My project also proceeds from the point of departure most often adopted within this approach: Heidegger's concept of authenticity and authentic understanding. Some other examples from this approach include conceiving of education as a work of art, especially literary art and most frequently, poetry. Still other examples offer new conceptualizations of the teacher, or the learner, or the teacher-learner relationship. Another example within this approach is to conceptualize thinking as a form of pedagogical action.

I have structured my reception of Heidegger within education according to the three approaches above. These approaches are in their turn connected to one another within what is referred to as Heidegger's "history of being." Iain Thomson explicitly states that in order to understand Heidegger's "profound" critique of education, we need to see it as a substructure of his "history of being." According to Thomson, this is because, from Heidegger's view: "the history of being makes possible the historical development of our educational institutions."[42] More importantly, perhaps, Thomson argues that it is because of this "history" that Heidegger's critique is superior to other current critiques of education. In contrast to other more contemporary critics, Heidegger provides a

[42] Thomson 144.

theoretical grounding for his critique, as well as a philosophical vision for revitalizing higher education and the university.[43] What I will show is how an argument that may at first seem somewhat out of date can be updated to show us not only where we are, but potentially where we may be going in education.

In order to better explicate the relevance of Heidegger's thought for a critique of education, and give a fuller context to my arguments, I will contextualize his reception within the "history of being" that Heidegger developed. This will have the added benefit of providing a philosophical framework, sufficient to explain why some writers have turned to Heidegger to address specific problems. Heidegger's relevance for such issues as technology and the environment cannot be adequately recognized without reference to his "history of being." But even a specific educational problem like performativity can be more fully understood within this framework. Finally, familiarity with Heidegger's "history of being" will help to make my approach more easily understood. It brings up a number of issues that I will refer to because they bring with them a fuller understanding of my thesis.

2.4.1 Historical Crises within Education

What forms does this historical crisis within education take? In the nineteen thirties, both during and after his rectorship of the University of Freiburg, most of Heidegger's remarks on education were directed at university education. During that time, Heidegger expressed a number of concerns that

[43] Thomson 153.

educators today are likely to find uncannily prescient. The first of these is Heidegger's dismay at the hyperspecialization and consequent fragmentation of the modern university. Whereas some today may have grown accustomed to such conditions, there are many who criticize the situation and point to Heidegger's concerns.

As we have seen, Thomson depicts Heidegger as having become disillusioned with higher education while he was still a student in Freiburg in 1911. But it was in 1929, in his inaugural lecture as a professor at that same university, that he made some of his most explicit observations:

> The scientific fields are quite diverse. The ways they treat their objects of inquiry differ fundamentally. Today only the technical organization of universities and faculties consolidates this burgeoning multiplicity of disciplines; the practical establishment of goals by each discipline provides the only meaningful source of unity. Nonetheless, the rootedness of the sciences in their essential ground has atrophied.[44]

It is important to note at the outset that, like German speakers generally, Heidegger's use of the term "science" ("Wissenschaft") applies to any disciplined search for knowledge, to history and psychology, as much as to physics or biology. In another respect, however, he normally applies it more narrowly than our understanding of "science" today. By calling history a science, he means to bring out that historians model their search for knowledge on the approach of the natural sciences. For Heidegger this is a disturbing development.

The dispersal and encapsulation of "knowledge" into special faculties is a trend of the modern university, that a number of contemporary critics have

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[44] Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" in David Farrell Krell, *Martin Heidegger. Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992) 94.

opposed such as Clark Kerr (1982), Bill Readings (1996), and Pocklington and Tupper (2002). On the model of the medieval university, the task of higher education was to transmit what was thought to be a relatively fixed body of knowledge. There arose the idea of the university as constituting a unity, its various members held together by the shared perception of a common ground of inquiry. Of course there are problems with this model, if it is taken for example as exclusively European, male, and heterosexual. But the very idea of the *uni*versity seems to suggest at least an attempt to imagine a shared project. The attempt to maintain this unity of community and purpose, thought to be definitive of the *uni*versity as such, soon proved to be a major problem for the modern university, however. German thinkers committed to the unifying ideal, for example, Fichte and Schelling, believed that unity would follow organically from the interconnected totality of the system of knowledge. As it developed historically, this faith in the system proved to be less influential than the "humanist" ideals of Schleiermacher and Humboldt. According to this conception, the university's unity would come from a shared commitment to the educational formation of character. In historical actuality, however, neither model succeeded in unifying the university community cohesively enough to prevent its fragmentation into increasingly specialized disciplines.

As the modern university began to lose sight of the shared goals which originally justified the endeavours of the academic community as a whole, its members began to look outside the university for some purpose to give meaning to lives of research. A second lament of Heidegger's was that the traditional

scholar was disappearing, to be "succeeded by the research man," a man of a "different stamp," committed to a rigid methodology and increasingly at the beck and call of publishers and outside bodies eager for "useful results."[45] Heidegger's critique of "research man" is one of his most scathing and potentially still relevant commentaries.

Even today we can see that only those disciplines able to produce "useful results" regularly find external support. Consequently, scholarly disciplines increasingly try to present themselves in terms of their use-value. According to a number of writers (Thomson, Lambeir, Standish) without a counter-ideal, students, too, will adopt this instrumental mentality, coming to see education merely as a means to an increased salary down the road. In this way fragmentation leads to the professionalization of the university and, eventually, its deterioration into vocationalism. Of course there are other value systems visible in the contemporary university, for example, the system which promotes contributions to society, but the "research-program" model still dominates.

This in turn brings us to a third concern that Heidegger expressed in his request for reinstatement in 1945, that universities were increasingly perceived as answerable to the needs of the professions – law, medicine, politics, and so on. According to Heidegger, this was a perversion of the proper relationship, for "knowledge does not stand in the service of the professions, but the reverse."

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[45] Martin Heidegger, "The Rectorate 1933/34: Facts and Thoughts," trans. K. Harries, *Review of Metaphysics*, 1985, 483.

The university should be "providing society with a measure," and not, therefore, be measured by its contribution to transient and extraneous goals.[46]

Heidegger predicts that universities will become "merely operational institutions," sites for scientific research and teaching, which will retain the traditional humanities for a while at least, but only as "cultural decorations."[47] Many educators would agree, that things have indeed gone as Heidegger saw them going. Already in 1929 he accurately described what fifty years later Clark Kerr would satirically label the "Multi-versity": "an internally fragmented Uni-versity-in-name-only, where the sole communal unity stems from a common grievance about parking spaces,"[48] or about budget cuts, as the current case may be. Lacking any sense of a shared purpose or common subject matter, the different disciplines tend to develop standards and goals that are appropriate to their particular domain of study. As these domains become increasingly specialized, the standards become ever more disparate. In this way, disciplinary fragmentation leaves the university without common standards or goals, except perhaps for the generic goal of *excellence.* According to critics such as Bill Readings, however, the emptiness of the ideal of excellence means that our contemporary "university of excellence" is becoming nothing more than an

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[46] Martin Heidegger, "Letter to the Rector of Freiburg University," in Richard Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy* (Cambridge: MIT Press Edition, 1993) 62.

[47] Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, trans. P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 108.

[48] Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) 47.

"excellent bureaucratic corporation."[49] Again, I am not saying that there is no interest in knowledge in the contemporary university, but there does seem to be the strong tendency to make knowledge subservient to professional expectations.

If the critique of Readings and Kerr are any indication, things have indeed gone as Heidegger saw them going, but it is not in the prescience of his remarks that Heidegger's special contribution to educational thinking resides. To identify what is truly distinctive in Heidegger's relevance for education, we need to broaden the context in the manner that Thomson suggested and examine Heidegger's reflections on education as part of his philosophy of Being. As we do, we will see how these critiques emerge from within this context, and the broader implications of these reflections will appear more specifically.

2.4.2 The Crisis of Education within a History of Being

It is time now to look at other writers who have written on the relevance of Heidegger for education, and in doing so, we will begin to formulate the history of Being that is necessary as a sufficient context to understand their accounts. I will begin with a writer who has published extensively on Martin Heidegger and was among the first in English to examine his relevance for education.

David Cooper is a prolific contributor to Heidegger research, a professor of philosophy at the University of Durham and Director of the Durham Institute of Comparative Ethics. Much of his work has focused on a Heideggerian reading

[49] Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996) 152.

of the notion of authenticity (1983); more recently, however, he wrote an article entitled "Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress" (2001). In this article, Cooper examines Heidegger's sense of a university in crisis, within the context of his reflection on such other topics as the nature of science, the nature of philosophy, and the "distress" of the modern human condition.[50]

According to Cooper, it is within a "constellation" of science, philosophy and distress that the importance of Heidegger for education emerges, but only by virtue of a fourth theme that constitutes the center of their orbit. That fourth theme is truth: "the central theme in the constellation, the one around which the others revolve as it were, is that of *truth*."[51] Cooper sums it up as follows:

> It is, as Heidegger sees it, a momentous shift in our understanding of truth that has brought in its wake the dominance of science, the atrophy of philosophy/thinking, our contemporary distress, and a stunted conception of education. And it is here, in this vision, if anywhere, that the depth and originality of his remarks reside.[52]

According to Cooper's understanding of Heidegger, it is a shift in the understanding of truth that has brought about a change in the concept of education. In order to understand the nature of this shift, and its relevance for Cooper's discussion of science, philosophy and distress, we need to encounter it as Heidegger depicts it as part of his history of Being.

According to Heidegger, philosophy was born with the Greeks' wonder at the world and their consequent attempt to investigate all beings, themselves

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[50] David E. Cooper, "Truth, Science, Thinking, and Distress," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002) 50.

[51] Cooper 52.

[52] Cooper 58.

included. Although we cannot repeat the early Greek experience of the world, Heidegger claims that there was a truth to that experience which has become increasingly obscured and which we must endeavor to recollect.

The early Greeks, on Heidegger's account, experienced Being in an authentic way, as *physis*, a process of arising, of emerging from the hidden.[53] The Greeks' experience of Being was inseparable from a certain understanding of truth and the place of human beings. As the Greek word for truth, *aletheia* (unhiddenness, uncoveredness) suggests, they understood truth as "the unconcealedness of beings," that is, a being is true when it emerges as it is, unconcealed. The task of human beings, concomitantly, is to "guard the truth," to remove the obstacles in the way of things emerging unconcealed, so that they "might appear... as the beings they are." Human beings are "called" precisely to serve as the "clearing" in which things may emerge unveiled.[54]

Heidegger claims, however, that once the Greeks, inspired by their wonder at the world about them, began to investigate, it was not the process of emergence, Being, which they investigated, but the things which had emerged, beings. This, the "decisive moment" in history, the true beginning of metaphysics, occurs with Plato, and therewith the great philosophy of the Greeks comes to an end. Though Plato, Aristotle and their successors will talk of Being, this is not Being as originally experienced: rather, it changes to the

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[53] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Massachusetts: Yale University Press, 1959) 14-15.

[54] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971) 35.

general properties or causes of beings. True Being for Plato is the world of the forms or ideas. When Plato experiences things in the world as appearance, this is no longer emergence; rather, the actual horse or flower is a pale copy of its supersensible, prototypical form.[55]

At this decisive moment for Heidegger, the crucial difference between Being and beings is forgotten. Such a point is characteristic of Heidegger, for whom history is less an account of what people have thought and done, as of what they have ignored or forgotten. In this instance Being was no longer appreciated as the ineffable source of beings, and becomes something to arrive at by abstraction or inference from beings. It becomes just one more kind of Being. At best, it becomes the conditions necessary for us to perceive or otherwise encounter things, not the source of those very conditions. When that happens, the notions of truth and human Being undergo concomitant shifts. Truth is no longer grasped as the coming into unconcealment of things: instead, Plato understands it as getting a right view of the forms. The task of human beings is no longer to guard things in their unconcealedness but to develop the intellectual prowess adequately to grasp their essence. Both changes are apparent in Aristotle: the conception of truth as aletheia has passed on to a determination of truth as the correctness of an assertion.[56] Human beings are defined as rational animals, one creature among others, distinguished only by a capacity to exercise reason in getting assertions correct.

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[55] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, trans. R. Rojcewica and A. Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) 120.

[56] Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, 98.

What are the implications of Heidegger's account, according to Cooper? Philosophy as thinking, as a meditative attention to the source and occurrence of the unhiddenness of things, gives way to science as the primary form of inquiry, for science is precisely the disciplined endeavor to provide a uniquely correct and certain account of the world, one that corresponds to the way that reality independently is. Although science understands itself in this way, it is forgetting that, however correct its representations, it is only *one way* in which reality presents itself to us. In particular, science fails to recognize that it only admits as real those entities which lend themselves to exact measurement, expression in terms of regularities and laws, and empirical investigation. Moreover, it is blind to its presupposition to regard the world simply as a network of such measurable entities.[57]

For their part, philosophers have been guilty of insufficiently probing the conditions of experience: they have taken beings for granted, failing to explore the Being on the basis of which beings are at all. Even less have they paid attention to the mysterious source of these conditions. Hence philosophy, at least since its earliest times, has involved a forgetting of the truth of Being. It is to this long forgetting that Heidegger gives the name "metaphysics," henceforth a pejorative term in his vocabulary. If philosophy has decayed into "metaphysics," this is because it has fallen prey to the understanding which prevails in the sciences.[58]

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[57] Cooper 56.

[58] Cooper 56.

The early Greeks' combination of wonder at the opening up of a world for them and a sense of being at home in a world where they are, so to speak, the "shepherds" of this event and the "shelterers" of what comes into the open, atrophies.[59] It is eventually replaced by the sense of "distress" of modern men and women who experience the world as an alien array of objects set over against themselves as the rational subjects who represent these objects. Regarded as being there for objective measurement, they no longer invite wonder:

> With truth conceived of as a fixed relation between entities, assertions, and their objects, human beings lose all sense of themselves as being essentially engaged in the emergence of truth, in a process, that calls for "deep awe," whereby things emerge out of hiddenness into the light.[60]

Cooper goes on to explain that people may not be aware of their distress because they are without recollection of what has been lost, they have forgotten. However, indications of distress are everywhere: in a frantic pursuit of expensive diversions, in the adulation of movie stars and sports heroes, in blind devotion to technological progress, and so on.[61] Such lives are obviously bereft of the deep awe and wonder that obtain when there is mindfulness of truth – of a world arising from concealment into unconcealment, or truth as aletheia.

In regard to education, instead of being a process whereby people are brought to an experience and understanding of things in their unhiddenness, education has become "the calculated, swift massive distribution of

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[59] Cooper 53.

[60] Cooper 57.

[61] Heidegger, "An Introduction to Metaphysics," 36-7.

ununderstood information to as many as possible in the shortest possible time."[62] The educated person piles up information, but it is "ununderstood" since they are without appreciation either of the status of the information – as belonging to just this or that particular way in which things are revealed – or of the possibility of, and the conditions for, access to the types of information they gather. As previously noted, the dominance of science, which has been made central to modern systems of education, serves to marginalize other forms of inquiry within educational institutions. Conversely, the conception of education as serving the accumulation of information reinforces the idea that it is only the sciences that are genuinely educative. The humanities, to the degree that they survive in the modern university, are relegated to ornamental status, and even the study of education itself gets treated as superfluous. This, in turn, serves to cement, among modern educated people, that sense of distress which is part of the scientific conception of reality.

In what way can Heidegger's approach to education inform educational practice? The possibilities that Cooper sees are ones that I would also emphasize as constituting the relevance of Heidegger for education. If Heidegger is correct, then the culture of education is crucially flawed. An outstanding feature of that culture is the dominance of one form of inquiry, the natural sciences, over others. This dominance is attested to not only by the inequitable amount of university resources devoted to the sciences but also by a deeply ingrained perception that it is the sciences alone that are the proper and

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[62] Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy*, 85.

final authorities on knowledge and understanding, and for solving problems. According to Heidegger, the sciences are no more *the* way of truly revealing or disclosing how reality is, than other modes of thinking and activity, in part precisely because they are the products of a determination to restrict what is to count as knowledge.[63]

As a possible response to this situation, Cooper cites Heidegger's admonition to "keep reflection vigilant." Heidegger made this appeal in an article entitled "Science and Reflection" and addressed it to "every researcher and teacher."[64] Cooper does not speculate as to the qualities of an educational enterprise in which Heidegger's entreaty to teachers is given due weight and consideration. Cooper does, however, commit himself to such an enterprise when he cites Heidegger again in terms of the "hope" Heidegger expressed in "Science and Reflection"; namely, that "that which is worthy of questioning will someday again open the door to reflection..."[65] In the conclusion of his article, Cooper aligns himself and all teachers and researchers with Heidegger's vision when he suggests that "we all play our small part in trying to pry open that door."[66] My thesis should be seen as a development of Cooper's efforts to enlist Heidegger for a rethinking of educational practices.

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[63] Cooper 60.

[64] Heidegger, "Science and Reflection," in *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) 62.

[65] Heidegger, "Science and Reflection," 60.

[66] Cooper 61.

2.4.3 The Crisis in Education as Enframing

Like Cooper, the Heidegger scholar Patrick Fitzsimons proceeds from the idea of a crisis in education, but he shifts the emphasis of this danger to our current technological understanding of the world as enframing. The question of the problem for education of what Heidegger terms enframing is best addressed by returning once more to Heidegger's history of Being.

Heidegger's critique of technology has been enthusiastically received by many eco-philosophers, eco-feminists and environmentalists, but few of them appreciate the place that technology has in Heidegger's history of Being. Heidegger made it very clear at the outset of his work entitled "The Question Concerning Technology" that his is no conventional understanding of technology: "the essence of technology is by no means anything technological."[67] Heidegger approaches technology as a manner of revealing or rendering things manifest quite different from any previous way, and one that governs the whole of modern life, including the natural world, the cultural world, and the business world. As a way of revealing, technology is akin to the *techne* of the early Greeks, but whereas the Greek craftsman saw himself as "bringing forth" the intrinsic properties of the materials with which he was working, today's technologist "challenges forth" these materials, "sets upon" them and imposes a "use-value" on them (12-15). Thus the "earth now reveals itself as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit," and the Rhine river as a "...water power supplier – that is when it's not put on call "for inspection... by the vacation

[67] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 4.

industry" (16). People no longer honour and cooperate with the earth: rather everything is put on "standing-reserve," as so much equipment to order, tap and use. To this setting-upon, challenging, ordering way of revealing the world, Heidegger gives the name "enframing" ("Ge-stell") (19). Enframing, therefore, is the essence of modern technology.

What does Heidegger find so dangerous about the technological way of revealing? It constitutes a quintessential irony: while technology is the logical outcome of humanity's desire for self-preservation by rendering the earth and everything on it submissive to our needs, technology has come to dominate humans. And this is not simply an expression of the view that technology has consequences that no one can control. More crucially, human beings become helplessly caught up in the total mobilization that technology requires if it is to press ahead. At the same time that humans exalt themselves to the "posture of the lord of the earth," Heidegger claims that we ourselves are "taken as standing-reserve" ("Bestand"), as a resource valued only for our potential contribution to the technological process (27).

There is another aspect to technology which invites Heidegger's criticism. Technology, he writes, "drives out every other possibility of revealing" (27). In previous epochs, a prevailing way of revealing things could not entirely exclude other ways of experiencing them. Technology is different: every potentially rival way of revealing becomes subsumed within it. This means, for a start, that everything in modern life gets leveled and made monotonous. In part, this is due to technological ingenuity: distance is erased through the television and

computer so that events as far away as the moon are brought into our homes. Moreover, whether that home is in Arizona or Alaska, with central heating and air-conditioning, we need never experience the natural differences of climate and the seasons. More disturbingly, the values and standards by which people live become homogenized across the globe, all of them derived from the imperatives of technology.[68]

So effectively does technology drive out other possibilities of revealing that its most fundamental characteristic – namely that it is merely one way of revealing – is itself overlooked. Experiencing things instrumentally becomes so entrenched that the very possibility of experiencing them in any other way is excluded from the modern imagination. Herein resides "the supreme danger," the total "oblivion of Being" (27) Not only is every other way of revealing excluded, so is any sense of what it might be to experience things differently, for any perception that the present way is just *a* way has gone. With this, we are at a maximum distance from the early Greeks' conception of Being as physis, from their holding themselves open to the "emergence" of things in all their potential fullness and variety.

Patrick Fitzsimons agrees that the "intolerance to other views is the defining characteristic of Enframing."[69] He considers this within the specific context of education and identifies a danger: technology renders education an instrument of capitalism through the dynamic of globalization. Fitzsimons

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[68] David E. Cooper, *Thinkers of our Time* (London: The Claridge Press, 1996) 66-67.

[69] Patrick Fitzsimons, "Enframing Education," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002) 179.

argues that education has been appropriated as the key technology for globalization conceptualized as a "new integrated world economic order."[70] The literature of globalization as an integrated world economic order has it that education is vital to the production of a correspondingly appropriate citizenry. Fitzsimons cites reports by the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and the World Bank that indicate that the focus on education as a cultural and economic instrument of capitalism is to be intensified.[71]

Fitzsimons warns that when we take education primarily as a technology for national economic development, it comes with goals already predetermined as being of value. Education so configured does not inquire as to education's purpose, it is structured to produce the predetermined ends, and the human is part of that structure: "The student (as consumer) supplies the consumption, the government supplies the capital, and the teacher supplies the product."[72] Each part of the framework depends on the regulation of all the other parts, and it is the framework itself and not the individual that reveals. Fitzsimons suggests that under the condition of modern technology the agency of revealing resides within the framework as a whole, not with the individual. As such, the enframing of education conceals the state of beings from themselves. What appears instead is an educational framework for constituting and instituting order. Such education has all the features of enframing, it demands a constant supply of

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[70] Fitzsimons 179.

[71] Fitzsimons 184.

[72] Fitzsimons 184.

resources, whether that be knowledge, people, or financial capital assets. Above all, and this is its most dangerous feature, it does not tolerate any other mode of revealing.

If Fitzsimons' understanding seems too narrowly delimited by imposing a Heideggerian interpretation on education, I would like to consider two further relevant views on this issue. The first is the view of two Canadian professors, Tom Pocklington and Allan Tupper, in their book on Canadian universities entitled *No Place to Learn* (2006). Without so much as a passing reference to Heidegger, the chapter on technology is remarkably consistent with Fitzsimons' Heideggerian interpretation of an enframed education:

> Advanced education is a commodity that can be conveyed from producer to consumer in a variety of ways – the point is to find the most efficient way, which, as it happens, is computer-driven... In an era of globalization and revolutionary transformation of wealthy countries into information-based economies, the obvious task of universities is to produce "human resources" (the label is revealing in its technological reduction of persons into factors of production) who can adeptly use the latest means for processing information.[73]

As we have seen, in enframed education there must be a continual supply or, in Heidegger's language, "standing-reserve," of product and constant improvement in value. Pocklington and Tupper have explicitly depicted human beings as "resources," and education as the means of adding value to those "resources" in the most "efficient" ways. Fitzsimons argues that we have construed a world in which human beings have "learned to willingly adopt the

[73] Tom Pocklington and Allan Tupper, *No Place to Learn* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002) 160.

ethos of efficiency as a personal moral responsibility."[74] The result is an available, consumable, and above all "mute" stockpile of human resources. "Mute" because there is no place from which to view the framework: "all is concealed."[75]

From the perspective of a traditionally liberal, humanist viewpoint, this interpretation of education would qualify as inhuman because it does not theorize agency as inherent in the individual. This is the viewpoint from which Tupper and Pocklington proceed. Following Heidegger, however, this type of education is simply enframed, reducing the human to "the status of a clever animal with no insight into its own authentic possibility and obligation: to disclose things and to shelter their being."[76] And if we recall Iain Thomson's argument, Heidegger's interpretation is the more powerful one, because it is embedded in a theoretical and philosophical conceptualization that provides a way out.

The second view that I would like to present is that of David Block in his article entitled: "'McCommunication' A problem in the frame for SLA."[77] Block argues that there has been a tendency in recent times to "frame" interpersonal communication as a set of technical skills that can be defined, made more efficient, quantified and ultimately controlled. He notes that Fairclough (1992,

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[74] Fitzsimons 186.

[75] Fitzsimons 186.

[76] Fitzsimons 181.

[77] David Block, " 'McCommunication' A Problem in the frame for SLA," in *Globalization and Language Teaching*, eds. David Block and Deborah Cameron (New York: Routledge, 2002) 117-133.

1995) has referred to this process as the "technologization of discourse."[78] Block, however, coined the term "McCommunication," as an extrapolation of the term "McDonaldization" formulated by Ritzer (1996). For Block, both these terms emphasize not only that the "technologization of discourse" relies on a frame which over-rationalizes communication, but also that this frame is commodified and spread around the world. What specifically troubles Block is that this particular "frame" has become pervasive within "Second Language Acquisition" (SLA) research:

> ... the tendency to frame communication in this way [McCommunication] has spilled over into SLA research, where communication is seen as referential in nature and framed as efficient, calculable, predictable, controllable and standardized negotiation for meaning. The problem with this frame is not that it is incorrect or inaccurate, but that it is partial and fails to capture the complexities of communication as a site of SLA.[79]

In this article, Block's concerns resonate strongly with those of Heidegger. This occurs not only in terms of Block's alarm that one way of viewing linguistic phenomena is shutting out others, but also in the very language he uses, namely, his reference to "framing." Moreover, Block shares Heidegger's concern that the "technical-rational frame" that is currently applied so pervasively within second language acquisition research ultimately "...dehumanizes the social/psychological phenomenon..." that is human

[78] Block 120.

[79] Block 131.

language and communication.[80] In other words, for both Heidegger and Block, our humanity is at stake in the ubiquity of this frame.

Fitzsimons points out, however, that despite "the extreme danger" identified by Heidegger, he never suggested we attempt to destroy or eliminate technology as a way out of enframing. On the contrary, Heidegger recognized the many advantages of technological devices, including the ways they challenge us to greater advances. What we need to do instead, he suggested, is to find ways of employing technology that avoids the technological understanding of Being. How can we do that? According to Fitzsimons: "To alert us to at least the idea of other possibilities, Heidegger advances *poiesis* – another mode of revealing – that inherently contains the idea that there are infinite possibilities for being."[81]

Fitzsimons does not define *poeisis*, nor does he elaborate on how Heidegger understands the term. Moreover, Heidegger himself never specifically defined *poiesis* in any one work. Rather, his sense of the concept emerges over many works and from his writings on the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin. I will give an account of how Heidegger understands and develops the concept in Chapter Three. For now, I will put forward a provisional definition by following Heidegger's own approach and turning first to the Greek understanding of *poiesis* and then to Hölderlin.

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[80] Block 132.

[81] Fitzsimons187.

According to *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, the Greek meaning of *poiesis* is "production" in a manner that is "characteristic of crafts."[82] By way of an example, *The Dictionary* specifically cites "building" which, as we shall see in Chapter Three, is a particularly important activity for Heidegger, too. Hölderlin's contribution to Heidegger's concept is to insist that poetic language does not depend upon the pre-established meanings of everyday language nor even an "existent reality" for its force; rather, *poiesis* resists and transcends the efforts of our everyday language to establish one definite, univocal meaning (TM 470). Therefore, whereas enframing does not permit other views or understandings of the world, *poiesis* does. Because of this it is a conceptually more powerful mode of understanding. But that is not the only reason that Heidegger recommends *poiesis* – and this is where, it might be argued, his more literary or, for some, his more mystical leanings emerge.

A further problem with modern technology's enframed efficiency is that it theorizes a world where there is no mystery, nothing sacred, and therefore human beings cannot "dwell" there. "Dwelling" is another important concept in Heidegger's later writing that is related to "building" and that I will examine in Chapter Three. According to Fitzsimons, Heidegger's concept of "dwelling" requires the sustained integration of human beings with nature and this will diminish to the extent that resources are depleted through an enframing of the world. By contrast, a poetic understanding of the world "makes that world

[82] Robert Audi, General Editor, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 716.

sacred, never able to be mastered, and therefore an object of reverence."[83] It is the sense of the sacred that is required, not the destruction wrought under modern technology. But again, we do not see this, because enframing blocks poiesis as an alternative understanding of Being.

Fitzsimons applies Heidegger's history of Being and understanding of technology to identify the threats to education. He concludes by acknowledging another aspect of enframing that we encountered in Heidegger's history of being: "a technologically determined world depends on theorizing technology as a rational universal that would push societies toward an identical model."[84] Fitzsimons argues that an extension of the process of technological progress under globalization is homogeneity, the end of culture, and therefore the end of difference. For Fitzsimons, if we value diversity and cultural difference, we must expose enframing. Since enframing depends on concealment, a potent way to expose it is to speak of it: "... if we accept that words 'speak us into existence' – and we wish to live – in the face of *Enframing*, we cannot remain silent."[85]

Above all, Fitzsimons turns to education. Just as Cooper committed himself to a Heideggerian objective with educational implications, Fitzsimons does the same. He concludes his article with the following statement: "To speak we need a language community within which to 'stand still,' and within which a 'clearing' might reveal Being itself to us poetically. The promotion of suitable

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[83] Fitzsimons 187.

[84] Fitzsimons 188.

[85] Fitzsimons 188.

educational language communities in many cultural worlds is the purpose of this chapter."[86]

This latter hope speaks directly to language study; however, while Fitzsimons introduces the crucial role of language as an appropriate response to the crisis, he does not develop it. Other scholars have developed this aspect of Heidegger's thought and its implications for education. Many of them do so in order to address a specific question or problem within education.

2.4.4 Problems and Questions within Education

Based on this discussion of the historical crisis within education, we can already identify the themes that have been derived from Heidegger, namely, the emphasis on questioning, an attention to different possibilities, and the significance of wonder. The central role is attributed to language. As we shall see, these themes and the crucial role of language also figure prominently among writers who turn to Heidegger's thought to address specific issues and concerns within education.

Bert Lambeir has written extensively on the implication of new technologies within the educational sciences. In his article entitled "Comfortably Numb in the Digital Era," he does not proceed from the standpoint of a crisis within education, but does apply the Heideggerian questioning of technology to the role of information and communication technology within education.[87]

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[86] Fitzsimons 188.
[87] Bert Lambeir, "Comfortably Numb in the Digital Era," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002) 103-121.

Although Heidegger never encountered the computer as such, Lambeir claims that Heidegger's analysis astutely depicts our current situation, and that his philosophy sets the stage for an alternative understanding of the computer phenomenon. This, in turn, provides a space for altering practice within pedagogy, where the computer is enjoying a rapidly-growing influence.

As is the case with many other writers, Lambeir attests to the omnipresence of technology generally, and within education specifically, and acknowledges the dangers that we have come to recognize as deriving from a Heideggerian perspective. First and foremost, the recognition that technology is not a mere tool for learning, but "the omnipresent, dominant way in which the world becomes meaningful to us."(108) Secondly, the emphasis on efficiency as an overall standard of the educational system that "reduces the subject content, as well as both teacher and student, to *Bestand*." (113) Thirdly, the way in which the computer is making large-scale businesses and global economies "an indispensable partner of education." (113)

The danger that Lambeir focuses on, however, has to do with language and how it, too, is becoming "Bestand." For instance, electronic text is fast on the way to becoming a "dominant language form." (115) A predominant part of our communication today is mediated by electronic forms of speech, by way of e-mail, podcasts, "chats" and other forms of computerized social-networking. Most of this electronic conversation is in the form of written language, which modern information and communication technology approaches as a mere instrument, a fast and efficient means to an end. (116) This mentality is obvious

in the instance of computer programming languages, a blatant form of instrumentalization, but it is in evidence as well in the manner in which communication between people is constructed. Opening salutations, grammatically correct sentences and coherent texts, are sacrificed for the sake of speed. Instead, computerized messages incorporate many acronyms, abbreviations, unfinished sentences, and incomplete texts. The same applies to reading. It is no longer studying a complete text, but becomes a hasty scrolling and clicking, looking for the most useful parts of a text on the screen.

But if technology is taking control over the mode and world of language, Lambeir points out that it is also taking over our thinking, since language and thinking are irrevocably connected with one other. Speaking and writing are the materializing of thoughts and when our language is changing, our thoughts are changing in their turn. This is to say that our thinking is in danger of losing its sense, because "language becomes *Bestand* and speech, when posed in this fashion, becomes information." (116) A Web-based education, of the kind encouraged by business and government, becomes "information processing in the first place." (116)

Such a concept of education fits very well in the contemporary performativity discourse in education, but what becomes of the poiesis, which Fitzsimons saw as saving us from enframing? Lambeir asks a similar question:

> I wish to consider if there is some space left for *Dichtung* in this techno-centric universe. What can it mean to dwell in a world overrun by the computer, and what is in it for education? Is it indeed the case that *Being* does not have to be understood in a purely technological manner, even in this digital era? (117)

Lambeir claims that there is no going back to a time before the computer: "*education unplugged* is no option." (117) However, there are ways to incorporate poiesis within the interface. Following Heidegger, this would involve practices that escape the paradigm of speed, the criterion of efficacy, and the concept of language as word processing. As one example of how to achieve this, Lambeir suggests that teachers and learners simply "dwell in cyberspace... without searching for something in particular." (118) He proposes that teachers and learners surf the Web together and see what shows up. According to Lambeir this would have the effect of teaching learners to deal with all kinds of content, including unexpected or unpleasant content that would require applying some critical judgment. Lambeir concedes that such a practice would involve risks, "but at least not the risk that one would not be educating." (118) Conventional internet use mainly involves putting aside contemplative attention, whereas the approach Lambeir suggests provides the time "to be enraptured, to be troubled and touched by a particular subject." (119)

There is a further advantage to such a practice:

> In letting the uncertainty of content slip into the classroom, the teacher cannot but show her colors.... She cannot pretend as if she herself does not hold particular things valuable, prior to the "choice" of the learner. Whatever the teacher offers as education content, she will have to legitimate and thus speak as the person she is... (118)

Within the context of language pedagogy, Rick Kern has argued for a similar role for instructors in the use of internet-mediated learning materials, especially those that involve communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. According to Kern: "The teacher's crucial task is to lead follow-up

discussions, so that the chains of texts that students produce can be examined, interpreted, and possibly re-interpreted in the light of class discussion or subsequent responses from native speakers."[88] For Kern, as for Lambeir, the teacher plays a key role in facilitating critical reflection and cultural awareness after the activity. I will examine the implications of Heidegger's thought for the teacher-learner relationship in language pedagogy in Chapter Five.

Heidegger's analysis of technology alerts us to the way in which computerization alters our understanding of reality and of human being as such. The natural world and humanity with it are in danger of becoming merely standing-reserve, and educational content is in danger of becoming bare information. Lambeir argues that if we follow Heidegger in what he tells us about language, and try to combine this with an altered use of information and communication technology, a concept of education as a "personal and challenging undertaking" (120) emerges as an alternative. I agree with Lambeir and will describe my conception of what constitutes a "personal and challenging" experience of language learning in Chapter Four. At this point, I will consider one more writer who looks to Heidegger to resolve some larger problem outside of education proper.

In her article entitled "Heidegger and Nietzsche: Nihilism and the Question of Value in Relation to Education,"[89] Ruth Irwin draws on Heidegger to

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[88] R.G. Kern, *Literacy and Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 252.

[89] F. Ruth Irwin, "Heidegger and Nietzsche: Nihilism and the Question of Value in Relation to Education," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002) 191-210.

evaluate the very serious threat to our world of environmental devastation. As I noted previously, environmentalists of all stripes turn to Heidegger for his critique of technology so that Irwin's turn to Heidegger is not unusual: however, Irwin has a different purpose for drawing on his philosophy. As the situation stands now within the world generally, and within education specifically, there is a tendency to look for a technological solution to what is perceived as a technical environmental problem. Irwin insists, however, that in the face of such a serious threat, technological quick "fixes" are not the appropriate response (192). Instead she looks to education in its role as a source of values:

> The role of education in the exploration of values is important. Consciously opening up the interpretation of existing values about the relationship between people and the planet repositions the educational project as the means to reimagining human society. (192)

The role that Irwin sees for education is to reconfigure or "reimagine" the relationship between human society and the environment in which we live. She reminds us that the institutions of education are – in theory if not in practice – protected from exposure to the dynamics of consumerism and commodification in ways that other realms of society are not. Moreover, the traditional role of universities as the "critic and conscience of society" (192) gives us the unique opportunity and responsibility to imagine alternative ways of living. According to Irwin:

> It is through the generation of new knowledges, and the nurturing of character that society reformulates itself in relation to the earth. The ethical evaluation of these new forms of knowledge is crucial to the creative and caring regeneration of the human environment, as opposed to the corrosive adoption of consumerism and usury. (193)

We are already familiar with Heidegger's understanding of the development of Western civilization and its relation to the world. Irwin represents it as follows:

> ...there was a historical shift in ancient Greek thought in the concept of Being...this shift is a decline in the originary force of human awareness and ability to make Being manifest... Plato began that decline... Aristotle redressed it to some extent but his reliance on categorical statements of the logos... produced a stale representation rather than a poetic, forceful "wresting" of Being from concealment. This corruption has resulted in a degeneration and complacency of society and history. (193)

According to Irwin, Heidegger regards the significance of humanity as lying in the reciprocal relation between human beings and Being and this consists primarily in a "passion for questioning" which "wrests" Being from concealment (193). For Irwin, Heidegger's depiction of human beings as a questioner is crucial for her argument, because it designates humanity's most important role as being open to Being rather than developing new ways of utilizing the world as a resource.

For Irwin, the role of inquiry constitutes the heart of educational concerns, but Heidegger's ideas about the function of language and logic also have important consequences, especially for the relative emphasis placed on different fields of human inquiry. In contrast to our faith in the sciences which promote scientific technology and economics, Irwin reminds us that Heidegger relegates science to "busyness" and claims that works of art constitute the best way of opening up original aspects of Being and reconfiguring culture (193). Above all, Irwin presents Heidegger as endowing language and especially poetry with the

power to render Being as something "strange" thereby enabling "a discerning and fresh revealing of the Being of beings." (195)

Irwin agrees with Heidegger's analysis that technology is not merely a neutral tool with which we affect the environment. The technological frame within which we find ourselves has "no field of vision outside of itself" (207). Every attitude we have is a response to the technological world. According to Irwin, however, Heidegger's analysis can help us to avoid technological, site-specific "fixits" to problems such as pollution and human caused extinction.

By attributing the significance of the relationship between human beings and Being to questioning, and through an awareness of the creative possibilities of language, Heidegger presents us with a vital indication of the potential role and motivation for education. Irwin states it explicitly: "According to a Heideggerian reading, the ethical task of education is to inspire a psychology of awe. To *care* about Being as such. Clearly, it is here that the role of education is most vital." (207)

We have already encountered references to "awe" but this is the first that we have to "care." The concept of "care" is central to Heidegger's philosophy as he presents it in *Being and Time*. Heidegger distinguishes human beings from all other beings in existence, by claiming that we are that being, among all other beings in the world, whose existence is an issue for itself. Our existence matters to us. We are the beings who care about Being. Irwin makes references to Heidegger's book in her article, however, it does not play a pivotal role in her argument. This is characteristic of the writers within the first two

groups. By contrast, *Being and Time* is a seminal text for writers in the third group. Before moving to this group, I want to summarize the themes of the first two groups.

We have just been considering those writers who look to Heidegger to address particular problems or questions related to education. These emerge from within education itself, such as Lambeir and the use of information and computer technology. Or they are larger questions that education is called upon to resolve, such as the threat of environmental devastation that Irwin considers. The writers in this group look primarily to Heidegger's history of Being for inspiration and ideas to resolve the questions and issues that face education. In this way they are similar to the first group of writers that proceed from the conviction of a crisis within education. They are similar, too, in the themes they have chosen as relevant for education: the portrayal of human beings as the questioners of Being, the danger of restricting ourselves to one way of understanding our world, instead of being open to many possibilities, and the roles of wonder and awe as crucial experiences in our relationship to our world. Again, all of these themes share fundamentally a profound attention to language.

2.4.5 Conceptions of Education

The final grouping of writers who has written on Heidegger and education has in common their development of a new conception of education. As mentioned above, this group draws its primary inspiration from a different text,

Heidegger's opus magnum, *Being and Time*. My project belongs to this group and I will be describing Heidegger's thinking in *Being and Time* in the following chapter. By way of introduction, however, I will look at one writer briefly. This is primarily in order to complete an analysis of the three groups and to announce the themes that I will take into the third chapter. The writer is Pádraig Hogan and his article "Learning as Leavetaking and Homecoming."[90] In this article Hogan examines how the philosophy that Heidegger developed over the course of his life could be understood as a series of learning confrontations.

According to Hogan, Heidegger confronts three ways of thinking that have prevailed within the history of Western civilization down to our time but that do not adequately or appropriately express the distinctiveness of being human. These ways of thinking have informed conceptions of education that are also in their turn inadequate. We have already encountered some of the ways in which Heidegger has depicted our humanness that differ from our dominant modes of conceptualizing the human, hopefully they do not require detailed explanation.

The first of Heidegger's confrontations is with classical and modern forms of metaphysics. Because these draw on Heidegger's examination of truth within the history of Being, we are familiar with this thinking. The second is his confrontation with epistemology, whether in rationalist, empiricist, positivist, or other forms. Again, we are familiar with this confrontation through my previous analysis of Carnap's critique and of Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics.

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[90] Pádraig Hogan, "Learning as Leavetaking and Homecoming," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002) 211-228.

Heidegger's final confrontation, as Hogan depicts it, is with Nietzsche and a way of thinking that has since come to inform most postmodern thought in contemporary educational and cultural debates. Hogan describes Heidegger's encounter with Nietzsche as a profound one. He argues that this encounter takes the form of a confrontation that "resulted in a dramatic turning to new pathways in Heidegger's later philosophy." (222) Hogan is not alone in this argument. Most commentators on Heidegger refer to a "turn" or "Kehre" in his thought that came about after his extensive work with Nietzsche. Hogan's exposition will give us an opportunity to explore this shift.

Hogan frames the above-noted confrontations in the form of "leavetakings." The reason we are familiar with them is because they derive from Heidegger's confrontations with the question of "truth." We have already seen what Hogan points out, namely, that truth for Heidegger:

> ... was immeasurably beyond the capability of metaphysics to discern with concepts, and also beyond the capacity of epistemology to ground rationally. While remaining supremely important for Heidegger, truth came to be understood in his thinking as that, to which the best of human efforts might hope to draw near, but also as that which was in itself unfathomably different from what the fruits of calculative thinking might yield. (216)

For Heidegger, the prominence of metaphysics in Western philosophy led to a forgetfulness of the question of Being, a forgetfulness that was rendered more intractable by the rise of epistemology with its confident aspirations of achieving a rationally grounded certainty and comprehensive conceptual mastery. According to Heidegger, these ways of thinking predispose the thinking not just of individuals, but of whole cultures of learning and of belief, to a

forgetfulness of what is most worthy of human attentiveness and reverence: "to think ever anew that which was worthy of thinking's best efforts." (220) But if Heidegger's confrontations with metaphysics and epistemology were decisive for his thought, no less decisive were his sustained encounters during the nineteen thirties and forties with the work of Friedrich Nietzsche.

If anyone could be seen to put an end to the search for objective certainty it is Nietzsche. As Hogan presents him, Nietzsche marks the final phase of metaphysics, that of the absolute subjectivity of the will to power. How the world is, is now simply what we have decided or willed. The terms and concepts with which we describe it are merely those we have constructed as most conducive to obtaining control over the world and our lives. Whereas Heidegger depicts Being as a mysterious source that calls to humanity whose task is to protect it, this is now entirely withdrawn and denied. Being is nothing other than the expression of our will (219-222).

According to Hogan, one of the most important conclusions Heidegger draws from his repeated explorations of Nietzsche's thinking, is that: "Nietzsche's philosophy is not the overcoming of nihilism that it purports to be, but rather the 'fulfillment' of nihilism." (221) Just as an aside, in my view this is an exaggerated reading of Nietzsche, who wrote vehemently against nihilism on many occasions. But Hogan is keen to make a larger point with Heidegger.

From Heidegger's view, if nihilism is the denial of Being, then with Nietzsche, despite his claim to overcome nihilism we have nihilism proper. On Heidegger's account, Nietzsche's nihilism loses sight from the start of all that is

most worthy of thinking in the relationship between being human and Being. The two remain close in regard to the primacy of interpretation in human understanding, but Nietzsche's preoccupation with human being in the context of will to power, marks a decisive rift. In Heidegger's view the nihil, or no-thingness, is precisely that which calls for thinking. Henceforth, in his efforts to understand better the relationship between human being and Being, Heidegger turns the focus of his philosophical attention from human being to the relationship itself as an interplay. According to Hogan:

> In keeping with this shift in emphasis (*die Kehre*), Heidegger's language begins to show less of the philosophical formality and precision of *Being and Time*, and becomes increasingly imbued with imagery and metaphor. (222)

The path Heidegger's thought now takes, for Hogan, can be designated with the term "homecoming." As a kind of homecoming, thinking, as Heidegger elucidates it, lies among the first of humankind's responsibilities, but this responsibility is not a matter of a "theoretical representation of Being and of man," rather, it is an endeavor that is properly called action (224). Hogan explains that, as action, thinking is neither theoretical nor practical because it occurs before such a distinction can be made. He goes on to draw on some of the later themes in Heidegger's writing when he describes this as: "a finding of the way, a losing and refinding of the way, to one's human dwelling in the nearness of Being... with a view to a safeguarding, a sheltering." (224) In this action, Hogan claims, is something "reverential" or even "sacred." Moreover, it is something that can "properly, or worthily, be called educational." (224)

Hogan concludes his depiction with the assertion that the work of teaching is, first and foremost, "a form of action that answers the call of thinking." (224) To regard teaching in this way is to view teachers, but also learners, very differently than do those models that portray teaching as a technology, or as a service industry to some economic or political agenda. It is to conceptualize teachers as, in the first place, "active thinkers," whose work is to promote enduring and flourishing relationships to what is most worthy of the efforts of their learners (224). In terms of the curriculum, Hogan visualizes every subject – and not just the humanities! – as the experience of a "bringing-to-language which opens up a world of inquiry." (225) Such experience should involve "attending to" what is most worthy of thought in a particular field, although Hogan purports that we are more likely to "busily bypass" such thought. Still, such action does not appear to dismay Hogan and I would conjecture that this is attributable at least in part to how he understands Heidegger and his work:

> Heidegger's later writings can roughly be seen as a succession of explorations of the truth of Being, and of how human being is claimed by it, evades it, responds to it, ignores it, remains in attendance on it, rushes past it, belongs to it, or misunderstands it. All of these, it should be remembered, are forms of learning or consequences of learning." (223)

Of course, Hogan's representation of Heidegger's thought raises a number of questions for education about pedagogical objectives, methodological approaches and curriculum design. Some of these are new, but most would be recognizable to educators as questions that have been around for a long time. Again, the nature of the relationship between teacher and learner is an important

example. Like Cooper before him, Hogan admits to the need for more development of the vision, but does not attempt this in his article. This is in contrast to scholars such as Thomson and Bonnet, who have developed specific pedagogical approaches and conceptions. I will be building on the work of these two scholars in the service of language study.

2.5 Education Otherwise

I have reviewed the relevance of Heidegger's thought for education from within the context of three approaches: as a response to a crisis within education, as a response to some specific problem or question within education, and as a means to reconceptualizing education. It is time now to summarize the themes that have been identified within and across these approaches and to examine how they relate to language pedagogy. This examination will be a general one but will set the parameters for my further examination and analysis in the following chapter.

First, Heidegger's lifelong ruminations on the question of Being are a source of insight into crises involving both our actual, contemporary world and the world of education (Cooper). Crucial in this regard is a way of understanding and relating to the world that Heidegger claims has reached its zenith in our modern age: the technological thinking of enframing (Fitzsimons). For Heidegger, the essence of this technological way of seeing things – or in Heideggerian language this "mode of revealing" – is that everything is understood in terms of its use-value, as a resource to be exploited. This way of

revealing encompasses all entities in the world, including ourselves, for we too assume the position and value allocated to us in the instrumental world picture.

In regard to education, Heidegger's insight alerts us to the ways in which our educational institutions have already fallen under the sway of technology and enframing. Within post-secondary education, this instrumentalist technological understanding is involved in the increasing fragmentation, vocationalization, and technologization of the university. The consequences of this understanding are further exemplified by the market and managerial models of learning that increasingly set the tone for so much that has come to be regarded as education. As part of the so-called knowledge economy, where human beings are regarded as "human resources," universities are directed to turn out flexible, multi-skilled knowledge-workers for the twenty-first century.

By all accounts, however, the most serious consequence of the technological way of encountering entities is that it has become internal to our consciousness. We have become increasingly immersed in accordance with the instrumentalist frame of mind it provides, to the exclusion of any other way of understanding our world and relating to the entities in it. According to all the writers I reviewed, Heidegger regarded this single-minded focus on utilitarian ends as a sinister phenomenon of modern life. It is an attitude that alienates us from the entities in our world, for they cannot show themselves as they are in their many-sidedness. In addition, we are denied the sense of enrichment afforded by encountering things differently, afresh, and in their inherent uniqueness, which is a view advocated by Ruth Irwin.

I believe that Heidegger's work is to be valued in education for its power to reveal the totalizing effects of technology in our world and how this accounts for many of our practices in education. But by all accounts, his thought is not limited to insightful negative critique alone. Clearly, the value of Heidegger's negative critique is augmented by the richness of his positive contribution, in his account of language and especially poetic language or the language of poetry. Across the approaches, Heidegger scholars appear agreed that Heidegger's conception of the poetic serves as a means of disrupting the totalizing thought of enframing. If our language is in danger of reification as "standing-reserve," our thinking, too, will remain reified and static, closing off alternate possibilities for understanding and expressing our world (Lambeir). In contrast, our poetic language, or, better, our language to the extent that it is poetic, provides the possibility of finding new ways of expressing the way things are for us (Fitzsimons). This involves a reverence for things that is poetic in kind, a reminder of a different way of relating to the world, a way that makes that world sacred, something we must approach with wonder and awe (Irwin).

In summary, most of the implications of Heidegger's thought for education derive from the juxtaposition of two trajectories within his thinking, one negative and the other positive. I am referring to a distinction that Heidegger himself made in his work entitled *Discourse on Thinking* between "calculative" thinking and "meditative" or "poetic" thinking. As an historical "mode of revealing" in which entities increasingly show up only as resources to be optimized, "calculative thinking" quantifies all qualitative relations and sets everything up as

a resource to be exploited. By contrast, "meditative" or "poetic" thinking "contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything," free from any partial, pragmatic perspective.[91] By all accounts the stakes in the game are certainly high. For Heidegger, our very humanity stands threatened. The danger, as Heidegger observes in *Discourse on Thinking*, is that "there might go hand in hand with the greatest ingenuity in calculative planning and inventing indifference toward meditative thinking, total thoughtlessness. And then? Then man would have denied and thrown away his own special nature – that he is a meditative being."[92] What are the stakes for language study in this situation?

The relation of language study to the themes associated with calculative thinking is in most instances explicit and direct. For example, one means by which the totalizing dominance of calculative thinking might be mitigated, is to learn more than one language. Since the eighteenth century German scholars like Johann Gottfried Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt have put forward the idea that different people speak differently because they think differently, and that they think differently because their language offers them different ways of expressing the world around them. This notion was picked up in the United States by the anthropologist Franz Boas and subsequently by Edward Sapir and his pupil Benjamin Lee Whorf. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis makes the express claim that the structure of the language one uses influences the manner in which

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[91] Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. J. Anderson and E. Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 46.

[92] Heidegger 56.

one thinks and behaves.[93] This hypothesis has encountered legitimate criticism, however, there is nowadays a recognition that language both frames and reflects the way people think. This does not exclude the likelihood that calculative thinking occurs in many different languages; nevertheless, by bringing in the possibilities of thought that other languages offer, language study is at least aligned with the forces of resistance rather than submission to the totalizing dominance of calculative thinking.

There is another way in which language study relates to the negative critique of calculative thinking. Fitzsimons stated his purpose for writing on Heidegger and education as "the promotion of suitable educational language communities in many cultural worlds."[94] In other words, one way to resist the ills associated with calculative thinking is to make sure that the linguistic repertoire of humankind remains as rich and diversified as possible. I believe that the repeated use of the words we inherit through our own language can compel us towards a certain conventionality or conformity in our language use. In turn, our thinking can become static, closing off new directions and possibilities. By contrast, learning another language offers the possibility of finding new ways of expressing the way things are for us. For educators this is, in my opinion, more than a possibility: it is our responsibility and this above all in language education.

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[93] Claire Kramsch, *Language and Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 12.

[94] Fitzsimons 188.

As far as my thesis is concerned, a fuller account needs yet to be made of Heidegger's concept of the "poetic" and how it offers the resistance to "calculative" thinking that he considers so crucial. I do this in Chapter Three. In the meantime, however, it is possible to draw some general conclusions in regard to the relation of language education and the positive theme of "meditative" thinking. To begin, Heidegger's profound engagement with the creative forces within language aligns his approach with language study, at least potentially. To the extent that language learning does not restrict itself to a "skills" approach, and incorporates the "poetic" dimension of language, it can contribute positively to the development of a sensitized and receptive language awareness in learners, consistent with a "meditative" disposition. Such language study sensitizes us to the way that language conveys values. It can serve to make us more aware of the immensely powerful way that language conditions our relationship to the world and to each other. This awareness is especially relevant to the claim made for "poetic" thinking that it reveals a different way of relating to the world, a way that makes familiar things unfamiliar. Language study specifically involves an encounter with the unfamiliar and the strange. Currently, this exposure to the strange and unfamiliar in a language class does not evoke the experience of awe or wonder characteristic of "poetic" thinking. Indeed, a more customary response appears to be rejection or resistance. To achieve a response more akin to wonder would entail a different concept of ourselves and our relation to the world. We will see in Chapter Three that Heidegger offers such a concept in authentic understanding.

Heidegger's concepts of authenticity and authentic understanding are important for education because authenticity provides a concept of personhood and therefore a view of the qualities that must be developed through education. Because of its connection to the nature of human understanding, authentic understanding also offers a perspective on the nature of personally significant learning and the conditions that are necessary for it to occur. Moreover, it is through authentic existence that a truly critical pedagogy may be possible. Authentic understanding is the third theme of Heidegger and education and the major focus of my project. I have offered only a brief introduction to this theme so far, and will develop it in Chapter Three. As part of that development, the three features that have been repeatedly identified as characteristic of Heidegger's position will emerge again. These are the focus on questioning, an openness to new possibilities, and the experience of wonder.

Before concluding this chapter and beginning my account of authentic understanding in Chapter Three, I want to begin looking at the reciprocity that I am claiming for the two fields of language pedagogy and philosophical hermeneutics. I have shown how language education is responsive to the questions and concerns that are the focus of Heidegger's thought both in its critical and affirmative expressions. But can Heidegger's thinking be as receptive to the needs of an intercultural approach to language learning, an approach that aligns with the stated vision of higher education to produce citizens for a global world? By "global" I am not supporting a "globalized" concept of education

supportive of multinational corporations, but simply a broader awareness of different languages and cultures round the world.

My thesis does not proceed from the approach of a crisis within education, but it does assume a crisis within intercultural approaches to language study. In the way of an affirmative response, Heidegger's approach can assure – and reassure members of the discipline – that it is not a bad thing for a discipline to be in crisis. On the contrary, according to Heidegger, the defining trait of a scholarly discipline is the self-questioning in which it engages:

> ...real progress comes not so much from collecting results and storing them away in "manuals" as from inquiring into the ways in which each particular area is basically constituted [Grundverfassungen] – an inquiry to which we have been driven mostly by reacting against just such an increase in information.
>
> The real "movement" of the sciences takes place when their basic concepts undergo a more or less radical revision which is transparent to itself. The level which a science has reached is determined by how far it is *capable* of a crisis in its basic concepts. (BT29)

According to Heidegger, such crises occur in periods in which a discipline's basic concepts are undergoing revision, and this is a positive phenomenon. His vision of a crisis is akin to the sense of "paradigm shift" that Thomas Kuhn captures in his important work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1969). At such times it is particularly clear that the research accomplished by a discipline takes place on the ground of a particular way in which the objects of that discipline have been understood and represented beforehand. At other times, this ground is apt to be overlooked.

By all accounts, no previous approach to language study has so questioned its conceptual premises as have the intercultural approaches. Still,

the discipline is in need of more than approving reassurance. Can Heidegger's approach to understanding provide some new insight, some new directions in which to proceed for language study?

If nothing else, Heidegger's thought has shown us that the kind of language we use will be crucial for the kind of education we have. Why do we lack an appropriately sensitive but rich or differentiated language to talk about language education? Why don't educators ask this question more? In my opinion, Heidegger's development of the nature of authentic understanding in his canonical work *Being and Time* has the potential to be applied in ways that have significant implications for the language of education and for educational practices. My purpose will be to identify the best implications of that thought, not so much in its exposure (negatively) of calculative thinking, but in its affirmation (positively) of meditative thinking. Together with Heidegger's account of authentic understanding, this approach has the potential to reveal the nature of some of the current frustrations within language pedagogy and some possible ways beyond them.

Chapter III Authentic Understanding and Poetic Thinking

One goal of my dissertation, identified in Chapter One, reflects both the aims of contemporary education generally and new directions in the discipline of language education specifically: language study should aim to enhance the self-understanding of learners by increasing their awareness of their own identity as culturally and socially-defined individuals. Heidegger's advocacy of authentic understanding involves a conception of selfhood that emphasizes the role of socio-cultural forces in shaping identity; moreover, it links greater self-understanding to an awareness of these forces, and implies the importance of a more sensitive response to the self-understandings of others.

In Chapter Two, my examination of the reception of Heidegger's work within education revealed two lines of thought which constitute a seminal distinction in his thinking, the distinction between "calculative" and "meditative" thinking. The character and significance of the "calculative" have been described in the foregoing chapter. I will explore the "meditative" in this chapter because, in my opinion, the concepts of authentic understanding and poetic thinking represent the most constructive impulses in Heidegger's thought for language education. I believe that they will not only relate constructively together, but also augment and enhance one another in a manner that has potentially positive implications. My objective in this chapter is to examine both concepts, relate them to one another, and outline the implications for language education.

This chapter will have three main sections. The first section will depict Heidegger's concept of authentic understanding as he delineated it in his opus magnum *Being and Time* .[1] The second section will explore Heidegger's concept of "poetic" thinking as it is expressed in the collection of works entitled *Poetry, Language, Thought.*[2] In the third section I will bring the two together and extrapolate the implications for language pedagogy.

3.1 Heidegger's Philosophy of Authentic Understanding

It has been suggested by contemporary Heidegger scholars, that much of the fascination with his work is attributable to his blending of major philosophical issues with cultural critique. Admirers like Hannah Arendt and detractors like Theodor Adorno are both agreed that Heidegger's impact upon young people in the nineteen twenties and thirties was largely due to their sense that here, especially in the notion of authenticity, was a philosophy that directly addressed the conduct of their lives and their generation in the decades between the two World Wars.[3] For his part, Heidegger claimed that his philosophy in *Being and Time* was an attempt to "work out" nothing less than "the question of the meaning of Being," by identifying the essential, ontological structures of human

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) quoted as BT.

[2] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971) quoted as PLT.

[3] David E. Cooper, *Thinkers of our Time* (London: The Claridge Press, 1996) 37.

existence (BT19). These structures constitute the framework within which each of us understands our own Being and the Being of other beings.

According to this ontological framework, each of us understands ourselves first and foremost in our own Being, which Heidegger refers to as "Dasein." "Dasein" is translated as "being there" and is Heidegger's term for the type of being we are, the entity which traditional philosophy refers to as a subject. In addition to "Dasein," Heidegger distinguishes two more forms or modes of Being: "Zuhandensein" and "Vorhandensein." Translated as "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand" respectively, these are Heidegger's terms for those entities we are accustomed to regarding as objects.

Beginning with "Dasein," Heidegger's term for the type of being we are, this designation captures a basic aspect of our existence; namely, that there is no existing, no "being" without a "there," some place in which to exist. We exist in the world and that is why Heidegger claims that our existential structure is "Being-in-the-world." The hyphens indicate the profound degree of interrelationship that we, "Dasein," have with our world. This relationship might be likened to how we understand some other expressions with this construction, such as being in love or being in trouble.

Being-in-the-world is a unitary phenomenon, so we must resist the Cartesian temptation to think we are dealing here with independent entities. In Heidegger's account, the "world" is not a thing, nor does it consist of things. Moreover, "being-in" should not be conceptualized as a spatial relationship. We are always in-the-world by way of our interest and involvement in it, our caring

for and about that world. So much so, in fact, that according to Heidegger, the meaning of Being for "Dasein" is "Sorge" or "care." Heidegger describes care as "a single primordially unitary phenomenon which is already in this whole in such a way that it provides the ontological foundation for each structural item in its structural possibility" (BT226).

Heidegger's concept of care has been taken up and developed in a number of other fields. Perhaps one of the best known is Carol Gilligan's book entitled *In a Different Voice* in which she described an alternative approach to moral problems through an ethic of care.[4] The approach was identified in the voices of women, although Gilligan did not claim that the approach is exclusively female. A well-known work in the area of education is *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* by Nel Noddings. In this work, Noddings sums up Heidegger's approach succinctly: "For Heidegger care is inevitable; all aware human beings care. It is the mark of being human."[5] She goes on to claim, however, that not all educators develop the capacity to care in the manner she develops as part of the teacher-learner relationship.

Although the concept of care will also play a role in my consideration of understanding within language pedagogy, Heidegger's concept of care does not resemble most of the qualities we associate with the term. Care may express itself as a love for humans or nature, but that is not all care is. Within the

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[4] Carol Gilligan, *In a different voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

[5] Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools. An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College Press) 18.

Christian framework, care is often taken to mean "empathy," "compassion," or "pity," but these are not what Heidegger means with the term. Because care permeates human being, modes of human being that are neither loving, nor necessarily authentic, are also aspects of care. For the time being, it is sufficient to remember that "Dasein" is that entity which has care as its manner of Being: "Dasein's Being reveals itself as *care*" (BT227).

Because "Sorge," or care as it has been translated, is such a rich and complex term, Heidegger does not define it until the end of his depiction of Being-in-the-world. Heidegger does, however, introduce the element of "Besorgen" very early (BT83). This early introduction, as well as the term's etymological connection to "Sorge" – lost in the English translation of "concern," – are indications of its crucial significance for "Dasein." As I will show, concern also plays a crucial role in the efforts of language learners.

Although "Sorge" constitutes the unity of "Dasein's" way of being, Heidegger says that we actually have many possible ways or modes of being in our world, and he eventually introduces and describes most of these modes. To make an appropriate beginning, however, he focuses on that mode of Being in which we live most of the time through most of our lives and which he refers to as "durchschnittliche Alltäglichkeit," or "average everydayness":

> At the outset of our analysis it is particularly important that Dasein should not be interpreted with the differentiated character [Differenz] of some definite way of existing, but that it should be uncovered [aufgedeckt] in the undifferentiated character which it has proximally and for the most part. This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity. Out of this kind of Being -- and back into it again -- is all existing, such as it is.

> We call this everyday undifferentiated character of Dasein "*averageness*" (BT69)

This "average" and "everyday" mode of Being is presented by Heidegger as the mode in which human beings initially find themselves and in which they primarily remain. As we shall see, it is analogous to what language pedagogy identifies as our experience of the familiar. Indeed, in an article entitled "The Familiar and the Strange: On the Limits of Praxis in the Early Heidegger," Joseph P. Fell explicitly links the two.[6] Emerging from quite a different context, Sonya Sikka compares Tauler and Heidegger and their descriptions of the "immediate condition of the self" as that condition which finds itself "in the first instance and for the most part, as a being at home."[7] This is because Heidegger himself refers to this condition of everyday familiarity as that of "Being-at-home" (BT233).

Whatever the terminology, Heidegger has worked out this mode of "everydayness" in such a thorough and detailed manner that it can be effectively utilized by the discipline as a definitive depiction of the phenomenon of the familiar. Of course, if average "everydayness" is an experience of the familiar, it must be contrasted to a characterization of the unfamiliar or the strange. This could be readily extrapolated from Heidegger's comprehensive treatment of everyday familiarity. The extrapolation could be integrated with the

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[6] Joseph P. Fell, "The Familiar and the Strange: On the Limits of Praxis in the Early Heidegger," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, H. L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall eds. (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) 68.

[7] Sonya Sikka, *Forms of Transcendence: Heidegger and medieval mystical theology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997) 206.

imaginatively dramatic characterization of the unfamiliar or strange which Heidegger himself has developed in his formulation of "das Un-zuhause," or "Unheimlichkeit." The translations of "not-at-homeness" and "uncanniness" (BT233) are first indications of the appropriateness of these characterizations for language study. I will return to them later in this chapter to account for student resistance to cultural learning. For now, we will return to Heidegger's account of authentic understanding.

Having established that the constitutive structures of Being-in-the-world are most accessible through the mode of "everydayness," Heidegger says that what determines an entity as "ready-to-hand" within our everyday mode of understanding, is that "Dasein" has adopted a certain relationship or attitude to it. It is the attitude which Heidegger has already identified as "Besorgen" or "concern." We shall see shortly that this "concernful" relation to the "ready-to-hand" stands in contrast to the theoretical relation to an object in a manner which a language classroom can make especially evident. For his part, Heidegger depicts the contrast as follows:

> The ready-to-hand is not grasped theoretically at all, nor is it itself the sort of thing that circumspection takes proximally as a circumspective theme. The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw [zurückziehen] in order to be ready-to-hand authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves [die Werkzeuge selbst]. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work - that which is to be produced at the time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. (BT99)

As Heidegger describes it, what characterizes "Dasein's" "concernful" encounter with the entities in its world is that these entities "withdraw" as objects

in their own right and are focused upon the activities and purposes we hope to carry out through them. So it is that the carpenter interacts with a hammer, as an appropriate entity for a particular task of hammering (BT98). The carpenter's attention does not dwell on the hammer as an object in its own right but passes through it to the work at hand. In the same way, the attention of a teacher normally "withdraws" from the chalk in her hand or the board upon which she is writing, to the matter of the task at hand.

Of course, the "ready-to-hand" relationship to entities is not the only way we can encounter entities in our world. Proceeding from the same general features used to characterize entities as "ready-to-hand," entities encountered as "present-at-hand" are those explicit and decontextualized entities of the sort the scientist encounters. That is to say, an entity is treated as "present-at-hand" when it is viewed by us as explicit and decontextualizable in this way. For it is important to bear in mind a distinction made by Heidegger and concretized in the experience of the language classroom, that what we would ordinarily consider the same entity may nevertheless fall into both categories; that is, it may be either "ready-to-hand," or "present-at-hand" depending upon the mode in which it is encountered. A piece of chalk in use, implicit in the movement of the teacher's hand across a blackboard, is "ready-to-hand." That same chalk in the product-tester's laboratory, being probed and scrutinized for flaws, is "present-at-hand."

There is another way in which the language classroom shows us that we should not think of entities as belonging exclusively to one or another category.

Whereas chalk in a classroom is usually a "ready-to-hand" entity, chalk in a language classroom can be either "ready-to-hand" or "present-at-hand." The process of identifying this entity by way of a nonsensical noise (or written marks) that must be explicitly assigned meaning, compels the chalk to forfeit its "everyday" qualities and renders this usually "ready-to-hand" entity into a "present-at-hand" one. That same piece of chalk which is essentially invisible within the "concernful" encountering of the native language, will acquire a different kind of presence in the unfamiliar language. It is precisely this potential for newly emergent meanings, or in Heidegger's language new "presencing," when it is connected to Heidegger's concept of authentic understanding, that is directly relevant for language pedagogy. I will explain this later in this chapter, when we have a fuller picture of authentic understanding. It is time now to look at a second crucial feature of "Dasein": "being-with-others."

Heidegger's account of our world and our everyday understanding by no means holds that all the entities encountered there are inanimate. Other "Dasein" are also encountered, and such encountering depends upon their similar structure of Being-in-the-world. We view others as "being in" more or less the same world as ourselves, insofar as these others pursue largely the same ends, through basically similar means. Heidegger calls this shared pursuit which grounds our encountering of others, our "Mitsein": "the world is always the one I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]. Being-in is *Being-with* Others. Their Being-in-themselves within-the-world is *Dasein-with* [*Mitdasein*]" (BT155). Humans, which Heidegger renames "Dasein,"

are always fundamentally involved with others, this togetherness is a constituent element of human experience.

The main point to be made is that Heidegger depicts "Dasein's" Being as essentially social in nature. So far as "Dasein" is at all, it has "Being-with-one-another" as its kind of Being. A key term here, though difficult to define, is "das Man." Usually rendered as "the they," this is a very dissatisfying translation. The use of the plural suggests a collection of individuals while the use of the third person suggests that this is a collection of others. But Heidegger says:

> These Others, are not definite Others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them... One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances their power. The 'Others' whom one thus designates in order to cover up the fact of one's belonging to them essentially oneself... is not this one, not that one, not oneself [man selbst], not some people [einige], and not the sum of them all. (BT164)

An "other" by this understanding does not mean everyone else but me – those against whom the "I" stands out. Rather, they are those from whom for the most part an "I" does not distinguish itself – those among whom one is, too. Heidegger gives something resembling a definition when he describes "das Man" as "nothing definite, and which all are, though not as the sum" (BT164). Perhaps one of the more important points here is simply to note that the individual is only rarely singly there, for Heidegger. Instead, one could say that identity always includes alterity. One is always other to oneself and to others.

It is to the "inconspicuousness" of "das Man" that Heidegger attributes its power to determine the possibilities available for "Dasein" (BT164). Heidegger claims that "das Man" determines the way an individual "Dasein" interprets its world and "Being-in-the-world." This is of considerable importance because

these possibilities constitute nothing less than the source of our understanding of what we are and what we can be:

> We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking. (BT164)

Heidegger claims that "das Man" dictates the way an individual "Dasein" interprets its world and "Being-in-the-world." This domination of "Dasein" by "das Man" has a central role to play in Heidegger's account, and again I see its implications as being just as pivotal for pedagogy. What I mean by this will become clear as soon as we look at the last of the constitutive structures of humans, on Heidegger's account. These are: "Befindlichkeit," "Verstehen" and "Rede."

Macquarrie and Robinson translate "Befindlichkeit" as "state-of-mind"; however, it is difficult to define precisely and has been translated alternatively as "mood" or "attunement," "affect" and "feeling." In a particularly strenuous effort at accuracy I have even seen it translated as "so- foundness."[8] For Heidegger's part, his sense of the term derives from the many allusions and nuances of the meaning in German which the English translation cannot capture. Moreover, his use of the term is not confined to an individual "Dasein." Michael Haar shows that as Heidegger uses the term, it can refer to the "sensibility" of an age (e.g. romantic), the "culture" of a corporation (e.g. aggressive), the "temper" of the times (e.g. apathetic), as well as the "mood" in a current situation, such as the

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[8] John Haugeland, "Dasein's Disclosedness," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, H. L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall, eds. (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) 36.

"mood" in the classroom (e.g. eager, tense, apathetic).[9] Heidegger confirms this in *Being and Time*:

> Publicness . . . not only has in general its own way of having a mood, but needs moods and 'makes' them for itself. It is into such a mood and out of such a mood that the orator speaks. He must understand the possibilities of moods in order to rouse them and guide them aright. (BT178/SZ139)

To align "Befindlichkeit" with the aim of "guiding" others "aright" is to align it with the aims of pedagogy, although for Heidegger there is another far more crucial side to "Befindlichkeit" that we must consider. Heidegger refers to this as "Geworfenheit," translated as "thrownness":

> Dasein can, should, and must, through knowledge and will, become master of its moods; in certain possible ways of existing, this may signify a priority of volition and cognition. Only we must not be misled by this into denying that ontologically mood is a primordial kind of Being for Dasein, in which Dasein is disclosed to itself *prior to* all cognition and volition, and *beyond* their range of disclosure. And furthermore, when we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood; we are never free of moods. Ontologically, we thus obtain as the first essential characteristic of states-of-mind that *they disclose Dasein in its thrownness* . . . (BT175)

According to Heidegger, we are "thrown" into our world, insofar as our "state-of-mind" or "mood" is something we find ourselves always already in, with no possibility of originally producing it. At any given moment we find ourselves always already in the midst of a certain form of "concern" or involvement in our world. In this way, "thrownness" can be viewed as a kind of "rootedness" in our past. As we shall presently see, this "rootedness" of "Dasein" as it is revealed through "Befindlichkeit" may be viewed as a sort of countervailing tendency to

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[9] Michael Haar, "Attunement and Thinking," in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, H. L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall, eds. (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992) 159-172.

the pressing ahead of "Dasein" into its future that is revealed through the structure of "Verstehen" or "understanding."

"Understanding" is not a form of cognition or type of intellectual comprehension, nor is it a specific ability or competency to perform some particular task. "Understanding" as Heidegger depicts it is a competence for the whole system of involvements that constitute our world: "In understanding, as an *existentiale*, that which we have competence over is not a 'what', but Being as existing" (BT183). As an existential characteristic of human existence, involved in all of human behavior, "understanding" can find expression in any number of ways. Its primary activity is, however, the projection of possibilities: "Why does the understanding. . . always press forward into possibilities? It is because the understanding has in itself the existential structure which we call '*projection*'" (BT184).

Heidegger claims that humans always most basically "understand" themselves in terms of some possible ways to be. Our "Being-in" the "world" by way of "understanding" it involves, therefore, our being always directed towards a way we may be, and our competent acquaintance with those routes that lead to that end. Thus, the "projection" of "understanding" viewed as humans' pressing ahead into our future may be regarded as a sort of countervailing accompaniment to the "thrownness" revealed by "Befindlichkeit" as "Dasein's" rootedness in its past.

The complementarity of "understanding" with aspects of "projection" and "thrownness" extends to the third aspect of "being-in" that Heidegger calls

"Rede," translated as "discourse": "Dasein-with is already essentially manifest in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding. In discourse, Being-with becomes 'explicitly' *shared*..." (BT205). Heidegger's point now is that aspects of our implicitly shared understanding of the world can be called to the attention of others and made explicit in "assertions":

> As something communicated, that which has been put forward in the assertion is something that Others can 'share' with the person making the assertion, even though the entity which he has pointed out and to which he has given a definite character is not close enough for them to grasp and see it. (BT197)

Because it is in the nature of the "assertion" that it may be "shared," Heidegger observes that we may use the "assertion" without fully "grasping" the truth it conveys. Who of us, for instance, hasn't spoken of the "horrors of war" or the "miseries of poverty," not by virtue of experiencing these ourselves, but because we have heard others speak in this way? For Heidegger, this constitutes a crucial deficiency, a deficiency of the one feature that unifies all the various aspects of "Being-in," indeed, that renders our entire structure of "Being-in-the-world" as an integrated whole. This feature is "Sorge," or care.

The unifying force of "care" within understanding is the meaning of our existence, the "Being of Dasein" (BT241). It is therefore the decisive feature by way of which we understand the world in the fullest sense of the word. It is by means of the "care" of our "concernful" understanding, that entities matter to us in the richness of ways in which they do. According to Heidegger, therefore, if an individual does not share in the "concern" that an "assertion" intends, their use of it is crucially deficient.

We will be able to see more clearly what this involves by way of some concrete examples, one fictitious and for the sake of illustration; the other deriving from the everyday world of language study. For the first, fictitious instance, let us imagine one student saying to another: "My pen has run out of ink." Technically, what the assertion states is only that the predicate "run out of ink" is applied to the subject entity "pen." However, to limit this assertion to an observation that the "pen" possesses the physical quality of being devoid of ink would be to impoverish substantially the fullness of the "understanding" from which the assertion derives. This might include, for instance, exasperation on the part of the student, that she is having such a bad day, regret over having gotten such a cheap pen, or hope that she might be able to obtain a replacement from her interlocutor. All of these are possible as part of the original "concernful" understanding and are not conveyed in the predicative act of the "assertion."

In order for the fullness of an understanding to be successfully communicated in an "assertion," the conditions of a hermeneutical dynamic must be fulfilled. In Heideggerian terms this means that the student and her interlocutor must have in common a concern with this type of entity; that is, they must be alike in applying the same involvement to the entity, in "caring" about the ends this "ready-to-hand" entity is useful for, and in possessing a like competence over the means to achieving those ends.

What Heidegger wants us to see, is that "discourse" proceeds from a fullness of "understanding" which can never be entirely captured at the level of

the "assertion." Because "discourse" is "co-original" with "state-of-mind" and "understanding," it incorporates all the forms in which our practical being-in-the-world expresses itself, including such articulations as sighs, laughs, cries and silence. In the case of the pen, such discursive forms of expression as an expletive, an exasperated sigh, or wordlessly tossing the pen in the garbage might be equally or even more successfully expressive.

In any case, according to Heidegger, it is a shared "concernful" understanding that grounds both the successful "interpretation" of an entity and the successful communication of an "assertion." That this hermeneutical grounding is poorly conveyed and sometimes even lost entirely in "assertions," can be further exemplified by looking now at a problem common to the study of many languages. It involves the politeness forms of social interaction and has the potential to severely compromise communicative competency and intercultural understanding.

No matter what the language, politeness routines make up a substantial proportion of everyday interactions amongst people. One of the most crucial ways of establishing and maintaining social contact is in knowing how to address the people with whom one is interacting. For English-speakers, pronouns of personal address are less problematic than their counterparts in many other languages, including German. In German, the choice is limited to only two forms, "du" or "Sie," and yet the frequency of incorrect usage is high even at advanced levels of study. This is not attributable to grammatical complexity, since the grammatical forms are straightforward and easily

mastered. In addition, there are quite clearly codified rules for selecting between the two. Of course, in practice, the choice of personal pronoun does not always adhere so tidily to rules, but most of the errors that learners make are not the fine distinctions of the grey areas, but rather obvious and blatant contraventions of the code; for example, addressing some civic authority with the familiar du, or a school-aged child with the polite "Sie." Perhaps the clearest indicator that students are not grasping the distinction is the indiscriminate switching between the two forms with the same interlocutor. Because incorrect usage of these forms may be perceived as impolite – if not downright insulting at times – the consequences for the learners can be critical.

This not uncommon didactic problem may be accounted for in a number of ways, and addressed by any number of didactic strategies. Viewing it now in terms of Heideggerian hermeneutics, the problem may be seen as exemplifying the innate relation of "discourse" with "state-of-mind" and "understanding," whereby each is constituted by its relationship to the others and each therefore requires the others for its intelligibility. "Being-in" more or less the same world, native German speakers share in the intelligibility that grounds the usage of "du" and "Sie." One has been socialized, in other words, into the same language and cultural practices from birth, across a range of interlocutors and contexts. Most importantly, they do so in the full hermeneutical sense of adopting the same "concernful" attitude towards it. Non-native speakers, who do not have this world in common, do not share the "concernful" understanding that grounds the usage. They can repeat the forms, but the distinction will not matter to them in

the meaningful way that it will for a German speaker and so their grasp of it is deficient. For English speakers there is an even further disengagement from the "concernful understanding" of the German speaker, since there is nothing directly analogous in the English world. Such a distinction in forms of address is not a part of English pronominal "discourse," though it can be found in other address forms, such as Miss, Ms., Mrs., Dr., or first name versus last name identification. Presumably, if learners could become more "concernfully" engaged with the distinction, correct usage in both languages would be more readily achieved. Such a successful engagement would seem to be the implication of this Heideggerian account. It is an implication we will explore further as we continue along the path towards authentic understanding.

3.1.1 Falling into the Familiar

The previous section took us to the end of the first part of Heidegger's account of "Being-in-the-world." This account is very important for my examination because it shows the crucial significance of socially-shared, embodied practices for human understanding. The second part of Heidegger's explication of being-in introduces the mode of "fallenness" or "Verfallen". It is even more important for showing the dramatic extent and sweeping consequences of our immersion in our cultural tradition. It is this aspect of Being that Heidegger blames for those crucial misinterpretations of ourselves that his own analysis is always at such pains to dismiss. And indeed, it will play this role even though Heidegger emphasizes that the term "does not express

any negative evaluation" (BT 220). Still, it is evident from his depiction that "falling" is a tendency that hinders self-understanding and that we must struggle to overcome if authentic understanding is to be attained.

Within the context of language pedagogy, Heidegger's depiction of "fallenness" is equivalent to the tendency on the part of learners to resist the unfamiliar, adhere to the familiar, and to judge a strange culture solely by the standards and experience of their own culture. This of course condemns them to viewing the other culture only from an outsider's perspective and possibly even blocks their efforts to gain an insider's experience, to see the other culture as it sees itself. Although Heidegger is not explicitly concerned with our relationship to the unfamiliar culture, immersion in the familiar is in opposition to the authentic understanding towards which he is urging us. It goes without saying that Heidegger himself never considered language study as an instrument for advancing the kind of self-understanding he promotes. I will argue that language study is precisely that kind of instrument, however, and want to begin now by looking at the manifestations of "fallenness" in our average, everyday behaviour and linking these with behaviour in the classroom.

We have already established that "Dasein's" way to be is to understand Being. "Fallenness" refers to an essential tendency in "Dasein," the tendency to flee or avoid the disclosure of such understanding. Heidegger distinguishes between two types of "falling," both of which are very much in evidence in the language classroom, although within classroom experience they amount in the end to much the same thing. The first is that we affirm and adhere to the

cultural tradition we have inherited and interpret other traditions by the standards of our own:

> Our preparatory Interpretation... will make manifest, however, not only that Dasein is inclined to fall back upon its world (the world in which it is) and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light, but also that Dasein simultaneously falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold. (BT42)

We have already seen that, according to Heidegger, the world in which we find ourselves is one into which we have been "thrown." We have also seen that this world is held in common with others and so can be explicitly shared with them in "discourse." Heidegger's further point now is that (for the most part) we accept this world and continue to operate within it, because it is so generally accepted and adhered to by others around us. The ends towards which we project are selected and validated for us by the fact that this is what one does in the community to which one belongs. These ends are what anyone values and strives for and in accepting them as confirmed in this way, we ourselves then belong to this "they," we ourselves are this "anyone." This is captured particularly well in the German phrase "wie es sich gehört"– "in the proper way." It is explained particularly well by Bourdieu, who claims:

> nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and, therefore, more precious, than the values given body... by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as "stand up straight" or "don't hold your knife in your left hand."[10]

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[10] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 94.

Nevertheless, whatever gain we realize from belonging to the collective, Heidegger characterizes such "fallenness" into the understanding of "das Man" as involving a loss of our own authentic self: "The Self of everyday Dasein is the *they-self*, which we distinguish from the *authentic* Self – that is, from the Self which has been taken hold of in its own way" (BT167). It is important to note that this claim is based upon Heidegger's presentation of the self not as a thing, a substance, or a subject, but as a "way of existing" (BT312). In "fallenness," "Dasein" has embraced a "way of existing" merely because that "way" is publicly accepted.

Let us look briefly at the other main route by which "Dasein" may fall, that of an absorption in entities that make up our world. We have seen that our everyday relation to entities consists in our dealings with them in an attitude of "concern." Now according to Heidegger, when "Dasein" finishes or "rests" from its tasks, "concern does not disappear; circumspection, however, becomes free..." (BT216). Thus, while we may "rest" from our work, our seeking to "bring close" or arrange the entities in our environment continues in a different form:

> Care becomes concern with the possibilities of seeing the "world" merely as it *looks* while one tarries and takes a rest. Dasein seeks what is far away simply in order to bring it close to itself in the way it looks... Consequently it does not seek the leisure of tarrying observantly, but rather seeks restlessness and the excitement of continual novelty and changing encounters. (BT216)

When everyday Being has nothing more at hand that needs to be taken care of, the care of "concern" becomes the "care" of looking around, merely for the sake of looking. Heidegger calls this looking for its own sake "Neugier," which literally means "greed for the new" but is usually translated into English as

the much more benign "curiosity." Considered from a pedagogical perspective, "curiosity" is something positive and this is not surprising. Webster's New World Dictionary defines curiosity as "a desire to learn or know." As Heidegger describes it, however, "Neugier" is not to be recommended. As a fallen form of our "concernful" involvement with entities, "curiosity" seeks an involvement with entities able to provide for maximum distraction and diversion. It does so not in order to understand the world, however, but simply to provide it with constantly new possibilities for fleeing the world.

It is not Heidegger's example, but I believe that many of the newer technologies, such as television and the computer, exemplify and promote this distracting absorption. It is in the nature of these media that they are able to present us with an array of entities in rapid succession. As a consequence, we experience a necessarily brief but therefore all the more gripping involvement with each. Nothing is held before us long enough to encourage the close and sustained involvement normally considered conducive to understanding; rather, these technologies offer precisely the intense but fleeting involvement sought by "Neugier." Of course, this description does not apply so arbitrarily, but insofar as Heidegger's characterization is valid, educators can neither unequivocally endorse curiosity as an end in itself, nor technology as a means.

We have seen from Chapter Two that Heidegger will promote an attitude that is a relative of curiosity but much older philosophically: wonder. Webster's definition of wonder resonates with the conceptual constellation we have established and want to pursue: "the feeling of surprise, admiration, and awe

aroused by something strange, unexpected, incredible, etc." The use of technology to promote wonder would mean the application of one of the oldest philosophical concepts to improve classroom practices in our time. Heidegger's approach would also encourage us to look again at pedagogical practices that are more recent but currently out of favor. I am thinking specifically of the practice of close reading as a means of developing the sustained and thoughtful engagement Heidegger advocates for understanding, and to offer a balance to the form of involvement that the newer technologies promote.

Returning again to the issue at hand, although "Dasein" falls along two routes (absorption in "das Man" and absorption in entities), these may come to expression in any number of ways. Heidegger singles out "curiosity" as a fallen expression of our "concernful" involvement with entities, and this has the benefit of being relevant to pedagogy. Another form of falling is "Gerede." "Gerede," or "idle talk," is a form of communicating in which one is concerned not so much with the subject-matter itself, but with one's interaction with the other. That which is said is not done so out of a genuine concern for a particular topic, but with an eye to the conversational situation: "We do not so much understand the entities which are talked about; we already are listening only to what is said-in-the-talk as such" (BT212).

In developing our ability to manage such interactions, we naturally acquire a facility of speaking in ways accepted as appropriate. We learn conversational moves that are welcome and effective among our partners in such an exchange. In other words, in "Gerede," "Dasein" aligns itself with a

common way in which things are spoken of, and acquires a facility at speaking of them in this way.

There is an implication here for language learning, which is as obvious as it is ironic. What Heidegger describes as a "fallen" mode of Being, could be seen by language study as representing somewhat of an ideal. Insofar as the goal of language study is to enable learners to converse and interact effectively in a language and culture unfamiliar to them, the fallen mode of "everydayness" appears to be the very one learners and teachers should use as a model. After all, by Heidegger's definition, "Gerede" constitutes an intersection of language and culture that is fundamental. In "Gerede," the social dimension of talk is at least as important as the linguistic – if not more so. Such an account is the essential equating of community with communication. Moreover, if we grant Heidegger this claim that "idle talk" is the form of communication in which a speech community primarily engages, we have an account of why learners relying on the language they have acquired in a classroom are so ill-equipped to converse in the actual speech community.

It is clear that we cannot endorse "fallen everydayness" as the new ideal for language study. Aside from the fact that it would be virtually impossible to attain within a classroom setting, this is decidedly not the positive pedagogical possibility of Heidegger's philosophy for at least two reasons: first, to promote such an absorption of the learner into the unfamiliar culture would be to endorse the naive "cultural affirmation" of which Borrelli warns. An unquestioning acceptance of the ways of an unfamiliar culture by a learner is just as

unproductive as an unquestioning acceptance of their own. Both undermine the goal of enhancing understanding. The impetus within language pedagogy to have the learner understand another culture by assuming its ways, needs to be balanced by another which encourages questioning the ways of that other culture – just as one must question one's own culture.

A second reason why "fallen everydayness" is not appropriate as an ideal for language study comes from Heidegger himself. We have already seen that Heidegger, while not wanting to give "fallenness" a negative valuation and insisting that it is part of our existential structure, nevertheless claims that it is not the mode in which we should remain. As we shall immediately see, the problems Heidegger attributes to "fallenness" have resonance with long-standing problems within pedagogy. We have already had a first look at these problems in conjunction with our examination of "Rede." An inquiry into "Gerede" will give us an opportunity to develop the discussion.

Heidegger claims that our "idle talk" embodies a particular understanding of ends and world, which we inevitably incorporate in the course of verbal interaction; however, as we have already seen, because this understanding is acquired in such an indirect way, it is characterized by a certain remoteness from its subject-matter: "Idle talk is the possibility of understanding everything without previously making the thing one's own" (BT213). Indeed, if a speaker has grasped an issue or an involvement only in such "idle talk," they do not, in Heidegger's sense, genuinely understand the involvement at all; they understand, i.e. have a mastery over, only the procedure for speaking of the

involvement to others, and not over the involvement itself. Heidegger claims that it is through such "idle talk" that we acquire our only familiarity with broad sectors of our world, so that for the most part everyday "Dasein" understands only at second hand and with an "average intelligibility" (BT212):

> And because this discoursing has lost its primary relationship-of-Being towards the entity talked about, or else has never achieved such a relationship, it does not communicate in such a way as to let this entity be appropriated in a primordial manner... but communicates rather by... *passing the word along*. (BT212/SZ169)

The understanding which "idle talk" conveys is not a genuine familiarity or mastery of its subject matter, even where its assertions correspond objectively to the facts. This, of course, is a phenomenon well known to educators, even if it is not expressed in Heideggerian terms. An example from my own experience provides an exemplary case in point.

The pedagogical instance was an immersion program in which Canadian students studied third-level German within Germany. As part of the format, the students and I had a chance to discuss many current issues of concern in Germany, topics such as "Ausländerfeindlichkeit" ("hostility towards foreigners") and the divisions between East and West Germans. The debate was always lively but also disquietingly predictable. All too frequently complex questions were flattened and relativized by handy responses, responses I recognized as the standard fare of modern Western liberalism. For instance, the students admonished Germans for not being more tolerant of foreigners, for not being more informed and open-minded regarding cultural differences, and for resorting to violence instead of turning to dialogue to resolve their differences. If,

however, these same students encountered German cultural behaviors unfamiliar to them, infringingly close body contact, for instance, or the failure to return a smile, they generally showed little of the tolerance, open-mindedness and faith in dialogue which they had recommended for the Germans. Instead, their responses were closer to the very ones they had condemned in the Germans: suspicion, rejection, anger.

All of the students in this immersion class had had at least two years of university studies. It was evident that they were well-versed in attitudes currently considered politically correct, but the manner in which they actually expressed and responded to their personal experience was not consistent with what they said. They did not apply to themselves what they applied to others. In Heideggerian terms, they repeated assertions they had heard without the crucial dimension of "concernful" involvement. In the insider-outsider terminology of language pedagogy, they responded to the unfamiliar as outsiders. They adhered steadfastly to the familiar ways of their own tradition and resisted those of the other tradition. What might have induced those Canadian students not only to talk tolerance but actually to respond with tolerance – rather than rejection and condemnation – to those German ways that didn't coincide with their own? What might have contributed to taking them beyond mere average intelligibility?

To propose some possibilities we must first establish what it is that "Dasein" is fleeing. We have just seen that while language learners may talk as if they have the benefit of an insider-outsider perspective, they could simply be availing

themselves of the re-assertion feature of assertion. In practice, learners are just as likely to flee the unfamiliar by adhering to the ways of their own tradition. Establishing what it is about our Being that "Dasein" is fleeing in "fallen everydayness" may give us insight into what it is about the unfamiliar that learners are fleeing when they cling to the familiar.

3.1.2 Fleeing the Unfamiliar

We have already established that what distinguishes Heidegger's ontology from traditional philosophy is the priority he gives to our "concernful" understanding as the basic condition for all our activity. Heidegger goes on to explain, however, two interconnected ways in which that condition is lacking or deficient. They derive from the ways we are "thrown" and "projecting," those all important aspects of "Being-in-the-world" that I correlated earlier with "state-of-mind" and "understanding."

If we recall, thrownness refers first to the way we find ourselves always already in a world – already operating in terms of some structure of involvements, which we have not ourselves constructed or chosen. However, to understand properly the sense in which we, because "thrown," can never choose or construct our Being-in-the-world, we must consider this "thrownness" in terms of the contrasting notion of "projection."

This, now recall, refers to the way we press ahead towards some possible way to be – towards some end by which we understand ourselves. We exist by projecting towards possibilities with which we identify ourselves, but this

projection is grounded in an understanding which has always already been imposed upon us. We are never able to choose our possibilities from the ground up, and our existence is in this sense out of our own control, possessing a momentum we do not ourselves generate. We find ourselves carried along, and never able to set or plant ourselves in such a way as to determine, once and for all and for ourselves, our own course.

> ...in existing as thrown – Dasein constantly lags behind its possibilities. It is never existent *before* its basis, but only *from it* and *as this basis*. Thus "Being-a-basis" means *never* to have power over one's ownmost Being from the ground up. This "*not*" belongs to the existential meaning of "thrownness." (BT330)

This impossibility of a total self-creation, this sense in which we can never be a first cause of ourselves, is the first way in which our Being, as Being-in-the-world is dissatisfying to us. The second dissatisfaction is somewhat more straightforward:

> ...in having a potentiality-for-Being it always stands in one possibility or another: it constantly is *not* other possibilities, and it has waived these in its existentiell projection... Freedom, however, *is* only in the choice of o n e possibility – that is, in tolerating one's not having chosen the others and one's not being able to choose them. (BT331)

So, while the first dissatisfaction lies in our inability to choose the basis responsible for the choices we make, the second consists in a limitation built into these choices themselves: that they inherently involve a ruling-out of alternative possibilities, and dictate that we now cannot be in those other ways. Our world – that which is constituted by our aiming towards certain ends and knowing certain ways to pursue them – is only one among many possible worlds. And just as it is not picked out as the one we have chosen for ourselves, so it is not

picked out as intrinsically finer or more worthy than any of these others. This dissatisfaction is disturbing to us, implying as it does that we must cut ourselves off from a vast range of possibilities, by virtue of our identification with some handful. We understand or define ourselves in terms of these possibilities we strive towards, yet, not only are they ones we ourselves have not made, they are not even inherently or distinctively worth striving for.

Heidegger refers to these two deep dissatisfactions as the two "Nichtigkeiten," translated as "nullities," and claims that they are built into our structure of "concernful" Being-in-the-world: "Care itself, in its very essence, is permeated with nullity through and through" (BT331).

The "nullities" are the ways in which our essential condition of Being-in-the-world is dissatisfying to us. Because there is no ultimate foundation or justification for the possibilities a person adopts, our existence has a null basis. "Falling" is how we avoid recognizing and acknowledging this. Expressed most simply, it is the tendency in us to avoid facing the essential groundlessness to our Being. As a last step in clarifying this dynamic, let us look briefly at how both the routes along which we fall can function as a port in the storm of groundlessness, whereas the experience of the unfamiliar may leave us drifting out at sea.

I previously identified two directions taken by our "falling everydayness": flight into an absorption in entities within-the-world, and flight into an absorption in a certain way of Being-with others. If we look for an example to the second of these, we can see fairly quickly why such falling in with the average

understanding of "das Man" should help us to turn away from the groundlessness of our Being:

> ...the obviousness and self-assurance of the average ways in which things have been interpreted, are such that while the particular Dasein drifts along towards an ever-increasing groundlessness as it floats, the uncanniness of this floating remains hidden from it under their protecting shelter. (BT214)

The very commonality of our public understanding, the way it is unanimously affirmed and conformed to, give it the appearance of fastening on ends and entities as they really are and must be, and conceal its status as merely one among many possible understandings. There is a rough consensus as to what constitutes the good life, and the role of entities in the realization of such a life. This joint understanding is displayed in our public, "concernful" activities, and is shared in the talk which is typical of our everyday relations to others. We more easily care about our work when we see others busy at it about us, and when our talk with them takes its ends for granted. Such displaying and sharing serve to strengthen the immersion of each of us within this familiar, socially conventional and grounding understanding.

In short, immersion in "das Man," in our familiar "everyday" understanding, helps to stabilize us in the face of the ever present potential of the "nullities" to destabilize us. A drawback to this stabilizing immersion is that we are likely to avoid or resist those things that might disturb it and bring us face to face with our groundlessness. The deeper we are immersed, the less likely we are to recognize that we have never examined the means or ends involved in our familiar understanding, and that these means or ends are adopted at the

cost of excluding others – others that may be unfamiliar to us, but no less intrinsically worthwhile. All of this is best illustrated with an example which I would like to take again from an immersion experience of a different sort: Canadian students participating in a language immersion program within Germany.

As noted previously, the format of this immersion program included regular exchange and discussion. The topics for discussion were usually taken from the textbook, and included such issues as stereotypes, cultural values, and inter- and intracultural relations. Often, however, the subject matter was left up to the students in which case they rarely had anything to do with such topics as "Ausländerfeindlichkeit" ("hostility to foreigners"); rather, the students chose to talk about the average, everyday practices and behaviors of the life they suddenly found themselves "thrown" into. Indeed, for the entire six weeks of their stay, the topics of concern that most occupied the students were around food and water – although not in that order. Water was their first and foremost concern and above all, their problems with the drinking water.

The Canadian students in the immersion program were accustomed to drinking bottled water that is uncarbonated. Since most of the bottled water in Germany is carbonated mineral water, students experienced considerable difficulty obtaining the uncarbonated bottled water they were used to drinking and which they preferred. The German host families with whom they were staying seemed to show an equally strong preference, although in reverse. Students claimed that although they stated their preference for uncarbonated

water clearly and unequivocally, and although the German families normally bent over backward to accommodate their Canadian guests, they could not be motivated to buy uncarbonated water. Some students resorted to drinking water from the tap, horrifying their German hosts though in most cases not sufficiently enough to get them to purchase uncarbonated bottled water. But their water troubles didn't end there.

For most of the Canadian students a daily shower was a fundamental part of basic hygiene. Many of them felt very strongly about this, insisting that it was a part of their identity, their sense of themselves as a clean person. They felt dirty when they could not shower or bathe daily. Needless to say, this commitment on the part of Canadian students to personal hygiene frequently clashed with the commitment of their German host families to conserving water. It appeared that in many families a daily shower or tub bath was considered wasteful and/or excessive. A shower every two or three days was expected to suffice. In other families a daily shower was tolerated but showers were to be held much shorter than the students were used to. Yet this was still not the end of their troubles concerning water.

Not unexpectedly, the German attention to water conservation carried over into other areas: the frequency with which laundry was done, for instance, and how often a student could change their clothes. Thus, from the first day of classes to the last, both in classroom discussion and in their written submissions, cultural differences around water were one of the most frequently addressed topics.

Regarding this from a pedagogical point of view, I recognize that students may show a preference for discussing topics like food and water because they are linguistically easier to manage than a topic like "Ausländerfeindlichkeit." In any case, the duration and intensity of the students' engagement with these concerns are compelling. Their attention to such everyday entities as water and food, and such routine activities as drinking and washing are, of course, consistent with Heidegger's pragmatic philosophical stance. It supports the priority that he attributes to "everydayness" as constituting the primary mode of understanding which we inhabit. The students' interests and behaviors also support Heidegger's claim that we are considerably invested in adhering to this mode of understanding. The Canadian students recognized and even praised the highly developed German consciousness of water conservation, yet they clung steadfastly to the familiar Canadian attitudes and ways as being preferable. Significantly, the students claimed they were better able to deal with cultural differences because they were able to talk about them. Clearly, however, talking about their experiences around water did as little to change their actual attitude and practices as talking about tolerance. We have already looked at the features of talk, that is, of assertion and re-assertion, for an account of why this might be so.

I began this chapter by pointing out the fundamental differences between Heidegger's approach to philosophy and that of traditional approaches, and the way they are the same. It is time now to clarify this.

3.1.3 Achieving Authentic Understanding

As already noted, Heidegger does not offer the conventional philosophical program for what constitutes wisdom, or goodness, or beauty. Still, *Being and Time* does what philosophy up to Heidegger had more or less always done: give a ground (in Heidegger's case, an ungrounded ground) for our understanding of everything. Moreover, in his own way, Heidegger aims at that edification which his philosophical predecessors have also traditionally sought. For Heidegger does not leave us without a response to this dilemma of our groundlessness. The response lies, he says, in a transformed mode of understanding, a non-falling mode of existence that he calls "Eigentlichkeit" or "authenticity."

As a non-falling mode of existence, "authenticity" is that mode of Being-in-the-world in which we most directly face the groundlessness of our own Being. As the contrasting mode to "das Man," it is constituted by different modifications of "state-of-mind," "understanding" and "discourse" than those found in "fallen everydayness." Heidegger's name for this non-fallen mode of concern is "Entschlossenheit" or "resoluteness." The German is revealing both in its affinity to "Erschlossenheit" ("disclosedness") and in its secondary connotation of openness seen in the literal translation of "Entschlossenheit" as "un-closedness."

Insofar as we have characterized "falling" as an immersion in "das Man" and an absorption in entities, this initial characterization of "authentic understanding" as a contrasting mode to "falling" may suggest that it is another

way of disengaging ourselves from a "concernful" involvement with entities. Heidegger emphasizes that this is not so:

> Resoluteness, as *authentic Being-one's Self*, does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating 'I.' And how should it, when resoluteness as authentic disclosedness, is *authentically* nothing else than *Being-in-the-world*? Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others. (BT344)

The "resolute understanding" of "authentic" Being does not involve any kind of abstraction or disengagement from the world of our concern, but rather a different manner of involvement in our world. In authenticity we do not cease projecting towards various ends, but we assign ourselves to these in full recognition that they do not constitute what we most basically are. In other words – and this is an important point for pedagogy – we continue to assign ourselves to these ends but with a ready openness to giving them up and to substituting quite different roles. Within the context of language study, this would translate into learners overcoming the tendency to identify themselves simply and endlessly by reference to their own tradition. Their "concernful" involvement would continue to determine the manner in which their tradition matters to them, but they would acknowledge the contingency of their own and any other tradition.

This authentic openness to shifts in our ends, that is, the refusal on our part to cling to them as secure indicators of what we really are, will have as its complement an openness to shifts in our understanding of entities, animate and inanimate. This would include ceasing to take any current understanding of an entity as the secure essence it must and can only have. In the case of language

study, learners would no longer understand artifacts, either those of the unfamiliar tradition, or those of their own tradition, in one privileged way, believing it to be the only way of encountering entities and not one whose choice is ultimately without ground.

So far we have a characterization of authentic understanding that depicts it negatively, in its contrast to fallen understanding. It remains to characterize this form of understanding positively, especially in its expression as a pedagogical sensibility. To achieve this, I believe we must begin first with the three characteristics that we have already identified as exemplifying a Heideggerian approach; that is, the definitive role of questioning, the attention to possibilities, and the experience of wonder. Not surprisingly, these three characteristics are present in Heidegger's positive depiction of "authentic understanding" in *Being and Time*.

The first among these features is a view of understanding as an ongoing process of questioning. This is in contrast to the traditional pedagogical goal of attaining a critical level of mastery. This first feature constitutes more than just a pedagogical extrapolation of Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics. Heidegger himself specifically identified questioning as a priority in his *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles (Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle)*, where he stated that scholarly inquiry should seek to "heighten what is questionable" – "eine Steigerung der Fragbarkeit."[11] Such questioning would

[11] Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 61, (Frankfurt/M: Vittorio Klosterman, 1985) 239.

involve overcoming the scholarly desire to conclude, to render a question inert through resolution. It would also involve a critical dimension, although not through any metacognitive positioning. Considered in light of Heideggerian hermeneutics, regardless of our best efforts to understand, we can never be freed of our own assumptions. The implicit acknowledgment here is that absolute knowledge is not humanly attainable. Such acknowledgment carries with it the corollary that a conflict of interpretations will inevitably attend the pursuit of knowledge and learning. Also implied is the probability that many more of our own preconceptions are likely to come to light in our dealings that involve others, and hence other interpretations, particularly if those others are quite differently disposed to ourselves.

The second feature identified by scholars as characterizing a Heideggerian educational approach is an emphasis upon possibility. This characteristic, too, is a feature of Heidegger's conception of existential understanding:

> In understanding, as an *existentiale*, that which we have such competence over is not a "what," but Being as existing. The kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being, lies existentially in understanding... Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility. (BT183)

We have seen that Heidegger characterizes understanding as a kind of know-how that transcends a reliance on fixed positions or theories. Here he points out that understanding is a mode of being which is capable of going beyond what is, and so "disclosing" not just actual things or beings, but the possibility of things or beings. That is, in understanding, we project our

possibilities before ourselves; we plan, pursue goals, anticipate consequences, expect results and generally orient ourselves towards that which we are not yet. Understanding ourselves in this way as our own "potentiality-for-Being" is what enables us to exist within our ownmost possibilities. Furthermore, an understanding which emphasizes possibilities would encourage us to adopt the opposite response towards experience from that taken in "fallen everydayness," that is, justified in our choice of one interpretation and tranquil in our neglect of other possibilities.

To summarize: The significance of Heidegger's emphasis on questioning and possibilities lies in his insistence that the unattainability of absolute knowledge is not something that can be conquered; rather, it is an inescapable feature of the human condition. This feature, however, opens up new possibilities for how understanding itself is to be understood and advanced. The wholehearted acknowledgment of such limitation and possibility is, therefore, among the most important and enabling of educational virtues.

The following passage may be seen as a kind of synopsis of the characterization I have been describing thus far. In addition, it makes reference to a central dynamic in the attainment of authentic understanding:

> Has not Dasein's Being become more enigmatical now that we have explicated the existential constitution of the Being of the "there" in the sense of thrown projection? It has indeed. We must first let the full enigmatical character of this Being emerge, even if all we can do is to come to a genuine breakdown over its 'solution', and to formulate anew the question about the Being of thrown projective Being-in-the-world. (BT188)

According to Heidegger, all of us must become more fully and explicitly aware of the involvements in which we "concernfully" participate. One of the ways of achieving this is by being more attentive to the inevitable "breakdowns" in this participation. In Chapter Four I will discuss the crucial role of disruptions or "breakdowns" in the attainment of authenticity. I will show how the notion of a disruption or "breakdown" connects to my argument that the study of an unfamiliar language is especially suited to achieving "authentic" understanding. Finally, I will develop the concept of a "breakdown" in its positive potential as a pedagogical strategy. Within the context of the language classroom, we will see how breakdowns can encourage us to question the necessity of our involvements, to recognize their groundlessness, and to create an opening for other possibilities. Those possibilities would have to include the experience of wonder, the original philosophical attitude of learning.

In his book entitled *Heidegger and 'Being and Time,'* Stephen Mulhall confirms that the attainment of authentic understanding that I am proposing as a pedagogical concept constitutes a major aspect of Heidegger's text. Mulhall goes on to link the attainment of authentic personhood with the recovery of the sense of wonder that the ancient Greeks held as the original human motivation for learning: "It is a sense of wonder that Heidegger thinks of as a response to the Being of things, a response to Being; and he aims to recover in his readers a capacity to take seriously the question of its meaning or significance."[12]

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[12] Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and 'Being and Time'* (London: Routledge, 1996) 2.

I agree with Mulhall that the experience of wonder can help us to embrace authentic understanding in a constructive and productive way. We saw in Chapter Two, however, that many Heidegger scholars link the experience of wonder with "poetic" thinking rather than authentic understanding. I want to connect both concepts, authentic understanding and poetic thinking, in order to develop the pedagogical implications for language study. As noted previously, the characteristic qualities of "calculative thinking" have been sufficiently delineated in the previous chapter. I will now examine the concept of "poetic" thinking in order to develop a more comprehensive account.

3.2 „*dichterisch wohnet/ Der Mensch auf dieser Erde*"

"Poetically man dwells on this earth" – Friedrich Hölderlin

Although language figures prominently in the elaboration of the human, it does not have the supreme status in *Being and Time* that Heidegger comes to attach to it in his later thought and writing. Again and again we have seen Heidegger portrayed by critics as turning to language and above all poetry as a resistance to technology's totalizing effects. What does Heidegger mean by "the poetic"? As noted in Chapter Two, Heidegger does not define his concept of "the poetic" in any one work; instead it emerges from several works, and from his writing on the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin. Heidegger turns to this poet because Hölderlin is centrally concerned in his own writing with the nature of poetry. In addition to his writing on Hölderlin, I will also turn to Heidegger's work entitled *What is Called Thinking?* My primary reference, however, will be the

anthology entitled *Poetry, Language, Thought.* This anthology was composed, with Heidegger's consent, of writing from various shorter works, chosen because they fit together to bring out the main aspects of his thinking that relates to poetry, art, thought, and language.

Already in *Being and Time,* language is described as much more than a means of communication. By the time of the "Letter on Humanism" written in 1947, human language has become "the house of Being" since, without language, no beings could appear.[13] According to Heidegger, human speech is required for there to be beings. Beings are what can be encountered by us, but they can only be fully encountered by us if they are named and talked about. This is how they are given a place within the sphere of our understanding and concern. In addition, human beings are those beings who attest to their own Being, to their belonging to the earth. This occurs as history and is only possible through language.[14]

In "The Origin of the Work of Art," one of the best known of the works included in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Heidegger claims that before language can become a device for conveying information, there must have occurred "projective saying" which "by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and appearance" (PLT73). "Projective saying" is one of Heidegger's terms for poetry. Poets are the main vehicles of "projective saying" for it is their

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[13] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992) 237.

[14] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) 77.

words which shaped the vocabulary, understanding and historical worlds of their people. Heidegger actually expresses this notion most succinctly in his 1936 address on "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry":

> The poet names all things with respect to what they are. This naming does not merely come about when something already previously known is furnished with a name; rather, by speaking the essential word, the poet's naming first nominates the beings as what they are. Thus they become *as* beings. Poetry is the founding of being in the word.[15]

Here Heidegger is claiming that the poetic is a general possibility of language in the extent to which that language is a kind of *poiesis*, a creative bringing into being of things and possibilities for us and for our world. This is seen most readily in the naming of things. Naming, however, is not just the furnishing of an already existing thing with a name. Rather, "the linguistic work" is the original provision of names and things to talk about which enables them to come within the sphere of a people's "concern":

> . . . it transforms the people's saying so that now every living word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, what lofty and what flighty, what master and what slave. (PLT43)

The way Heidegger describes poetry, it provides the standards of measure that show how things are at stake for a community or a culture. In other words, "projective saying" (poetry) draws on the background "saying" of a people, their proverbs, anecdotes, and oral traditions, but also the tacit interpretations embodied in their customs, rituals, and festivals, and transforms

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[15] Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. K. Hoeller (Amherst: Prometheseus, 2000) 59.

that "saying" into a "linguistic work," a possibility of language that articulates for a people their understanding of reality (PLT 43).

We saw in Chapter One that the "4-F Approach" to cultural learning, which focuses primarily on "festivals, fairs, and food" in its representation of culture, is generally dismissed by intercultural approaches to learning due to the absence of a critical component. The approach does have its proponents, however, and they might well take heart by Heidegger's perspective on traditional, cultural activities. Claus Altmayer, for instance, disagrees with the subordinate status accorded to "Landeskunde" (the German rendition of the "4-F approach") and has attempted to reclaim this traditional component of German language study. He has sought to achieve this reclamation of "Landeskunde" by subjecting it to the "critical discourse" perspective predominant within German Studies. A number of efforts in that direction have been pursued; however, too many questions remain open regarding the theoretical rationale and the research approach, most notably, the question of the relationship between hermeneutical and empirical research methods.[16] The way that Heidegger depicts it, the "poetic" might serve as a mediating principle between methodologies and thereby redeem the approach for intercultural language learning.

One further parallel exists between the "naming" power of poetry as Heidegger describes it and language practices. Learners of another language

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[16] Claus Altmayer, "'Cultural Studies' – ein geeignetes Theoriekonzept für die kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung im Fach Deutsch als Fremdsprache?" in Zeitschrift für interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht 9.3 2004; cited in *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 175.

are often quite concerned to learn the names that the language has assigned to things. Although recognized as an indispensable part of language acquisition, the learning of the names for things – in other words, "vocabulary" – is often considered one of the most tedious endeavors in which a learner is compelled to engage. Teachers of languages search constantly for tips and tricks to motivate their learners and to make the learning of vocabulary more palatable. This more practical, classroom approach is in stark contrast to the inspired attitude of a "poetic" approach to the names for things. Teachers working from a sensibility that regards vocabulary as "the founding of being in the word" might not be able to evoke the same exhilaration for the names of things as Heidegger or Hölderlin, but their point of departure could be inspiration rather than mere motivation, and this would almost certainly have a positive effect for the learners.

As far as Heidegger is concerned, there is another reason that poetic language is so important, for it is from words, especially the essential words of the poets, that thinking receives its tools. In his later writings, Heidegger began using the term "thinking," in contrast to "philosophy," to describe the work he did. For Heidegger, a primary activity of the thinker, in league with the poets, is to recall the original senses or associations of an "essential word" that have been buried in metaphysical thought. In this regard, the perspective of Iain Thomson is relevant. In his work entitled *Heidegger on Ontotheology,* Thomson claims that Heidegger's approach constitutes a "double deconstructive hermeneutic

strategy."[17] Heidegger endeavors first to "uncover" what has been concealed by tradition, in order to "recover" the primordial experiences which have fundamentally shaped some subsequent historical development. According to Thomson this approach characteristically involves "two moments," a positive as well as a negative moment: "The negative moment, in which the sedimented layers of distorting interpretation are cleared away, is invariably in the service of the positive moment, in which something long concealed is recovered."[18] The word "thinking" ("Denken") serves as an example of this dynamic. In his work, *What is Called Thinking?,* Heidegger ends his lectures by posing the question in the title one final time:

> At the end we return to the question we asked at first when we found out what our word "thinking" originally means. *Thanc* means memory, thinking that recalls, thanks... Thinking is thinking only when it recalls in thought the *ἐόν,* that which this word indicates properly and truly, that is, unspoken, tacitly... This quality is what properly gives food for thought. And what is so given, is the gift of what is most worthy of question.[19]

By "recalling" the original association of "thinking" with "thanking" ("Danken"), we can come to consider and appreciate thinking as not solely a "human" achievement. To be able to think does not depend wholly on our will and wish. The way Heidegger depicts it, thinking is determined by that which is to be thought as well as by those who think. In a Heideggerian vernacular, it

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[17] Iain D. Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology. Technology and the Politics of Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 141.

[18] Thomson 141.

[19] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glen Gray (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 244.

involves not only our receptivity to Being but also Being's receptivity to us, and in that way it is something in the way of a gift.

Heidegger is clearly working here toward a concept of thinking and language that is more poetic than it is philosophical, but this does not mean that he denies the importance of traditional conceptions of thinking. Indeed, as he remarks in *What is Called Thinking?*, traditional ways of grasping thinking endure so steadfastly "because they have their own truth."[20] To advance any new way of understanding things always involves a struggle because traditional ways and conceptions about it are intrinsically involved. This dynamic is familiar to language students, where a learner's mother tongue is often a primary impediment to the learning of a new language. Heidegger offers no suggestions in *What is Called Thinking?* for alleviating the problem of intractable patterns of thought. I believe his concept of authentic understanding does offer educators, and above all language teachers, a potential strategy in *Being and Time*. Of course I recognize that this was not Heidegger's intention, but it is my argument that we can make more of his work than he himself would have. In any case, I will return to *What is Called Thinking?* in the following section, because in this work Heidegger makes some useful comments on the nature of learning and teaching.

In other writings in the collection *Poetry, Language, Thought*, particularly in the works "Building Dwelling Thinking" and in "Poetically Man Dwells," Heidegger brings the themes of thinking and the poetic together explicitly and

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[20] Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* 31.

links them to the possibility of "building" and "dwelling." He tells us that on etymological grounds, to "dwell" is to "cherish... protect... and care for," but for Heidegger, "dwelling" is as much a matter of poetry and thought as other practices we more usually associate with it:

> Dwelling occurs only when poetry comes to pass and is present . . . poetry, as the authentic gauging of the dimension of dwelling, is the primal form of building. Poetry first of all admits man's dwelling into its very nature, its presencing being. Poetry is the original admission of dwelling. (PLT227)

We have already seen that the naming action of poetry was always more than the furnishing of an already existing thing with a name. Now Heidegger tells us that connecting the "naming" activity of *poiesis* to "dwelling" has some further consequences; specifically: "The naming call bids things to come... It invites things in, so that they may bear upon men as things" (PLT199). According to Heidegger, the word "thing" like "thinking" is an essential word and its etymology inspires Heidegger to invest it with a special sense. The Old German thing meant an assembly or gathering:

> The Old High German word *thing* means a gathering, and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter. In consequence, the Old German words *thing* and *dinc* become the names of an affair or matter of pertinence. They denote anything that in any way bears upon men, concerns them, and that accordingly is a matter for discourse. (PLT174)

Heidegger's concept of how things "gather" has implications for intercultural approaches to language study that are significant enough to merit a detailed elaboration in Chapter Four. As in the instance of "naming" and vocabulary, the implications involve the adoption of an attitude or comportment

on the part of teachers and learners towards the "things" that are "founded" in the words of the unfamiliar language. An example will follow directly.

The concept of things gathering is important for the unity of Heidegger's thought because the theme of "things" allows Heidegger to "gather" most of the themes in his later thought. Moreover, Heidegger's ruminations on this theme, where he describes such things as the Heidelberg bridge and a simple jug in their "gathering," exemplify a perspective that inspires some of his most insightful passages. A bridge, he claims, is "never first of all a mere bridge" conveying traffic, it is first of all "a thing" (PLT153). This does not mean the bridge is first of all an object to be identified with its perceptual properties or the material out of which it is made. To conceive of the bridge in such a way is to submit it to the representation of scientific analysis which relates to all things according to one model of understanding, thereby "annihilating" them as things:

> Science's knowledge, which is compelling within its own sphere, the sphere of objects, already had annihilated things as things long before the atom bomb exploded... The thingness of the thing remains concealed, forgotten. The nature of the thing never comes to light, that is, it never gets a hearing. (PLT170)

In order to explicate the relevance for language study of the "thing" in terms of its "gathering" qualities, I will take Heidegger's example of a jug. The jug understood as a three-dimensional object, composed of inert matter, and of a certain weight and height, is a jug understood in abstraction, by way of a reduction of language that "conceals" and "forgets" more than it reveals: "But what is a thing? The jug is a thing. What is the jug? We say: a vessel, something of the kind that holds something else within it..." (PLT166). But that

is not how Heidegger understands and describes the "thingness" of the jug: "The holding of the vessel occurs in the giving of the outpouring... The giving of the outpouring can be a drink. The outpouring gives water, it gives wine to drink..." (PLT172).

The jug, understood in the Heideggerian "poetic" sense of a "thing," is the jug of our lived experience. It is the entity that holds the water that quenches the thirst after the day's labors. It is the entity from which wine is poured that is shared at the family meal. The jug focuses human practices in such a way that what this entity "means" is something more than any physical, objective description can possibly convey. What the jug means, the way it is understood, is tied to the practices of which it is a part, in all their "fourfold" richness:

> The jug's essential nature, its presencing, so experienced and thought of in these terms, is what we call thing. We are now thinking this word by way of the gathering-appropriating staying of the fourfold. (PLT174)

This quotation returns us to Heidegger's concept of "gathering." What a thing "gathers" is the fourfold, and in so doing first *is* a thing. The four elements that constitute this quaternity are, according to Heidegger: earth, sky, divinities, and mortals. "Earth" and "sky" between them are intended to represent the natural world although considered not in terms of scientific categories, but of events and processes as they impress upon ordinary human concern: "Earth is the building bearer, nourishing with its fruits, tending water and rock, plant and animal... The sky is the sun's path, the course of the moon... the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and the inclemency of the weather..." (PLT178). Here Heidegger is referring to the regular rising and

setting of the sun, the passing of the days, the changing of the weather and of the seasons.

"Mortals" refer to human beings in their personal and social lives, with an emphasis on their understanding of their mortality: "The mortals are human beings. They are called mortals because they can die. Only man dies. The animal perishes. It has death neither ahead of itself nor behind it" (PLT178). The divinities are the "beckoning messengers of the godhead" (PLT178) but are most certainly meant to represent all the so-called "higher things" – art, philosophy, religion – which can turn human beings from their immersion in mundane activities towards reflection on the meaning of their lives.

The fourfold, then, is Heidegger's grouping of what "matters" to human beings, in terms of how it "concerns" us, in terms of how we "care" about things. Again using the example of a jug, we can get a better understanding of how Heidegger envisions this dynamic:

> In the gift of water, in the gift of wine, sky and earth dwell. But the gift of the outpouring is what makes the jug a jug. In the jugness of the jug, sky and earth dwell. The gift of the pouring out is drink for mortals. It quenches their thirst. It refreshes their leisure. It enlivens their conviviality. But the jug's gift is at times also given for consecration. If the pouring is for consecration, then it does not still a thirst. It stills and elevates the celebration of the feast. The gift of the pouring now is neither given in an inn nor is the poured gift a drink for mortals. The outpouring is the libation poured out for the immortal gods. (PLT172-173)

The fourfold of earth and sky, mortals and divinities portrays the world of the human as an interplay of our social relations, our relations to artifacts, and our relations to nature. Within language study, I believe it has a potentially constructive application as a template for interpreting entities from an unfamiliar

culture. Moreover, Heidegger's own choice of a jug is a good example of the type of cultural artifact to select for interpretation. In my opinion, the "vessels" that a culture uses as part of their rituals around food and drink, examined in terms of Heidegger's concept of the fourfold, would yield a rich understanding of the artifact, and in turn, the culture of which it is a part. I will exemplify this in Chapter Four.

Heidegger makes a number of claims about the fourfold of the thing appropriate to his purposes for the concept. Two of these claims are relevant for my thesis because they involve the parameters of Heidegger's conceptualization of entities in *Being and Time*, and hence my own extrapolations for language education. The first relevant claim is that the four junctures of the fourfold constitute a unity in a "mirror-play" with one another: "Earth and sky, divinities and mortals – being at one with one another of their own accord – belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold. Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others" (PLT179). With this claim we retain the holism that is a central tenet of the authentic understanding of the "world" that Heidegger puts forth in *Being and Time.* The world is not a collection of independent entities: "For world and things do not subsist alongside one another. They penetrate each other" (PLT202).

The concept of the fourfold exemplifies the unity of self and world and affirms the implications for human understanding that are to be derived from this unity; namely, that to exist humanly is to exist socially and culturally. Therefore, the ground for our self-knowledge and all our self-reflective activity is our social

being. Neither Heidegger's concept of the fourfold, nor his notion of authenticity, in any way signals a retreat from this fundamental aspect of human being and understanding. To be authentic means to think and act with the awareness that the human being, as a thrown Being-in-the-world, is both a contingent being without stable foundations, and a Being-with-others whose meanings are always socially constructed and shared. A consequence of becoming authentic, then, is coming to feel at home in a shared world, and in Chapter Four I will explain how language learning is uniquely suited to achieving this.

On the other hand, the "things" of Heidegger's later thought now have an integrity that makes their significance exceed the understanding we have of them from *Being and Time*. The gathering of the fourfold can be understood as the dimensions of the world in which our lives are lived out, dimensions without which entities cannot be meaningfully understood. And in fact, Heidegger writes: "The unitary fourfold of sky and earth, mortals and divinities, which is stayed in the thinging of things, we call – the world" (PLT199). Insofar as we accept this conceptualization, the failure to attend to how each "thing" in its own way "gathers" the world might be considered a shortcoming not only of science and technology but for that matter, also of *Being and Time.* As was my contention at the outset of this chapter, by augmenting the implications for language pedagogy of authentic understanding with those of poetic thinking, a much richer and more comprehensive vision can be developed. In order to achieve this, however, we must permit Heidegger to complete his depiction of

the fourfold gathering of the jug as a thing. This is important not only for the integrity of Heidegger's concept but for the comprehensiveness of mine.

> In the gift of the outpouring, mortals and divinities each dwell in their different ways. Earth and sky dwell in the gift of the outpouring. In the gift of the outpouring earth and sky, divinities and mortals *dwell together all at once.* (PLT173)

In my opinion, the thinking of the philosopher is in league here with that of the poet. From their union emerges a receptivity towards the things in our world, that extends beyond an "authentic" understanding of being. This receptivity involves a sense of appreciation and gratitude for being and beings that is befitting the reception of a gift. Such a comportment is in sharp contrast to the manner in which the world of education approaches its objects. The conventional approach to entities of learning and knowledge is detachment and neutrality. This is the comportment that an objective, scientific attitude extols and promotes. The receptivity that Heidegger's thought implies is a kind of affirmation. Affirmation does not derive from detachment, nor can affirmation be neutral. Moreover, affirmation is the very comportment that Borrelli condemned as inappropriate.[21] Nevertheless, it is evident from these lines, as from so much of his thought and writing, that for Heidegger the objects of knowledge are objects of love.

It seems only fitting to conclude my examination of the "poetic" by letting the "poet" have the last word. To that end, I will return to the verses from the

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[21] Michele Borrelli, "Intercultural Pedagogy: Foundations and Principles," *Mediating Languages and Cultures: Towards an Intercultural Theory of Foreign Language Education* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1990) 273-286.

poet Hölderlin that constitute the title for this section. Heidegger has taken them from a late poem by Hölderlin that he frequently invokes and explores in his writing on poetic thinking:[22]

> Voll Verdienst, doch dichterisch wohnet
> Der Mensch auf dieser Erde.
>
> Full of merit, yet poetically, man
> Dwells on this earth.

Human life is full of merit for its wondrous deeds and accomplishments, but Heidegger seems to be saying that our capacity to "dwell," to be at home in our world, should not be defined primarily by our productivity or technical mastery. Human being finds its home in the world through language, through the "founding of being in the word." Heidegger writes that "poetry is what first brings man onto the earth, making him belong to it, and thus brings him into dwelling" (PLT218). Dwelling, therefore, is a poetic act, an act of thankful and thoughtful revealing of being through language. Literature in the language classroom, especially poetry, can help students to dwell more fully in the unfamiliar language than they might otherwise. Indeed, they may well gain an enhanced appreciation of both, the unfamiliar language and their own.

3.3 Understanding, Dwelling, Teaching, Learning

The relevance of Heidegger's thought for intercultural approaches to language study is in the possibilities of a hermeneutic receptivity that it offers.

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[22] Martin Heidegger, "... Poetically Man Dwells ..." in *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971) 213.

The receptivity that derives from the authentic understanding of *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes as "Entschlossenheit." This has been translated as "resolve" or "resoluteness," but literally means un-closedness. "Entschlossenheit" emphasizes an ontological self-consciousness whereby we acknowledge the social constitution of human being, but do not become lost in public modes of coping. Instead, we authentically choose the relationships and involvements to which we want to commit. This choosing involves an "openness" to the emerging "possibilities" of our particular situation.

The sensibility associated with "dwelling" that Heidegger advocates in his later writings on language and poetic thinking, he describes as "Gelassenheit."[23] Translated as "releasement" or "letting-be," "Gelassenheit" names a comportment in which we remain sensitive to the many interconnected ways in which things show themselves to us; namely, as "mattering" to us within an interplay of four modalities – "earth," "heavens," divinities," and "mortals," and as revealing themselves to us through language.

We saw in Chapter Two some of the values for education that have been identified for each approach. I will now outline the implications of these two sensibilities for intercultural language pedagogy. As I noted in Chapter One, it is not my objective in this effort to offer another new methodology for intercultural approaches. The discipline has no shortage of those. Rather, my goal is to propose a conceptualization of understanding and learning that is sufficiently

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[23] Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. J. Anderson and E. Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

rich and nuanced to offer a useful response to the challenges the discipline has documented as facing, and the questions it is posing. Above all, I wish to contribute to the inherently rich potential of language study to educate for improved cultural understanding in the twenty-first century.

3.3.1 Authentic Understanding as a Pedagogical Sensibility

We have examined Heidegger's dynamic of "authentic understanding" and have been able to define it as the recognition of the contingency and groundlessness of the understanding that we inherit from our culture and take for granted. Central to Heidegger's account is the notion of human consciousness as "Dasein." What is characteristic of "Dasein" is that things matter to it in terms of its awareness of its own existence and sense of the future. Choice is integral to its way of being, as is the awareness that in choosing to pursue one course of "possibilities" another course is denied. The essential contingency and uncertainty of the situations into which "Dasein" is "thrown," result in a flight from the truth of its ontological situation. The mode of "average everydayness" into which "Dasein" usually falls is characterized by a tendency toward dispersal and distraction away from these things. The inauthentic understanding of the anonymous "they" distracts "Dasein" from the truth, substituting what is said in trivializing "idle talk" for genuine inquiry and concern.

In general terms, such an account has relevance for any society where much of the everyday is dominated by consumerism. Indeed, many thinkers

and educators draw on Heidegger's concept of authentic understanding to counter those pervasive social forces threatening to convert us into passive recipients of trivial information.[24] In terms of formal educational learning, I believe that Heidegger's account of authentic understanding is significant in at least two ways: first, it provides a concept of human *being* and therefore a standpoint on what must be recognized and developed in an individual human during their education; second, it offers a perspective on the nature of personally significant learning and the conditions that are necessary for it to occur.

Regarding the first point, what emerges most prominently from Heidegger's account of authentic understanding is the central importance of the learner and the opportunity for the learner to decide how they will value what they learn, and to decide how it should affect their outlook and their actions. Such an emphasis is consistent with so-called "learner-centered" approaches to pedagogy, an approach to which intercultural approaches subscribe. I believe, however, that Heidegger's concept of authentic personhood has implications for the relationship between teachers and learners that do not currently constitute part of a learner-centered approach; indeed, that are contrary to the approach. One example is the currently popular conception of the teacher as a facilitator. In one of his rarer *explicit* comments on education, Heidegger had the following to say about the role of the teacher:

> The teacher must be capable of being more teachable than the apprentices. The teacher is far less assured of his ground than those

[24] Ilan Gur-Zé ev, "Heidegger and the Possibility of Counter-Education," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002) 65 – 80.

> who learn are of theirs. If the relation between the teacher and the taught is genuine, therefore, there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official. It still is an exalted matter to become a teacher . . . That nobody wants any longer to become a teacher today, when all things are downgraded and graded from below (for instance, from business), is presumably because the matter is exalted, because of its altitude.[25]

Many of the questions and concerns of the AATG Task Force on cultural competence involve the role of the teacher and, not in the least, a perceived sense of inadequacy on the part of teachers to meet the demands of intercultural approaches. In Chapter Four I will propose a provisional model of an "authentic" teacher of an unfamiliar language, and address teachers' concerns from the standpoint of the model. In addition to rejecting the conception of the teacher as a facilitator, an identifying feature of authentic teachers is that they embrace, as one of their pedagogical goals, the pursuit of authentic understanding in their students. This immediately raises an important question: What role can language education assume in initiating individual students into the nature of their own unique and authentic perspective? The response resides in the reciprocal relationship I see as inhering in the dynamics of achieving authentic understanding and the dynamics of learning another language. This derives from the role of "disruptions" or "breakdowns" as Heidegger depicts them in *Being and Time.* Such disruptions, articulated as a pedagogical dynamic, are the topic of Chapter Four. My argument there, as

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[25] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glen Gray (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 15.

throughout, is that disruptions or breakdowns function best as moments in a longer process of transformation in the language classroom.

I have already shown how Heidegger's approach to understanding offers a way of accounting for a number of specific phenomena instructors encounter in our language classes; for instance: the difficulty of learners to apply correctly something that is intellectually very easy to understand; the tendency of students to resist the unfamiliar and cling to the familiar (not only in specific instances in the classroom, but perhaps in their more general resistance to including culture in their learning of another language); and the divide between theory and practice, when students do not demonstrate in practice and behavior what they have acquired in theory. This raises another important question for language pedagogy: how much learning in our classrooms essentially has the character of "idle talk," amounting to little more than the acquisition of a leveled-off public understanding of things, rather than being carefully interpreted and evaluated in terms of the learners' sense of their own existence? In Chapter Five I will relate this question to the parallel concern within intercultural approaches that the level of exchange in the classroom remains "superficial,"[26] and I will propose a response.

Aside from learner-centered approaches, Heidegger's concept of authentic understanding opposes another widespread model of education: the conception of the learner as an empty vessel. We cannot understand education

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[26] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, "In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* No. 38.2, (2005): 173.

as the transmission of information, or the filling of the learner with knowledge as if inscribing a *tabula rasa* or, in other conventional terminology, as if filling an empty vessel. Such conceptions of education have lost most of their currency in any case. In Heideggerian terms they are false because we are "thrown" beings, "always already" shaped by a tradition we can never get behind, and so we can never be blank slates or empty containers waiting to be filled. On the contrary, to be authentic is precisely to extricate ourselves from our "everyday" unselfconscious "fallenness" in the perspective of "the they" ("das Man") which, for the most part, conditions our perceptions.

The German word "eigentlich," translated as "authentic" in *Being and Time,* comes from a stem meaning "one's own" ("eigen") and carries with it a connotation of owning oneself, owning up to what one is becoming, and bringing one's own self into question. It is important to note, however, that authentic being, in resisting the conformism of "das Man," does not negate the communal and social nature of human being. To "own" who you are, as Heidegger describes it, is first to identify what really "matters" in the historical situation in which you have found yourself "thrown," and then to take a resolute stand on pursuing those things. However, since the projects and goals it is possible to pursue are all inherited from the historical culture into which one has been thrown, to take a stand on what matters is always at the same time to be involved in the shared undertakings of the broader community. For Heidegger, then, authenticity always includes a social dimension.

In his work of 1991 entitled *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Charles Taylor takes up the concept of authenticity and argues that a human self develops dialogically and that the "horizons of significance" which our culture provides are essential references for our sense of ourselves and for the choices we have to make. By "horizon of significance" Taylor means the prevailing principles, values, and norms of a social community, that express an agreed-upon conception of what constitutes a good life within that community. A concept of selfhood and of self-determination that does not acknowledge the importance of such a regulative framework "trivializes" the human condition by yielding "a flattened world in which there aren't very meaningful choices because there aren't any crucial issues."[27] Though his own conception may be more Hegelian, Taylor is clearly working closely to Heidegger's understanding of authenticity and authentic self-awareness.

The reference to such a framework, which lies beyond any one individual being, reveals a tension between being active and being passive that is present within the authentic understanding of *Being and Time.* Because the possibilities that "Dasein" can take for its own are all inherited from the culture into which it is thrown, to take a stand on what "matters" is always at the same time to be engaged in the concerns of a larger shared community. The concept of authentic personhood, therefore, has always had a passive dimension that Heidegger went on to develop in his later thinking, his so-called "poetic thinking." Within an educational context, both elements must be taken into account. It is

[27] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 68.

important to consider the implications of "poetic thinking" for language study. Above all I want to recommend simply that more literature should be taught from the beginning of language study. In other words, "poetic thinking" is a matter of both the way of thinking and the content of thought.

3.3.2 Poetic Thinking as a Pedagogical Sensibility

We have seen that Heidegger describes thinking as a gift or a grace. Thoughts come to us, we do not think them up: "We never come to thoughts. They come to us" (PLT6). The comportment associated with "poetic thinking" is not, however, one of complete passivity but one of cooperating with and remaining "open" to thinking. According to Heidegger, the receptivity we are to adopt is that of "Gelassenheit" or "Gelassenheit zu den Dingen," a non-manipulative, non-imposing way of "letting things be" what they are. Heidegger tells us in "The Thing" that "releasement" is a step back from "the thinking that merely represents . . . to the thinking that responds and recalls" (PLT181). He describes a thinking that is at once *passive* in the sense of a listening and attending to what things convey to us, and *active* in the sense that we respond to their call. To achieve this, Heidegger says we need to experience ourselves as recipients of the gift of thinking. It is such experiences of receiving a gift that Heidegger tries to capture when he speaks of a kind of thinking that is thankfulness.

Within an educational context, Heidegger's comportment of "Gelassenheit" has been most notably embraced by feminist scholars. One

recent example of the feminist reception of Heidegger is the work by Nancy Holland and Patricia Huntington entitled *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*. In the introduction to this work Huntington states:

> Whereas authenticity focuses on what it means to take critical distance on conventional ways of interpreting life journey, the later model of letting be has been of keen interest to feminist theory. The mature works advance a non-hierarchical and premetaphysical understanding of the relation of Dasein to the other. His [Heidegger] is a fine model of a nondominating relation to earth, to human mortality, and to all life.[28]

Heidegger's call to humanity to learn to "let things be," his complaint that industrial technology is laying waste the earth, and his claim that we should "dwell" with things instead of dominating them, are the aspects of Heidegger's poetic thinking that have been embraced by feminist and ecological theorists alike. In considering the implications of this sensibility for language pedagogy, I can begin by turning to Heidegger directly. In his work *What Is Called Thinking?* Heidegger makes an explicit reference to teaching and learning that resonates with "Gelassenheit":

> Teaching is even more difficult than learning. We know that; but we rarely think about it. And why is teaching more difficult than learning? Not because the teacher must have a larger store of information, and have it always ready. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than – learning. His conduct, therefore, often produces the impression that we properly learn nothing from him, if by "learning" we now suddenly understand merely the procurement of useful information. The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they – he has to learn to let them learn.[29]

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[28] Nancy J. Holland and Patricia Huntington, Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001) 35.

[29] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glen Gray (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 15.

In these comments, the comportment of "Gelassenheit" constitutes the heart of the teaching-learning dynamic. However, the way in which Heidegger describes the activity of "letting learn," this sensibility will clearly require the full engagement of both teacher and student to carry out successfully. One of the contexts, therefore, in which the tension between the active and passive dimensions of Heidegger's thought is fully visible is in the relationship between teachers and learners. In my opinion, the educational context is generally one in which the full scope of that tension comes into play. Within language education specifically, I will take this tension into account in my proposals for the teacher-learner relationship that is the topic of Chapter Five.

In the previous section on poetic thinking, the interplay of the fourfold featured centrally and I made the claim that it had significant implications for language pedagogy. By way of an introduction, I described how this concept might serve practically as a template for interpreting cultural artifacts. In my opinion, however, it has an even more important role to play. The primary significance of this concept for language education is the way in which it makes the poetic qualities of "dwelling" relevant for our everyday lives. As far as intercultural approaches are concerned, these are above all the other-regarding qualities inherent in the mirroring relationship of the fourfold. For example, Heidegger describes the jug as the manifestation of a unique congruence of the fourfold. Approached in this manner, the everyday jug is experienced *not* as one object among the innumerable objects in the world, but as something special and unique. Viewing it in this way, we are prompted to remember the

extraordinariness of ordinary things, their otherness to us and their ultimate unfathomability even as they are part of our ordinary world, our everyday lived experience. To my mind, this is an appropriate receptivity to cultivate within intercultural approaches to learning and it will constitute my point of departure in the following chapters.

An experience of the otherness and unfathomability of things is fitting for a further important reason: it has the potential to evoke wonder. We saw in Chapter Two that Heidegger reception within education repeatedly connected poetic thinking with the experience of wonder. Earlier in this chapter, I identified the experience of wonder as a characteristic feature of authentic understanding. We can see from the foregoing that the "Entschlossenheit" of authentic understanding and the "Gelassenheit" towards things are not equivalent terms; still, both entail a responsive hermeneutic receptivity with positive applications for pedagogy, and both designate comportments that involve the experience of wonder. Indeed, wonder is the unifying feature of these two comportments.

3.3.3 Wonder as a Hermeneutic Receptivity

Heidegger lectured on the trait of wonder in the winter semester of 1937-38 and depicted it as follows: "Wonder lets the familiar appear as unfamiliar and therefore plunges the human being into an aporia... a holding-fast of the inexplicable in the face of which Dasein finds itself in wonder."[30] It is a special

[30] Martin Heidegger, Gesamt Ausgabe 45: 167; cited in John Sallis, *Reading Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 294.

kind of learning to have a feeling that the familiar way things usually are, is strange. And it is through wonder that what is most familiar becomes most strange. This strangeness takes us out of our element. We are not able to dwell securely in the familiar or to see our way through the strange. It makes us question, perhaps in a manner not unlike Heidegger: why is there something, instead of nothing?

We saw in Chapter Two that modern "logical" philosophers often try to discredit this kind of questioning by claiming that such questions have no meaning and ought not to be asked (Carnap). They constitute a kind of intellectual neurosis, or at the very least, a misuse of language. According to many modern thinkers, the task of education is to cure people of such nonsensical questions. But wonder is not a disease to be cured.

Wonder, and its expression in learning as wondering, constitute a distinguishing feature of our humanity. As Heidegger observed, it appears to be the special peculiarity of human entities that they are self-aware: they think about thinking and know that they know. This may lead to circular reflections and perhaps even vicious circles, but there is something incomplete about human *being* that is bereft of wonder. Certainly, the education of those human beings who have never experienced wonder is incomplete, and that is bad enough. What is worse is that their humanity is incomplete, for it has never astonished them. In the following chapters, I will proceed from the standpoint that to experience wonder in the classroom would be to reach an authentic self-understanding through the learning of another language.

Chapter IV Principles and Practices in Language Education

It is the central claim of this dissertation that the study of different languages belongs to an education appropriate to the twenty-first century. It is a further claim that Heidegger's concepts of authentic understanding and contemplative thinking align him with this pedagogical enterprise. Language study is uniquely suited to promote the reflection on an authentic mode of understanding, and contemplative thinking offers a receptivity to alterity that intercultural approaches to language study seek. The integration of these two receptivities supports my proposal that language study will make a substantial contribution to the education of students as global citizens.

In this chapter my purpose is to examine how authentic understanding and contemplative thinking might be integrated into the context of the language classroom. The chapter will be divided into three parts. In the first part I will demonstrate the reciprocity between authentic understanding and language learning. In the second part, I will respond to some of the issues identified by the AATG Task Force on the Teaching of Culture. The final part of this chapter will examine the role of the teacher.

4.1 Authentic Understanding as Pedagogical Practice

One of the tasks that Heidegger assigned his philosophy was the attainment of a particular mode of understanding he called "authentic understanding." In the previous chapter I worked out the characteristic features of this understanding in terms of qualities that are both characteristically

Heideggerian and traditionally pedagogical. I identified these qualities as involving the attitudes of questioning, possibility thinking, and wonder. These qualities derive from Heidegger's claim that in "authentic understanding" we do not primarily identify with the familiar ends or meanings of our everyday world, but recognize that these could as easily be any other end or meaning. Furthermore, the ends and meanings of our familiar, everyday world do not necessarily limit what we ourselves most basically are, or the possibilities of what we can be.

In pedagogical terms, Heidegger conceptualizes understanding as an open-ended, ongoing process of questioning rather than the attainment of a fixed level of mastery. The aim of this process is to enhance our capacity to generate possibilities rather than conclusions. In the absence of conclusiveness, learners should embrace the groundlessness of their understanding through the experience of wonder. But if we agree that such characterization embodies a pedagogical task, how yet might we attain to it? How does one make the transition from fallen understanding into authentic understanding? How do we facilitate such a transition within the context and practices of the language classroom? Heidegger does not offer any explicit strategies for undertaking such a transition; however, as other Heidegger scholars in education have done, I will show in this chapter, that a number of approaches may be extrapolated from his philosophy and teaching. We have a first indication of a direction to pursue with the Heidegger scholar Iain

Thomson.[1] The reciprocal relation between language education and authentic understanding will become visible in Thomson's account.

4.1.1 Thomson, Heidegger and Plato

Iain Thomson belongs to the group of scholars, identified in Chapter Two, who proceed from the standpoint of a crisis in education, a crisis that Heidegger's philosophical approach can help to resolve. According to Thomson:

> We now stand in the midst of a historical *crisis* in higher education. Heidegger's profound understanding of the *nature* of this crisis . . . reveals the ontohistorical trajectory leading up to our current educational crisis and, more importantly, illuminates a path which might lead us out of it. (143)

Thomson argues that it is Heidegger's history of Being which allowed him to see the interlocking trends of the instrumentalization, corporatization, globalization, and ultimately the technologization of education. We were introduced in Chapter Two to Heidegger's vigorous critique of the way in which our educational institutions have come to express a technological understanding of Being. We also learned that, for Heidegger, historical developments are more important for what they conceal, rather than what they reveal. Heidegger's analyses of history seek to recover the forgotten aspects of Being. While Thomson agrees, he also argues that Heidegger's analysis always includes a constructive moment: "the negative moment, in which the sedimented layers of distorting interpretations are cleared away, is invariably in the service of the

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[1] Iain Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology. Technology and the Politics of Education* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 143.

positive moment, in which something long concealed is recovered" (141). As far as education is concerned, the positive moment for Thomson occurs when Heidegger seeks to uncover our Western tradition's most influential philosophy of education: Plato's conception of *paideia*. Heidegger maintains that aspects of Plato's notion of education have exerted an unparalleled influence on our subsequent historical understandings of education, while other, even more profound aspects, have been forgotten. He means to show how forgotten aspects of the original Platonic notion of *paideia* remain capable of inspiring possibilities for the future of education. Thomson draws our particular attention to a text that Heidegger began writing in 1930 entitled "Plato's Teaching on Truth."[2] Thomson insists that: "Here, tracing the ontohistorical roots of our educational crisis back to Plato's cave, Heidegger (quite literally) *excavates* an alternative" (155). The alternative especially emphasizes the role of the teacher in the process of learning.

Plato claims, at the beginning of Book VII of the *Republic*, that the allegory of the cave illustrates the essence of education (*paideia*).[3] Drawing on this allegory, Heidegger makes several explicit formulations for education that Thomson subsequently develops into his own pedagogical dynamic. It is Thomson's account of Heidegger's reading of Plato that supports my project. For Thomson, the key part of Heidegger's reading is his vision of education.

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[2] Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of Truth,* trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, William McNeill, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[3] Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianopolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2004) 208.

This vision suggests a process of transformation: "Real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it" (159). Thomson, with a second citation from Heidegger, begins to develop an educational method: "*Paideia* means turning around the whole human being. It means removing human beings from the region where they first encounter things, and transferring and accustoming them to another realm where beings appear" (159). Thomson sums up his interpretation of Heidegger's formulation as a pedagogical goal; namely: "to bring us full circle back to ourselves, first by turning us away from the world in which we are most immediately immersed, then by turning us back to this world in a more reflexive way" (159). Thomson argues that these formulations constitute an ontological approach to pedagogy. For my project, I will follow Thomson's reading of Heidegger on Plato, but emphasize the crucial role of language learning in this dynamic.

The four stages of Plato's allegory begin with prisoners held captive in a cave. Chained since childhood so that they are unable to turn their heads, they have only ever seen shadows that are cast onto the wall in front of them, by the glow of a fire from behind. In the second stage of the allegory, a prisoner escapes the chains and turns around to discover the fire and the objects responsible for the shadows on the wall. The third stage shows this freed prisoner ascending from the cave into the light of the outside world, slowly coming to understand what is seen there as made possible by the light of the sun. In the final stage the liberated prisoner returns to the cave and takes up

the struggle to free the other prisoners, who, however, violently resist their would-be liberator. Thomson maintains that Heidegger's interpretation of this well-known scenario constitutes the pedagogy of an ontological education. According to Thomson, the prisoner's four successive stages depict an ontological education that breaks students' bondage to the calculative and technological approaches to knowledge that is characteristic of modern education.

Today, when their education begins, students are immersed in what they most immediately encounter, taking the shadows cast by the fire on the wall as the ultimate reality of things. Yet this fire is only man-made and, according to Thomson: "the confusing light it casts represents enframing's ontologically-reductive mode of revealing" (163). When a student's gaze is freed from its captivity and that student recognizes the fire as the source of the shadows, the second stage is reached. Within the understanding of Heidegger's interpretation, to see the fire and the objects that produce the shadows is still not to see reality, because both are the products of human endeavor and hence artificial in some sense. The breakthrough comes with the realization that what has been seen on the wall of the cave are shadows, that these are flickering semblances of human constructions and therefore fatefully limited by them. According to Thomson, "With this recognition – and the anxiety it tends to induce – students can attain a negative freedom from enframing" (163).

Yet Heidegger insists that real freedom, the kind of freedom in which students are free to understand reality differently, is attained only in stage three,

in which someone who has been unchained is conveyed outside the cave and "into the open" (163). With this positive ontological freedom, what things are no longer appears merely in the man-made and confusing glow of the fire within the cave. The things themselves stand there in the validity of their own visible form. Ontological freedom is achieved when entities show themselves in their "full phenomenological richness" (164). The goal of the third stage of ontological education is to teach students to see that the Being of an entity – be it a book, a jug, a bridge, or, to use a particularly salient example, *they themselves* – cannot be fully understood in the ontologically reductive terms of enframing.

With the attainment of this crucial third stage, Heidegger's genuine ontological education may seem to have reached its completion, but Thomson continues to trace Heidegger's excavation of the allegory, especially in the significance of the original myth of the *return* to the cave. At the end of the myth, after the ascent towards the light, the possibility that the emancipated person should go back down into the cave is raised. In other words, ontological education reaches its true culmination only in the fourth stage. According to Thomson, Heidegger's ranking of the return to the cave as the highest stage of ontological education is not merely a call for others to adopt his "vision of education as a revolution in consciousness," (165) it also reflects his recognition that, in ontological education, learning culminates in teaching.

For the purposes of my argument in this chapter, I would like to draw attention to the emancipation from the cave as an interim stage between captivity and emergence into the light of the outside world. According to Plato,

the prisoner escapes the chains and turns around to discover the fire and objects at the mouth of the cave. The fire creates the shadows that have thus far absorbed the captives' attention. As we have seen, in terms of an ontological education, in stage two the metaphysical chains of enframing are broken, but here Thomson poses an important question: "*how* does this liberation occur?" (163). This question is so crucial that Thomson turns to Heidegger for an answer. We can appreciate Thomson's insistence that this is an important stage of the action. After all, if stage two does not happen, the other stages cannot occur. The prisoners must remain forever captive. Thomson comes to the conclusion, however, that "despite the importance of this question" Heidegger does not explain how the liberation occurs (163). Thomson can only find a response in what he claims is "an aside" that Heidegger makes, specifically: "to turn one's gaze from the shadows to the entities as they show themselves within the glow of the firelight is a difficult task and fails . . ." (163). Here Heidegger would seem to be saying that it is virtually impossible for a prisoner to free himself, implying that someone else must undertake to unchain and convey the prisoner out of the cave. And, as we shall see in the fourth stage of Heidegger's interpretation of the text as an allegory, it is indeed the teacher who is understood as facilitating students' passage between each of the stages.

I would like to focus on the many parallels between this allegory and the specific pedagogical dynamics of a language class, particularly on the second stage that poses unanswered difficulties for Thomson. I will begin with

Thomson's stated goal for education: "to bring us full circle back to ourselves, first by turning us away from the world in which we are most immediately immersed, then by turning us back to this world in a more reflexive way" (159). The goal of education as Thomson depicts it is consistent with the goal of intercultural language pedagogy that I delineated in Chapter One, namely, self-understanding. Moreover, the pedagogical dynamic that Thomson specifies of turning learners "away" from their usual world and then back again to that world "in a more reflexive way" is consistent with the acknowledged dynamics of intercultural language learning to "decenter" the learner. This is done by moving the learner outside their own culture by moving them into the unfamiliar culture. By way of this new position, a learner can come to understand their own culture in a more sensitive and critical way (22). Seen in this way, the general goals of an ontological education as defined by Thomson are consistent with the goals of intercultural approaches to language study.

As far as the strategies are concerned by which Thomson and language study hope to achieve these goals, language study offers a constructive action at the precise moment that Heidegger and Thomson are at a loss for a response: the question as to how to initially liberate the prisoner or learner. We have posited that this role must fall to the teacher, but this is an interpretation and not explicitly stated. Moreover, it is not explained how the teacher is expected to accomplish this. In language study the potential for this liberation is an inherent aspect of the learning dynamic. By virtue of taking on the challenge of learning another language, students are inherently turned away from the

world in which they are usually immersed. I showed in Chapter One that there is general consensus on this point among language educators.

As a third and final intersection with Thomson's interpretation, language pedagogy involves the "anxiety" that Thomson claims accompanies the second stage of the learner's progression. It is a well-established phenomenon within language pedagogy that learners experience anxiety when they begin to learn a new language. One of the most influential early models of second language acquisition, Stephen Krashen's "Monitor Model," specifically addresses the matter of learner affect as the fifth of its five central hypotheses. According to Krashen's "affective filter hypothesis," acquisition takes place when learner anxiety is low.[4] In "The Consensus: Another View," Douglas Brown agrees with Krashen that too much anxiety may be debilitating, but that too little anxiety may also undermine learning: "We do well to note that anxiety can be debilitative but it can also be *facilitative*. . . . As teachers we should allow some of the anxiety and tension to remain in our classes. . . ."[5]

In 1991 Elaine Horwitz and Dolly Young compiled various research studies examining the role of anxiety in language learning. In this compilation, the research of Elaine Horwitz, Michael Horwitz and Jo Ann Cope expressly linked the experience of anxiety in language learning with matters of identity and self-image, and claimed this is what distinguished it from the anxiety felt in other

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[4] Stephen Krashen, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982) 63.

[5] Douglas Brown, "The Consensus: Another View," in *Foreign Language Annals* 17 (1984) 278 .

academic subjects: "The importance of the disparity between the 'true' self as known to the learner and the more limited self as can be presented at any given moment in the foreign language would seem to distinguish foreign language anxiety from other academic anxieties, such as those associated with mathematics or science."[6] We could see the need to perform in language classes, specifically the need to perform with the new language in public, as an important part of dynamic unique to language study.

Clearly, further research is required to determine more precisely the role of emotions such as anxiety in second-language learning; however, the link that has been established which connects anxiety with matters of identity, is consistent with my argument that language learning can contribute to self-understanding. The learning that takes place through the study of a language occurs at a profound level, the level of the self.

Returning to the allegory, we saw that Thomson made the claim that the moment in which the learner is freed would be one filled with anxiety. Indeed, that is how it is for learners of an unfamiliar language. The beginning of this experience is associated with anxiety. Thomson does not approach this anxiety as a possibly constructive factor in his ontological education, but this is the move that I want to make. I do this because of the potentially constructive role of anxiety in Heidegger's ontology in *Being and Time*. The point brings us back to the reciprocal nature of my claim at the outset of this project, that language

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[6] Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz, and Jo Ann Cope, "Foreign Language Anxiety" in *Language Anxiety: From Theory and Research to Classroom Implications*, Elaine K. Horwitz and Dolly J. Young, eds. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991) 31.

study is inherently and uniquely suited to fulfill Heidegger's concept of authentic understanding. As we shall see, this expressly and explicitly involves anxiety. The mood which Heidegger claims first gives us some intimation of the possibility of living authentically and which would inevitably accompany such a possibility is "Angst," normally translated as "anxiety." As with other moods, "Angst" is also a form of understanding. We will see now what kind of understanding "Angst" is and the pivotal nature of its role in both language study and authentic understanding.

4.1.2 Anxiety and Authentic Understanding

Heidegger tells us repeatedly in *Being and Time* that the three modes of Being – the ready-to-hand, the present-at-hand, and *Dasein* – are not usually explicit and disclosed to us, but rather implicit and disguised. Using Heidegger's example of a hammer to illustrate this, it is clear even to someone who is not a carpenter, that a hammer in use for some purpose is not encountered explicitly and in isolation, but implicitly and in conjunction with other entities, other related "beings" such as nails, wood, or workbench without which the hammer could not be in use at all. For its part, the chalk is experienced in its relation to the blackboard, wall, lights, room, building etc. In this way, therefore, a ready-to-hand entity is never grasped in its own right, in and of itself, rather, its identity is given it by its role within a larger collection of entities all employed together in the pursuit of some purpose. Generally speaking, we use the terms implicit and context-embedded to describe these features of ready-to-hand entities. Within

the specific context of language learning, this implicit, context-embedded nature of objects is reflected in the practice of introducing new words in groupings of related terms and themes. This is in contrast to a dictionary approach to learning, with its assumption of simple, linear correspondences between the terms used for entities. The recognition underlying this approach of word patterning is that one word belongs to a field of others used together to express a sense of the world among a community of speakers.[7] Such approaches have resonance with Heidegger's conceptualization of the implicit, embodied nature of our understanding.

Heidegger develops his account of our implicit, context-embedded relationship with entities when he speaks of the "inconspicuousness, unobtrusiveness, and non-obstinacy... of that which is proximally ready-to-hand" (BT106). Heidegger uses these terms in somewhat specialized senses that we need not go into here. Significant for our purposes is that these expressions capture a "positive, phenomenal character" of "ready-to-hand" entities which the terms implicit and context-embedded do not. This "positive" aspect derives from the fact that these entities actually require such implicitness and embeddedness in order to be serviceable or useful. It is a feature of "ready-to-hand" entities that they are more effectively employed, the less we explicitly reflect upon them. Indeed, in our "everyday" dealings with them, their serviceability is lost when something disturbs their implicitness; for example, the hammer becomes an

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[7] Richard M. Swiderski, *Teaching Language, Learning Culture* (Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1993) 53.

explicit entity when it is too heavy in the hand, (BT102) the chalk when it breaks, the pen when it runs out of ink. Indeed, if the study of another language has shown us anything, it is the usual implicitness of our mother tongue compared to the explicitness of an unfamiliar language. What characterizes the words of our mother tongue is that they have "withdrawn" to the point of transparency. The look or sound of words becomes explicit, only at such time as we fail implicitly to follow their sense.

The way Heidegger describes it, although the three modes of Being are not usually explicit and disclosed to us, there is a way in which they will suddenly show themselves, uncovered and disclosed. This usually involves some kind of "Störung" or "disturbance" (BT105) in our "everyday" understanding of these types of Being, a "disturbance" that makes this understanding explicit, and reveals it as having all along made possible the encountering of entities within-the-world, in whose favor it was then neglected:

> But when an assignment has been disturbed – when something is unusable for some purpose – then the assignment becomes explicit...[W]e catch sight of the 'towards-this' itself, and along with it everything connected with the work – the whole 'workshop' - as that wherein concern always dwells. The context of equipment is lit up...as a totality constantly sighted beforehand in circumspection. With this totality, however, the world announces itself. (BT105)

Heidegger points to those instances when ready-to-hand entities are broken, missing, or the context is otherwise disturbed, as occasions in which the normally implicit phenomenon of "world" can come explicitly into view. He exemplifies such a breakdown using the turn signal of a car. When the turn signal on one's car is broken, an implicit understanding of it, which has all along

grounded its use, suddenly becomes explicit. The connection between the actual lever and the lights at the corners of the car, and the role these play in informing others of my intended direction, now comes to my explicit attention. I become aware of how they have all along allowed me to maneuver safely through intersections, and to proceed easily and without thought to my various destinations. When this quite minor piece of equipment breaks down, so too does my ability to operate smoothly and effortlessly within the larger context of the traffic scene. With the partial breakdown in such an ability, the implicit structure to the understanding it involves may be explicitly glimpsed as something that has been operating all along in ways ordinarily ignored.

The explicitness produced by such "Störungen" play a pivotal role in Heidegger's ontology, and I see them as playing a parallel role within pedagogy. In language study it is very common to have "disruptions" or "disturbances" in our understanding of an entity that we otherwise take for granted. Language learners regularly experience what may be considered breakdowns in their relationship to entities because the familiar, everyday relationship they have with an entity is disrupted by that of the unfamiliar language and culture. We can take the relationship of the CSSG students to water, as a case in point. The Canadian students took the manner of their purposeful and practical relationship with water completely for granted until that relationship was abruptly and definitively disturbed by the German relationship. In this way, language education inherently provides the very "disruptions" that Heidegger finds so useful for disclosing everyday understanding and opening the way to other

forms of understanding. A parallel effect could be reached by having students experience life among members of another social class at home, as well. That having been said, it must be acknowledged that the dynamic of liberation and new understanding depicted in the allegory of the cave is not applied to an inanimate entity. In the cave allegory it is an animate entity, a *Dasein* in Heideggerian terminology, whose everyday existence is disrupted when they are freed from their chains. It is of the disruption in understanding of *Dasein,* and the anxiety this involves, that I shall now give an account.

4.1.3 Anxiety and the Language Learner

The Being of "Dasein" is the central topic of *Being and Time* and therefore the disruptions involving this mode of Being receive special attention. Indeed, an aspect of the Being of "Dasein" to which Heidegger gives both detailed and sustained attention throughout the length of his book is a particular form of "Befindlichkeit" which Heidegger singles out and which he specifically names. This "state-of-mind" ("Befindlichkeit") is "Angst," normally translated as "anxiety."

Heidegger has already told us that it is our state-of-mind or mood which discloses certain segments of our world as mattering to us in certain ways. In other words, our state-of-mind generally absorbs us in a particular form of concern for some particular part of our world. In anxiety, however, it is not any specific or particular involvement in our world that is in question, but all the involvements that make up the entire structure of the world that cease to

concern us. Anxiety is anxious not about any particular entity within-the-world, but about Being-in-the-world itself:

> That which anxiety is anxious about is Being-in-the-world itself. In anxiety what is environmentally ready-to-hand sinks away, and so, in general, do entities within-the-world... Anxiety thus takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the 'world' and the way things have been publicly interpreted. (BT232)

Anxiety, then, is not just any state-of-mind or mood, but a very important one. In anxiety we lose that projective drive towards ends that formerly defined us and with it, our ordinary relationship to entities as the manipulable means to those ends. This way in which the world as a whole ceases to matter to us, constitutes an existential acknowledgement of the two contingencies – or in Heideggerian terms nullities – essential to our Being. For it is only when we slip out of straightforwardly identifying with some particular end, that we fully recognize those two contingencies which, unlike the end itself, genuinely belong to our own Being. That it should be just this world – or, expressed in a manner that enables us to transfer this recognition to the classroom – that it should be just this particular tradition, that we should identify ourselves with just these interpretations and understand our surroundings in just this way, is due neither to us nor to any inherent merit to our native tradition. In its content our cultural tradition is merely one among any number of possibilities, having neither an absolute claim upon us, nor we upon it.

This liberation of the learner, from the domination of the one to the possibilities of the many, is an appropriate goal for all education. Furthermore, it is this goal which language study is uniquely suited to achieve. I will return to

Heidegger's conception of possibilities and their crucial role in his approach to understanding. It is important first, however, to continue developing my claim that the study of an unfamiliar language is a pursuit especially suited to achieving authentic understanding. Heidegger gives us the opening for this alignment through a conceptualization that is at the heart of both: "das Nicht-zuhause-sein." When our everyday, fallen understanding is disrupted through anxiety we undergo the experience Heidegger refers to as "unheimlich," that is, uncanny or "not-at-home":

> As we have said earlier, a state-of-mind makes manifest 'how one is'. In anxiety one feels 'uncanny'... But here "uncanniness" also means "not-being-at-home" [das Nicht-zuhause-sein]. ...the "they" brings tranquillized self-assurance – "Being-at-home," with all its obviousness – into the average everydayness of Dasein. On the other hand, as Dasein falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the 'world'. Everyday familiarity collapses. Being-in enters into the existential 'mode' of the "not-at-home." Nothing else is meant by our talk about 'uncanniness'. (BT233)

In the state of anxiety, then, we are "not-at-home" in the world in which we happen to have been. Our experience of an unfamiliar culture may be described in precisely the same way. The experience of "das Nicht-zuhause-sein," the experience of "das Unheimliche," is the experience of the strange or the unfamiliar. That makes Heidegger's state of anxiety synonymous with the experience of the unfamiliar and indeed they share the same attributes. For instance, Heidegger claims that in the state of anxiety we lose our tendency to grasp ourselves solely in terms of the familiar world we know by experiencing a disruption in the significance of that world. An encounter with the unfamiliar constitutes the same such disruption with the same potential consequences. In

anxiety we recognize the contingency to our world, and our condition of being thrown into projecting a merely contingent world. The same consequences may be derived from an encounter with the unfamiliar. In other words, we resist or are wary of the unfamiliar because it constitutes the same threat – or promise – as anxiety, to make us face the groundlessness of our familiar world.

In terms of Plato's allegory, the experience of the prisoner liberated from the familiar world of their shadows, may be conceptualized as the experience of the learner liberated from the familiar world of their language and culture. In the allegory, it is unclear how the prisoner is released, except that this liberation is a "difficult task" and associated with "anxiety." In language learning this liberation is also associated with anxiety, but the liberating force can be identified: it is the anxiety-inducing encounter of the learner with the new, unfamiliar language. The difficult task for the language learner follows after the anxiety-inducing encounter and is shared by the teacher as primarily a pedagogical one.

In the cave allegory, the anxiety of the liberated prisoner is viewed as a form of "negative freedom" that the prisoner experiences before the "positive freedom" of a new understanding becomes possible. As we have seen, the anxiety of the learner in language study is not perceived as a "negative freedom." I propose that it should be, however, so that the "positive freedom" of possible new understandings might also become the experience of the language learner. These new possibilities of understandings may take any number of forms, but it is my further proposal that they be conceptualized in the qualitative terms of authentic understanding. I propose this in part because of the

fundamental consistency between those qualities that characterize authentic understanding and the qualities that are generally acknowledged as being educational. For me, however, what distinguishes "authentic understanding" from other forms and recommends it for pedagogy is the reciprocity of the dynamic between Heidegger's philosophy of authentic understanding and language study.

The above proposals notwithstanding, we are still left with the "difficult task" of turning the negative freedom of the learner into something positive. An important dimension of this task would be to make the experience of disruption through an encounter with another language take on the nature of a promise, rather than the threat it currently assumes within language pedagogy. In the terms of the allegory, the role of the teacher would be central in such an undertaking. Teachers must be able to recognize the anxiety and disruptions that learners experience, when they occur, and respond to them in an appropriate manner; that is, the pedagogical response would have to be consistent with the nature and scope of classroom activities. In addition, these practices should address the stated concerns of the AATG Task Force on the Teaching of Culture. I will examine the role of the teacher, one of the concerns of the AATG Task Force, in the final section of this chapter. The AATG requests for definitions and for measurable objectives within intercultural language pedagogy are the topics of the following section.

4.2. Intercultural Language Pedagogy: Definitions and Objectives

In Chapter One I introduced an initiative on the part of the American Association of Teachers of German to examine the teaching of culture within the discipline. A five-member task force was struck and in the Fall of 2005 their findings were published in the professional journal *Die Unterrichtspraxis* in the report "In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom: Recommendations of the AATG Task Force on the Teaching of Culture."[8] In this report, the Task Force poses a number of questions grouped under five headings that the Task Force members identify as requiring professional consensus; these are: definitions, contents, objectives and assessment, approaches and materials, and teacher development (176). In what follows, I will address some of the questions that have been posed in regard to the issue of definitions and of objectives in the light of Heideggerian hermeneutics.

4.2.1 Definitions in Language Education

It is not surprising that the report of the AATG Task Force on the teaching of culture begins with the question "What is culture?" (172). As I explained in Chapter One, the term has become so problematic and controversial that at least two linguists (Edmondson and House, 1998) have argued that the discipline should dispense with the term entirely. In their report, the Task Force presents a number of reasons why it has proven so difficult to define the concept

[8] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, "In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* No. 38.2 (2005) 172-181.

within the context of language education. Generally speaking, these difficulties revolve around the "all-inclusiveness" of most of the definitions that have been proposed and the need to find a definition that is "sufficiently restricted" so as to be "usable" within German language instruction (174). Therefore, under the first heading of "Definitions" the Task Force asks the question: "Which definition(s) of culture, cultural understanding, and cross-cultural communicative competence or cultural literacy are appropriate in the context of FL teaching and learning...?" (176).

In light of the mandate of the Task Force and the current obsession of the discipline with culture, I can understand that this issue was given primacy among the five identified by the Task Force. To my mind, however, the quest for definitions is inextricably linked with the question of objectives. Indeed, considering the stated criterion of the Task Force that the definition of culture be "sufficiently restricted" to be useful, I would argue that the likelihood of successfully defining the term is greater once the objectives have been identified. This being the case, I will begin by proposing as an appropriate objective, the mandate that I identified for the discipline in Chapter One: "self-understanding and an explicit awareness of one's own identity as a culturally and socially-defined individual" (58). As I pointed out, such a mandate is consistent with current educational values and objectives generally, and is appropriate to a language pedagogy that goes beyond utilitarian aims to educate for more enduring competencies.

Michael Byram is cited in the AATG report as expressing a similar perspective for the discipline; specifically, that "the promotion of intercultural competence is not just part of a utilitarian aim for language teaching, but also an explicit contribution to the personal development of the individual and to their acquisition of desirable attitudes toward otherness" (173). Because our philosophical objectives are so similar, the question that the Task Force applies to Byram's position can also be applied to mine: "Can these objectives be derived from broad, all-inclusive goal statements...?" (173). As part of their effort to find a "sufficiently restricted" definition of culture, the Task Force seeks "specific, measurable curricular objectives" (177) and rightfully questions whether these can be derived from the "broad, all-inclusive goal statements" that have been offered by Byram and others.

I stated my opinion in Chapter Two, that the best implication of Heidegger's thought for education is in its revealing of the following truth: that the kind of language we use is critical for the kind of education we have. To my mind, there is no more relevant example of the need for an appropriately sensitive language than in the central question of objectives and standards in education. In Heideggerian terms, we must take care that the jargon of objectives and measurement-based standards that prevails in the discipline is not mere idle talk that reflects calculative assumptions about learning. One example is the assumption that disciplinary rigour must be a product of some kind of enframing, of adherence to a framework of pre-specified rules, and that mastery cannot be conceived without external, measurement-based control.

Even the current formation of the Ph.D. defence would be an example of this. By contrast, Heidegger would argue that true rigour in such matters requires the application of *poiesis*, the responsive, receptive engagement of poetic thinking. The persistence of standards cannot be a matter alone of following assessments from a pre-given scale, for, insofar as our disciplinary criteria stand in need of articulation and assessment, they stand in need of judgment, and in our judgments we stand in need of our language as *poiesis*.

It is significant to note that, in the matter of objectives, the Task Force turns to the teacher and poses the question: "what can we as individual teachers be accountable for?" (177). As we shall see, Heidegger would support such a move and such a question, and I will address it in the final part of this chapter. For now, the initial questions regarding definitions and objectives remain and call for a response.

A feature of cultures identified by the Task Force that makes it difficult both to establish objectives and agree on definitions is "that cultural practices and perspectives are constantly evolving, i.e., that culture is not static" (175). Learners of another language need to have reliable information on attitudes, behaviors, identities, and values in the community of the language they are learning, but because "language" and "culture" are such dynamic entities, this cannot be accomplished through a static depiction of facts and details. To begin, it is essentially impossible to remain current about how things are done, so that any factual information will inevitably become stale and essentializing. Moreover, ways of doing things differ from place to place and from situation to

situation within what would be considered one and the same "culture." It is virtually impossible to keep learners informed about the appropriate behavior, or attitude, for every conceivable location and combination of circumstances within a particular speech community.

I suggest that learners would be better able to cope with the dynamic and differentiated nature of a particular speech community if the discipline were to shift the emphasis from the speech community in itself to its unfamiliarity. In my opinion, learners in the twenty-first century need to know how to deal with the unfamiliar per se, wherever and in whatever form they encounter it. Certainly for Canadian learners focusing on the concept of the unfamiliar, or "otherness" as Byram articulates it, is more appropriate for a number of reasons.

Students in a Canadian university represent an almost limitless variety of ethnicities and cultures. Indeed, the ethnic constellation of a German language class is generally so varied, that students will almost certainly encounter and have to interact with members of many other cultures. Ironically, the only culture that will likely not be represented is the German one, since "native" German speakers are not permitted in German language classes. To be sure, there are "heritage" students in our classes, though only rarely "native" German speakers. It is impossible for an individual student in the class to be informed about the practices and beliefs of so many other cultures. Clearly, knowledge about another culture is not the basis upon which our students can be expected to interact successfully with others. By focusing on the idea of the unfamiliar, the discipline has an objective that is sufficiently open and flexible to address the

wide range of individual perspectives and experiences that our students represent.

The German language class is just one example of the need for learners to deal with the unfamiliar in whatever form they may encounter it. I would argue that the situation of the German language class may be extrapolated to other classes in other universities and other cities throughout Canada. Consistent with my position that the discipline should shift its focus to unfamiliarity is the position of Michael Byram that learners need to develop "desirable attitudes toward otherness" (173). Factual knowledge is too static. Learners need appropriate attitudes that they can draw on whenever and wherever they experience the unfamiliar, be that in the classroom or the line-up in the grocery store. I propose that the hermeneutical receptivities of authentic understanding and contemplative thinking are potentially appropriate attitudes. Where, however, does this leave the concept of culture and even more specifically, the German culture in a German language class?

Potentially, the study of any language would offer students the same educational value that I am claiming for the study of the German language. What is crucial is that learners undergo the actual experience of trying to learn another, unfamiliar language. It is this experience that has the potential to expand the understanding of self and other that is of such significant educational value. The study of languages or cultures as these are pursued in such disciplines as linguistics or anthropology will not achieve the same effect. This is because these disciplines are lacking the anxious, experiential dimension of

learning another language that I have identified as an intricate aspect of authentic understanding and that is necessary for self-understanding.

In Heideggerian terms, the pedagogical task as it may be derived from his account of Being is to devise a way of engendering insights for the learner which are not fallen, that is, not limited to the familiar perspective of their own tradition. Success would be gauged by whether the consequent understanding becomes embodied in the learners' attitudes and comportment, and not isolated from them as a merely theoretical position. Yet as we have seen from Chapter One onwards, the calculative and theoretical modes of understanding are the privileged ones we most often encounter in education. I will examine further why a theoretical approach to learning is so attractive and has gained such dominance within the academic community. This will offer an account of why other disciplines are not able to bring about the depth of understanding that the learning of a language may potentially achieve.

4.2.2 Deficiencies of Theoretical Understanding

I am arguing for authentic understanding and poetic thinking as appropriate attitudinal sensibilities within language education. Currently, however, theoretical and calculative modes of thinking dominate intellectual activity within educational contexts. Why does the intellectual community valorize these modes of thought? Why should teachers not limit themselves to this approach within education generally and language study in particular?

Far from being the privileged mode of understanding that we generally take it for, Heidegger insists that the theoretical mode is nothing more than another form of fleeing. We saw in Chapter Three how the routes of flight that we adopt in "everydayness" offer natural havens against our recognition of the essential groundlessness to our Being. How might adopting the theoretical attitude help us to avoid facing this groundlessness? In showing how in "everydayness" we flee the nullities, Heidegger presented two routes: a distracting absorption in entities, and an immersion in "das Man" and its comfortingly ubiquitous interpretations. In the instance of theoretical understanding, we encounter the same two routes.

Beginning with the second route, that is, falling as assimilating oneself to "das Man," it is easy to see why the theoretical mode of understanding has dominated our intellectual and educational traditions. The theoretical mode of understanding is comforting to us because theoretical thinking is typically accepted and reinforced as the basis of the way one thinks. This acceptance endows the theoretical interpretation of entities with an absolute status. And of course scientific interpretations are granted an especially widespread and confident public acceptance. So the tranquillizing impact of finding an understanding to be shared, to be repeated on all sides as self-evident and established, can be achieved just as well by theoretical understanding as by everyday understanding, and will qualify the former as an equally attractive place to flee the recognition of groundlessness. The question still remains,

however, as to why of all modes it is the theoretical one that has come to be so accepted?

The answer derives from the manner in which an absorption in "das Man," stands in a reciprocally reinforcing relation with an absorption in entities. As it turns out, the absorption in entities associated with the theoretical mode is different in style from the absorption of everydayness, but likewise effective in permitting an oversight of our groundlessness. The theoretical attitude aims to encounter its objects differently than is the case in the everyday and indeed to improve on such everyday encountering, to correct an inadequacy it senses there; specifically, to encounter entities with an explicitness and an independence from context that are not originally present in our everyday interaction with the ready-to-hand. In this way the theoretical attitude intends an improved understanding of entities, beyond that possible in everydayness. These aims are attractive to the falling effort into an absorption with entities in a way that language learning can also appreciate.

A theoretical grasp of an entity purports to give more than just another perspective on an entity; it lays claim to an insight that will survive any shifts in context or involvement. Language study is, of course, very sensitive to the effects of shifting contexts on our understanding of cultural artifacts. Compelled by its very nature to deal with such shifts, language study recognizes the role of contextual involvements in compromising shared understanding. The theoretical mode attempts to work against these involvements, by permitting them no role in any account of an entity itself. This involves the selection of some particular

concepts to replace the sense-giving role of our everyday involvements. For although entities may no longer be interpreted according to our "concernful" involvement with them, they must still be situated in some other system. Heidegger uses the example of how the framework of Cartesian co-ordinates replaces the "concernful" context of everyday space.

According to the sense of spatiality adhering to ready-to-hand entities in everyday understanding, the distance of an entity from us consists not in some objectively measurable interval, but in its accessibility or availability to us. Correspondingly, the direction in which an entity lies is determined not by the reading on a compass but by reference to the interrelations that hold entities together in relational complexes, for example, a hammer with nails and a workbench, or a pen with ink and paper. Thus, a classroom is located in a certain building in a certain area of the campus as a complex of classroom, building, campus. It is located as belonging within some larger complex of structures towards which we know our way. Moreover, this classroom is near or far according to the ease with which we may reach it. For instance, it is further in darkness or bad weather than it is in sunny daylight. It is in such an understanding of space that we primarily act and reckon, and not in the co-ordinate system of the geographer or cartographer.

Heidegger's example in *Being and Time* is particularly relevant to related research in language pedagogy. He discusses the use of "here" and "there" in language and what they mean in concrete experience. This brings him within the field of locative deixis within language study. In its simplest, non-specialized

use, the term deixis means to show or point out directly. In linguistic terms, deictic references are the "grammatical markers of relational phenomena."[9] In other words, deictic terms serve the linguistic function of connecting all language to concrete situations by orienting language with respect to time (temporal deictics), place (locative deictics) and person (participant deictics).

The locative deictic "here" in English may be directly translatable as "hier" in German, however, as any student of another language will confirm, the experience of these terms for the learner is not necessarily equivalent. The discrepancy becomes even more pronounced with the term "there" in English, translatable either as "da" or "dort" in German. Heidegger's claim that we usually act out of a "concernful," everyday understanding gives an account as to why these terms are not interchangeable.

Hubert Dreyfus offers a striking example of how Heidegger's account of "concernful," everyday understanding is at work within spatiality. The example is of distance-standing practices and is particularly relevant within an approach to language study as cultural study. According to Dreyfus, we have all learned to stand at an appropriate distance from other people, although different cultures have a different sense of what is appropriate. In North Africa, for example, people stand closer and have more body contact than in Scandinavia. There is no evidence that this distance is determined or can be explained through explicit and/or quantifiable standards of measure; rather, how close one stands goes

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[9] Christine Tanz, *Studies in the Acquisition of Deictic Terms*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) 5.

with an implicit understanding of what constitutes an appropriate distance.[10] Dreyfus has support for this claim in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who notes that only those who study but do not share a particular cultural understanding think of it as an objectifiable system of rules:

> The anthropologist is condemned to adopt unwittingly for his own use the representation of action which is forced on agents or groups when they lack practical mastery of a highly valued competence and have to provide themselves with an explicit and at least semi-formalized substitute for it in the form of a *repertoire of rules.*[11]

By way of systematized rules, the learner's problem of distinguishing between "hier," "da," and "dort" is circumvented entirely. In the same manner, colors may be specified by wavelengths and not by hues that can be differently experienced in differing personal and cultural contexts. It is perhaps a little clearer now, why Heidegger rejects the Cartesian view of human understanding as a conglomeration of individual theories and beliefs. But Heidegger's view differs from that of Bourdieu as well. Because a culture's shared ways of behaving constitute an understanding of Being, these shared practices could be studied as shared interpretations. Heidegger would resist approaching them as mere facts to be studied objectively by a scientific discipline such as anthropology or sociology. Instead, he would describe these as interpretations or articulations within a tradition.

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[10] Hubert L. Dreyfus, Being-in-the-World. A Commentary on Heidegger's 'Being and Time', Division I, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991) 18.

[11] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 36.

From the point of view of the scientist, without such basic concepts, with respect to which the properties of entities can be situated, it would not be possible to arrive at any content for a characterization of what these entities are in themselves. Heidegger calls this adoption of some such basic concepts "thematization," with the most prominent thematizations of course being those which provide a grounding for the sciences. According to Heidegger: "Every science is constituted primarily by thematizing" (BT445).

The sciences represent a field whose thematization has been so highly developed that they have come to constitute an ideal in this form of approach, representing the one way to grasp entities as they really and only are. But it is precisely when science insists that it has placed entities objectively, as they are in themselves and not relative to any context of concern, that it most indicates a falling motive. For here we have science, secure in its ability to demonstrate claims and decisively refute alternatives or objections, claiming to have fixed and stabilized its objects within a privileged system of disclosing these things as they really are. Such a single-minded absorption in attempting to achieve a secure grounding expresses a full pattern of avoidance of the nullities and presents an attractive route for falling "Dasein."

Heidegger's claim that this approach is misguided was a constant theme of his project. According to Heidegger, there are a number of ways in which the theoretical approach is misguided in its response to the nullities. Many of these are philosophically technical while others relate quite specifically to Heidegger's temporal analysis of Being. None of these ways need concern us here and

would, in any case, merit a complete study on their own. What does concern us is how these misguided ways relate to pedagogy. In this regard, the ways in which the theoretical mode may be inadequate hinge about a single crucial point that should be quite familiar by now; namely, that there is a gap between the level at which a theoretical position occurs, and that at which the motivating nullities reside. The theoretical project mistakes the root dissatisfaction, which is a groundlessness in our "concernful" understanding, as rather a groundlessness in our system of beliefs about entities. It tries to eliminate this dissatisfaction by providing the grounding that is felt to be lacking. Heidegger claims this is not possible and his most common criticism of it argues against the illegitimacy of the present-at-hand interpretation of Being that this approach basically involves. Heidegger is dismayed that we tend to universalize this attitude, and to take presence-at-hand as the way in which entities, including "Dasein" itself, really or most basically are:

> ...the interpretation of Being takes its orientation in the first instance from the Being of entities within-the-world. Thereby the Being of what is proximally ready-to-hand gets passed over, and entities are first conceived as a context of Things which are present-at-hand. "Being" acquires the meaning of "Reality." Substantiality becomes the basic characteristic of Being. (BT245)

The claim that is central to *Being and Time* and that is implicitly defended through most of the work is that we are most basically Being-in-the-world, and that present-at-hand accounts of us as given by traditional philosophy and the sciences are distortions of this essential nature. According to Heidegger we are in the world by virtue of the way we have been thrown into moods, and project towards ends. Here is the site of a deep incompatibility between concernful

understanding and the goals of the theoretical attitude that is a first indication of the reason for the gap between theory and practice.

The theoretical attitude wishes to view itself as no longer rooted in concern and pressing ahead through involvements – but it cannot escape the condition of thrown projection. Our theorizing is inevitably rooted in a "concernful" understanding whose goal-directedness precludes the explicit and focused grasp of things independent of context, at which theory aims. This is because the priority of our "concernful" understanding is not merely chronological. The theoretical attitude is based upon our "concernful" understanding in more than the sense that we are first in one and then, later, in the other. Rather, our very access to entities depends on our "concernful" understanding since our thematizing is always still set within that understanding of Being as readiness-to-hand. The theorist, too, is always still in the world:

> ...the thematizing of entities within-the-world presupposes Being-in-the-world as the basic state of Dasein... If, moreover, thematizing modifies and articulates the understanding of Being, then, in so far as Dasein, the entity which thematizes, exists, it must already understand something like Being... if Dasein is to be able to have any dealings with a context of equipment, it must understand something like an involvement, even if it does not do so thematically: a world must have been disclosed to it. (BT415)

Taken together, we must conclude the following: Not only does the realization of our essential groundlessness lie deeper than the thematization that theory recognizes, but this realization is only adequately confronted at a corresponding level; not by a merely theoretical recognition, but by a grasp that is deeper than theoretical, a grasp that is at the level of our "concernful" understanding. Theory can, of course, help us towards this deeper recognition,

but any full way of Being-in-the-world is not crystallized in a set of beliefs we may possess, nor in a handful of concepts presupposed in our theories. Insofar as theory conveys only an ability to speak differently about our structure and properties, it remains at too superficial a level. This was exemplified in the ability of the CSSG students to talk about tolerance, although they did not exhibit it in their day-to-day behavior. It is also exemplified in the kind of intelligibility that underlies the rules distinguishing "du" and "Sie," but does not use these forms correctly. Non-native German speakers do not share the "concernful" understanding that grounds the usage. They can repeat the forms, but the distinction will not matter to them in the "concernful" way that it will for a German speaker. For English-speakers there is an even further disengagement from the "concernful" understanding of the German speaker, since there is nothing directly analogous in the English world. Presumably, if learners could become more "concernfully" engaged with the distinction, appropriate usage would be more readily achieved. This is an implication to which I will return in the next chapter.

If we accept Heidegger's account of us as beings of care inescapably rooted in concern, and if we further accept that the theoretical attitude does not amount to a basic enough transformation of our existence to constitute a genuine alternative to our falling everydayness, where then does that leave us? Our progress on the path of understanding is not without some roadblocks, and before proceeding it will be necessary to pause before what is undeniably the

most intractable obstacle along our way. I am referring to the self-referentiality of hermeneutical consciousness as a circular process.

4.2.3 Deficiencies of Hermeneutical Understanding

As we have seen, hermeneutical understanding involves a circular movement from parts to whole and from whole to parts. I have mentioned the way in which Heidegger's application of this process is more rigorous than the conventional hermeneutic circle. Still, insofar as Heidegger's approach may be identified as hermeneutical, it shares in a paradoxical aspect of this dynamic; namely, that all understanding becomes a circular reflection on its own conditions. And indeed, Heidegger claims that all understanding necessarily derives from previous understanding and is the interpretation of what has already been understood: "Any interpretation which is to contribute understanding, must already have understood what is to be interpreted" (BT194). According to this dynamic, the understanding we gain, therefore, can ever only be of our own position, our own self. This being the case, the principal value of philosophical hermeneutics seems to lie in clarifying the nature of self-understanding. Insofar as education generally seeks this goal, this value can be embraced; however, this emphasis on the self within understanding is also seen as a potential limitation within the hermeneutic account. This limitation becomes a crucial one for a hermeneutics that is to be applied across different language communities as in the case of language study. The question cannot be evaded:

Does Heidegger's hermeneutic model of understanding condemn us to imprisonment within our own subjective viewpoint?

In "Heidegger and the hermeneutic turn," David Couzens Hoy argues that this is not the case in Heideggerian philosophy.[12] To begin, self-understanding in the case of Heidegger can never be taken in the traditional sense in which it might suggest grasping some inner, private self. As we have seen, a human being for Heidegger is never an isolated, distinct subject, but one that is in its very essence constituted by its *world*. Because of this conception of the self as being "in-the-world," and because of the way in which Heidegger conceives of this relation, his hermeneutical account of understanding does not constitute a one-sided approach that places the weight of understanding on the interpreting subject. Of course, interpretation will always reflect the self-understanding of the individual who is interpreting, so there will always be some dimension of the interpreter's context that is brought into focus. But with Heidegger, there is that crucial other side of the equation: "Being-in-the-world." The structure of Being-in-the-world implies an inherent connection and therefore reciprocity in the process of understanding. Who a self is will itself depend on that self's interpretations of the world in which it is intrinsically, inextricably, and "concernfully" dwelling. So by a Heideggerian account, understanding and interpretation should disclose something about both self and the actual world.

A further aspect works against subjective imprisonment. Heidegger's hermeneutics allows for an opening to the other and the world not only through

[12] David Couzens Hoy, "Heidegger and the hermeneutic turn," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Charles Guignon, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 170-194.

the inherent connection of self and world, but also in his depiction of understanding as an activity, a doing. As we have seen, understanding for Heidegger is more like a competence, an ability to run things, to know one's way around, than any specific form of cognition. It includes our everyday interactions in and with the world, our most basic ability to live in and cope skillfully with our world. Of course, this ability must take into account that the ways in which features of the world show up are constantly changing, and this constant change requires us to form particular interpretations. Our shift from one interpretation to another at the appropriate moment is a sign that we do understand the world. So a change in interpretation is not necessarily a sign of lack of understanding, since in these cases the change of interpretation shows that we can cope with the various demands the world places on us.

All of the above notwithstanding, Heidegger's claim that the backdrop of understanding forms our interpretations in advance, certainly gives rise to a crucial issue we have encountered in various guises, and identified in Chapter One with the figure of Jürgen Habermas. It raises the question of whether there is some way to "get out" of the circle. According to Heidegger, however, the idea of "getting out" is essentially misguided:

> *But if we see this circle as a vicious one and look out for ways of avoiding it...then the act of understanding has been misunderstood from the ground up...* If the basic conditions which make interpretation possible are to be fulfilled, this must rather be done by not failing to recognize beforehand the essential conditions under which it can be performed. This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move... (BT195)

The way Heidegger pursues it, the circularity of the hermeneutic movement is a rigorously dynamic process, one of making implicit background assumptions explicit, and then testing these assumptions to see if they can really be maintained in the face of the rest of what we believe and do. Heidegger speaks of "genuine" understanding as that which gets beyond "fancies and popular conceptions" (BT195), and these are precisely what come to nothing when the interpreter tries explicitly to work them out. Still, Heidegger insists that beliefs can ever only be checked against other beliefs. The circle of understanding is a dynamic one in which preconceptions will either work out or fail, but there is no place "outside" of the circle of understanding.

Heidegger's approach is, of course, in contrast to critical approaches to understanding that assume that individuals can detach themselves from their involvements, can become objective about their circumstances, and can see things in a non-situated, neutral way. Critical reflection claims to be able to do this through recourse to objective, rational criteria not subject to circumstances pertaining from within a particular situation. According to Heidegger, however, critical thinking can never attain to any kind of objective control over a situation by presuming to function in some artificial disconnection from it. Indeed, his primary point in adhering to a hermeneutical model of understanding is to undermine the conventional philosophical insistence on an independent "outside." As we have seen, for Heidegger, the fundamental structure of our human existence is to be "in-the-world." A bare subject, an isolated "I" detached

from a world never is, and is never given. We are existentially always situated, always involved-in. We can never "get out."

As we have seen, it is a major part of Heidegger's legacy that he rejects the traditional model of the subject as the knower standing over against what is to be known. Heidegger conceives of the individual and world as forming an interactive and interconnected circle. His strikingly different conception of the hermeneutic circle, one in which "Dasein" and world are coterminous in understanding, shows us that the subject-object model of traditional philosophy is not the only possible starting point for knowledge:

> In the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing... What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way. (BT195)

The crucial role of starting points was recognized already by Friedrich Schleiermacher in his book *Hermeneutics and Criticism*. Schleiermacher realized that methodological strategies would be affected by whichever of two starting points in the quest for knowledge was deemed to prevail: understanding or misunderstanding. We have already seen that, for his part, Schleiermacher aligned himself with misunderstanding as the appropriate point of departure in the hermeneutic quest. "Misunderstanding" he insisted, "arises of itself; understanding must be desired and sought at every point." (my translation)[13] This is in contrast to Heidegger's starting point.

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[13] „Mißverstehen ergibt sich von selbst;Verstehen muß auf jedem Punkt gewollt und gesucht werden." Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutik und Kritik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1993) 92.

According to Heidegger, the dynamic of understanding is such that it can correct its own mistakes and inadequacies. The way Heidegger describes the process, however, understanding must generally be a successful practice before particular aspects of interpretive understanding could even emerge as mistakes or misunderstandings. His conception of understanding would have misunderstanding arising only against a tacit background of shared understanding. As far as language methodology is concerned, this would be consistent with the position of Kramsch, for instance, that learners of another language must be enabled to understand the other speech community as it understands itself.[14] In other words, the understanding of this community must be reproduced, or as Kramsch puts it, "reconstructed" for the learner insofar as such reconstruction is feasibly possible. Now this is certainly a challenging expectation: some of the difficulties associated with such a reconstruction were noted in Chapter One; primarily, that it tends to be reduced to the simplistic transmission and or comparison of cultural traits and behaviors.

For her part, Kramsch calls for an emphasis on "a process that applies itself to understanding foreignness or otherness."[15] According to Kramsch, reconstruction is the part of this process that enables learners to go beyond the outsider's perspective which is inherently theirs, to an insider's perspective on

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[14] Claire Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 210.

[15] Kramsch 206.

an unfamiliar culture. In order to attain to both, however, she claims that a third perspective is necessary:

> The only way to start building a more complete and less partial understanding... is to develop a third perspective, that would enable learners to take both an insider's and an outsider's view... It is precisely that third place that cross-cultural education should seek to establish.[16]

Heidegger, too, is concerned to have individuals develop a fuller understanding, an authentic understanding. Moreover, such understanding will be open to new, previously unforeseen, possibilities. Following from his frequent pronouncements that we are always already in-the-world, by way of being concerned about or caring for that world, Heidegger suggests that it is the awareness of such concern that is authentically important. The question as to whether the primary intent of understanding is to promote understanding or avoid misunderstanding stands apart from our authentic concerns. We involve ourselves in such a question because we mistakenly suppose that resolving it will help us with our other genuine, existential concerns.

Heidegger tries to direct us to more fruitful questions and responses. These are the "positive possibilities" of understanding to which he refers. Heidegger has already shown us something about the nature of these possibilities by his emphasis, within understanding, on the disclosure of its conditions and procedures. Clearly, he advocates an understanding aware not only of its object or subject matter, but also, and perhaps more importantly, of itself. In other words, he is emphasizing an understanding which is self-aware.

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[16] Kramsch 210.

4.3 The Teacher

The report of the AATG Task Force on teaching culture specifically names the teacher as an issue for consensus. It is interesting to note that this issue is the last one on the list, and features the fewest questions. On a Heideggerian account, the role of the teacher would be the first issue on the list. In this section, we shall see why this is the case and what the implications are for a language pedagogy in the twenty-first century. In what follows I will look briefly at the reports we have of Heidegger's teaching approach to derive what we can about the role of the teacher directly from him. In the second section I will turn to the most explicit statements that Heidegger made in regard to teaching and learning, and develop these notions against the backdrop of authentic understanding and poetic thinking. In the final section, I will return to Heidegger's interpretation of the cave allegory, and to what it tells us about the teacher.

4.3.1 Heidegger in the Lecture Hall

The task that Heidegger assigned his philosophy of Being was the attainment of a particular mode of understanding he called authentic understanding. I have shown how Heidegger's conception of this form of understanding accounts for many basic experiences within language learning. This is because the fundamental tension between the familiar and the unfamiliar, which constitutes a primary experience of the language classroom, parallels an elemental tension which, according to Heidegger, is a part of our existential

structure. He even conceptualizes this tension in the same terms currently prevailing in language pedagogy. Heidegger claims that our familiar, everyday understanding helps us sustain a feeling of secure "at-homeness" that is steadfastly maintained in the face of the "not-at-homeness" which is the ultimate fact of our existence. Heidegger advocates this mode of authentic understanding because it neither covers over nor flees the "not-at-homeness" that other modes of understanding, and especially the theoretical approach to understanding prevailing within academia, attempt to do.

Language teachers are very aware of the potential of an unfamiliar language to induce a feeling of not-at-homeness in the learner. It is the approach of most language programs to try to neutralize or diminish this aspect of language learning. Merely one example among any number of others I could cite is the relatively new (first published in 1996) and popular German program entitled "*Moment mal!*" The teacher's resource manual in this program explicitly advises the teacher to mitigate "fear of the new" ("Angst vor dem Neuen") by instilling learners with a sense of "security and trust" "Sicherheit und Vertrauen").[17] For his part, Heidegger claims that the feeling of not-at-homeness, uncomfortable as it may be, is not something to resist or avoid. Indeed, as I pointed out, this is what makes language learning able to accomplish what other disciplines that involve the study of language cannot. If we do not flee this experience, it can be potentially productive and expansive,

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[17] Martin Müller, Paul Rusch, Theo Scherling, Reiner Schmidt, Lukas Wertenschlag, Heinz Wilms, Christiane Lemcke, *Moment mal! Lehrwerk für Deutsch als Fremdsprache, Lehrerhandreichungen* (Berlin: Langenscheidt KG, 1996) 30.

leading to the broadening of our understanding that we identified in the first chapter as an educational value.

There exists scope within language study for a kind of teaching that may enable students to unlearn the fixities of thought in whose grip they are. But such an understanding requires more than a benign and safe encounter with the unfamiliar, and it goes without saying that it does not happen naturally of its own accord. It is the difficult task of the teacher to assist the learner in achieving this kind of insight and understanding.

In his own way, Heidegger might be seen as trying to evoke a sense of not-at-homeness in his students as part of his teaching approach. Karl Loewith was a student of Heidegger when Heidegger was completing *Being and Time* and was the most popular professor at The University of Marburg. Loewith describes Heidegger's teaching as follows: "The technique of his lecture consisted in building up a complex structure of ideas, which he then dismantled to confront the overstrung student with a puzzle and leave him in a void."[18] The image of students being "overstrung" and in a "void" bears resemblance to the anxiety of the language learners who find themselves not-at-home. Although Heidegger never explicitly expressed the idea that thinking and learning involve – or even require – a physiological response on the part of the learner, it would seem to be implied in his teaching approach.

[18] Elżbieta Ettinger, *Hannah Arendt Martin Heidegger* (New Haven: Yale University Press,) 11.

4.3.2 Learning, Thinking, Understanding

Heidegger was intensely involved in teaching for most of his life, but only rarely addressed the topic directly and explicitly. His most explicit remarks on the subject derive from a course of university lectures he delivered during 1951 and 1952 at the University of Freiburg that were subsequently published as *"Was heisst denken?"* (*What is called Thinking?*). In this section, I will identify and develop what I believe are some of the most important insights that Heidegger's thinking offers on teaching and the role of the teacher. I will do this by drawing on Heidegger's following explicit remarks on teaching and learning in relation to his concepts of authentic understanding and poetic thinking.

> True. Teaching is even more difficult than learning. We know that; but we rarely think about it. And why is teaching more difficult than learning? Not because the teacher must have a larger store of information, and have it always ready. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than – learning. His conduct, therefore, often produces the impression that we properly learn nothing from him, if by "learning" we now suddenly understand merely the procurement of useful information. The teacher is ahead of his apprentices in this alone, that he has still far more to learn than they – he has to learn to let them learn. The teacher must be capable of being more teachable than the apprentices. The teacher is far less assured of his ground than those who learn are of theirs. If the relation between the teacher and the taught is genuine, therefore, there is never a place in it for the authority of the know-it-all or the authoritative sway of the official. It still is an exalted matter, then, to become a teacher – which is something else entirely than becoming a famous professor. That nobody wants any longer to become a teacher today, when all things are downgraded and graded from below (for instance, from business), is presumably because the matter is exalted, because of its altitude.[19]

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[19] Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glen Gray (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968) 15.

> To learn means to make everything we do answer to whatever essentials address themselves to us at a given time. Depending on the kind of essentials, depending on the realm from which they address us, the answer and with it the kind of learning differs.[20]

From the above comments, we can immediately conclude that Heidegger did not conceive of educating as instilling into students something from an external source through a heavily didactic process. The heart of Heidegger's statement on teaching is his call to teachers to *let learn*. As I noted in Chapter Three, this insistence to *let learn* might appear to characterize teaching as something passive. In my opinion, this is only if we do not consider it in relation to his concept of authentic understanding in *Being and Time* and his critique of calculative thinking.

Central to Heidegger's characterization of human beings in *Being and Time* is the view that we are the beings who live understandingly and for whom our own Being is an issue. For much of the time, however, the personal cogency of our understanding is tranquilized through our submersion in the idle talk and accepted understanding of "das Man" – what everybody thinks and says. Instead of thinking things through in terms of their meaning for our own unique existence, we approach them primarily in terms of what is currently in favor, with an understanding that readily passes on to the next thing rather than test the validity of its assumptions.

From his depiction of authentic understanding we can surmise that, for Heidegger, education is above all concerned with the value and meaning that

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[20] Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* 14.

the individual learner derives from learning, how it affects their attitudes, their actions and their conception of themselves as unique individuals. From the second citation, we see that learning, for Heidegger, is a response on the learner's part to a call which issues from different areas. He advocates a form of learning that is at once receptive in the sense of attending to what things convey to the learner, but also active in the sense that the learner responds to their call. Only when the learner is fully immersed in what is to be addressed can the decisive knowledge of anything, no matter how commonplace it may be, appear in a manner that avoids the learner's habitual ways of grasping it. From this admonition we see that it is also crucial for Heidegger that learners respond to the demands and rigor of thinking. Clearly, Heidegger saw learning as a highly demanding and participatory affair, which required the full engagement of both the learner and the teacher. The teacher has to be teachable, too.

As far as the teacher is concerned, Heidegger tells us that he can never be "assured of his ground" because this ground cannot be specified in advance. In other words, learning evolves out of each unique teaching-learning situation, not ahead of it. It may be the role of the teacher to stimulate and provoke engagement by, for example, helping the learner to identify and to pursue the questions that need to be asked, but the teacher is not a mechanism for "delivering" pre-specified knowledge and skills. Teaching is not a means to an end. It is a way or a path that takes its start from the quality of the learner's engagement and has no certain destination in mind. This relates to Heidegger's critique of the calculative way of thinking that expresses a drive to mastery,

conceives of the world as a resource, and reckons everything in terms of its potential to serve utilitarian purposes.

Heidegger's critique of calculative thinking has revealed that he was vehemently opposed to a mechanization of thinking which attempts to enframe it in pre-imposed and often highly instrumental structures, thereby limiting thinking's possibilities. For Heidegger, education is definitely not about acquiring the skills required to satisfy the demands of global capitalism. In contrast to the "calculative" demand of education to classify and predict in order to intellectually possess and materially utilize, Heidegger admonishes us to be attentive to things as they are, to let them be as they are, and to think them and ourselves together. Consequently, the teacher-pupil relationship becomes a potentially very creative and open encounter in which the teacher honors the quality of the learner's engagement and helps the learner to hear for themselves what demands to be thought in this engagement.

Perhaps the closest that these values and characteristics come to conventional forms of pedagogy is to the "learner-centered" approaches. According to "learner-centered" approaches as they are currently understood and practiced within the post-secondary context, it is fundamental that learners understand the point of the learning activities in which they are engaged, that these activities are meaningful to them, and that they take responsibility for their own learning.[21] These characterizing features are consistent with those we have identified from Heidegger with their emphasis on self-realization and

[21] Colin Wringe, *The Effective Teaching of Modern Languages* (New York: Longman, 1989).

individuation. In addition, since the objectives of learner-centered approaches cannot be accomplished without knowledge of the learner, these approaches take care to identify the profile of the learner they are addressing and develop approaches suited to the needs of this learner. This is indicative of a further personalizing and individuating tendency that is consistent with the values identified by Heidegger.

In my opinion, however, a Heideggerian approach distinguishes itself from "learner-centered" views of language education in a number of important ways. To begin, a "learner-centered" approach pursued within an institutional setting still generally enables those external to the individual teaching-learning situation to set the criteria for successful learning. Within language learning the learning objectives, the essential content, and the teaching approach of individual learners and teachers are almost always pre-specified. Moreover, they often reflect highly instrumental and narrowly vocational aims. It is ironic, therefore, that in a rare instance where this is not the case, it is regarded as a shortcoming or deficiency. I am referring to the intercultural approaches that are the topic of this project. As we have seen, the AATG Task Force on culture learning regards the absence of "measurable curricular objectives" as an "issue requiring professional consensus" (177).

Applying Heidegger's critique, we can identify other ways in which "learner-centered" approaches have fallen under the sway of "calculative" thinking. In "learner-centered" approaches teacher and learner are held accountable to external bodies through regular, measurement-based

assessment, inspection and evaluation. In all, it amounts to an approach that is highly enframing in Heidegger's sense of the term, and one in which it becomes entirely "natural" to regard education primarily as an economic resource. The development of genuinely individual perspectives and personal ways of making sense of experience are not officially recognized or promoted. This contrasts strongly with the kind of full learner engagement previously described.

For the quality of learning to be achieved that underlies a Heideggerian approach to education, there is a need first and foremost for a conception of the teacher-learner relationship that is qualitatively different from that which prevails in conventional approaches. The Heidegger scholar Michael Bonnett argues that a Heideggerian approach to learning and the teacher-pupil relationship conceives of education as a form of the poetic.[22] Bonnett describes the poetic as "an engagement with things which is both personal in its commitment and transporting through its openness to things themselves; thinking which involves true responsibility for self and towards things..." (238). How does this translate into education, in particular, teaching and the teacher-pupil relationship? According to Bonnett, it invites us to view education as "an ever-evolving triadic interplay between teacher, learner, and that which calls to be learned" (238). Bonnett claims that this implies a relationship that evolves according to its own norms and is destroyed if made subservient to any set of external norms that attempt to pre-specify what it is to achieve and how it is to proceed.

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[22] Michael Bonnett, "Education as a Form of the Poetic: A Heideggerian Approach to Learning and the Teacher-Pupil Relationship," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, Michael A. Peters, ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002) 229-243.

In the presentation of his argument, Bonnett anticipates an objection that the lack of pre-specified objectives and norms will result in a lack of discipline and intellectual rigor. He insists that the contrary is true and that the rigor of poetic thinking and practice is greater than any to be generated by following an externally imposed framework, for it requires "constant and close attention to the signs which are its way,... a genuine *listening* to that which calls to be thought in the evolving situation" (239). In terms of the triadic relationship, this means "the engagement of the learner with that which concerns him/her and the teacher's sensing of this and of the integrity of the subject matter itself as a tradition of concerns and perspectives" (239). According to Bonnett, poetic thinking generates its own context-relative interpretations of criteria which express a receptive, responsive openness to things.

He refers to this "poetic" conception of the teacher-learner relationship as "empathetic challenging" (241). Bonnett claims that the action of "empathetic challenging" will bring into question beliefs which may be "deeply constitutive of one's personal identity and which significantly shape one's outlook" (241). As a consequence, Bonnett insists that the teacher plays a central role in supporting the experience of learning by virtue of his or her own experience of engaging with the material. According to Bonnett, by revealing an individual and personal sense of what is important, problematic, or a source of wonderment, the teacher exhibits what an honest engagement might mean and how it becomes integrated into human life. The teacher, in relation to the learner, and the learner, in relation to what is to be learned, are involved in a relationship that

requires both to offer something of themselves as individuals. Not surprisingly, in order to preserve both the integrity of the learner and of the material, the poetic teacher-learner relationship must be "highly reciprocal and based on trust" (240). Above all, however, Bonnett emphasizes the following aspect of empathetic challenging: "It locates the teacher-pupil relationship at the very heart of education – indeed, as maintaining the space in which education succeeds or fails" (239). To be sure, such a conception is sharply in contrast to current, conventional concepts that conceive of the teacher as a facilitator.

To regard teaching as Bonnett does is to view teachers, and also learners, very differently than does the viewpoint that casts teaching as a technology, or as a service industry. It is to envisage teachers, first and foremost, as active thinkers, whose work is to bring about – sometimes through creative conflict and constructive struggle – what is most worthy of the efforts of each learner. But this view also recognizes that what is most worthy of both teacher and learner may well be simply the ongoing activity of learning itself.

Bonnett's application of Heidegger's concept of poetic thinking not only celebrates the richness of personal engagement in learning, it sensitizes teachers and learners to values that may not be materialistically utilizable, but which are immensely powerful in conditioning our relationship with the world.

4.3.3 The Return of the Teacher

This chapter began with the interpretation by Iain Thomson of Heidegger's conception of education in terms of Plato's allegory of the cave.

Thomson's account of Heidegger's reading of the allegory draws attention to the second stage of the emancipation from the cave, the interim stage between captivity and emergence into the light of the outside world. What is new in Heidegger's reading of the allegory is its emphasis on the return of the one who had ascended towards the light. For Heidegger – and Thomson and I follow him in this regard – this return is the return of the teacher:

> the telling of the story does not end, as is often supposed, with the description of the highest level attained in the ascent out of the cave. On the contrary, the "allegory" includes the story of the descent of the freed person back into the cave, back to those who are still in chains. The one who has been freed is supposed to lead these people too away from what is unhidden for them and to bring them face to face with the most unhidden. But the would-be liberator no longer knows his or her way around the cave and risks the danger of succumbing to the overwhelming power of the kind of truth that is normative there, the danger of being overcome by the claim of the common "reality" to be the only reality. The liberator is threatened with the possibility of being put to death, a possibility that became a reality in the fate of Socrates, who was Plato's "teacher."[23]

Having once ascended to the light, the person who returns to the cave would find their eyes filled with darkness and would be criticized, their very life might be threatened. In the return to the cave, it is necessary to turn one's head around again and to readjust one's eyes to the lack of light. This is necessary, but with it comes the danger of sliding back into acceptance of the conditions that prevail there. This danger is Heidegger's overriding concern. The teacher cannot come back to the darkness simply armed with truth, for the teacher would be lost in the face of the illusions that make up the student's world, the

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[23] Martin Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of Truth,* trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, William McNeill, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 171.

kind of understanding that thrives on the flickering images at the back of the cave. For Heidegger, it is precisely in tranquilized, largely unwitting collusion with these images that so many teachers in educational institutions fill their time. There is no need to recount here the enframing tendencies of such institutions, either the instrumentalism or the way that the important work of education disappears in proceduralism. In what follows, I shall concentrate rather on the qualities that the returning teacher must bring back to the cave. For Heidegger, the decisive movement in the dynamic of learning is turning. The teacher must turn against the darkness of their imprisonment towards the light, and when the teacher returns the teacher should inspire the students to turn against their own darkness. The process of turning, which both the teacher and the students undergo, takes time:

> But why does this process of getting accustomed to each region have to be slow and steady? The reason is that the turning around has to do with one's being and thus takes place in the very ground of one's essence. This means that the normative bearing that is to result from this turning around, must unfold from a relation that already sustains our essence and develop into a stable comportment. This process whereby the human essence is reoriented and accustomed to the region assigned to it at each point, is the essence of what Plato (123) calls *paideia*.[24]

On this account, Heidegger draws our attention to three main points in his vision of education. First of all, real learning is a slow and steady process. It does not happen quickly. For Heidegger and for Plato, the fifty-minute class would probably be inappropriate, not the least because they lived in different economies. The second point that Heidegger emphasizes here is the idea of teaching and learning as a process of turning and returning: the teacher turns on

[24] Heidegger 166.

their background and teaches the students to turn on theirs. In the earlier work *Being and Time*, Heidegger would have described this as a process of reaching authentic experience, but in this account of Plato's allegory, he wants to stress a view of authentic education. His third point is that this turning, which happens through a slow and steady process, will draw us back into a "stable" relation to ourselves, to "the region" we are most accustomed to. Clearly, for Heidegger, authentic education requires a profound turning on ourselves that will bring us back to a deeper self-understanding.

I see this turning in close proximity to the celebrated "turn" in Heidegger's own thinking, his "Kehre" from philosophy to poetry, from a concern with "Dasein" to one with language. Following from this emphasis on language, we might presume that it is not the teacher who leads the way from the shadows of the cave, but the poet, or the teacher as poet. Such a proposal becomes possible especially upon a consideration of the productive nature of *poiesis*, on the way that language as *poiesis* lets things appear. The ascent to the second stage, it will be recalled, involves coming to understand a different kind of appearing of things. What I am suggesting is that the turn Heidegger envisages for the teacher could equally be understood as a turn from philosophy to poetry, or in our case, from a more grammatical understanding of language to a more poetic understanding of language.

The Heidegger scholar, Paul Standish, has made the claim that the German concept of "Dichter," with its connotations of spiritual leader and poet,

indicates something of the task that faces the teacher.[25] Given the nature of the ascent toward the truth and Heidegger's account of the essential nature of the poetic, it is the "Dichter" who, according to Standish, leads the way by "finding the measure of things, through realizing criteria of what is to count, by edification, where this, as the word tells us (*aedificare*) is simultaneously building."[26] For Standish, following Heidegger, the teacher like the poet will establish what matters and communicate this to the students for their edification. This edification is a kind of training or "building" of the student's sensibility in the direction of their own self-realization. Admittedly, this may seem somewhat exalted for the early twenty-first century language classroom, but I believe that a language teacher will at least gain in range and flexibility if they are aware of the poetic, or even spiritual, dimension of their work.

We saw in Chapter Three that Heidegger links the poetic to naming, and naming to the possibility of building in his 1951 lecture on "Building Dwelling Thinking." Naming, it will be recalled, was always more than the furnishing of an already existing thing with a name. Naming here comes to be understood as a kind of measure-taking. Especially in the process of education, it is very hard to accumulate knowledge without a name, or taking the measure, of an entity or an experience. In other words, it is impossible to build without taking measure. This may sound abstract but it actually has very specific practical

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[25] Paul Standish, "Essential Heidegger: Poetics of the Unsaid," in *Heidegger, Education, and Modernity*, Michael A. Peters, ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002) 158.

[26] Standish 158

consequences. Students cannot learn the perfect in the German, an understanding of the perfect cannot be built without naming its component parts. This measure-taking is not so much the application of a preexisting measure to some already existing thing, but rather the bringing into being of the very possibility of measuring. Indeed, the measure-taking can be seen according to Heidegger, as an act of world-making:

> This measure-taking is itself an authentic measure-taking, no mere gauging with ready-made measuring rods for the making of maps. Nor is poetry, building in the sense of raising and fitting buildings. But poetry, as the authentic gauging of the dimension of dwelling, is the primal form of building. Poetry first of all admits man's dwelling into its very nature, its presencing being. Poetry is the original admission of dwelling.[27]

Whereas "measure-taking" may seem to be a conventional form of statistical analysis, Heidegger suggests that, if we understand naming as measure-taking, we can see language as the surveyor of our world. Furthermore, naming brings an entity into being. The task of the teacher, who has turned against their prior experience and towards a different way of naming things, is to communicate or share this ability to name entities anew. In the context of my project, the language teacher will be the one who can communicate to the students the ability to articulate their own experience under a new description. What was previously pedestrian in English will be new and different in German. The students will have a new set of names or measures to apply to their world. The practice of teacher and learner together would be, on

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[27] Martin Heidegger, ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . ." in *Poetry, Language, Thought* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971) 227.

this account, to create meaning but not to rest in it: to transform familiar realities into springboards for new thought.

The teacher, understood as a namer and measure-giver, is someone who constantly turns on their own experience and re-evaluates it with new descriptions. For Heidegger, Thomson and Standish, the teacher resembles a poet, who can create new worlds with new words. "Poetic thinking" as embodied by the teacher will supplement and strengthen the authentic understanding of the student about their own being in the world. Heidegger's integration of "poetic thinking" with "authentic understanding" animates both the experience of the teacher and the learner.

What I have just said may seem very remote from the technical descriptions from the AATG report, but in fact, Heidegger's vision of education guided by authentic understanding and poetic thinking should make a major difference to the technical explanations of our institutions. I am not saying that the AATG needs to think of itself as poetic, but I am suggesting that teachers in our world today need to be reminded of the need for poetic thinking in their daily practice. It is not just a matter of reaching standards and competing or achieving technical goals. Education in general and language education specifically can inspire the students to turn on the fallen understanding in which they find themselves and transform this world in new directions. My argument is that by teaching students new languages, they will come to see the world in new ways.

V New Themes in Language Education

My argument is that authentic understanding and poetic thinking are appropriate attitudinal objectives for language education today. My intention is to show how these sensibilities might be integrated within current approaches to language learning. To that end I will compare and evaluate three first-year language programs in German. Again, I am not proposing a methodological alternative to the many excellent language teaching methodologies already available. Rather, I am putting forward some alternative themes for language education: to diversify the traditional skills orientation of language curricula, and to broaden the range of scholarship within language education. By integrating a hermeneutic approach, language study could more fully realize its potential.

This chapter is composed of three parts. In the first part, I will address two final issues of concern as identified by the AATG Task Force Report. In the second part, I will compare and analyze three first-year programs in German language in terms of their approaches and materials. In the third part of this chapter I will conclude the argument of this dissertation as a whole.

5.1 Approaches to Language Teaching

One of the observations of the AATG Task Force on the teaching of culture is that "there is no dearth of suggested approaches for the teaching of culture...."[1] The plethora of approaches marks the challenge, identified by the

[1] Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, and James, "In Pursuit of Cultural Competence in the German Language Classroom," *Die Unterrichtspraxis* No. 38.2 (2005) 177.

Task Force, of the profoundly dynamic nature of culture. A cultural tradition does not exist as a static set of facts, and this naturally has implications for the choice of pedagogical materials and for modes of transmission. If, from a pedagogical viewpoint, the discipline does not proceed from a dynamic concept of culture, a one-way transmission deriving from the simple juxtaposition of two discrete cultures would be quite sufficient. We saw that Claire Kramsch recognizes the shortcomings of such a transmission and suggests a model whereby a learner views both the unfamiliar culture and their native culture from the perspective in each case of both an insider and an outsider. The first step in the four-step model she presents is to "reconstruct the context of production and reception of the text within the foreign culture." The individuating power for Kramsch is in the learner finding a third perspective between the two: a "third place."[2] Although the concept of a "third place" is familiar from traditional dialectical thinking in philosophy, when it is applied to language education from a Heideggerian perspective it becomes something different.

As I described in Chapter Four, Heidegger's model of understanding proceeds from a different metaphorical dynamic. In contrast to a metaphor of "place," or different places whereby some learners may be included while others may be excluded from the process, Heidegger would argue that there is no place outside of the circle of understanding. Heidegger works from a model of understanding as circular, but not tautological. The hermeneutic circle, for him,

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[2] Claire Kramsch, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 210.

does not simply bring the learner back to where they began. Instead, the learner embarks on a process of self-transformation through turning and returning, and as they turn on themselves with others who are also turning on themselves, a remarkable group dynamic also occurs. No one learner is left outside the process, but all are included individually and together. Among the defining characteristics of the hermeneutic circle in education are such features as the absence of any absolute start or end points; the mutual, indivisible interdependence of part and whole; and a simultaneous interaction within the interconnected totality. The power of such a metaphorical model is that it can accommodate mutually exclusive impulses. Though Heidegger would argue that there is no "place" outside of the circle of understanding, the goal of developing a more complete and less partial understanding is shared by both Heidegger and Kramsch.

Here we encounter the very important sense in which both the understanding of "everydayness" and the understanding of anxiety are partial understandings. We cannot interpret Heidegger's argument as claiming that any mode of understanding, whether it is everyday, calculative, contemplative or authentic, is a complete understanding. What he does claim is that our everyday, routine understanding is obtained at the cost of a deep self-forgetting in which the very ground for understanding is covered up. In light of this profusion of possibilities, we might legitimately ask: Which understanding has priority for intercultural language pedagogy?

5.1.1 Approaches: Three Moments in Learning

Heidegger's dynamic of understanding is consistent with Kramsch's, insofar as they would support, as an initial move, the reproduction of the unfamiliar understanding for the learner. Heidegger's view is that we generally attain to authentic understanding from out of a familiar, fallen understanding that is always already ours. From the outset, the learner needs to share in as much of the fallen everyday dimension, or insider's perspective, of the unfamiliar understanding as it is possible to transmit. Many of the pedagogical strategies presently in use are of this type – reproductive activities, directed toward achieving familiarity with, if not mastery of, the unfamiliar language and culture. Still, without modification and development these approaches will not move beyond the isolation of the simple facts and straightforward comparisons that the discipline is trying to avoid. The concern of the Task Force in regard to more simplistic approaches derives from the recognition of their shortcomings.

On the issue of approaches, then, I would propose that the pedagogical expression of the ontological dynamic that Heidegger depicts would involve three phases or impulses. As already noted, the first phase of the encounter with an unfamiliar language would be directed towards familiarizing the learner with as much of the specifically fallen aspect of the language as is possible. I refer to this initial, familiarizing impulse as the structuring or constructive phase in the encounter with the unfamiliar. As far as the construction of understanding is concerned, many existing pedagogical approaches and practices remain operative: developing skills from the simple to the complex, for instance, and

relating new information to learners' existing knowledge. In the section that follows, I will make some suggestions to enhance these already familiar approaches.

As we are aware, of course, it is not desirable that we remain immersed in our familiar, everyday understanding. Just as Heidegger looks to the inevitable disruptions or disturbances in our familiar, fallen understanding to provide an opening for a more authentic understanding, language pedagogy should take advantage of such openings as well. Indeed, I propose that our approach should make active use of these disturbances, as opposed to diminishing or mitigating them. To do so would incorporate a kind of destructuring impulse in the pedagogical dynamic. The integration of destructuring moments will induce a temporary disruption in the momentum of the restructuring trajectory which will be carrying the learner. Such a disruption interrupts the learner's indulgence in the comforts of habitual thought patterns. It is this disruption that offers an opportunity to attain to the third moment: the personally revealing moment of self-understanding. Optimally, such a moment would involve the recognition of the contingent and creative aspect of ourselves and the world, and thus develop a fuller understanding of self and world. That fuller understanding involves the qualities which I have identified as characterizing authentic understanding: an attitude of questioning, an emphasis on possibilities and the experience of wonder. As I established in Chapter Three, it is the experience of wonder that links authentic understanding with poetic thinking.

Taken together, the integration of authentic understanding and poetic thinking within language education would consist of structuring, destructuring, and personally revealing moments. This Heideggerian expression of a hermeneutic model takes better account of what frequently occurs in language education. My point is that we need to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this dynamic. I will now apply this more Heideggerian approach to the issues identified by the AATG Task Force.

5.1.2 Reproduction in Learning

My first suggestion for supplementing the structuring, or reproductive impulse in language education is in regard to the content. Viewed from a Heideggerian perspective, a greater emphasis should be placed on *everyday* manifestations of unfamiliar understandings and practices. The example of water usage may again be taken as a case in point. To the best of my knowledge, no German language text addresses the issues of either food or water in a manner which reflects their significance for students. In the following part of this chapter, I will compare three successful first-year German language programs and, as we shall see, none of these include water as a specific topic. Rather than being an explicit subject of attention, both food and water become an issue only implicitly, arising incidentally when the students learn how to order a meal or shop for groceries. Being able to shop for food or order a meal is useful and necessary, but these activities reflect the position of the learner as a tourist in another culture. More attention needs to be paid to topics and entities

that reflect the everyday, routine preoccupations and relationships of the individuals belonging to the target tradition.

In my opinion, water is a profoundly rich subject for study. In addition to the many implications it has for students on a personal, daily level, it is also inextricably linked to an issue which distinguishes Canadians and Germans at the larger socio-cultural level. The different attitude towards water on the part of Germans and Canadians is a specific instance of a general difference: the highly developed environmental consciousness of Germans in comparison to Canadians. Indeed, the human relationship with water has become a topic that transcends the many boundaries we have erected and connects us in the sense of a global village. Perhaps no other single entity, with the exception of oil, can claim this distinction. Surely, it belongs in all language programs educating for cross-cultural awareness.

Another way in which the structuring/reproductive impulse might be enhanced is in regard to approach. After having chosen topics and entities that reflect more fundamental, everyday manifestations of a culture, the current approaches to the topics that are chosen for inclusion should be supplemented. I mentioned above that getting to know another community from the position of a tourist is not an appropriate approach to developing an understanding of self and other. Authentic understanding involves an emphasis on questioning, an attention to unforeseen possibilities and an experience of wonder. These qualities require sustained attention to a topic.

So many modes of thinking today are driven by a need to get things quickly sorted out, refusing to stay with things, always looking past things to further purposes and, as a result, losing sight of them. I will verify, in my examination of language materials, that they do not constitute an exception. Students are subjected to a learning progression that moves swiftly and relentlessly from topic to topic. Insofar as students need to be exposed to a wide range of topics, entities and activities, this variety is positive. I argued in Chapter Four, however, that no matter how comprehensive the variety of themes or topics, no selection of topics will ever be complete enough to cover all aspects of a speech community. Moreover, communities change – and much faster than program materials do. This is why the development of attitudinal qualities in learners is so important. In order to develop such qualities, however, learners require more time with at least one topic or entity. A possibility would be to choose one topic that could be carried along through the various phases and chapters that students cover, essentially for the length of a term of study. It could, for instance, be water; it could be a vessel that holds water, a jug. Learners could reflect on these entities from within the contexts of the other themes they encounter, as for instance, the family. The theme of the family is one that learners encounter in most first-year language textbooks, and legitimately so, as this is an important subject. Water usage within the family would supplement and enhance this theme. I believe that the integration of water would serve to enhance any of the themes traditionally associated with

beginners' programs. Most important, it would provide an opportunity for the kind of learning that only comes from *sustained* attention to a topic.

I suggested in Chapter Three that Heidegger's "gathering" of the "fourfold" could be utilized in the learner's encounter with an entity, both familiar and unfamiliar. It is already a widespread strategy to collect the associations learners have with a topic or entity, when it is first introduced. This practice could be supplemented by gathering associations in the terms of reference comprised by the "fourfold." The "fourfold" is Heidegger's attempt to group whatever matters to human beings, in terms of how it concerns us, under four salient categories: earth, sky, mortals, and divinities. Heidegger's understanding of entities, in terms of the fourfold, resonates with his earlier approach to works of art and can serve to guide the use of the fourfold in its pedagogical application. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*[3] Heidegger distinguishes works of art from other entities by claiming that they allow things to show up as the beings they really are; they "let a being be as it is" (PLT31). Heidegger's most renowned illustration of this is his discussion of Van Gogh's painting of a peasant woman's shoes. Although shoes often lie around inconspicuously, and are put on and taken off without a thought, Van Gogh enlivens the relation of the shoes to their wearer. From them is revealed "the fallow desolation of the wintry field" (PLT34). Considered in terms of the fourfold, it is the "earth" and "sky" of the wearer that the shoes bring before our sight. Between them, earth and sky

[3] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) 17-87.

are intended to reveal the natural world of the peasant, considered not in terms of scientific categories, but of events and processes as they impinge upon ordinary human concern – the changing seasons, the rising and setting of the sun. But the shoes also reveal to us "the toilsome tread of the worker," that is, her relations to her home, her family and her fellow-workers (PLT34). The category of "divinities" and "mortals" refers to human beings in their personal and social lives. Regarded in the terms of the fourfold, the entity of the shoe is shown in a particularly vivid and "concernful" manner.

For Heidegger some entities have a more elevated function, as, for example, a Greek temple. According to Heidegger, inherent within the temple is the essence of the Greek people, their conceptions of "birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace" (PLT42). Even more, the temple gives to its people "their outlook on themselves" and therefore their identity, since without such works, which serve to focus or "gather" the various aspects of their way of life, there could not be that way of life. At the same time that the temple "opens up a world" it sets this against the sky and the earth "which itself only thus emerges as native ground" (PLT42). The categories of nature – rock, sea, storm, and so on – only assume the distinctive contours they had for the Greeks in virtue of their relations to the temple. The rock, by bearing the temple, "first becomes rock"; the storm, by raging above the temple, is manifested as a storm (PLT42). Heidegger's concept of the fourfold suggests understanding and treasuring things for what they reveal about us, rather than what they can do for us.

A further way in which reconstructive strategies and practices might be enhanced is related to the other two suggestions already depicted. If, as Heidegger claims, "Befindlichkeit" and "Verstehen" emerge simultaneously along with "Rede," then reconstructive strategies should be brought into a direct relationship with this primordial integration of "mood," "understanding" and "discourse." In other words, an attempt should be made to convey the kinds of involvements embodied in linguistic practices. The criterion for comprehension, what it is to understand appropriately, lies in an ability to use a linguistic formulation appropriately, to join in a shared practice of using that statement in certain ways in certain contexts, within a shared context of concern. I shall use Heidegger's example of a carpenter interacting with his assistant to show why this "concernful" dimension is so important for understanding.

According to Heidegger's anecdote, a carpenter says to his assistant "too heavy" as he hands back one hammer and reaches for another. In what does the meaningfulness of this assertion consist? The carpenter is in the midst of a certain project by way of projecting towards a certain end, and knowing his way all along the path that leads to this end. Because his assistant is engaged in the project in a similar way they both share in the same situation, they are both involved in the same little sector of the same world. Now the carpenter's assertion comes out in the midst of this shared project or situation and aims at a particular adjustment: access to a hammer better suited to the task at hand. But the assertion, "too heavy," can be used within the scope of many situations or projects. The carpenter's assertion will be meaningful to the assistant, the

assistant will only understand it, if it induces him to apply the same involvement to that same entity; that is, if he comes to stand in the same "concernful" relationship to that entity as the carpenter already does. The ability to use a linguistic formulation appropriately, therefore, depends upon our "concernful" understanding.

While this may be the case, in the classroom we deliberately separate the "concernful" understanding that guides our everyday living from our theoretical, formal knowledge. This observation can be exemplified through our previous consideration of the "du/Sie" distinction between informal and formal forms of address. As I pointed out previously, making this distinction does not require some complex feat of cognition. The guidelines governing the distinction are quite simple to comprehend. If requested, most students would be able to recite them correctly on demand. Nor does this distinction constitute any great formal complexity. The action of ensuring that a verb correctly agrees with its (pro)noun is a basic language skill. I propose that students have trouble making this simple distinction correctly because contemporary language programs approach it almost solely as a formal, present-to-hand distinction. The "concernful," ready-to-hand dimension of this distinction is not taken into account.

The Report of the AATG Task Force singles out the "du/Sie" distinction as an aspect of cultural knowledge that every textbook covers (175). Traditionally, the distinction is introduced at the very outset of a language program. Students learn the appropriate pronouns and matching forms of the verb within the first

hour or two of instruction. When acquisition proceeds according to this conventional approach, virtually every learner can cite the rules for the use of "du" and the use of "Sie" at the cognitive level, but at the functional level, very few students can use "du" and "Sie" along with the related informal pronouns and their possessive adjectives with consistent accuracy. Evidence abounds of the blatant errors within the classroom context, where instructors regularly encounter sentences that address one person with both forms, such as: "Haben Sie deine Hausaufgaben gemacht?" (Have you {polite form} completed your {familiar form} homework?) When errors of this nature occur within the German speech community, the social and practical consequences (i.e. speaker having their needs met) can be significant.

Generally speaking, the reproductive strategies used to transmit this critical distinction in politeness practices appeal exclusively to the learners' cognitive faculties, i.e. Bourdieu's appeal to rules. If cognitive approaches were supplemented by efforts to engage the "concernful" understanding of learners, successful usage would be greatly improved. Learners of German who can draw on their "concernful" understanding of this distinction by virtue of knowing another language, generally make the distinction correctly. Examples are French learners of German whose understanding of the French pronouns of direct address, "tu" and "vous," help them to apply the German ones appropriately.

A final way in which reproductive approaches and strategies might be enhanced involves a fundamental psychological theory and pedagogical

practice: the activation of existing knowledge and understanding to prepare for new learning. This pedagogical practice is consistent with a basic hermeneutic principle and can be exemplified through an activity quintessential to both hermeneutics and pedagogy: the reading of a written text. Proceeding from a hermeneutical point of view, new understanding cannot be acquired without involving previous understanding. Learning occurs when students actively integrate new information with what they have learned in other ways and in other contexts. Comprehending a text involves the interactive dynamic in which we make connections between what we already know and new information in the text. The richer the store of background knowledge, the better we understand what we read. Pedagogical research in language learning supports this approach. For instance, high school students learning Spanish were tested on their comprehension of a text describing a baseball game. The researchers found that the students' background knowledge of the game was more important in determining their comprehension than was their ability in Spanish (Levine and Hause, 1985). Therefore, in cases where students may not know enough about a topic to enable them to read with understanding, they may be given direct and specific instruction about relevant concepts before they attempt to read a text. Some strategies that teachers use to activate prior knowledge are brainstorming, pre-reading, and graphically structured overviews.

According to a Heideggerian hermeneutical dynamic, all learning takes place in terms of what we always already understand. This is a characteristic of our thrownness, of being born always into an already meaningful world. It is this

interaction that makes our very being in the world hermeneutical in nature. In the attempt to understand what is different, unfamiliar or other, we are thrown back upon our existing understanding. A Heideggerian approach to learning would, therefore, affirm the process of activating prior knowledge. However, it would also distinguish itself from standard pedagogical practice in a particular way. A hermeneutic activation of existent understanding would solicit not only formal knowledge from learners, but all the experience and personal understanding they bring to the learning situation. This is important generally because students often have relevant prior experience that would facilitate their understanding of new material that they do not, however, connect with the topic under consideration.

Standard pedagogy has a further reason for adopting the strategy of activating prior knowledge: already existing conceptions can act as a barrier for new information. If students hold beliefs contrary to new material being studied, their old beliefs are likely to interfere with their acquisition of new understanding. From a Heideggerian perspective, however, familiar beliefs are not primarily a source of interference, but one of potentially fruitful disruption and new understanding. This is the topic of the following section.

5.1.3 Disruption in Learning

No matter how ardently we might seek to reproduce the understanding of a speech community, such understanding can never be fully reconstructed. When the limits to achieving understanding through reproductive strategies have

been reached, the partial understanding acquired through the reconstructive impulse needs to be augmented. As we have seen, Kramsch turns at this point from the insights afforded by an insider perspective to those of an outsider perspective. Since the learner is already an outsider as far as another culture is concerned, Kramsch is particularly interested in giving the learner an outsider perspective on their own culture. This has considerable resonance with Heidegger's concern to overcome our absorption in the traditional understanding into which we have been thrown. His thinking differs, however, on how this is to be accomplished and what the outcome should be. As we saw in the previous chapter, the experiences and entities of our understanding are assigned a particular and stable identifying meaning. In order to recognize the ultimately contingent status of these essentializing identifications, our tranquillized immersion in them must be disrupted. One way to approach this is through learner errors or mistakes.

Besides being a potent form of the disruption that Heidegger views as an opening to authentic understanding, a major theme of Heidegger's depiction of our understanding as fallen is that it is fallible. It is the existential human condition to make mistakes, to err. That we may be mistaken, and probably are, is implicit in the 'fall' of our fallen understanding – but in that also rests the possibility of our redemption: knowing that we do not know. From a Heideggerian perspective, this is a profound theme for human learning and understanding. A pedagogical quest in which the ultimate goal is neither

conclusive knowledge nor certainty, but rather full consciousness of human fallibility, goes to the heart of education.

Of course, the idea of regarding fallibility and error as the agencies through which we increase understanding is not new. Conventional wisdom has long held that we learn from our mistakes, often better than from our successes. From a more formal point of view, the Swiss developmental psychologist Piaget believed cognitive conflict to be indispensable for intellectual development.[4] Cognitive conflict occurs when one engages in interaction with peers and is confronted with their conflicting points of view. According to Piaget, it is through the resolution of such conflict that cognitive growth takes place.

It is also a concept within a hermeneutics of even the more moderate variety. According to Gadamer, for instance, most of our learning derives from negative experiences. We learn through positive experiences because they only confirm what we already know. Hermeneutic insight is acquired when we have been contradicted by events, when we have to change or adjust our perspectives:

> If we thus regard experience in terms of its result, we have ignored the fact that experience is a process. In fact, this process is essentially negative... If a new experience of an object occurs to us, this means that hitherto we have not seen the thing correctly and now know it better. Thus the negativity of experience has a curiously productive meaning. It is not simply that we see through a deception and hence make a correction, but we acquire a comprehensive knowledge.[5]

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[4] Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*, trans. Margaret Cook (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963) 157.

[5] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum Publishing Co, 1993) 353; *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1960) 359.

Indeed, much earlier than Piaget and Gadamer are the ancient dialogues of Plato, virtual meditations on knowledge as illusion. Acknowledging that he did not know what truth was, Socrates spent most of his time exposing those who thought they did. Instead of seeing errors and inaccuracies as interfering, and attempting to resolve them for a smooth integration of the new, this would represent a first example of how an instructor might constructively utilize a disruption in understanding.

5.2 Three Programs in German Language Education

It is often said that a good teacher can teach with any text, but most teachers, even the best and most experienced ones, search for and value excellence in their instructional materials. Identifying excellence in a language text is not, however, the purpose of this analysis. Neither is it my purpose to determine the most excellent of the three sets of instructional materials I will be examining. My purpose is to address the remaining two issues put forth by the AATG task force on the teaching of culture as specified in their report of 2005.

In Chapter Four I addressed the call by the Task Force to define culture by arguing that this term is not the most appropriate or potentially productive one to use within language learning, and indeed that the discipline substitute the term "unfamiliar" or "otherness" for culture. This addressed the issue of definitions, specified by the Task Force. In Chapter Four I also addressed the matter of objectives and examined the role of the teacher, thereby addressing

three of the five issues of concern to the Task Force. This leaves the issues of content, approaches and materials.

The language programs I have selected for my analysis represent the outcome of an informal survey of language programs currently in use in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and the West Coast of the United States. Each program constitutes the effort of a different country (Germany, the U.S.A. and Canada), and they all target the same learner-group (young adults at a post-secondary level of education). I am using this level of language education because it is the one I have the most experience with, having taught for over fifteen years at a large, post-secondary research institution (The University of British Columbia).

The German language program entitled *studio d*[6] is the most recently released of the three language programs I will be examining. Published in 2006 by the German publisher Cornelsen (Berlin), a number of people are named as having participated in its creation: Herman Funk, Christina Kuhn, Silke Demme, Carla Christiany, Oliver Bayerlein, Beate Lex and Beate Redecker. This program is as comprehensive as it is current consisting of a "Kurs- und Übungsbuch" (text- and workbook) as well as audio and video components, a vocabulary guide, speech training textbook and instructor's materials.

McGraw-Hill is the publisher of *Deutsch: Na klar!,*[7] an introductory German course whose creators live and work in the United States: Robert Di

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[6] Herman Funk, Christina Kuhn, Silke Demme, Carla Christiany, Oliver Bayerlein, Beate Lex, Beate Redecker, *studio d Deutsch als Fremdsprache Kurs und Übungsbuch* (Berlin: Cornelesen, 2006).

[7] Robert DiDonato, Monica D. Clyde, Jacqueline Vansant, *Deutsch: Na klar!: an introductory German course*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill).

Donato in Ohio, Monica D. Clyde in California and Jacqueline Vansant in Michigan. The program was published in its fourth edition in 2004 and is noteworthy for its comprehensiveness. The extensive list of components includes the Student Text, the Listening Comprehension Program, a Workbook and a Laboratory Manual, an Electronic Language Tutor, an interactive CD-Rom, an Online Learning Center, and a complete Audio Program. Available to instructors are an Annotated Instructor's Edition of the textbook, an Instructor's Manual and Testing Program, a Video and Audio program, a Training/Orientation Manual for beginning instructors, and access to a Video Library of Authentic Materials.

Prentice-Hall is the American publisher of *Treffpunkt Deutsch*,[8] one of the most popular first-year programs in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Created by Rosemarie and Fritz Widmaier, professors living and working in Ontario, Canada, this program was originally published in 1991, with a second revised edition published in 1995, a third in 1999, and a fourth in 2003. The fifth revised edition is expected in the fall of 2007. As far as the instructional materials are concerned, it is as comprehensive as the other two programs, including complete audio, video and software components specifically customized for the program.

Of course, as well as being comprehensive, an effective language program must be carefully planned. As a first step those charged with the

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[8] E. Rosemarie Widmaier and Fritz T. Widmaier, *Treffpunkt Deutsch, Grundstufe*, (Uppper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.).

responsibility for such an undertaking must agree about where the program is going, its ultimate purpose and primary goals; in short, its underlying philosophy. Such a philosophy provides the foundation for the selection and organization of the various components of the program, as well as providing a reference point by which the learning process may be directed. The effectiveness or excellence of a language program usually consists of determining how well the content and approach of a particular program reflect the goals of its stated philosophy. It bears repeating, therefore, that my emphasis will be different.

For the purposes of this project, I will retain the three categories of objectives, content and approach; however, I will be assessing these categories in terms of the concerns put forth by the Task Force. My ultimate goal is to suggest ways in which the attitudinal objectives and coinciding hermeneutical receptivities of authentic understanding and poetic thinking might be integrated with the content and approaches of these programs.

5.2.1 Philosophies and Objectives of Language Learning

I have shown in Chapter One that attitudinal objectives promoting the goal of self-understanding and individuation are consistent with contemporary theories of education. Recent scholarship within language education specifically has also led to a view of teaching and learning that emphasizes language learning as the development of the learner's understanding rather than the acquisition of a skill. Such an approach is due in part to contemporary epistemological orientations that recognize the subjective and culturally-defined

nature of knowledge. It also reflects a realization that traditional approaches to learning, with their emphasis on the accumulation of factual knowledge and fixed standards of mastery, will not serve students in this world of rapid change and exponential increases in information. This latter point is also acknowledged in the AATG report on the teaching of culture, with its assertion that "cultural practices and perspectives are constantly evolving..." (175). The charge has been made by the Task Force that these new orientations in the discipline are not reflected in the materials or practices of the discipline. It is this charge that I will now address. I will begin by reviewing briefly the philosophical approaches adopted by *studio d*, *Deutsch: Na klar!,* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch.*

As I noted previously, *studio d* is the most current of the three programs I will be examining. As such, it might also be expected to reflect the most up-to-date objectives and approaches within language learning. It is important to note that the program explicitly states that it has taken its orientation from *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*: "*studio d* is closely oriented with the proficiency levels of *The Common European Framework of Reference*" (my translation).[9] The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*[10] is a reference document, originally issued in 1996, and currently representing the main conceptual framework for language education in Western Europe. It describes itself as a framework of reference for "*language*

[9] "*studio d* orientiert sich eng an den Niveaustufen des Gemeinsamen europaeischen Referenzrahmens," 3.

[10] *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

teaching, learning and assessment" with the general objective being to "overcome *linguistic* barriers" (2.1). The italics are mine; however, the document does appear to put its main focus on "linguistic competences" (4.7.2) and on "language activities" (3.1). The "general competences" are considered to be: (1) declarative knowledge (*savoir*); (2) skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*); (3) existential competence (*savoir-être*); and (4) ability to learn (*savoir-apprendre*) (4.7.1). The third "general competence" is identified as "existential competence (*savoir-être*)" and is most directly related to my proposal that attitudinal objectives belong to language study as an intellectual activity promoting global literacy. This competence is a reflection of individual identities comprising "attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types" (4.7.1.3). The competences themselves include such attitudinal qualities as "openness," "conviviality" and "good will," the development of which is supposed to improve the "ability to relate to otherness" (3.2.1). Other desirable attitudinal qualities delineated are "discretion," "politeness," "smiling affably," and "patience." According to the *Framework*, however, these attitudinal competences are to be used to "compensate for 'gaps'" in a learner's "linguistic competence" (7.3.1.3). In other words, *savoir-être* is viewed in part as a compensation for linguistic deficiency. The *Framework* does consider the possibility of the learner developing an "intercultural personality," but this is regarded as raising "important ethical and pedagogical issues" and the question arises as to whether it should be considered "an explicit educational objective" (4.7.1.3). According to a critique of the *Reference* document by Manuela

Guilherme, the approach articulated by the *Framework* is in the end "functional, with objectives defined in terms of 'better performance', 'optimal functional operation', or 'fulfillment of tasks.' (7.2.1) Issues related to culture are granted a minimal role throughout the document."[11]

In view of the approach taken by the *Framework*, it comes as no surprise that the goals of self-realization and individuation do not form part of the stated pedagogical objectives of the *studio d* program. Nor does this program include any reference to attitudinal objectives. In order of mention, the preface to the textbook emphasizes the thematic and grammatical structuring of the textbook and the inclusion of the four grammatical proficiencies in language learning: listening, reading, writing, speaking (Hören, Lesen, Schreiben, Sprechen). This is consistent with a skills approach to learning, which is in turn consistent with the emphasis of the *Framework*.

A special point is made of explaining that the section on practice exercises concludes with an overview entitled: "Das kann ich auf Deutsch." ("What I can do in German.") This is noteworthy, because it introduces a feature that appears to most characterize this work: learner autonomy. In the declaration of its approach, the promotion of learner autonomy is expressed in terms of developing one's personal learning strategies[12] and learning independently (my translations).[13] It is also reflected within the organization of

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[11] Manuela Guilherme, *Critical Citizens for an Intercultural World. Foreign Language Education as Cultural Politics* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2002) 146.

[12] "Die Lerntipps unterstützen Sie bei der Entwicklung individueller Lernstrategien," 3.

[13] "Die Art der Präsentation . . . soll entdeckendes Lernen fördern," 3.

the program materials that have been divided up into the following five sections: Themes and Texts, Speech Acts, Grammar, Pronunciation, and Learning to Learn.

It is interesting to note that no reference is made to culture in the statement of philosophy and it is not included in the organization of the program. The closest reference to things "other" are to the exercises in which the learner can compare their daily life and experiences with those of the German-speaking countries (my translation).[14] I discussed the drawbacks of a comparative approach to culture in Chapter One.

In sum, this very current program does not place emphasis on attitudinal objectives, on self-development or on the development of appropriate attitudes towards others. The emphasis is on learning structures, consistent with a "skills" approach and learner autonomy. This does not bode well in terms of the goals of language education for cross-cultural awareness; however, I will continue to include the materials and approaches in my examination, to see if activities appropriate to such objectives might be incorporated. We will now see how this compares with the two more established North American programs.

Treffpunkt Deutsch was first published in 1991. Since then it has been adopted by "hundreds of colleges and universities" in Canada and the United States, with the publication of a fourth edition in 2003. (xvii) The fourth edition distinguishes itself from the first in a number of ways that indicate an awareness of the changes in pedagogical approaches. As far as their stated philosophy is

[14] "Den Alltag der Menschen in den deutschsprachigen Ländern... vergleichen mit Ihren eigenen Lebenserfahrungen." 3.

concerned, however, it is noteworthy that it remains essentially unchanged from the first edition to the fourth edition. The "foundation" of the first edition of this program was "student-centered, communicative learning" and this approach remains the stated foundation of all four editions. (xvii) Pedagogical objectives that might be considered developmental or attitudinal are not explicitly mentioned, however, it would be incorrect to conclude that such objectives are therefore completely absent. They are present in the explicit and continuing commitment of this program to the pedagogical concept of "learner-centeredness." As we saw in Chapter Four, this means that learning activities must be meaningful to the learner and the learner must take responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, the extent to which *Treffpunkt Deutsch* reflects its stated commitment to learner-centeredness, is the extent to which it is open to the incorporation of attitudinal objectives.

The American program *Deutsch: Na klar!* explicitly states that it orients its program with the National Standards developed by ACTFL in collaboration with AATG, AATF, and AATSP. (xvii) The *Standards for Foreign Language Learning*[15] begins with the "Statement of Philosophy," where it is affirmed that "the United States must educate students who are equipped *linguistically and culturally* to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad" (italics are mine) (7). According to the *Standards* document, the main broad goals for language education are "the five C's": (1) Communication (2)

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[15] *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (Yonkers, NY: National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996).

Cultures (3) Connections (4) Comparisons and (5) Communities. The second main goal area, "Culture," is granted great importance by the authors of the document since "the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and the vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language" (43-4).

Scholars in the field have welcomed this approach because it emphasizes the role of culture as an integrated aspect of language learning.[16] The *Standards* set goals for culture learning that expects students to develop an "insider's perspective within the cultural framework of the other language." The *Standards* also encourage experiential learning through "many different kinds of interaction with members of other cultures," and "personal exploration in the language of the culture" (44-45). However, as Met and Byram have pointed out, the dynamic aspect of culture is not very explicit in the *Standards* document because perspectives (meanings, attitudes, values, ideas) are "reified and described as an objective reality waiting to be discovered, observed and analyzed by the learner."[17] Furthermore, although there are references to the existence of different cultures within a single language, cultures are confined to geographical limits representing them as "monolithic, shared by all the speakers of the same native language in a given geographical space," which is definitely not an accurate description. Certainly the document does not appear to give

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[16] D. L. Lange, "Planning for and using the new national culture standards" in *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, (1999) 60-61.

[17] M. Met and M. Byram, "Standards for foreign language learning and the teaching of culture," in *Language Learning Journal* 19 (June, 1999) 67.

sufficient account of the characteristic that the AATG Task Force identified above all others as characterizing culture: its changeability.

In my introduction of *Deutsch: Na klar!* I drew attention especially to the comprehensiveness of their instructional package. As it turns out, this is consistent with the objective of their program which is to "suit a wide variety of approaches, methodologies, and classrooms." (xvii) This comprehensiveness even has a temporal dimension, as the creators claim that the instructional materials are both "exciting" and "innovative," but have retained many features that "instructors have come to trust since the publication of the first edition." Although *Deutsch: Na klar!* does not align itself with any particular pedagogical approaches, it nevertheless identifies what it considers to be the "hallmark" of the program: "authenticity." The correspondence to Heidegger is coincidental but as we shall see, not entirely without significance. It is evident from the number of references to this concept, that "authenticity" constitutes a central tenet of the program.

Language programs that commit themselves to the pedagogical concept of authenticity acknowledge something that Heidegger had recognized more than half a century before: namely, that language is an expression of the everyday beliefs, customs, and social structures of the communities in which it is spoken. Instead of language texts made-to-order with some particular didactic point in mind, instructional materials present the target language as it occurs "naturally" within the culture and is used for authentic communication among native speakers. In addition, the tasks or activities which learners are required

to engage in are always those which they might reasonably expect to encounter in some possible everyday, real-life situation.[18] Consequently, only the widest possible range of materials could adequately reflect the variety of actual modes of communicating. Moreover, in order to bring as many authentic modes of communication into the classroom as possible, language materials are presented within the medium in which they naturally occur: a television news broadcast visually on a screen, a radio traffic report within an audio mode. This is why contemporary language learning generally takes place within the framework of a multi-media package: videotape, audiotape and computer software. It accounts for why *Deutsch: Na klar!* specifically is so comprehensive, but it is also the link to objectives that could be considered attitudinal.

As a result of this attention to authentic content, instructional materials were selected that better acquainted learners with the lives of the speakers of the target language. The purpose was to improve the communicative competency of the learner, but it was also thought to combat hostile attitudes and stereotyping. The aim was to promote the forming of balanced judgments on the basis of accurate information rather than prejudice or hostility. Open discussion based on balanced information and the informed re-appraisal of any value-based judgments is considered an integral part of pedagogical

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[18] Colin Wringe, *The Effective Teaching of Modern Languages* (New York: Longman, 1989).

authenticity.[19] In the case of *Deutsch: Na klar!*, the pedagogical concept of authenticity is the opening to attitudinal objectives within language learning.

Nevertheless, of the three programs, the American *Deutsch: Na klar!* appears the most skills-oriented and the least consistent philosophically with an intellectual approach. An indication of this is the priority and emphasis within the program on "clear and succinct grammar explanations" and "form-focused activities." (xvii) Also noteworthy within the context of our purposes is the remark that structures are taught with "considerable regard to accuracy." (xvii) Finally, despite the commitment of *Deutsch: Na klar!* to authenticity, it is expressly stated that authentic cultural materials have been included to "teach skills that will allow students to function appropriately in the German-speaking world." (xvii) The attention of the program to grammatical accuracy, and the approach to cultural proficiency as a skill, reflect a view of language learning as primarily a matter of skills acquisition.

The Canadian program *Treffpunkt Deutsch* has not incorporated self-understanding as an explicit pedagogical objective, but it does remain firmly committed to the concept of learner-centeredness. Implicit in this pedagogical concept is a concern for the developmental and attitudinal objectives identified as appropriate.

The commitment of a language program to the pedagogical concept of learner-centeredness is evident in the suitability and relevance of the

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[19] Gerald Logan, *Handbook for Planning an Effective Foreign Language Program* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1985) 13.

instructional materials to the intended learner-group. Programs that incorporate this concept also take care that proficiencies of a more general nature will be acquired in addition to those commonly associated with language acquisition. These include such things as the efficient use of reference works and source materials; problem-solving strategies; active interaction and collaboration with fellow learners, and perhaps most important as far as a hermeneutic dimension is concerned, a willingness to risk making mistakes.[20] This latter component brings us closer to the differentiated sense of understanding that we are seeking where disruptions in the foundations of our familiar understanding have a constructive role to play in learning. The extent to which a learning program reflects an explicit commitment to learner-centeredness parallels the extent to which it is open to the incorporation of attitudinal objectives.

As important as philosophical objectives are, they are meaningless unless they are reflected in the program materials. In what follows, I will look at how the content of each of these three programs puts their theory into practice.

5.2.2 Materials in Language Learning

An effective language program will carry out the selection and organization of its language materials in accordance with its underlying philosophy and objectives. In each of the programs under consideration here, we have identified those aspects of their philosophies consistent with the objective of promoting understanding of self and other. It is time now to

[20] D.A. Wilkins, *Second-language learning and teaching* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974) 36-37.

examine how the content of these programs reflects this goal. As before, a point of reference for this examination will be the concerns identified by the AATG Task Force about relevant materials. A further point of reference will be the experience of the Canadian students of the CSSG. In terms of materials, these students identified water as having the most personal and practical relevance for them. In addition, the German environmental consciousness was identified as the most striking difference distinguishing Germans from Canadians. How do these programs fare in regard to their attention to this very basic issue? Do any of the programs specifically thematize water? Do any of them thematize the more general issue of environmental consciousness, of which this specific concern is representative?

A review of the respective chapter breakdowns of all three programs reveals that water is not thematized in any of the three programs. In *studio d* water is treated primarily as a vocabulary item. Moreover, it is a vocabulary item within the thematic context of food and eating. The broader issue of German environmental consciousness is not thematized in the beginner's level of this program at all. The environmental consciousness of Germans is addressed in *Deutsch: Na klar!*, but only as a sub-theme of the more general topic of public opinion ("Die öffentliche Meinung"). Moreover, although a few environmental concerns are addressed, water conservation is *not* one of them.

Of the three programs, only *Treffpunkt Deutsch* approaches water as a topic, but it does this only within the context of food and eating. Students are advised that if they order a glass of water in a restaurant, they will be given

mineral water and they will be expected to pay for it. (303) The second edition of the program addressed the topic of "Umweltprobleme" (environmental problems) in the chapter entitled "Andere Länder, andere Sitten" (other countries, other customs). As part of this chapter, students are given general information on garbage removal. This information does not do justice to the fact that in Germany garbage removal verges on being a science, but at least the topic is raised. The students are also given an activity entitled "Denk mal über Wasser nach!" ("Think about water!"), in which they match up German logos regarding water conservation with brief comments and tips on the subject taken from a Berlin brochure for water conservation. Although the importance of the topic of water in *Treffpunkt Deutsch* does not begin to reflect its overwhelming significance for the CSSG immersion students, at least it did emerge as a topic. Regrettably, this section was removed from subsequent editions of the textbook!

Although none of the three language programs thematizes water, the overall selection of themes is wide-ranging and diverse. The materials in *Deutsch: Na klar!* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch* especially comprise an extensive variety of motifs, including historical, geographical, political, technical, literary and entertainment themes. As I remarked in Chapter Four, this diversity is constructive insofar as it exposes learners to a wide variety of cultural manifestations. As I also remarked, none of the three programs pays anything but the most ephemeral and superficial attention to any one topic.

A final observation is relevant within the context of this analysis, in this instance involving the program *Deutsch: Na klar!* Although the stated approach

of *Deutsch: Na klar!* emphasizes skills rather than individual attitudinal objectives, the manner in which the thematic content is articulated reflects the most personalized approach of the three programs. The following are examples of some of the thematic categories in *Deutsch: Na klar!:* "Über mich und andere" (About myself and others), "Was ich habe und was ich brauche" (What I have and what I need), "Wir gehen aus" (We're going out), and "Wie man fit und gesund bleibt" (How to stay healthy and fit). Comparable chapters in *Treffpunkt Deutsch* thematize the same concerns with the following more neutral, depersonalized titles: "Familie" (family), "Alltagsleben" (daily life), and "Freizeit-Ferienzeit" (leisure time/holiday time). This is similar in *studio d* with the following comparable chapter titles: "Familienalbum" (family album), "Voll im Leben" (fully in life), and "Aktiv in der Freizeit" (active during leisure time).

The approach taken to these titles in *Deutsch: Na klar!* emphasizes the personal relevance of these themes for the learner. Expressing the very basic theme of shelter in the very personal manner, "Was ich habe und was ich brauche" is consistent with the Heideggerian attention to the "concernful" dimension of our understanding, which reveals the world as mattering to us in personal ways. By contrast, the term "Wohnen" is a much more impersonal, even neutral term. We will see now whether this opening for a "concernful," personalized engagement with the language materials is carried through at the level of the chapter.

5.2.3 Approaches and Materials in Language Programs

I have chosen for my comparison the chapter that deals with the theme of leisure time and activities. This topic is thematized in each of the three programs. *Treffpunkt Deutsch* entitles this chapter „Freizeit—Ferienzeit" (Free time – holiday time), *studio d* has the title „Aktiv in der Freizeit," and *Deutsch: Na klar!* entitles the chapter „Freizeit und Sport." This particular theme is addressed at about the mid-point within the overall organization of each of the programs: Chapter Five out of twelve chapters in *Treffpunkt Deutsch;* Chapter Seven out of fourteen chapters in *Deutsch: Na klar!* and Chapter Four out of six chapters in *studio d.*

With regard first to the individual components comprising these chapters, there are considerable consistencies and notable differences among the programs. All of them assign specific sections within the chapter to deal with the linguistic components of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. In regard first to the differences, *Deutsch: Na klar!* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch* each include distinct sections in their chapters which provide information about the German language and the three German-speaking cultures. There is nothing resembling these components in *studio d.* In *Deutsch: Na klar!,* these components are entitled "Sprach-tip" and "Kultur-tip," respectively. *Treffpunkt Deutsch* entitles its comparable sections "Sprachnotizen" and "Kultur." In both programs, these sections provide useful and interesting materials related to the theme of the chapter, and are usually accompanied by colorful photographs. Topics include the postal system, transportation system, education and health programs,

housing, sports and leisure activities as well as holidays and celebration events, historical events, and entertainment. As their respective titles imply, the "Kultur" section of *Treffpunkt Deutsch* tends to be more comprehensive than the "Kultur-tip" of *Deutsch: Na klar!.* The fourth edition of the text has, however, added four "Zwischenspiele" (cultural presentations) that appear after Chapters Three, Six, Nine, and Twelve and expand on the previously introduced chapter themes.

Treffpunkt Deutsch features a further component of materials not included in either *studio d* or *Deutsch: Na klar!.* This section is entitled "Leute," ("people") and, as the title suggests, it presents information in German about interesting people in all three of the German-speaking countries. Some of them are contemporary figures, others are historical. Some are famous, such as Margaret Steiff, the inventor of the teddy-bear; others are anonymous, everyday citizens such as the student Fatma Yützel. As with the "Kultur" sections, the "Leute" sections are related to the themes of the chapter. In the chapter on "Freizeit - Ferienzeit," for instance, the "Leute" section features the historical figure Ludwig II. of Bavaria and his fairy tale castle "Neuschwanstein." The castle is a favourite holiday destination for native and foreign tourists alike. By way of a first overview, therefore, it would appear that *Treffpunkt Deutsch* is more comprehensive than either *studio d* or *Deutsch: Na klar!* with respect to providing informational content on the three German-speaking cultures.

If we compare the opening of the relevant chapters on leisure-time activities in *Deutsch: Na klar! studio d* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch*, we will see that *Treffpunkt Deutsch* and *studio d* each begin by explicitly stating the learning

objectives of the chapter for the learner. Indeed, *Treffpunkt Deutsch* consistently states all targeted learning objectives explicitly and comprehensively, both for the instructor and for the learners. This is consistent with the emphasis that *Treffpunkt Deutsch* places on the concept of learner-centeredness. As previously noted, this concept emphasizes the learner's active participation in and responsibility for her or his own learning, an approach that is consistent with the concept of self-development and understanding. *Deutsch: Na klar!,* by contrast, includes a short list of what is contained in the chapter, but does not format this list in terms of learning objectives. *Deutsch: Na Klar!* does, however, give students the opportunity for self-assessment in the form of a check of "Lernziele" (learning goals) at the end of the chapter. In the case of *studio d* the objectives are stated briefly but explicitly at the beginning of the chapter and are reiterated again at the end of the chapter.

In regard to the use of "authentic" materials, the proliferation of representations is a requirement for *Deutsch: Na klar!* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch* in a way that it is not for the German program *studio d.* Students and instructors living and learning in a German-speaking culture have ready access to such examples as newspapers, theatre programs, parking tickets, and menus. For students and instructors not living in a German-speaking country, however, the access to such materials is considerably diminished. In extreme cases, the representations in the textbook are the only exposure classroom learners living in a non-German-speaking country will have to these things. The same may be said of the quantity and variety of the photographs and information. For

instance, factual information on how the German train system works, along with a photo-collage of the trains, and the pictorial reproduction of a train ticket, may be the closest a learner, not living in a German-speaking culture, ever comes to this central phenomenon of German-speaking countries – one which they will almost certainly need some familiarity with if they ever visit these countries. This is in contrast to learners who are living within a German-speaking country and are very possibly riding the train everyday as part of their commute to class. The proliferation of information and examples is a response on the part of *Deutsch: Na klar!* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch* to the realities of the learning context – realities which *studio d* does not need to take into account. Still, while the response of *Deutsch: Na klar!* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch* may be sufficient in terms of the learning context, it is not sufficient in terms of the goal of understanding, for some of the reasons which follow.

To begin, the sections on culture in *Deutsch: Na klar!* and those on people and culture in *Treffpunkt Deutsch* are generally very polite and positive descriptions and reports. The values of the German-speaking peoples, their ways of saying and doing things, are always presented very favorably. We have seen, of course, that the discipline understands itself as inherently dispelling ethnic stereotypes and promoting intercultural tolerance, even though these goals may not be explicitly stated. No doubt the polite descriptions in *Deutsch: Na klar!* and *Treffpunkt Deutsch* strive to reflect this implicit self-image of the discipline and attempt to encourage constructive perceptions of German-speaking peoples. But even if these approaches aim at such estimable goals as

tolerance and appreciation of diversity, neither the spirit nor the intent of these goals are served simply by substituting a negative stereotype with a positive one.

Heidegger's concept of authentic understanding accounts for why such insightful experiences must be so aggressively pursued. In our familiar, everyday understanding we are already fending off the recognition of our basic groundlessness, our fundamental "Nicht-zuhause-sein." The way we feel when we find ourselves compelled to deal with something unfamiliar or strange offers an eery, uncanny parallel to our existential "not-at-homeness." The tendency will be for us, and for our students, to resist it. It is because Heidegger views this relatively "negative" experience as having a potentially very constructive effect for our self-understanding and individuation, that I have claimed that it has a pedagogical dimension.

The philosophical rationale which underlies the selection and organization of content also applies to the sequencing of the actual language materials and activities. Factual knowledge may be transmitted; consequently, a quantitative, reproductive view of knowledge entails methods of transmission that emphasize memorization and testing. By contrast, understanding must be constructed by individuals on the basis of their existent understanding and experience. This is more time-consuming to attain and more complex to measure. The authentic understanding that Heidegger promotes involves a further complicating factor, since we will resist this form of understanding for the reasons that Heidegger has explained.

Heidegger intends the qualities of authentic understanding to be appropriated from a different point of departure and through a different manner of insight. With regard to the pedagogical qualities of authentic understanding, I have identified these as a questioning attitude, a focus upon possibilities, and the experience of wonder. The point of departure is our everyday mode of understanding, and attention to Heidegger's own strategies and approach reveals that the insight of authentic understanding involves some form of disruption or destructuring of our everyday, familiar understanding. Through this disruption we would lose all basis for comparative assessment, because we would lack any starting point from which we might proceed to ground such a comparison. This revealing function does not involve an abstraction or disengagement from our familiar world of concern, but rather a manner of involvement in that world that recognizes and takes responsibility for the way it is understood and interpreted by us.

I will examine the approaches of these programs for openings to such personally revealing moments and experiences. An appropriate beginning is an approach that is fundamental within language acquisition and to which all three language programs commit themselves: the so-called four "skills" or "Fertigkeiten" of language acquisition. Since linguistic goals do not figure as prominently in my approach as non-linguistic goals, I will explore linguistic goals only briefly and with the purpose of determining if the three programs under discussion go beyond a simple skills approach to incorporate growth in understanding.

The two receptive skills of language learning are listening and reading. Much of what is done in the initial phase of learning new material will involve receptive comprehension strategies. Even after the initial phase, comprehension activities will normally be carried out whenever new material is introduced. Speaking and writing are the two productive skills in language learning. Learners perform these functions only after they fully comprehend the oral or written message being conveyed. For instance, when learners appear ready to reproduce some new material that has been practiced through a comprehension activity, they will be given the opportunity to try out various elements of it within the established context. When learners can reproduce the types of communicated information with which they have been presented, they might then try producing information of a similar or associated type. At such time as they are confidently and competently familiar with the language forms needed to convey the intended meaning, the point has been reached at which they should be able to communicate their own meaning independently and creatively. The sequencing should begin with the verification of comprehension, then move to activities involving reproductive and productive language skills, leading finally to the free and creative use of language.[21]

If we turn now to our language programs and an examination of the chapters, it will come as no surprise that the sequencing of language activities is consistent with the four-skills approach explained above. In each program, new material is introduced through a combination of textual and aural comprehension

[21] Logan, 9-12.

activities, proceeds with some reproductive drills or exercises and continues with activities for productive application, then finally opportunities for creative language use. Still, despite the commitment of all the programs to this acknowledged form of skill-chaining, none of them confines themselves to a simple skills approach. Most important in terms of the construction of understanding is the inclusion of activities drawing on such extra-linguistic skills as individual interpretation and interpersonal negotiation, and all three of the programs promotes these skills to some degree. An example in *Treffpunkt Deutsch* is an exercise entitled "Ich will mein Leben ändern" ("I want to change my life"), in which students are asked to choose three things in their present daily lives that they would like to change, and then compare their changes with those of at least one other student in the class (136). An example in *Deutsch: Na klar!* is an exercise entitled "Meine Freizeit" ("My free time"), in which students compare with other students how they like to spend their weekends (121). A similar exercise appears in *studio d* entitled "Über Sport und Hobbys sprechen" ("Talking about sports and hobbies"), in which students are asked to prioritize their favorite weekend activities and then compare their priorities with a fellow student (62). All three programs have their learners draw up a personal schedule of daily routines which they are to share and compare with fellow students, and none of the three programs fails to include a number of general questions requiring a more or less independent and creative response. These are in regard to such things as their attendance at movies and participation in sports.

As was noted earlier, all three programs rely heavily on the strategy of comparative exchange. This is a valid and useful approach as far as the structuring moment of understanding is concerned, but it is not enough to bring the learner to the fullness of understanding for which the AATG Task Force calls and I envision. We shall see shortly how such simple strategies as augmenting the action of comparing with that of contrasting, and including more open-ended questions, will serve to promote this fuller understanding, but we have yet to consider one more important aspect of the learning sequence and its relation to developing understanding. I am referring to the important role of prior understanding.

As I remarked previously, the process of introducing new material by first activating already existent knowledge is a fairly standard pedagogical practice in language learning. An overview of our three language programs indicates that some form of it is operative in all of them. With respect to the specific chapters under review, however, the North American programs reflect a very different emphasis from the German *studio d*. The activity in *studio d* requires students to match up a brief description of three people with three leisure-time activities. There is nothing about the descriptions that would indicate a likely match with the activities, reducing it to an exercise of chance or coincidence (60). The learning value to the students is in the opportunity the activity provides, to familiarize themselves with relevant vocabulary. Nothing about this activity as it is currently structured evokes the personal knowledge or experience of the

learners. This is in contrast to the two North American programs, which take a very personal approach to the task.

In both *Treffpunkt Deutsch* and *Deutsch: Na klar!,* annotated remarks direct instructors to introduce the topic of leisure-time activities by talking about their own activities and experiences. If possible, this discussion is to be accompanied by photos from the instructor's personal collection. The orientation, in the case of both these programs, is on activating relevant knowledge of an authentic and personal nature. Of the three programs, the approach of *Deutsch: Na klar!* is most likely to evoke the personal and individual understanding of the learners because after talking about their own experiences, instructors are directed to inquire about the pursuits and hobbies of their students. Regrettably, however, *Deutsch: Na klar!* follows up on these activities with one that does not reflect so positively on the program: students are asked to compare American expenditures on leisure activities with those of German expenditures.

None of the three programs under analysis here attempt to mediate between the familiar and the unfamiliar, their own and the target culture, using an approach other than that of drawing comparisons. Such comparisons, such explicit noticing of similarities and differences are, of course, crucially different from the destructuring or disruption of our everyday understanding that I am proposing. This is because, in the act of comparing, we stand back from one culture only by standing within another. The perspective from which we view the one is detached from it only by being engaged instead in the other.

Contemporary language pedagogy is well aware of the extraordinary, perhaps insuperable, difficulty of assessing the quality and nature of the understanding in which we have been immersed – and also that of which we are not a part. According to Fantini: "Comparisons are always rooted in the perspective of the onlooker... therefore, they always entail some form of biased interpretation."[22] In using other cultures as a means for viewing our own, we are affected by the original blindness of our own eyesight, with the result that we are apt to see nothing in other cultures but the virtues or drawbacks of our own. By contrast, experiencing an interruption in the significance of both cultures forces us to see the only basis we have ever had for our identification with our own. For it is only when we slip out of straightforwardly identifying with one or the other, that we fully recognize what does belong essentially to our Being: thrown-projection.

This is the realization that I have referred to as personally revealing. It has been only our thrownness into a particular world, the Canadian world, that has made it ours, and not the judgments or weighings of our personal choice. That it should be just this world, that we should identify ourselves with just these traditions and practices and interpret our surroundings in just this way, is due neither to us nor to any intrinsic merit to this world. In its content our world is merely one among any number of possibilities, having no essential claim upon

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[22] A.E. Fantini, "Comparisons: Towards the development of intercultural competence," *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, Vol.62 (1999) 185.

us, nor we upon it. So how does a program or an instructor bring students to such a realization?

In the way of a start, I have suggested that at least a few of the questions posed in language programs should be open-ended. All three programs I am examining pursue an approach whereby the questions, exercises and activities are brought to some form of resolution or conclusion. Even those questions which might be regarded as open do not go beyond requiring a more or less personal response, which is then rendered concluded on the basis of individual preference; e.g. a favorite movie or sports activity compared (inevitably) to other peoples' favorites. Although such an approach may be legitimate as part of the structuring impulse of understanding, such resolution does not serve our goal of uncovering and opening up possibilities of human understanding. The learning process should never be viewed as attaining a complete and conclusive knowledge of something, but rather one that will always remain partial, provisional and open-ended.

By way of facilitating this approach, the process of comparison should be augmented by contrasting. This contrasting operation must not only *not* seek to resolve, conclude or integrate, it must forge a space or opening for contradictions and incongruencies. Let us take again the specific example of free time and leisure activities, the topic thematized in the chapters under review. Turning first to *Deutsch: Na klar!*, we see that the activities and exercises have largely been selected in order to illustrate and practice certain language functions. The most promising of the activities in terms of its potential

to provide a contrasting dynamic is the poem by Bertolt Brecht entitled "*Vergnügungen*" (229).

Vergnügungen

Der erste Blick aus dem Fenster am Morgen
Das wiedergefundene alte Buch
Begeisterte Gesichter
Schnee, der Wechsel der Jahreszeiten
Die Zeitung
Der Hund
Die Dialektik
Duschen, Schwimmen
Alte Musik
Bequeme Schuhe
Begreifen
Neue Musik
Schreiben, Pflanzen
Reisen
Singen
Freundlich sein.

Pleasures

The first glance out the window in the morning
Finding that old book again
Enthusiastic faces
Snow, the change of seasons
The newspaper
The dog
Dialectics
Showering, swimming
Old music
Comfortable shoes
Comprehending
New music
Writing, planting
Travelling
Singing
Being friendly.

(my translation)

The textbook approaches the poem as an opportunity for students to learn new vocabulary and to express their opinion on the "conventionality" (or lack thereof) of Brecht's pleasures. This poem could, however, easily lend itself to the introduction of a contrastive moment. A central theme of the poem is change, however, many of the pleasures Brecht lists in his poem derive from a sense of continuity, and depend upon things remaining the same and stable over time. Learners could be asked to identify such incongruencies in Brecht's poem. They could also be required to write a poem of their own and check it for contradictions within their own perspective. Such an activity would provide an opening for the kind of inconclusive, incongruent dimension that broadens understanding. The integration of poetic thinking into the language classroom involves, in other words, not only thinking poetically about language, but using language to think about poetry. In the particular case of Brecht's poem, the personally revealing moment occurs with the concern of the learner for the contingency of her or his own pleasures.

Proceeding to *Treffpunkt Deutsch* and *studio d,* it is striking that the chapters under review in these programs do not offer any opportunities to integrate a questioning, contrastive moment into the existing activities. A review of the materials quickly establishes what is missing in these programs that is available in the review chapter in *Deutsch: Na klar!*: a literary text. This absence is unfortunate, insofar as one specific chapter is concerned. It is alarming when an overview of other chapters verifies that this is the norm in these two language programs, rather than the exception. The question presents itself: What is the

role of literary texts within language education? Literature has served many constructive purposes over the long history of language study. Not the least of these was as a scholarly basis for departments of languages and literatures in academic institutions. What is its current status? Has literature disappeared from the teaching and learning of languages?

The evidence provided by three language programs cannot be considered representative for the discipline; however, in "The Avatars of Literature in Foreign Language Study," Claire Kramsch comes to the conclusion that "literature-within-language study" is disappearing.[23] She bases this conclusion on her analyses of the official organ of North American language teachers and learners, the *Modern Language Journal.* A survey of *Journal* articles over the past couple of decades shows that the *Modern Language Journal* identifies almost exclusively with second language acquisition research, its preferred genres being "the experimental study" and "the review article" as opposed to the "literary essay" or the "stylistic study" (569).

According to Kramsch, the link of literary scholarship with the study of language has been slowly waning since the demise of philology, and the onset of the communicative turn in language learning and teaching. In an approach that supports the position taken by Heidegger, Kramsch attributes the split between the study of language and that of literature to the "relative value of nomothetic (experimental, positivistic) versus hermeneutic (interpretive) forms of

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[23] Claire Kramsch, "The Avatars of Literature in Foreign Language Study," in *Modern Language Journal*, 84 (2000) 553-573.

knowledge"(568). Kramsch regrets this split, claiming: "The cost has been a regrettable reduction of language learning to its psycho- and sociolinguistic aspects and of language use to its referential and meta-linguistic functions" (569). What makes this loss even more egregious is that it is taking place just as the advances made in cognitive science and the socio-cultural turn in language studies have brought about a growing interest in the role of literary phenomena in the development of language and thought.

Literary scholars like Michael Holquist have pointed to the fact that literary texts are now being drawn upon by all manner of non-literary scholarship and expertise (e.g. physicians, psychiatrists, sociologists, historians) as giving access to truths that cannot be accessed through direct, objective means.[24] Both Holquist and Kramsch recommend revitalizing the link between language, linguistics and literature. According to Kramsch, "the time has come for the *Modern Language Journal* to show how crucial the poetic dimension is to language learners, to language teachers, and to the linguistic individuals that we all are" (579).

Many points have been made about the reasons for Heidegger's turn to the "poetic dimension." These points hinge upon an objective by now well familiar to us: to bring about a transformation of our understanding basic enough to constitute a genuine alternative to that of our everydayness. The success of language instruction that incorporates such a goal is dependent on language materials being used as more than just the object of study. Our materials also

[24] M. Holquist, "A new tour of Babel: Recent trends linking comparative literature departments, foreign language departments, and area studies programs," *ADFL Bulletin* (1995).

need to be regarded as the subject of our study. In other words, we need not just be able to talk about leisure time in a language class, but rather to attain to a fuller understanding about being in time. It is in the scope of literary texts to achieve this.

As we have seen in our examination, all of the language programs under review leave an opening for the construction of understanding through an abundance of exercises and activities requiring personal expression. The problem is that they don't go beyond this structuring phase and, in failing to do so, squander the opportunity to achieve the breadth of understanding possible through language education. Confronted with the unfamiliar, these programs seek to endow their learners with a sense of formal mastery over stable meanings. The point of the questioning and contrastive positioning that I have recommended is to deprive learners of their tranquillized immersion within essentialist identifications.

In Heideggerian terms, this disruption involves the realization that our views are based on concepts and beliefs we have taken over unawares from others. Most of us have been carried along, all our lives, with a momentum not our own. We have never made ourselves responsible for who we are. Language study should have, as one of its aims, the disruption of the momentum by which most of us are unknowingly carried along. To achieve this interruption, the encounter with the unfamiliar should be structured in such a way as to exploit a momentary disruption in the inexorable thrust of beliefs that otherwise determine our course. My attempt to adapt language materials in a

way that approaches time as contingent and incongruous, rather than formal and essential, would be an example of using this disruption constructively. The goal is to nudge learners out of their tranquillized immersion in their familiar everyday understanding, and into a more authentic understanding. Such understanding is characterized by a questioning attitude, an opening towards multiple possibilities and a sense of wonder. If learners are brought to this understanding, they could determine more of their own projects, supply their own momentum, and assume a responsibility for their understanding that they have never before possessed. In contrast to more traditional Platonic views of human development, a Heideggerian approach to language learning would promote self-transformation through self-understanding.

5.3 A New Theme for Language Study

If learning a language shows us anything, it is how we use language to create our worlds. We have seen how language allows us to name things, but also, how language determines what things shall be named. Language enables us to construct concepts about the events and things in our world, but it also controls what sorts of concepts we are able to construct. More than any other form of activity, learning a language makes us realize that whenever we form a sentence, we are creating a world. The idea that we use language to create the world is a rich and profound theme around which to organize language study.

There are many ways to approach such a theme, to explore the relationships between language and world-making. We are not exploring this

relationship very meaningfully if we focus on giving students the impression that the important thing about pronouns is their declination. The implications of some language programs would appear to be that if we teach such declensions well, it is enough; but by failing to reveal how human beings construct their world out of words, the discipline misses several profound opportunities. We fail, for instance, to convey the idea that there is an ethical dimension to how we use language. This point has been emphasized by every great philosopher, from Confucius and Plato to John Dewey and Judith Butler. Pronouns of address can be used in such a way as to transform certain human beings into non-persons, an offense that can be committed with excellent pronunciation or with impeccable grammar and spelling.

The story of how we humans use words to transform the world and are then, in turn, transformed by them, is a further profound dimension of this organizing theme. This dimension shows how powerful our habitual ways of speaking are. Two decades ago, the American pragmatic philosopher Richard Rorty claimed that "a talent for speaking differently, rather than for arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change."[25] By changing our speech, we could change our sympathies, our loyalties, our politics, and even our prejudices. Learners need to consider the consequences of such changes by encountering open-ended, potentially revealing questions. If we change our language, in what way will we change ourselves? What new prejudices might become comfortable

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[25] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 7.

and what old ones uncomfortable? In shaping the world through new ways of speaking, would we be better off or worse? The words in our world create an ongoing story and it continues to develop with unpredictable twists and turns. A particularly relevant example of this is our invention of surrogate languages. Printing, telegraphy, photography, radio, film, television, computers – each of these involve languages and multimodal texts which change how we tell our story, and thus transform our world. Indeed, according to Heidegger, these technological languages have come to play such a preeminent role in the telling of our story that they merit particular, sustained attention.

Among the various technological languages humans have invented, the computer is capable of altering our psychic habits, our everyday understanding, our worldview. To question the role of this language in the telling of our story has become an appropriate undertaking of all scholarly disciplines. This questioning includes language education, which has as its mandate an exploration of the relations between language and worldview. The discipline tends to confine itself to the study of rules governing grammar and pronunciation, and not the dynamics of world-making through words. Since academic disciplines are forms of discourse, most of education can be seen as a form of language education. Indeed, knowledge of a discipline mostly means knowledge of the language of that discipline. The discipline of History, for example, should not be understood as events that once occurred, but rather as language describing and interpreting events, according to rules established by historians. Even a discipline like Biology does not consist merely of plants and

animals, it is also the particular language employed to speak about plants and animals.

Many of today's pedagogues claim to be educating for membership in a global community. In order to prepare students to participate successfully in a global community, we must prepare them to encounter worldviews other than their own. Language learning provides students with an entry into a different worldview. Yet increasingly today, more attention is paid to computer literacy than intercultural literacy for future success. Indeed, if educational institutions continue in this way, much more of the population will learn how to use computers in the next decade or so. But if our educational system pays little attention to languages, how many people will learn them? One result of this process will be the loss of cross-cultural literacy for the sake of computer literacy.

Of course, as well as living in a global age we also live in an "information age." This speaks strongly for the importance of educating for the new technologies; however, it is crucial not to confuse technology education with technology operation. In this regard, the language of electronic technology has a parallel to that of the preceding mechanical technology. Just as most people can and do learn to operate computers irrespective of their formal education, most people learned how to drive an automobile without formal instruction. What we needed to think about with the advent of the car was not how to operate it, but what the car would do to our air, our landscape, our social relations. What we needed to know then about automobiles – as we need to

know now about computers and other important technologies -- is not how we are to use them, but rather how they use us.

Language study organized around the question of how our words create our worlds will consider what we may lose if we create a world in which the language of technology is the chief source of pedagogical motivation. Will speed of response become, more than ever, a defining quality of intelligence? Will we become more impressed by calculation than human sensibilities? Computer technologies have a powerful bias toward amplifying personal autonomy and individual problem-solving. What kinds of learning will be neglected, perhaps made impossible, as a result of this bias? Do new media create a global village, or force people to revert to tribal identities? These are questions and concerns at the heart of education today. Language study which incorporates a Heideggerian dimension would urge us to pose them, to be as interested in asking questions about technology as we are in getting answers from it.

The dynamic that Heidegger depicts in *Being and Time* is still at work today. Each of us has been created, molded, formed by a bewildering matrix of contingencies that have preceded us; from the patterning of the DNA derived from our parents, to the cultural and historical conditioning of the twentieth century, to the education and upbringing we are given, to all the experiences we have ever had and choices we have ever made. All of these have conspired to configure the unique trajectory which culminates in the present moment and carries us forward into the future. Were we to become aware of this, we could

begin to assume greater responsibility for the course of our lives. Instead, we concentrate upon arranging the details of our world in such a way that we feel secure.

We immure ourselves in the habitual routines and traditions that are familiar. We may sense that there is more to life than these, but habit impels us to forget it. Moreover, people collaborate in each other's forgetting. Family, social and religious institutions, as well as our educational systems, work to keep us remembering to forget. These institutions generally work very well, except that now and again something unexpected erupts. We find ourselves confronted with the stubbornness of matter, the fickleness of mood, the ambiguity of perception. For example, before the autumn of 1989, no one predicted the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union. Such contingent events might seem to be isolated moments, discomfiting but manageable, kept at a distance from the here and now, where we are safe in the business of remembering to forget; but Heidegger would urge us to acknowledge that contingency characterizes our existence.

Authentic understanding begins with remembering what we otherwise try to forget, and this can begin in the language classroom. Instead of clinging to our own traditions and familiar routines as a means of securing our sense of self, we can learn to question them actively. Questioning interrupts our indulgence in the comforts of routine and tradition. Our attachment to habitual behaviors and assumptions should be questioned, their grip thereby loosened, and in that moment the sheer fact of existence might become startling. How

extraordinary it is to exist at all! In this pivotal moment of human awareness, we realize that we, the questioners, are nothing other than the question itself. Life becomes a question for itself. Consequently, education becomes even more questionable than before.

But if life reveals itself as a question, it is not the kind that we can stand back from, reflect on, or answer through the authority of a strategy or a technique. The understanding generated by such questioning does not provide certain or consoling facts about the nature of life. Such questioning evokes mystery, not a problem, and the deeper we penetrate a mystery, the more mysterious it becomes. When this mystery penetrates our primary sense of being in the world, we experience wonder, and we begin to wonder.

To experience the original, pedagogical attitudes of wonder and wondering, is to begin to question what normally determines the sense of who we are and the kinds of reality we inhabit. Language learning can develop and sustain this questioning, before the habits of a lifetime reassert themselves and close in once more. For the moments we have together in language learning, we witness ourselves and the world as open to wonder and filled with possibilities. This awareness values an appreciation of other viewpoints and a celebration of difference. However individuated such qualities may be, they will also involve an expression of community: the international community that is an educational goal of language study.

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