

thinking

togetherness

ANDREJ BOŽIČ (*Ed.*)

THINKING TOGETHERNESS

PHENOMENOLOGY AND SOCIALITY

Dr. **Andrej Božič** is research fellow at the Institute Nova Revija for the Humanities (Inštitut Nove revije, zavod za humanistiko; Ljubljana, Slovenia).

The scientific monograph is published as part of the effectuation of the research program *The Humanities and the Sense of Humanity from Historical and Contemporary Viewpoints* (P6-0341), the research project *The Hermeneutic Problem of the Understanding of Human Existence and Coexistence in the Epoch of Nihilism* (J7-4631), and the infrastructure program *Center for the Promotion of the Humanities* (I0-0036).

The publication of the book is financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

165.62:316(082)

THINKING togetherness : phenomenology and sociality / Andrej Božič (ed.). -
Ljubljana : Institute Nova Revija for the Humanities, 2023. - (Humanistična zbirka
INR = The Humanities Series INR)

ISBN 978-961-7014-40-2
COBISS.SI-ID 172262659

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Ljubljana 2023

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Dario Vuger

ON CIRCUMLOCUTION AS METHOD FROM HEIDEGGER AND DEBORD TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHICAL PRAxis

Abstract: The paper explores the possibility of reading Heidegger's work as a methodological tool for a certain philosophical praxis. The main concepts, through which a new interpretative value of his main works can be presented, are the notions of circumlocution and circumstance as well as circumventing and circumfusing, and their respective utilization in philosophy. Through such a re-reading of Heidegger's oeuvre, the possibility of a new understanding of his philosophical aims emerges, accentuating the idea that a thoughtful engagement with the world in fact provokes new forms of behavior and relation to being. Once more can one stress the overwhelming importance of the notions of care and being-there in Heidegger's philosophy. Circumlocution points to the central importance of going-about or being-present through one's language, finding confinement within it, and bringing from within it the possibility of understanding phenomena. As such, circumlocution has a lot to do with vernacularism in Heidegger's philosophy.

Keywords: circumlocution, vernacularism, Martin Heidegger, Kitarō Nishida, Guy Debord.

There has been little or no debate regarding the meaning of literary style in Martin Heidegger's work, although we can clearly observe that there certainly exists the phenomenon, which could be thematized as "Heideggerian-style" philosophy and thus also legitimizes the discussion of literary style in terms of a certain method. Already by formulating the problem in such a way, we are on the path of specific Heideggerian interests, the crux of which is the overcoming of philosophy as metaphysics. Such overcoming seems to suggest that Heideggerian philosophy could be presented as a conceptual tool for a certain (post-)philosophical praxis, which is in turn already at work in Heidegger's final assessment of the modern era in his text "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking."

The main concept, through which a new interpretative value for the deliberation upon Heidegger's work becomes present, is the notion of circumlocution employed as a method for a mindful practice of engagement with the world and mediated only by the language of the everyday life. This, however, does not only concern the possible instruction regarding the issue "how to read Heidegger," but is, rather, a suggestion on reconsidering the role and reception of philosophy as a whole in the age of fundamentally novel phenomena, which can be summed up under the umbrella terms of *the society of the spectacle*—as indicated by the French theorist Guy Debord—or the culture of visualizations.

280 Heidegger's questioning language can be re-considered in terms of simulating the wanderings and wonderings of inner contemplation, which thus dwells in the immediacy of thought and language (expression). This provokes new forms of behavior and relation to being, a new *aisthesis* that goes beyond philosophical investigation and finds its limit in discussing the whole of Heidegger's work in terms of a project in radical will. We want to stress the importance of circumlocution in Heidegger as being representative of the whole of his philosophical project, and as a radical aesthetic essence of the work by his contemporaries who engaged in a similar conceptual practice within their respective philosophies, in order to provoke new understandings, augment and reframe our experience of the world in a certain philosophical mannerism through works of expressive and reflective writing opposed to the overwhelming dominance of the techno-scientific and spectacular modes of work in the 20th century.

Circumlocution as a method for a certain mindful praxis points to the central importance of going-about or being-present through one's own language, finding confines within it and bringing from within it the possibility of understanding phenomena. Vernacularism in Heidegger is intrinsically connected to this circumlocutory style. His use of everyday, common terms, in order to circumscribe vast conceptual frameworks outside the "learned" vocabulary of traditionally understood philosophical investigation or speculation, is integral to his radical overcoming of the speculative universe of philosophy towards a conceptually, methodically, and actually more engaged type of philosophy. The intensity of this philosophical praxis dwells in the

extensive use of language as the means for a “clearing of grounds” or “paving of paths.” It deals with resonances, relations, and experiences in life-world, and is not dependent on any kind of visual thinking, but rather on impressions that arise from the daily use of language, its ex-perimental mapping and implicit directions, which the words suggest us to follow. It should come as no surprise that this kind of “navigation” through language has the qualities of a certain “psycho-geographical” (Debord 1989, 5) practice in the proper sense of the word, as suggested by Guy Debord. It is also deeply anti-spectacular in the sense that it suggests a certain methodological iconoclasm to be taken up as a measure, in order not to succumb to the perils of contemporary imperatives of visualization.

The premises for such a conceptualization are evidenced in the general disposition of Heidegger’s philosophy understood, first, as a radical overcoming of the western philosophical tradition in light of the new phenomena, which have come to dominate all experience in the 20th century. And, second, as a disclosing of the most radical inadequacy of philosophy to critically address the issues of the techno-scientific domination over all aspects of contemporary culture, but also to fully explain and give meaning to fundamental problems of human experience of the world, which is in turn easily exploitable by these modern phenomena. Finally, circumlocution evident in Heidegger provides us with novel views and considerations of phenomenology as fundamental ontology or existential phenomenology, and as such denotes a certain *end* of philosophy. Heidegger’s overwhelming concern with the transformations of life-world and immediate experience is in terms of fundamental problems of experience that arose at the beginning of the 20th century with the development of contemporary physics demonstrated in his groundbreaking essays “The Age of the World Picture” and “The Question Concerning Technology,” as well as in his major work *Being and Time*.

In opposition to the visualizations and spectacles of contemporary science, which pushed the world into a technologically dominated framework of an endless show, Heidegger’s phenomenological method proves itself not as a science, but a practice of *making-sense* of the phenomena. The sense-making is done by the means of literary expression, through philosophy taken not as a form of cynicism, skepticism, or criticism, but as an act of existential

hesitation, which expresses itself through circumlocution. Heidegger radically turns phenomenology into a project: not only as a methodological tool, but as an environment for thought at the end of philosophy, which can no longer rely on its history and its concepts to satisfy the authentic will for knowledge of the emerging world.

Heidegger builds these attitudes as reactions to themes in contemporary science and culture between, and following, the two World Wars. The age of modern science and the techno-scientific augmentation of the daily life on an unprecedented scale have reshaped the infrastructures of society—its culture, art, and language—, alas, have fundamentally changed the patterns of thought. What began as a scientific theory of special relativity also marked the highpoint of debate over the structure, meaning, and goals of physical theory.¹ The socio-cultural infrastructure for the popularization of science as a part of cultural policy of the modern era is already well established.² The now historic debate between the philosopher Henri Bergson and the physicist Albert Einstein about the “correct” understanding of the notion of time marked the final decline of philosophy as well as the advent of the growing interest for new philosophers: philosophers-scientists in whose works philosophy takes on the form of a personally apologetic account of their own theories, while science they advocate dwells essentially in visualizations and discrete propositions opposed to oftentimes iconoclastic and “organic” or “flowing” way of *thinking as becoming*.

It should also not be forgotten that Guy Debord marks the advent of the *Spectacle* in the same historic time (Debord 1999, 175), tracing it through the same historic events and explaining it through the same sets of consequences; the attentiveness and the appeal of modern technologies, which deal exclusively with spectacles and visualizations (photography, cinema, television, digital media), become also one of the main tools for scientific research, on the one

1 The major philosophical debate preceding Einstein’s discoveries is well recounted in Pierre Duhem’s 1905 book *La Théorie physique, son objet, sa structure* (cf. Duhem 2003).

2 An instructive overview of the popularization of science, especially through digest and abridged formats, is given in the groundbreaking survey of contemporary culture in the 1961 book *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* by the American historian Daniel Boorstin (cf. Boorstin 1987, 118 ff.).

side, and of the popular commodification (and/by visualization) of time, on the other. When science reached into the non-graspable, it began dealing with images. Thus, the Einstein/Bergson debate marked the rise of post-modernism in the application of techno-science to the everyday life, not only on the infrastructural, but also on cultural and linguistic levels; for it was a debate about what is available to visualization and what is unimaginable, what is scientifically sound and philosophically absurd, what makes sense for the living, and what (re)makes (re-imagines, visualizes) life. Central to all such notions is the problem of visualizing time as a way of its understanding by making it discrete.

Heidegger's relation to these developments must be of crucial importance for understanding his philosophy, which clearly searches for new modes of engagement with the world that goes beyond the consequences of contemporary reconfigurations of knowledge, thought, action, etc.; in this respect, his project has a clear and implicit intellectual lineage, coming from Bergson and culminating in the post-philosophical figure of Debord, it also significantly resonates within the non-western traditions of thought. During the nascence of Heidegger's lifework, philosophy itself became the subject taken on by the most prominent physical scientists of his time, from Albert Einstein to Werner Heisenberg. Through popularization of science, philosophy itself became an alienating project, as summed up by Debord in 1967:

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The Spectacle is the inheritor of the weakness of the western philosophical project, which attempted to understand activity by means of the categories of vision, and it is based on the relentless development of the particular technical rationality that grew out of that form of thought. The Spectacle does not realize philosophy, it philosophizes reality, reducing everyone's concrete life to a speculative universe. (Debord 1999, 39.)

Complementarily, one reads:

The concept of "*the spectacle*" interrelates and explains a wide range of seemingly unconnected phenomena. The apparent diversities and

contrasts of these phenomena stem from the social organization of appearances whose essential nature must itself be recognized. Considered in its own terms, the spectacle is an affirmation of appearances and an identification of all human social life with appearances. But a critique that grasps the spectacle's essential character reveals it to be a visible negation of life—a negation that has taken on a visible form. (Ibid., 46.)

That is to say, the spectacle is a negation that has taken on the form of a *world-picture* (Heidegger 1968); it is an objectified *Weltanschauung* (Debord 1999, 36).

284 Since we are concerned here with the motivations for reading Heidegger's work in the contemporary age that he himself described as the age of the world picture—as an age of superficiality and technical frameworks, within which the possibility of thought lies in overstepping the philosophy's end inside the social application of cybernetic science as the new metaphysical horizon of mankind—, we suggest that the deliverable result of *Being and Time* is its ability to provoke an authentic practical response or a more meaningful interaction with the world, which would not be available to us, if he would have adopted a *philosophic* or *scientific* style of writing. Yet, the style itself is something not intentionally achieved or developed for a certain purpose, but rather an essential, inherent, and self-imposed structure, which dwells in subtlety, hesitation, and gesture. Here, we are on the fringes of aesthetic methodology—the aesthetics of reception and literary criticism—, but also of the study of socio-cultural history and philosophical context in light of Heidegger's re-conceptualization of phenomenology as the study of the daily life in its essential expressions in language, i.e., its vernacularism, and as the effort of establishing a way of/for thought to preserve itself at the time of unprecedented intellectual crisis. In that respect, we can also, considering Heidegger's style of writing as providing us with the method for thought, read it as a *situationist* project. Bringing forth the Heideggerian way of thought, leads out of philosophy and into observing world, not by means of spreading out of philosophy over the immediate experience, but by making experience of the world immediately present in the wandering language of thought. For this purpose, Heidegger does away with thinking in the same way Debord does

away with walking through a genuine psycho-geographical situationist effort, which is why phenomenology and vernacularism remain central.

By the usage of vernacular terms of the German language—*Dasein* and *Gestell* are the perfect examples—, Heidegger does not want to augment the language of philosophy, but seeks rather to augment the expressive potential of the living language with potentialities for the thought-provoking wandering concerned with phenomena, which stresses the importance of phenomenology and the “thinking about” in all its aspects (of something, but also as “going about”) and effectuations with regard to pure “thinking.” This is done by means of a re-thinking of the relationship towards language and of the possibilities of its use as not limited solely to the means of expression. In Heidegger, vernacularism and circumlocution are meta-lingual tools, which go beyond expression and towards the phenomenological realm of *clearing-the-path*, reaching openness, etc. Such an endeavor is not only the case and point within Heidegger’s “creative” and “experimental” use of etymological research, but it is, rather, a declaration of fundamental interest in the everyday life and its radical connection to the patterns established in a certain usage of the language possibilities, which are not properly utilized or are obscured by the images and/as new modes of “communication.”

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In *Being and Time*, and especially in the earlier lectures entitled on the *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, Heidegger discusses at length not only his understanding of phenomenology, but also his style. The analyses he provides us with in the *Prolegomena* and *Being and Time* are his most extensive studies into the differences and the nuances of immediate perception, *presencing*, its expression in language of the daily life. This is not a theory or a science pursuing to explain the concrete works of the mind or the physics of time. What he proposes is a structure that has the quality to bring about the wandering relation with our daily experience and to understand fully what and how we speak, why and to what *end* do we express our experiences in language, and why such experiences are not something that contemporary science can account for, although it can *discretely* explain them—like, e.g., our experience of time.

Therefore, Heidegger is ready to bring forth methodic contemplations for certain essential aspects of his work, such as “intentionality,” which is “not

good to be speculated about, but should rather be followed in its concreteness” (Heidegger 2000, 51). Thus, he continues with the idea that “phenomenology is as research exactly the work of unveiling and disclosing in the sense of methodically guided disintegration of concealedness” (ibid., 96). He stresses that his thinking “does not want philosophy, it wants things” (ibid., 98). Likewise, it does not want the *show*, nor a *visualization*, but the incessant activity of thoughtful understanding. The disintegration of concealedness cannot be achieved by “painting a picture,” but by “clearing the field,” by circumscribing an area or, better yet, by *circumambulation*, as it is an adoption of a certain special form of a radically mindful attitude.

286 Heidegger’s view of phenomenology is radical and disruptive with regard to all notions of philosophical and scientific investigation; it has to be such, in order to bring forth the methods of literary expression as a method for experience and of mindful relation with the world. He does not build or imply structures, but constructs affective environments or situations. This is the reason why Heidegger’s work is by himself always presented as being merely “preparatory,” as a kind of permanent prolegomena in terms of not being a textbook on how to write and do philosophy, but the prolegomena for a practice of a certain thoughtful engagement with the world after philosophy, a practice of thought. Heidegger’s circumlocution is in that respect instructive and practical.

This is present already in the contents of Heidegger’s *Prolegomena* and *Being and Time*. Due to the fact that the project remained unfinished, but was complemented by an extensive body of work, going outside and beyond the themes presented in the mentioned discussions—all the while remaining conceptually inseparable from them—, we are inclined to posit that one must take them as such, as rounded and self-reliant didactic and methodological tools, which bring into practical focus much of his shorter essays and lectures, acting as studies, singular psycho-geographies, or situational reports on a certain combination of words, expressions, and phenomena; such is, e.g., the play of words concerning *in-formation*, *ge-stellen*, or the *end* of philosophy (in terms of its *finitude* as a project and *habitual end* as finding the confines or an environment for realization).

Prolegomena and *Being and Time* deal with *being-there* and time in light of contemporary debates and implied prescribing of techno-scientific notion

of time to immediate human experience. However, Heidegger wants to do much more by developing the idea of the history of the concept of time as “history of discovering time as the history of the essence of being” (Heidegger 2000, 158). Such a history should build upon the question of being as a certain phenomenology of presencing or being-there as a philosophy of time, which radically overcomes any further philosophical engagement. By rediscovering time as nothing discrete, one adopts an attitude towards time, and not just an image of it. Moreover, in the central part of the *Prolegomena*, Heidegger himself warns us that “in this explication of being-there we will stumble upon a vast number of formulations that have at first a peculiar character and above all have—in formulation—*the character of hesitation*” (ibid., 171; my italics).³

This stems, he says, from the nature of language, the inadequacy of words, and from the grammar itself. Being-there must be discovered in its immediate daily presencing, in the “daily presencing of any individual to be as being-there” (ibid., 175). Now, in order to fully stand behind this often-stressed inadequacy of language, its inability to address the essential properties of the experience of being-in-the-world as presencing or of even intending an action, he must take his own philosophy to the level that radically dispenses with any form of definitive or scientific statements. There are three methods to uphold this ideal: 1) the extensive preparatory work, which is essential, 2) circumlocution or periphrasis in style, 3) digressions and transgressions in the use of vernacular concepts. These methods are equivalent to *dérive* (flowing, drifting) and *détournement* (diversion) of the psycho-geographical project developed by the actors of the Situationist International some years later; they advance the application of such concepts to the phenomena not only of made environments, but also of conceptual environments.

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Accordingly, Heidegger’s comment regarding practice as being de-realized in the age of modern science bears importance in more than a few aspects:

Machine technology is itself an autonomous transformation of praxis, a type of transformation wherein praxis first demands the employment

³ The German original employs the words “Charakter des Fremdartigen” and “Charakter des Umständlichen.”

of mathematical physical science. Machine technology remains up to now the most visible outgrowth of the essence of modern technology, which is identical with the essence of modern metaphysics. (Heidegger 1996, 116.)

288 Here, Heidegger seems to suggest that machine technology does not only transform praxis; it transforms it in such a way that it no longer seems to indicate a human activity, but rather the subjection of all human activity to automatized practice, which puts forward the demand for calculation, prediction, and optimization of all action, where *cybernetics* takes precedence over *poiesis*. The transformation taking place is described with reference to two major themes of Heidegger's work: *en-framing* as the essence of technology and *cybernetics* as the essence of modern metaphysics. Moreover, Heidegger here puts forward the idea of cultural politics as one of the decisive outcomes of this transformation, since "all human activity is understood in terms of its culture" (ibid., 8), and all culture becomes highly technical and subjected to optimization as a policy. Cultural policy, the same as the essence of modern science, relies on research, procedures, projects, and information, in order to live up to its image. In life, technology and science come together in such a way that they become virtually inseparable, like a picture-in-a-frame. They are such upon the basis of the necessity of their nature. Since human action is, in the broadest sense, the act of being (Heidegger 2000, 134), we can see how techno-sciences reduce being to a system or a picture to be manipulated and prescribed with meaning, making the picture itself the only thing to be seen, turning it as such into the complete and only available reality.

When discussing the essence of technology in terms of *Gestell*, or en-framing, we can see more clearly the vernacular/circumlocutory method at play. The title of the essay on technology poses the question, for which Heidegger sets himself to pave a path as a preparation for the posing of the question. This is done through a discussion, which does not provide us with a clear structure, but a series of connections circling around the term he decided to be central to the question—*Gestell* or en-framing—; it gives way to various etymological connections that sketch out the vast area covering the question. The author's circumlocution here is highly constructive, bringing about the

term *Ge-stell* from various accounts and conceptual similarities of *Gebirg* and *Gemüt*, as well as *stellen* and *nachstellen*, i.e., bringing-forth, standing, framing, forming, ordering, etc., which shape the discussion into a kind of a demystifying text that seems to aim at provoking a certain response, which is only achievable in practice or engagement with *technology* itself. The next step is the implicit link of the conceptual decomposition of the notion to that of *information*, which at the time dominates all scientific as well as the popular discourse. It is an in-formation, a thing that pushes forward with certain order, an ordering of phenomena to be taken as such or to be in-formative.

The same goes for the notion of *world-picture* in the text that tries to establish the grounding for bringing into view the essence of modern science, which is equal to the essence of modern era, because the latter is dominated by the application of modern science to the life-world of modern man. Through techno-sciences and their en-framing, the modern human being has its world served to it as a standing-in-front, a picture, at the essence of which lies a system. World-as-picture—provoked by science—means exactly the drawing-out of the world from the confines of immediate experience to a standing-reserve, which is the background or the forefront of action that is no longer integral to it, but only a supplemental show of technology. And, as the idiom “world-view” suggests, in discussing the notion of the world-picture, we are dealing with the dominant attitude towards the world. Heidegger’s use of circling-around, unfolding, and stretching-out a certain theme in its possible literary outlooks aims to provoke a certain understanding or a proper motivation for observing the concrete workings of modern science applied to the daily life through categories, which do not seem to be immediately connected to it. The world-view, which we are talking about here, is the same one that is at the center of Guy Debord’s exposition of the *Spectacle*; it is, namely, the objectified *Weltanschauung* (Debord 1999, 8) or, simply, visualization.

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It is well-known that Heidegger often stresses the importance of grasping *Dasein* in its daily presencing as well as in its surrounding world. The theme stretches throughout the whole discussion in *Being and Time*, but the terms employed within it become increasingly enriched by the developing *ecology* or conceptual landscape, which provokes us to act mindfully towards the understanding of conceptual and practical implications of certain connotations

of specific words and phrases, such as the (mundane) concepts of *world* (*Welt*) or *time* (*Zeit*). Such a movement represents the essence of circumlocution as it acts upon the philosophical and conceptual landscape in the same manner as practices of psycho-geography act upon the actual urban landscape of man-made environments. In this respect, language and culture must also be taken as man-made environments. In the following statement by Heidegger, one finds an appropriate quote for this comparison:

These measures express not only that they do not want “to measure,” but that the estimated distance belongs to a being, towards which one thoughtfully moves in a caring way. But even if we use the more solid measure and say “we are hour an hour away from home,” this measure must also be taken as estimated. Half-an-hour is not thirty minutes, but it is a duration that has no “length” in the sense of some quantitative stretch. This duration is always subjected to common, daily “doings.” (Heidegger 1985, 148.)

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The discussion is connected to the notion of distancing, making distance obvious or concealed, making us attentive to distance and mindful of our common expression of it, but also to the term *distraction*, which represents the same phenomena and by etymological approximation gives way to rising attentiveness of distraction as the drawing-away, guiding, and suppressing attention, of attending as doing with care, and not only with measure. By combining meanings, by circling around concepts, and sketching out a certain *aesthesis* or an affective network of careful considerations of phenomena, Heidegger employs circumstance and circumventing as elements appropriate to his phenomenology in such a way that he tries to provoke a sensation or an impression of the phenomena, which goes beyond what is plainly expressed in words. In this regard, the movement seems like *circumfusion*, or spreading-out, the levelling of the field of word-play to a certain immanent range of discussion that should be proper at all times to all the phenomena.

Thus, we can understand Heidegger’s project with regard to language and to the end of philosophy as being extensive in nature, especially if we compare it to the intensive critique provided by Debord who wishes to over-utilize certain

terms—like “spectacle”—, in order to deconstruct their mystifying grasp over our daily lives. Both “strategies” are the elements proper to circumlocution as method of thoughtful investigation. Circumlocution is taken here in its literary explanation as a periphrasis, but also in a more literal sense of going-about, *Umschreibung*, or, in the Croatian language *okoliš-anje* (*environment-ing*). The Croatian word bears the primary meaning of *hesitation*, of a reluctance at arriving to a certain fixed point, of a consideration of the point itself as something to be circled around and not immediately engaged, of a certain gravitating.

For Heidegger, it was necessary to find the concepts that would bring a rather complicated mind-scape of his task of thinking into the immediate complexity of the daily experience. He found this possibility in the vernacular term of *Dasein*. The meaning and concrete connection of the term to the daily life and its everyday use make it significant in light of Heidegger’s phenomenology as well as in the attempt at overcoming philosophy. Its significance is that of a converging point between the theoretical mind-scape and the life-world, within which language takes form: *Dasein* does not take up space; rather, it is infinitesimally small and presents only the center, around which Heidegger circles: it is a mundane (*mundus*) term in the *world-making* sense of the word.

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Now, although there are more than a few indications that Guy Debord was aware of Heidegger and his work, we are far from stating that his thought was directly influenced by Heidegger’s.⁴ Rather, we wish to accentuate the conceptual closeness between both thinkers with regard to what we are trying to thematize as a specific line of contemporary thought concerning the provocation of certain mindful attitudes towards the everyday life. There certainly exists a similarity in Debord’s use, and many an interpreter’s misuse, of the term *spectacle*. A lot of the blame for such misuse can be attributed to Debord himself for not persisting firmly enough in explaining the importance of the correct translation of the term, which is only achievable through circumlocution, because his work on the theory of the spectacle is by itself an effort at utilizing circumlocution as a method of exploring the nuances of

4 Cf. especially the letters found in his posthumously published correspondence: Debord 2003.

a concept that had been very carefully selected for its vernacular use in the French language.⁵ In this sense, his task is not dissimilar to that of Heidegger who effectively used up a large portion of *Being and Time* just to circumfuse the term *Dasein* and bring it into focus, not as a reinvented term, but as a circumstance that reinvents the everyday, within which it appears. We should not overlook that *Dasein* is a commonly used term in the daily speech, in much the same manner as the *spectacle* is used in the daily French language; thus, the effect on the reader of *Being and Time* or *The Society of the Spectacle* in their respective languages can have a genuine influence on their mindful action within the world reshaped towards accommodating the circumlocution involved in levelling the field of meaning.

292 The mindful and levelled experience of the world, through wandering confined in language, is something that brings forth one more connection: the Japanese tradition of thought and its linguistic heritage; the deep concern of the Japanese with the subtleties of language and expression is well documented and has become commonplace among scholars. An introduction to Japanese literature states the following about one of the central works of early Japanese literature entitled *Essays in Idleness* (*Tsurezuregusa*; 1329–1333) by Yoshida Kenkō: “what is not stated, cannot be seen by the eyes, and is incomplete in expression is more moving, alluring, and memorable than what is directly presented. Since ancient times, Japanese aristocrats prized the social capacity for indirection and suggestion.” (Shirane 2006, 7.) The concern for aesthetics of the Japanese (aristocrats) forms a part of sociality as the fine appreciation of the nuances of social response and interaction.

The idea of linguistic nuances shaping sociality is very much alive in Japan of the 20th century, where we find a few notable examples of

5 Opting to not translate the term of the spectacle (English: “show”; Croatian: “prikaz”) or of *Dasein* is, therefore, nonsensical. In this way, the concepts do not only lose their radical potential, but they also become novelty concepts within a certain national philosophy, which—as such—has no authentic connection to the actual philosophical efforts that produced it in the first place. Thus, by not translating, for instance, *Dasein* as “prisutnost” in Croatian—which is a genuinely vernacular term, a word frequently used in the daily language—, one obstructs the aesthetics of the Heideggerian thought, its capability to affect us immediately; rather, keeping the original form of *Dasein*, limits its use and any kind of engagement to the purely intellectual realm.

philosophers engaging in circumlocution that comes naturally from language itself, just as it does in Heidegger, in place of gestures. In this respect, one can consider one term, which is a daily occurrence in the Japanese language, but is at the same time a decisive term for a certain philosophy of a mindful practice proper to “the Japanese mind.” This may provide us with the case for vernacularism and the wandering language that suits Heidegger’s project especially well, as it also corresponds to other projects engaged with overcoming the speculative universe of the western philosophical thought by radically adapting it to a completely different socio-cultural, epistemic, and spiritual framework.

The word and concept of *basho* (場所; ba-sho)—in a quite literal translation it could be rendered as “situation,” “situatedness,” or “standing-about”—comprises two kanji characters, the first one for location as a concrete space and the second as a more abstract term usually used in addresses, as a place. *Basho* is central to Kitarō Nishida’s philosophy (Nishida 2012), which, interestingly enough, tries to overcome classical philosophical dualisms in the radical attempt at a philosophy of *nothingness* or *situating nothingness* within the perspectives opened up by the reception of western thought in the emerging intellectual centers of modern Japan. More importantly, Nishida’s philosophy precedes Heidegger’s, although their respective approaches are fairly similar because of the central importance of (Husserl’s) phenomenology in both of them. What Heidegger “invented” as a disruptive project of radical will through the methods discussed represented already the common ground for Nishida’s creative re-combination of western thought and eastern culture. His philosophy established the prominent *Kyoto School*, within which we can see an instantiation of the realization of just such a practice that has its focus in mindful engagement with phenomena beyond philosophy proper, finding in it only a new environment for the literary expression, which is by itself at home in the Japanese language. The latter carries a myriad of meanings on the same level of expression, embodying the making of gestures and the implied context as an essential part of speech, making it thus circumstantial or, better yet, situational. Equally, the withholding of gestures and situations only gives language a poetic expression, as it becomes more intensive—as it does in the case of Debord’s work on the notion of the *spectacle*.

It would seem that—from the vast oral traditions of Shinto to the literary tradition of Buddhist monks—thought and action have a deeper connection in Japan; thus, reading is—the same as writing—considered to be a part of acting, a praxis, which only makes it natural to be considerate of one’s language or even the way one thinks of things; thought itself seems to be applied and reflected upon the wholeness of nature. Being-there, or *presencing*, seems to be for the traditional Japanese mind almost a natural state of observing the fleetingness of things as well as of appreciating life in every form and in all phenomena, which also makes the life-world *spectacular* in a profoundly *iconoclastic* way. Such is the appreciating and the observing (*theorein*) of visual world considered as the nexus of gestures (*poiesis*), because the life-world is filled with divine life, as it is implied within the vernacular belief system in Japan. For the Japanese mind—considered in traditional terms—, every action is a manifestation of one’s will and the *eventfulness* of being. Because of that, its relation to other beings is highly considerate, mindful, and involved (*careful* in the sense of *teinei*);⁶ likewise, it seeks to avoid disturbing the life-world of any other being. Concentrating on the term *basho*, Nishida anchors his abstract philosophy in the everydayness of language and expression, provoking a new affective attitude towards the life-world.

Yet: by talking about situating nothingness, we are already within a certain Heideggerian framework masterfully resolved in the essay “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” which lays out and gives conclusion to the overwhelming preparatory work Heidegger undertook in his philosophy, in order to establish phenomenology as the only authentic response to the problem of thinking in the later 20th century. Within it, Heidegger explicitly talks about *situating nothingness* in terms of *das Ende*, which etymologically stands at the beginning and the end, since it, as a concept, denotes the concrete place of settlement and growth—the habitual end, *environ*—,⁷ as well as the

6 The word *teinei* comprises two kanji characters: the first one means a concrete place—it is commonly used for denoting a street, a city, or a ward, as well as for the counting of various tools—, the second means preference, peacefulness, quietness, and tranquility (it is used in the words for peace, stability, and politeness).

7 In the Croatian language, we use the word “kraj” to denote a place in the sense of a habitat. We also use it in the compound expression “kraj-obraz,” meaning land-scape, in which the word “kraj” means “next to,” but also implies the notion of habituation:

end in terms of temporal or spatial finitude. Both meanings, however—and this is here the gravitational center of Heidegger’s phenomenological pull—, have the notion of *realization* in their vernacular use.⁸ By speaking of the end of philosophy, Heidegger gives finishing touches to its realization, habituating it on the limits of thought now dominated by techno-sciences. The radical step here is the dissociation of philosophy and thought that is quite similar to Debord’s disruptive critique of the western philosophical project, which plunged the concrete life-world into a speculative universe of visualizations. Since both thinkers actually advocate a certain phenomenological path for thought and praxis, the development of the connections to the philosophers of the Kyoto School may prove to be fruitful in further disclosing the interconnectedness and highly performative or gestural closeness of the observing and the acting attitude as a basis for a certain mindful practice. Such a mindful attitude can be described as care and hesitation at once, as being, at once, nuanced and involved.⁹

We can, therefore, conclude that phenomenology in light of Heidegger’s project of a mindfully disruptive reaction to the advances of modern techno-sciences re-presents a post-philosophy, for which circumlocution, as method, is—it being a careful hesitation—a grounding attitude. Heidegger IS a

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the literal translation could, therefore be, “next-to-one’s-face” (“obraz” namely means “face”). Likewise, “kraj” is denotes the end of any duration in terms of finitude as well as the end of a certain concrete or the abstract space. The term “krajobraz” can, thus, in fact hold in itself all the meanings of the word “kraj,” which means that a landscape can be defined as the space beyond one’s own face, denoting the excentric positionality of the human being, for which language acts as a situating agent and a gesture of habituation that is always “ending” as the habituation of nothingness.

8 The double nuancing of meaning would not be possible, if Bergson’s groundbreaking work *Creative Evolution*, which—in light of new scientific theories (evolution) and technological inventions (cinema)—discusses the traditional problems of the emerging and enduring (becoming) consciousness, would not popularize the debate about nothingness and the limits of expression.

9 For example: the everyday term *seikatsu* (生活), which also utilizes two characters, the first one meaning “life” and “birth,” and the second “lively” and “living,” is commonly understood as livelihood or *the life of one’s daily existence*; in this sense, it is the closest thing to the vernacular term of *Dasein*, although *Dasein* is usually translated into Japanese as *gensonzai* (現存在), comprising three kanji characters meaning “being-presently-aware-of-one’s-existence.” The latter term has no presence in everyday language and is certainly in opposition with Heidegger’s project as discussed here.

situationist in the precise manner and gesture demanded by the critical project of Guy Debord, for he is interested not only in overcoming the faults of the western intellectual tradition, but at the same time tries to make the life-world expressible in language, rather than in images.

Through Heidegger's task of thinking, we can see that there is much more to technology than what it shows of itself; that the world is not reducible to the picture we have of it; and that circumlocution is not only a literary style, but a proper practice: we can literally observe Heidegger walking-about and writing-about: not simply writing-about-something, but wondering, navigating by following the confines, the—implicit and explicit—boundaries of language. As the formalization of thought, circumlocution is the psycho-geography of the mind-scape. This is the essence of the radical move: to think-about, and not to think about this or that.

296 Thus, let us keep in mind—taking in the consequences of the discussed essays—that, for Heidegger, philosophy is—within the contemporary era without the world—a practice of thought. For the situation of the total visualization of all events, philosophy must re-invent itself (as phenomenology) by radically “ending” in the circumlocutive practice of thoughtful engagement with the phenomena of the techno-scientifically re-imagined life-world. This is the only really existing meta-verse, and it is the only truly Heideggerian type of the world. Namely, the world AS the meta-verse (*stíkhos*).

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Department of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana

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ISBN 978-961-7014-40-2



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