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ABSTRACT

Derrida translates, reads, and discusses the work of Heidegger.

DESCRIPTION

Recorded in Ithaca, NY by Cornell University., Sponsored by: Andrew D. White Professors-At-Large Program., Speaker(s): French philosopher and author., Lecture, September 11, 1985.

115 minutes

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SUBJECT

Heidegger, Martin, 1889-1976; History—Philosophy; Philosophy

TYPE

Sound

[First recorded segment:]

[Introducer and faculty sponsor, Professor Edward P. Morris:]

...-thing of himself. How can any one man find so much to say? What answer [*laughter from audience*], what answer can we make to such gifts? Forgive me if I shirk the ineffable and confine my words to a couple of practical matters. As many of you know, one rhetorical form Jacques Derrida handles with special grace and dexterity is the formal seminar paper or public speech, ordinarily running to about two hours and allowing space for thought to go on its own right way while imagination plays and swerves. The lecture we are here to hear today, entitled "Heidegger's Hand," has threatened to overstep those limits. In order to avoid undue fatigue on all sides, Professor Derrida has decided to cut it short.

This coming Friday at 2 o'clock, in the Guerlac Room of the Andrew Dickson White House, he will read the last section, or peroration, to open a meeting devoted to general discussion. That meeting will last until 4, and you are cordially invited to attend and participate. There will be four other occasions for you to hear Jacques Derrida or speak with him. Today, immediately following his lecture, there will be a reception in the Andrew Dickson White House. On Friday, he will hold office hours in Goldwin Smith 262, from 10 to noon. On Saturday at 4:30, in this room, he will participate in a roundtable confabulation, marking the end of a colloquium on the matter of puns. The colloquium is sponsored by the Society for the Humanities and is entitled "The Call of the Phoneme." On Monday, September 16th, in 277 Goldwin Smith, Professor Derrida will lead a discussion of issues arising from a paper he

recently wrote against the institution of apartheid. Some copies of that paper in English translation are available in Goldwin Smith 286.

When you write down words and later speak them out, what happens? The elocution of written texts is a hand-to-mouth business. If words are a nutriment for thought, where do public lectures come in the food chain? More than about anybody, Jacques Derrida has taught us to look with rapt puzzlement at the way voices get caught-up in visible letters. His talks are copious banquets of delicacy and he keeps on inviting us back. Will you join me, please, in thanking him and in welcoming him once again to Cornell.

[Audience applause.]

[Indistinct and low-volume speech, probably Jacques Derrida's]

[Derrida:] Thank you, again. Uh, [clears throat], I want to thank you for coming and for giving me such a warm welcome to Cornell, as you have already done so many times before. As Professor Morris has just announced, I'm not going to read the very last part of my lecture and I will begin the general session that will take place on Friday with this last part. I must begin with some precautions. They all come down to asking your pardon and indulgence for what, in particular, touches on the form and the status of this lecture, this *le-, lecture*, this reading, on all the presuppositions I ask you to take account of. In effect, I presuppose the reading of a brief and modest essay, entitled, umm, "*Geschlecht: sexual difference, ontological difference*"—that was the title of this, uh, brief essay. It was published and translated more than a year ago and it began some work that I have taken up again only this year, in the course of a seminar I am giving in Paris under the title, "Philosophical Nationality and Nationalism." For lack of time, I can reconstitute neither the introductory article, entitled, "*Geschlecht*," (it treats of the motif of sexual difference in a course by Heidegger almost contemporary with, uh, *Being and Time, Sein und Zeit*) nor all the developments that form, in my seminar on philosophical nationality and nationalism, the contextual landscape of the reflections I shall present to you today. Nevertheless, I shall strive to make the presentation of these few reflections, still preliminary, as intelligible and independent of all these invisible contexts as possible.

Another precaution, another call for your indulgence: for lack of time, I shall present only a part, or rather several fragments at times a bit discontinuous, of the work I am following this year in the slow rhythm of a seminar engaged in a difficult reading, one that I would like to be as meticulous and careful as possible, of certain Heidegger, Heidegger texts, notably *Was Heisst Denken?* and above all the lecture on Trakl in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*.

So we are going to speak then of Heidegger. And we are also going to speak of monstrosity. We are going to speak of the word *Geschlecht*. [Walks over to write on chalk board, presumable inscribing the word, "Geschlecht."] The word I am not going to translate for the moment. Doubtless I shall translate it at no moment [laughter from audience]. But you know that, according to the contexts that come to determine this word, it can be, could be translated by sex, race, species, genus, gender, genre, stock, family, generation or genealogy, community, etc. In the seminary on "Philosophical Nationality and Nationalism," before studying certain texts of Marx, Quinet, Michelet, Toqueville, Wittgenstein, Adorno, Hannah Arendt, we had encountered the word *Geschlecht* in a very sketchy reading of Fichte, who says, I, I read the German first: "was an Geistigkeit und Freiheit dieser Geistigkeit glaubt, und die ewige Fortbildung dieser Geistigkeit durch Freiheit will, das, wo es auch geboren sey und in welcher Sprache es rede, ist

unsers Geschlechts, es gehört uns an und es wird sich zu zu zu uns tun” (that’s in the seventh of the *Discourses to the German Nation, Reden an die Deutsche Nation*). The French translation of this passage neglects to translate the word *Geschlecht*, no doubt because the translation was done during or just after the war, I think, by, uhh, Jankelevitch, duhh, Vladimir Jankelevitch’s father, and under conditions that made the word “race” particularly dangerous and moreover not pertinent for translating Fichte. But what does Fichte mean when he develops in this way what he calls then his fundamental principle (*Grundsatz*), to wit, that of a circle (*Kreis*) or an alliance (*Bund*), of a, an, on a, an engagement, an engagement that constitutes precisely belonging to “our *Geschlecht*?” “All those,” he says, “all those who believe in the spirituality and the freedom of that spirit, all those who want the eternal and progressive formation of this spirituality through freedom” (*die ewige Fortbildung*, uh, uh, he says; the eternal progression, formation: and if Fichte is “nationalistic,” in a sense rather enigmatic so that we can speak of it here very quickly, he is so, I mean, uh, “nationalistic” as a progressive, a republican, and a cosmopolitist; and one of the themes of the seminar I am currently working on concerns just the paradoxical but regular association of nationalism with a cosmopolitanism and with a humanism). I, I, I’m, quote again: “All those who believe in spirituality and the freedom of that spirit, all those who want the eternal and progressive formation of this spirituality through freedom,” uhh, “they all are part of our *Geschlecht*, they all belong with us and have to, to do business with us, wherever they are born or whatever language (*Sprache*, uh, *langue*, tongue), whatever language they speak. So this *Geschlecht* is not determined by birth, native soil, or race; it has nothing to do with the natural or even the linguistic, at least in the current sense of this term, the linguistic, for we were able to recognize in Fichte a kind of claim of the idiom (that’s why I say, at least in the current sense of the, of the term linguistic). There is in Fichte a claim of the idiom, of idiom of the German idiom. Certain citizens, Germans by birth, remain strangers to this idiom of the idiom; and certain non-Germans can attain it since, engaging themselves in this circle or this alliance of spiritual freedom and its infinite process, they would belong to “our *Geschlecht*.” So the sole analytic and unimpeachable determination of “*Geschlecht*” in this context is the “we,” the belonging to the “we” who are speaking at this moment, at the moment when Fichte addresses himself to this supposed but still to be constituted community, a community that, *strictu sensu*, is neither political, nor racial, nor linguistic, but that can receive his allocution, Fichte’s allocution, his address, or his apostrophe (*Rede an die Deutsche Nation*), and, umm, a community that can think with him, can say “we” in some language and from whatever birthplace. *Geschlecht* is an ensemble, a gathering together, an organic community in a nonnatural but spiritual, that believes in the infinite progress of the spirit through freedom. So it is an infinite “we,” a “we” that announces itself to itself from the infinity of a *telos* of freedom and spirituality, and that promises, engages, or allies itself according to the circle (*Kreis*, *Bund*), the circle of this infinite will. How is *Geschlecht* to be translated under these conditions? Fichte uses a word that *already* has in his language a vast wealth of semantic determinations, and he speaks *German*, of course. Despite what he says when he says: anyone, in whatever language he or she speaks, “*ist unsers Geschlechts*,” he says this in German, and this *Geschlecht* is an essential *Deutschheit*. Even if the word *Geschlecht* has rigorous content only from out of the “we” instituted by that very address, it also includes connotations indispensable to the minimal intelligibility of discourse, and these connotations belong irreducibly to German, to a German

more essential than all the phenomena of empiric Germanness, *Deutschheit*—but to some German, something which is a German idiom. All these connoted senses are copresent—present at the same time—in the use of the word *Geschlecht*, they virtually appear in that use, but no sense is fully satisfying. How is one to translate? One can recoil before the risk and omit the word, as the French translator did. One can also judge the word so open and undetermined by the concept it designates, to wit, a “we” as spiritual freedom engaged toward the infinity of its progress, that the omission of this word does not lose much. The “we” finally comes down to the humanity of man, to the teleological essen-, essence of a humanity that is announced *par excellence* in *Deutschheit*. *Menschengeschlecht*, *Menschengeschlecht* is often said for “*genre humain*,” in French, “mankind,” “human species,” “human race.” In the Heidegger text, uh, we shall be concerned with in, in a few minutes, the French translators sometimes speak of “*genre humain*,” mankind, for *Geschlecht* and sometimes very simply of “species.”

For here the question is nothing less, I venture to say, than the problem of man, of man’s humanity, and of humanism. But situated where language no longer lets itself be effaced. Already for Fichte, it is not the same thing to say the “humanity” of man and *Menschlichkeit*. When he says “ist unsers Geschlechts,” he is thinking of *Menschlichkeit* and not of *Humanität* of Latin ancestry. The fourth *Discourse* in the *Deutsche Nation* is by far consonant with those Heidegger texts to come on Latinness. Fichte distinguishes the, what he calls the dead language, quote, “cut off from its living roots” and the living language animated by an inspiriting breath. When a language, from its first phonemes, arises from the common and uninterrupted life of a people whose intuitions that language continues to espouse, to espouse, the invasion of a foreign people changes nothing; the intruders can rise only up to this primordial language, unless one day they can assimilate the intuitions of the, the *Stammvolk*, of the people-rock, -stock, for whom these intuitions are inseparable from the language; I quote: “...und so bilden nicht sie die Sprache, sondern die Sprache bildet sie” (they do not form the language, the language forms, forms them), unquote. Conversely, when a people adopts another language developed in the designation of suprasens, -sensible things, uhh, without however totally handing itself over to the influence of this foreign language, the sensible language is not altered by this event. In all peoples, Fichte notes, children learn that part of the language turned toward sensible things as if the signs for these things were arbitrary (*willkürlich*). The children must reconstitute the past development of the national language. But in this sensible sphere (*in diesem sinnlichen Umkreise*), each sign (each *Zeichen*) can become altogether clear thanks to vision or the immediate contact with the designated or signified thing (*Bezeichmeten*). Here I stress the, the sign, the word “sign” (*Zeichen*), for in a moment we shall come to the sign as monstrosity. In this passage Fichte uses the word *Geschlecht* in the narrow sense of generation; I quote: “For the first generation [*das erste Geschlecht*] of a people, having transformed its language in this way, the result would all the more be a forced return from the age of maturity (the age of man, *Männer*) to the, the years of infancy;” unquote.

And here Fichte is bent on distinguishing *Humanität* and *Menschlichkeit*. For a German these words of Latin origin (*Humanität*, *Popularität*, *Liberalität*), these words of Latin origin resound as if they were void of sense, even if they appear sublime and make etymology something of interest. Besides, it’s the same in the Latins or neo-Latins who know nothing of the etymology and believe these words belong to their maternal tongue (*Muttersprache*). But say

Menschlichkeit to a German, says Fichte, say *Menschlichkeit* to a German: you would be understood without any other historical explanation (*ohne weitere historische Erklärung*). Besides, it is useless to state that a man is a man and to speak of the *Menschlichkeit* of a man about whom one knows very well that he is not an ape or a savage beast. A Roman would not have responded in that way, Fichte believes, because if, for the German, *Menschheit* or *Menschlichkeit* always remains a sensible concept (*ein sinnlicher Begriff*), for the Roman *humanitas* had become the symbol (*Sinnbilde*) of a suprasensible (*übersinnlichen*) idea. From their origins, the Germans, they too, have joined together concrete intuitions in an intellectual, intellectual concept of humanity, always opposed to animality; and one would surely be wrong to see in the intuitive relation they preserve with *Menschheit* a sign of inferiority with respect to the Romans. Nevertheless, the artificial introduction of words of foreign origin, singularly Roman, into the German tongue risks debasing the moral level of their own way of thinking (“*ihre sittliche Denkart . . . herunterstimmen*”). But there is concerning language, image, and symbol (*Sinnbild*) an, quote, “indestructible nature” of the “national imagination [*Nationaleinbildungskraft*].”

This schematic recall seemed necessary to me for two reasons. On the one hand, in order to underline the difficulty of translating this sensible, critical, and sensitive word, *Geschlecht*; on the other hand, in order to indicate its irreducible bond to the question of humanity versus animality, and of a humanity whose name, as the bond of the name to the “thing,” if one can say that, remains as problematic as that of the language in which the name is written. What does one say when one says *Menschheit*, *Humanitas*, *Humanität*, *mankind*, or when one says *Geschlecht* or *Menschengeschlecht*? Is one saying the same thing? I also recall in passing the criticism Marx addressed in *The German Ideology* to the socialist Grün whose nationalism appealed, according to Marx’s ironic expression, to a, quote, “human nationality” better represented, uh, “human nationality,” which is, which would be better represented by the German socialists than by the other socialists (French, American, and, chiefly, Belgian).

In the letter addressed in November 1945 to the Academic Rectorate of Albert-Ludwig University, Heidegger explains his own attitude during the Nazi, Nazi period. He had thought, he said, that he would be able to distinguish between the national and nationalism, that is, between the national and a biologist and racist ideology; I quote: “I thought that Hitler, after taking responsibility in 1933 for the whole people, would venture to extricate himself from the party and its doctrine, and that the whole would meet on the terrain of a renovation and a gathering together with a view to the, to a responsibility for the West. This conviction was an error that I recognized from the events of June 30th, umm, 1934. I, of course, had intervened in 1933 to say yes to the national and the social (and not to nationalism) and not to the intellectual and metaphysical grounds on which the biologism of the Party doctrine rested, because the social and the national, as I saw them, were not essentially tied to a biologicist and racist ideology;” unquote. The condemnation of biologism and racism, as of the whole ideological discourse of Rosenberg, inspires numerous Heidegger texts, whether it be the Discourse of the Rectorate or the courses on Hölderlin and Nietzsche, whether it be also the question of technology, always put in perspective against the utilization of knowledge for technical and utilitarian ends, against the Nazis’ professionalization and their making university knowledge profitable. I shall not today reopen the dossier of Heidegger’s “politics.” Umm, I have done that in other places or seminars,

and we have today a rather large number of texts available for deciphering the classic and henceforth a bit academic dimensions, dimensions of this problem. But all that I shall now attempt will keep an indirect relation to another, perhaps less visible, dimension of the same drama. Today, I shall begin then by speaking of that monstrosity I announced a few moments ago. This will be another detour through the question of man (*Mensch* or *homo*) and of the “we” that gives its enigmatic content to a *Geschlecht*.

Why “monster?” Not in order to make the thing pathetic, nor because we are always near some monstrous *Unheimlichkeit* when we are prowling around the nationalist thing and the thing named *Geschlecht*. What is, what I would say in French, *un monstre*? What is a monster, *un monstre*? You know the polysemic gamut of this word, the uses one can make of it, for example concerning norms and forms, species and genus, gender, genre: thus concerning *Geschlecht*. I shall begin by privileging here another course, another direction. It goes in the direction, or the, the *sens*, of a less-known sense, since in French *la montre*, not *le monstre*, *mais la montre*, *la montre* but *la montre* (that’s a changing of, of, of gender, of sex, of *Gesch-*, of *Geschlecht*), uhh, *la montre*, *la montre* in French, has the poetico-musical sense of a diagram that *shows*, that *demonstrates*, or *monstrates*, *montre*, in a piece of music the number verses and the number of syllables assigned to the poet. *Monstrer*, *monstrer* is *montrer* (to show, to, to monst-, to demonstrate), and *une montre* is *une montre* (a, a watch, mm?). And I am already settled in, in the untranslatable idiom of my language, for I certainly intend to speak to you about translation. *La montre*, then, *la montre* prescribes the divisions of a line of verse for a melody. *Le monstre* or *la monstre* is what shows or monstrate, demonstrates, in order to warn or put on guard. In the past *la montre*, in French, was written *la montre*.

I chose this melo-poetic example because the monster I am going to speak to you about comes from a well-known poem of Hölderlin, “Mnemosyne,” “Mnemosyne” [*perhaps with German pronunciation*], uh, “Mnemosyne,” (uh, *je ne sais pas comment prononcer en France, en anglais*) [*laughter from audience*], uh, “Mnemosyne,” “Mnemosyne,” that Heidegger often contemplates, interrogates, and interprets. In the second of its three versions, the one that Heidegger cites in *Was heisst Denken?* one reads the famous stanza. I quote in German first:

Ein Zeichen sind wir, deutungslos,
Schmerzlos sind wir, und haben fast
Die Sprache in der Fremde verloren

Among the three French translations of this poem, there is the one by the translators of *Was heisst Denken?*, Heidegger’s *Was heisst Denken?*, uh, Aloys Becker and Gérard Granel. And translating Hölderlin in Heidegger, the translation, the French translation uses the word *monstre* (for *Zeichen*, sign), in a style that first seemed to me a bit mannered and gallicizing, but with, which on reflection seemed to me in any case to give occasion for thought. I quote not the French translation:

Nous sommes un monstre privé de sens
(*Ein Zeichen sind wir, deutungslos*,)
Nous sommes hors douleur
(*Schmerzlos sind wir*,)
Et nous avons perdu
Presque la langue à l’étranger.

(und haben fast
Die Sprache in der Fremde verloren)

We are a “monster” void of sense
We are outside sorrow
And have nearly, nearly lost
Our tongue in foreign lands

Leaving aside the allusion to the tongue lost in foreign lands, which would lead me back too quickly to the, to the seminar on nationality, I want stress, to stress first the “we, ‘monster,’” We are a monster, “we, ‘monster.’” We are a monster, and singular, a sign (*Zeichen*), a sign that shows, demonstrates, and informs, warns, but all the more singular since showing or demonstrating, signifying, designating, this sign is *deutungslos*, void of sense. *It says itself* void, it says, it, it is itself void of sense, simply and doubly monster, this “we:” we are sign, a sign—showing nothing. Mm? Uhh, showing, demonstrating, warning, pointing as sign toward, but in truth toward nothing, a sign out of the way, in a, uh, I would say a, a, a gapped relation to the sign, a display, uh [*une montre*], a display that deviates from the display or monstration, a monster that demonstrates nothing, that shows nothing. This gap of the sign to itself and to its so-called normal funct-, function, isn’t it already a monstrosity of monstrosity, a monstrosity of monstration? And that is we, we inasmuch as we have nearly lost our tongue in foreign lands, perhaps in a translation. But this we, the monster, is it man, the man?

The translation of *Zeichen*, sign, by *monstre* in French, has a triple virtue. First it recalls a motif, a motif at work ever since *Being and Time*, *Sein und Zeit*: the bond, the link between *Zeichen und*, and *zeigen* or *Aufzeigung*, between the sign and the monstration, the indication. Paragraph 17 (*Verweisung und Zeichen*) analyzed the *Zeigen eines Zeichens*, the showing of the sign, and lightly touches in passing the question of the feti-, fetish. In *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, *Zeichen* and *Zeigen* are linked with *Sagen*, more precisely with the High German idiom *Sagan*: “‘*Sagan*’ hiesst,” says Heidegger, “‘*Sagan*’ hiesst: *zeigen, erscheinen-, sehen- und hören-lassen.*” And further on, quote: “To name the said (*die Sage*) we employ an old word, well warranted but no longer in use: *Die Zeige (la monstre), Die Zeige*” (the word which is under lined by Heidegger who has moreover just cited Trakl, to whom we shall return, uh, on Friday. The second virtue of the French translation by “*monstre*” has value only in the Latin idiom, since the translation stresses this gap concerning the normality of the sign, for, of a sign that for once is not what it should be, shows or signifies nothing, and, and announces the loss of the of the tongue. The third interest, the se-, third virtue of this translation poses the question of man. I omit here a long development, that seems necessary to me, on what deeply binds a certain humanism, a certain nationalism, and a certain Europocentric universalism, and I {actually/lastly/aply} move toward the interpretation of “Mnemosyne” by Heidegger. The “we” of “Ein Zeichen sind wir,” is it indeed a “we men?” Numerous indications would give one the thought that the response of the poem by Hölderlin remain, remains rather ambiguous. If “we” were “we men,” this humanity would be determined in way justly rather monstrous, apart from the norm, and notably from the humanist norm. But Heidegger’s interpretation that prepares and gives access to this Hölderlin citation says something about man, and then too about *Geschlecht*,

about the, *the Geschlecht* and the word “*Geschlecht*” that still awaits us in the text on Trakl in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*.

The hand will be the monster, the monstrous sign, the proper of man as a monster, as a monstrous sign in the sense of *Zeichen*. I quote Heidegger: “The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes—and not just, just things: the hand extends itself and receives its own welcome in the hand of the other. The hand holds. The hand carries. The hand designs and signs, presumably because man is a monstrous sign [*Zeichen; Die Hand zeichnet, vermutlich weil der Mensch ein Zeichen ist*].”

This seminar of, umm, ’51, ’52, is later than the “Letter on Humanism,” that withdraws the question of Being from the metaphysical or ontotheological horizon of classic humanism: *Dasein* is not the *homo* of this humanism. So we are not going to suspect Heidegger of simply falling back into that traditional humanism there. On the other hand, the date and the thematic of this passage, accorded to that thought of the gift, of, uhh, giving, and of the *es gibt*, that overflows, overflows without reversing the anterior formation of the question of the sense of Being in *Sein und Zeit*.

In order to, to situate more precisely what one could call here the thought of the hand, but just as well the hand of thought, of a thought of the human *Geschlecht*, claiming it could be nonmetaphysical, let us remark that this develops itself in one moment of the seminar that repeats the question of the teaching of thought, in particular in the university, as the place of sciences and techniques. It is in this passage that I cut out, so to speak, the form and the passage of the hand: the hand of Heidegger. The issue of, uh, the French, umm, magazine, *L’Herne*, in which I published, umm, the essay on *Geschlecht*, bore on its cover a photograph of Heidegger (which is, I hope, circulated here), uh, a photograph of Heidegger, showing him (and this is a studied and significant choice), showing him holding his pen with both hands above a manuscript, like that [*presumably, Derrida is demonstrating the position in which Heidegger, in the cited photograph, has his hands*]. Even if he never used it, Nietzsche was the first thinker of the West to have a typewriter [*mild laughter from audience*], whose, whose photograph we know. Heidegger himself could write only with a pen, with the hand of a craftsman and not a mech-, m-, mechanic, as the text in which we are going to become interested, pre-, prescribes. Since then I have studied all the published photographs of Heidegger, especially in an album I bought at Freiburg when I had given a lecture there on Heidegger in ’79. And the play and the theater of hands in that album would merit a whole seminar. If I did not forgo that, I would stress the deliberately craftsmanlike staging of the hand play, of the monstration and demonstration that is exhibited here, there, whether it be a matter of the handling of the pen, of the maneuver of the cane, that shows rather than supports, or of the water bucket near the fountain, the fountain. The demonstration of hands is as gripping in the ac-, accompaniment of the discourse. {He} just hand-gestures all the time. And on the cover of the, the catalogue, as you can see, the only thing that overflows the frame, that of the window but also the frame of the photo, is Heidegger’s hand (like that [*presumably, Derrida is demonstrating the position in which Heidegger, in the cited photograph, has his hands*], you can look at it, at the photo, uh, {for it/which} circulates).

[*Second recorded segment:*]

The proper of man as the being of monstration: this distinguishes him from every other *Geschlecht*, and above all from the ape.

The hand cannot be spoken about without speaking of techniques.

Heidegger just recalled that the problem of university teaching resulted from the fact that the sciences belong to the essence of techniques: not to techniques, but to the essence of techniques. Techniques remains plunged in a fog, for which no one is responsible, neither science nor the scientists, nor man in general. Simply what gives rise the most to thinking (*das Bedenklichste*) is that *we*, says Heidegger, we do not yet think. Who, *we*? All of us, Heidegger is, Heidegger specifies, including him, him who speaks here and even him the very first (“*der Sprecher mit einbegriffen, er sogar zuerst*”). To be the first among those who do not yet think—is that to think more or less the “not yet” of what gives rise the most to thinking, to wit, that we do not yet think? The first, here, the one who speaks and shows himself in speaking to us, designating himself in the third person, *der Sprecher* (the speaker), is he the first because he, *er sogar zuerst*, is he the first because he already thinks that we do not yet think and already says so? Or indeed is he the first not yet to think, then the last to think already, that we do not yet think, which would not, nonetheless, prevent him from speaking in order to be the first to say this? I leave this question, these questions that would merit long developments on the auto-situation of this speech that claims to teach while speaking of teaching and claims to think, “What is learning?,” and first of all learning to think. Quote: “That is why,” Heidegger continues, “that is why we are here attempting to learn thinking [*Darum versuchen wir hier, das Denken zu lernen*],” unquote. But what is learning [*apprendre*]? The response, untranslatable in it, in its literalness, the response passes through a very subtle craft work, a work of the hand and of the pen among the words *entsprechen, Entsprechung, zusprechen, Zuspruch*. And let me, instead of translating, roughly summarize: to learn, *apprendre*, is to relate what we are doing to a correspondence, correspondence (*Entsprechung*), a correspondence in us with the essential (*wesenhaft*). To illustrate this *accord*, this correspondence with the essence, here is the traditional example of philosophical didactic-, didactics, that of the joiner, of the, uh, apprentice joiner. Heidegger chooses the word *Schreiner* rather than *Tischler*, for he intends to speak of an apprentice joiner (*Schreinerlehrling*) who works on a cabinet (*Schrein*). Now he will say later that, quote, “Perhaps thinking, too, is just something like building a cabinet [*wie das Bauen an einem Schrein*].” The apprentice cabinetmaker, uh, does not only learn to use tools to familiarize himself with the use, the utility, the toolness [*outilité, -tilité*] of things, uhh, for making. If he is a “true cabinetmaker [uhh, *ein echter Schreiner*],” an authentic cabinetmaker, he inclines or relates himself to the different ways of the wood itself, he accords himself, himself with the forms that sleep in the wood as it, the wood as it enter-, enters man’s dwelling (“in *das Wohnen des Menschen*”). The true joiner, the authentic joiner, accords himself with the hidden plentitude of the wood’s essence, and not with the tool and the use value. But with the hidden plentitude insofar as it enters the inhabited place (I stress, I stress here this value of place, of *site* for reasons that will appear later), the inhabited place as and inhabited by man. There is no craft, *métier*, of the joiner without this correspondence between the essence of the wood and the essence of man as the being who inhabits. *Métier*, in German, is said, *Handwerk*, handiwork, *Handwerk*, work of the hand, handiwork, handling, if not maneuver. When the French must translate *Handwerk* by *métier*, perhaps that it, uh, that it is legitimate and cannot be avoided, but it is a bad maneuver, a poor craft of translation, because in it the hand is lost (we have no hand; *Handwerk* is lost in *métier*). And reintroduced by, with *métier*, reintroduced in that translation is what precisely

Heidegger wants to avoid, the service rendered, the utility, the office, the *ministerium*, from which, I believe, the word *métier* comes. *Handwerk*, the noble *métier*, is a manual *métier* that is not ordered like any other profession, to public use or interest, or in pursuit of profit. This noble *métier* as *Handwerk*, *Handwerk* would also be that of the thinker or the teacher who teaches thinking (and the teacher is not necessarily, necessarily the professor of philosophy). Without this call, this correspondence with the essence of the wood, itself accorded to man's dwelling, the activity would be empty. It would remain just activity (*Beschäftigung*) oriented by trade (*Geschäft*), by commerce and the taste for profit. Implicit, implicit here, the hierarchicalizing and the evaluation are no less clear of these: on the one hand, but also above, toward the best, handiwork (*Handwerk*) guided by the essence of the human dwelling, by the wood of the hut rather than, {-ut/but}, than by the metal or glass of the cities; on the other hand, but also below, the activity that cuts the hand off from the essential, useful activity, utilitarianism guided by capital. To be sure, as Heidegger recognizes, the inauthentic can always contaminate the authentic; the authentic cabinet maker can become a furniture dealer for "large stores" (for supermarkets), the artisan of the dwelling or habitat can become the international corporation named in France, I think, "Habitat," "Habitat." [mild laughter from audience] The hand is in danger, always in danger, of course. "All handiwork, [*Handwerk*], all human dealings, [*Handeln*, mm? *Handeln*] are constant-, constantly in that danger. The writing of poetry [*das Dichten*] is no more exempt from this, from it than is thinking [*das Denken*]," unquote. But the analogy is double here: between *Dichten* and *Denken* on the one hand, but also on the other, between the two, poetry and thought, and the authentic *Handwerk* (handiwork). To think, to think is a handiwork, a *Handwerk*, says Heidegger explicitly. He says it without any dodge and without the "perhaps [*vielleicht*]" that had moderated the analogy of the thought with the manufacture of the cabinet, that is "perhaps," he said, like thought. Here, without analogy and without "perhaps," Heidegger declares, I quote: "At any rate, it [uh, *das Denken*, thinking, thinking] is a 'handiwork' [*Es ist jedenfalls ein Hand-Werk*]," thinking is a handwork, "a work of the hand," and he writes this in two words, "*Hand-Werk*."

This does not mean, of course, that one is thinking with one's hands, as is said in English and in French, that one speaks *with* one's hands when one's discourse is accomp-, accompanied with voluble gestures, or that one thinks *with* one's feet, *avec ses pieds*, when one is, as French has it, "bête comm ses pieds," uh, too stupid for words [laughter from audience]. What Heidegger means then, and why does he choose here the hand, whereas elsewhere he more readily {called/accords/caught} thought to light or to *Lichtung*, one would say to the eye, or else to hearing and the voice?

Three, three remarks to prepare a response here:

First, I have chosen this text in, in order to introduce a reading of *Geschlecht*. In this text, Heidegger, in effect, binds thinking, and not only philosophy, philo-, uh, thinking is not philosophy, is not simply philosophy. He binds thinking to a thought or to a situation of the body (*Leib*), the body of man and of human being (*Menschheit*). That will permit us to glimpse a dimension of *Geschlecht* as sex or sexual difference apropos what is said of, or not said about the hand. Thinking is not cerebral or disincarnate; the relation to the essence of Being is a certain, I would say, *manner*, a certain *manner* of *Dasein* as, as *Leib*, as body, as living body.

Second, Heidegger privileges the hand when, speaking of the relations between thought and the craft of teaching, he distinguishes between the current profession (an activity, *Bescha-*, *Beschäftigung*, oriented by useful service and the pursuit of profit, *Geschäft*), and, on the other, the authentic *Hand-Werk*. Now, to define the *Hand-Werk*, which is not a profession, one must think *Werk*, work, but also *Hand* and *handeln*, words that cannot be translated by “dealings [or in French, *agir*, mm].” The hand must be thought. But the cannot be thought as a thing, a being, even less as an object. The hand thinks before being thought; *it is thought*, a thought, a thinking, *en pensée*.

And my third remark will be more narrowly tied to a classic treatment of Heidegger’s “politics” in the National Socialist context. In all his self-justifications after the war, Heidegger presents his discourse on the essence of techniques as a protest, an act of *resistance* barely disguised *against*, first, the professionalization of university studies to which the Nazis, the Nazis and their o-, official ideologues have surrendered themselves. Heidegger recalls this concerning his Rectorate Discourse that, in effect, is raised, among other things, raised against the professionalization that is also a technologizat-, -zation of studies; and, *b*, uh, second, the submission of the National Socialist philosophy to the dominion and imperatives of technical productivity. The meditation on the authentic *Hand-Werk* (handiwork), this meditation also has the sense of an artisanal protest against the hand’s effacement or debasement in the industrial automation of modernization. This strategy has, one suspects, equivocal ethics: it opens up to an archaistic reaction toward the rustic artisan class and denounces business or capital, notions whose, whose associations then are well known. In addition, with the division of labor, what is called “intellectual work,” opposed to *Hand-Werk*, is what implicitly finds itself thus discredited.

Having said this, I want to underscore again the idiomaticity in what Heidegger says to us about the hand, quote: “Mit der Hand hat es eine eigene Bewandtnis.” With the hand one is dealing with a thing entirely particular, one’s own, proper, singular. *Une chose à part*, I would say in Fre-, a thing apart, I would say, as the French translation says, while running the risk of letting one think of a separate thing, of a separate substance, as Descartes said of the hand that it was the part of the body, to be sure, but was endowed with such independence that it could also be considered as a complete substance apart and almost separable. Heidegger does not say in this sense that the hand is a thing apart. In that the hand of any proper or particular of its own (*hei-*, *eigene*), it is not a part of the organic body, as the common representation (*gewöhnliche Vorstellung*) claims and against which, which Heidegger invites us to think.

The hand’s being, the essence of the hand (the, *das Wesen der Hand, der Hand*) does not let itself be determined as a bodily organ of gripping (*al ein leibliches Greiforgan*). It is not an organic part of the body intende-, intended for grasping, for taking hold, indeed, for scratching, let us add even for catching on or comprehending or conceiving, if one passes from *Greif* to *begreifen* or to *Begriff*, the concept. Heidegger could not let the thing say, could not *not* let the thing say itself, and one can follow here, I have tried to do this, do it elsewhere, one can follow here the whole problematic of the philosophical “metaphor,” in particular in Hegel, who presents the *Begriff*, the concept, as the intellectual or intelligible structure “relieving” (*aufhebend*) the sensible act of grasping (*begreifen*), of comprehending by taking hold of, by laying one’s hands on, by mastering or, and manipulating. If there i-, there is a thought of the hand or a hand of thought, as Heidegger gives us to think, it is not of the order of conceptual grasping, it doesn’t

belong to the order of conceptual grasping. Rather than this, this thought of the hand belongs, would belong to the essence of the *gift*, of a giving that would give, if this is possible, that would give without taking hold of anything. If the hand is also, no one can deny this, is also an organ for gripping (*Greiforgan*), this is not its essence, it is not, according to Heidegger, it is not the hand's essence in the human being: uhh, gripping. This critique of organicism and biologism, biologism also has the political destination I spoke of a moment ago. But does that suffice to justify this critique?

Here in effect occurs a sentence that, at bottom, seems to me Heidegger's most significant, symptomatic and seriously dogmatic. Dogmatic also means, here, metaphysical, coming under one of those *gewöhnliche Vorstell-*, "co-, common representations" that's risk compromising the whole force and necessity of the discourse right here. This sentence, in sum, comes down to distinguishing the human *Geschlecht*, our *Geschlecht*, and the animal *Geschlecht*, called "animal." I think, and I have often thought I must underscore this, that the manner, lateral or central, in which a thinker or a scientist spoke of the said, so-called animalness, animalness constituted a decisive symptom concerning the essential axiomatic of the given discourse. And no more than anybody else, classic or modern, does Heidegger here seem to me to escape this rule when he writes, I quote: "Apes, *for example*," and I underline "for example;" "Apes, *for example*, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands [*Greiforgane besitzt zum Beispiel der Affe, aber er hat keine Hand*]," they do not have hands or any hand.

Dogmatic in its form, this traditional statement presupposes, presupposes an, a, empiric or positive knowledge whose titles, proofs, and signs are never demonstrated. Like most of those who, as philosophers or persons of good sense, speak of animalness, Heidegger takes no account of a certain, I would say, "zoological knowledge," that accumulates, that is differentiated and becomes more refined concerning what is brought together under, under this so general and confused word "animalness," "animality." He does not criticize it and does not even examine the source of presuppositions—metaphysical or otherwise—it can also harbor. This nonknowing raised to a tranquil knowing, then exhibited as essential proposition about the essence, the essence of an, ape's prehensile organs, an ape that would have no hand, this is not only, in its form, the kind of empirico-dogmatic hapax legomenon, mislead or misleading in the middle of a discourse keeping itself at the height of the most demanding thought, beyond philosophy and beyond science. In its very content, this proposition marks the text's essential scene, marks it with a humanism that wanted certainly to be nonmetaphysical (and Heidegger underscores this in the, the following paragraph), but with a humanism that—between a human *Geschlecht* one wants to withdraw from biologicistic determination (for the reason, the reasons I just stated) and an animalness one encloses in its organico-biologic, -biologic programs—inscribes not *some* differences but an absolute, oppositional limit. Elsewhere I have tried to show that, as every opposition does, this absolute oppositional limit effaces the differences and leads back, following the most resistant, resistant metaphysico-dialectic tradition leads back to the homogeneous. What Heidegger says of the ape without hand—and thus, we are going to see, without thinking, without language, without gift and the capacity for giving—what Heidegger says of the ape is not only dogmatic in form because Heidegger knows nothing about this and wants to know nothing and has no doubt studied neither the zoologists, even were it to criticize them, nor the apes in the, in the Black Forest. [*laughter from audience*] It is, it is serious because what he says

traces a system of limits within which everything he says of man's hand takes on sense and value. Since, since such a delimitation is problematic, the name of man, his *Geschlecht*, becomes problematic itself. For it names what has the hand, and so what has thinking, speech or language, and openness to the gift.

Man's hand then will be a thing apart, not as a separable organ, but because it is different, dissimilar (*verschieden*) from all prehensile organs (paws, claws, talons); man's hand is far from these in an infinite way (*unendlich*) through the abyss of its being, "durch einen Abgrund des Wesens."

This abyss is speech and thought. Quote, "Only a being who can speak, that is, think, can have *the hand*," and I underline the singular here, "*the hand* and can be handy [*in der Handhabung*], handy in achieving works of handicraft [*Nur ein Wesen das spricht, das heißt denkt, kann die Hand haben und in der Handhabung Werke der Hand vollbringen*]," unquote. Man's hand is thought ever since thought, but thought is thought ever since speaking or language. That is the order Heidegger opposes to metaphysics: "[O]n-," quote, "[O]nly when one, only when man speaks does he think—not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes [*Doch nur insofern der Mensch spricht, denkt er; nicht umgekehrt, wie die Metaphysik es noch meint*]."

The essential moment of this meditation opens onto what I shall call the hand's double *vocation*. I use the word vocation to recall that in each *Bestimmung* (its destination), the hand holds (on to) speaking. This vocation is double but gathered together or crossed in the same hand, to show, to monstrate, to demonstrate or point out (*zeigen, Zeichen*) and to give or give itself, in a word, the monstrality, the monstrality of the gift or of what gives itself. I quote again:

"But the craft of the hand [*das Werk der Hand*] is richer than we commonly imagine [*meinen*: and we commonly believe, have the opinion]. The hand does not only grasp and catch [*greift und fängt nicht nur*], or push and pull. The hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes [*reicht und empfängt*—the German consonances, consonances must be heard here: *greift, fängt/reicht, umpfängt-, empfängt*—the hand reaches and extends, receives and welcomes, and not just things: the hand extends itself and receives its own welcome in the hand of the other. The hand holds [*halt*]. The hand carries [*trägt*]."

This passage from the transitive gift, if such can be said, to the gift of what gives *itself*, which gives itself as being-able-to-give, which gives the gift, this passage from the hand that gives something to the hand that gives *itself*, for instance in the, uh, mm, shaking hands, is evidently decisive. We find again a passage of the same type or that same structure in the following sentence: not only does man's hand, man's hand point out and demonstrate, but is himself a sign, a monstrous sign [*un monstre*], what begins the citation of the interpretation of "Mnemonsyne," on the following page; I quote:

"The hand designs and signs [*zeichnet*], presumably because man is a sign [*ein Zeichen*, it's, um, a monster]. Two hands fold into one [*falten sich*: also, join together] a gesture meant to carry a, umm, reading Heidegger, a gesture meant to carry man into the great simplicity [*Einfalt*; I'm not sure of, I understand in this sentence, that plays on *sich falten* and *Einfalt*; uhh, whether it be a matter of prayer, probably, uhh, an allusion to, uhh, uh, to, uhh, uhh, this gesture [*Derrida probably brings his hands together, as those of the hands of Albrecht Dürer*], umm, a well-known painting; umm, what matters above all is that hands can touch each other as such in auto-

affection, even at the, at the touch of the other hand in the gift of the hand; this implies that the hands can also *show themselves*].” Uhh, I quote: “The hand, the hand is all this, and this is the true handwork [*das eigentliche Hand-Werk*, in two words, the, uh, *das eigentliche Hand-Werk*]. Everything is rooted here that is commonly known as handicraft [*Handwerk*], and commonly we go no farther. But the hand’s gestures [*Gebärden*: eh, that’s a word worked-out, worked-over very much for Heidegger in other texts too]. But the hand’s gestures run everywhere through language [or through the tongue, *Sprache*] in their most perfect purity precisely when man speaks by being silent. And only when man speaks, does he think—not the other way around, as metaphysics still believes. Every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself [*trägt sich*] through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself [*gebärdet sich*] in that element. All the work of the hand is rooted in thinking. Therefore, thinking [*das Denken*] itself is man’s simplest, and for that reason hardest, *Hand-Werk*, if it would be, umm, properly accomplished at its proper time [*eigens*],” unquote.

The nerve of the argument seems to me reducible to the assured opposition of *giving* and *taking*: man’s hand *gives and gives itself, gives and is given*, like thought or like what gives itself to be thought and that we do not yet think, whereas the organ of the ape or of man as a simple animal, indeed as a *animal rationale*, can only *take hold of, grasp, or lay hands on the thing*. And for lack of time, I must refer, refer, umm, to, umm, um, uh, to a seminar already of longstanding in which we had been able to problematize this opposition of *giving* and *taking*. Uh, nothing is less assured than, than the distinction between *giving* and *taking*, at once in the Indo-European languages we speak (and here I am ref-, referring to a famous text on Benveniste, “Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary” in *Problems in General Linguistics*) and also, uhh, in the experience of an *economy*—the symbolic or imaginary, conscious or unconscious, all these values remaining precisely to be reel-, reelaborated from the precariousness of that opposition of the gift and of the grip, of the gift that presents and the gift that grips, or holds, or takes back, of the gift that does good and the gift that does bad, of the gift and of the poison (*gift/Gift*, in German).

For lack of time, I shall not analyze anymore the immense role the hand or the word “hand” [*Hand*] more or less directly plays in the whole Heideggerian conceptuality since *Sein und Zeit*, notably in the determination of presence, according to the mode of *Vorhandenheit* or *Zuhandenheit*. The first, *Vorhandenheit*, is translated more or less well in French by *étant subsistant* (that’s the, the object) and better in English by “presence-at-hand;” and the second, *Zuhandenheit*, by *être disponible* [as being available], like a tool or implement, and better, since the English can keep the hand, by “ready-to-hand,” or “readiness-to-hand.” *Dasein* is neither *vorhanden* nor *zuhanden*. So its mode of presence—we are *Dasein*, so *Dasein* has nothing to do, it is not determined as *Vorhandenheit* nor, or, nor as, umm, *Zuhandenheit*—its mode of presence is otherwise, but it must be, but it must indeed have the hand in order to relate itself to the other modes of presence, *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit*.

The question posed by *Sein und Zeit*, ehh, fifteen, paragraph 15, gathers together the greatest force of its economy in the German idiom and, in it, in the Heideggerian idiom, when, uhh, Heidegger asks: is or is not *Vorhandenheit* (the mode of being of the object, the substance {thereof/or of/zür, of}), is or is not *Vorhandenheit* founded (*fundiert*) on *Zuhandenheit*? Literally: what is the relation to the hand that founds the other in the relation of *Dasein* to the

Being of beings that it is not (*Vorhandenheit* and *Zuhandenheit*)? What hand founds the other? The hand that is related to the thing as a maneuverable tool or the hand as relation to the thing as subsisting and independent object? Here I cannot reconstitute either the stake of this question decisive for the whole strategy of *Sein und Zeit* or Heidegger's original calls for deconstructing the classical order of foundation (at the end of paragraph 15). But as this whole, whole passage is also an analysis of *Handeln*, handle, of the action or the practice as a gesture of the hand in its relation to sight, and thus a placement in a new perspective of what is called the *praxis/theoria* opposition. Let us recall that for Heidegger, quote, "'practical' behavior is not 'atheoretical.'" There is no opposition between pract-, practical behavior and theoretical behavior. And I am only going to cite some lines in order to draw out two guiding threads:

"The Greeks had an appropriate term for "Things:" *pragmata*—that is to say, that with which one has to do with [*zu tun*] in one's concerned dealings [*im besorgenden Umgang*] (*praxis*). But ontologically, the specifically "pragmatic" character of the *pragmata* is just what the Greeks left in obscurity [*im Dunkeln*];" uh, in sum, I, I, I interrupt my quotation, here, in sum, the Greeks were beginning to leave *Zuhandenheit* of the tool and the mode of being of the tool in obscurity to the benefit of *Vorhandenheit* of the subsisting object: one could say that they were inaugurating the whole classical ontology while leaving a hand in the dark, while leaving a hand to bring umbrage to the other, while substituting, in a violent hierarchicalizing, one hand-experience for another; and I quote again: "They, the Greek, thought, the Greeks, thought of these 'proximally' as 'mere Things [*bloße Dinge*].' We call those entities which we encounter, encounter in concern [*im Besorgen*] 'equipment [*Zeug*].' In our dealings [in common life, in daily and social surroundings, *im Umgang*] we come across equipment for writing, sewing, working, transportation, measurement [*Schreibzeug, Nähzeug, Werk-, Fahr-, Messzeug*]. The kind of Being with which eq-, equipment [*Zeug*] possesses must be exhibited. The clue for doing this lies in our first defining [*Umgrenzung*: delimiting, delimiting] what makes an item of equipment, name-, namely, its equipmentality [*Zeughaftigkeit*]," unquote.

And this mode of being will be precisely *Zuhandenheit* (readiness-to-hand). And Heidegger begins, in order to speak about it in the following paragraph, by taking up the example that he has, in a way, near at hand: the writing desk (*Schreibzeug*), pen (*Feder*), ink (*Tinte*), paper (*Papier*), what is happily called in French *le sous-main*, uh, the, blotting pad (*Unterlage*), the table, lamp, furniture, and, his eyes looking up a bit above his hands, rising, the windows, doors, the room, etc.

Here now are the two threads I would like to draw, by hand, from this text, in order to make them guiding threads, clues, or in order to sew or, and write also a bit in my manner.

First, the first concerns *praxis* and *pragmata*. Uhh, a much later passage of Heidegger punctuates it, in a gripping way, this long maneuver that makes of the *path of thinking* and the question of the sense of Being a long and continuous meditation of the hand or *on* the hand. Heidegger always says of thought that it is a path, a way, on the way (*Unterwegs*); but on the way, on the march, the thinker is unceasingly occupied with the thought of the hand. Long after *Sein und Zeit*, which does not speak *themat-*, *thematically* of the hand while analy-, analyzing *Vorhanden-* and *Zuhandenheit*, but ten years later, before *Was heisst Denken?*, which thematizes, uhh, these [*presumably, Derrida has lifted, waved or otherwise indicated his own hands*], uh, the hand, there is that seminar on the, Parmenides, uh, in 19-, uh, -42–43, which takes up again the

meditation on *pragma* and *praxis*. Although the German word *Handlung* is not the literal translation of *pragma*, it just touches, if one comprehends well, it meets, quote, “the primordially essential being of *pragma* [*das ursprünglich wesentliche Wesen von pragma*], since these *pragmata* present themselves as *Vorhandenes* and *Zuhandenes*, in the domain of the hand (*im Bereich der “Hand”*). So here all the motifs of *Was heisst Denken?* are already in place. Only the being that, like man, “has” speech (*Wort, mythos, logos*), only this being that has speech (*mythos, logos...*) can and must have the hand...

[Third recorded segment:]

...the allusion to *Handschlag* (the handshake or what is called “shaking on it” with the hand) that “founds,” Heidegger says, the alliance, the accord, the engagement (*Bund*). The hand comes to its essence (*west*, he says) only in the move-, in the movement of truth, in the double movement of what hides and causes to go out of its reserve (*Verbergung/Entbergung*). Moreover, the whole seminar is devoted to the history or truth (*alētheia, lethē, lethon, lathēs*). When he says, already, in the, in the same passage, that the animal has no hand, that a hand can never upsurge out of a paw or claws, but only from speech, Heidegger specifies, specifies that “man ‘has,’” quotation mark, in Heidegger’s text, “‘has’ no hands [plural], man ‘has’ no hands but that *the* hand, *the* hand occupies, in order to have in hand, man’s essence.” So, “man ‘has’ no hands [plural], but *the* hand ‘has’ man, occupies, uhh, man in his, in his, in his essence [*Der Mensch ‘hat’ nicht Hände, sondern die Hand hat das Wesen des Menschen inne*].”

The second thread leads back to writing. If man’s hand is what it is since speech or the word (*das Wort*), the most immediate, the most primordial manifestation of this origin will be the hand’s gesture for making the word manifest, to wit, handwriting, manuscripture (*Hand-schrift, Hand-schrift*), that shows [*montre*]—and inscribes the word for the gaze. Quote, “The word as drawn [or inscribed, *eingezeichnete*], the word as drawn and such that it demonstrates itself, thus to the gaze [*und so dem Blick sich zeigende*] is the written word, that is, writing [*das heißt die Schrift*], but the word as writing is handwriting [*das Wort als die Schrift aber ist die Handschrift*],” unquote. So instead of handwriting, let us say rather manuscripture, for, don’t forget, the writing of the typewriter, against which Heidegger is going to raise an implacable indictment, is also handwriting. In the brief “‘history’ of the art of writing [*‘Geschichte’ der Art des Schreibens, ‘Geschichte’* in quotation marks],” in this “*Geschichte’ der Art des Schreibens*, Heidegger sketches in a paragraph, in the ‘history’ he sketches the paragraph, he sees the phenomenal motif of what he calls a “destruction of the word” or of speech (*Zerstörung des Wortes*), writing is a destruction of the, of the word. Typographic mechanization destroys the unity of the word, this integral identity, this proper integrity of the spoken word that writing manuscripts—at once because it appears closer to the voice or body proper and because it ties together the letters—conserves and gathers together. I stress this motif of gathering together for reasons that will also appear, uhh, later on. The typewriter tends to destroy the words, the words, the unity of the words: the typewriter, I quote, “tears [*entreisst*] writing from the essential domain of the hand, that is, that is, of the word [of the spoken word]. The typewriter tears [*entreisst*] writing from the essential domain of the hand, that is, of the word [of speech].” The “typed” word, the “typed” word is only a copy (*Abschrift*), and Heidegger recalls this first moment of the typewriter when a typed letter offended the rules of etiquette. Today, the manuscripted letter is what seems culpable: it slows down reading and seems outmoded. The

manuscripted letter obstructs what Heidegger considers as a veritable degradation of the word by the machine. The machine, I quote, “degrades [*degradiert*]” the word or the speech it reduces to a simple means of transport (*Verkehrsmittel*), to the instrument of commerce and communication. Furthermore, the machine offers the advantage, for those who wish for this degradation, of, the advantage of dissimulating manuscripted writing and “character.” I quote, “In typewriting, all men resemble one another;” that’s the conclusion. “In typewriting, all men resemble one another.”

The path according to which a denunciation of the typewriter increased and specified itself would have to be followed closely (I cannot do it, that here). And finally the typewriter would dissimulate the very essence of the writing gesture and of writing itself (“Die Schreibmaschine verhüllt das Wesen des Schreibens and der Schrift”). This dissimulation or this veiling is also a movement of withdrawal or subtraction (the words *entziehen*, *Entzug* often recur in this passage). And if in this withdrawal the typewriter becomes *zeichenlos*, without sign, unsignifying, a-signifying, that is because it loses the hand. In any case, it threatens what, in the hand, holds speech safe, or keeps, s-uhh, s-uhh, speech, uhh, alive, or holds safe for speech the relation of Being to man and man to beings. Quote, “The hand handles:” *die Hand handelt*. The essential co-belonging (*Wesenszugeh-, -szusammengehörigkeit*) of the hand and speech, man’s essential distinction, manifests itself in this that the hands manifest (*la main manifest*) precisely what is hidden (*die Hand Verborgenes entbirgt, entbirgt*). And the hand does this precisely in its relation to speaking by demonstrating, by showing, and by writing, by pointing to, uh, signs that demonstrate, or rather by giving to these signs or these *monstres, ces montre, forms* called writing (“sie zeigt und zeigend zeichnet und zeichnend die zeigenden Zeichen zu Gebilden bildet. Diese Gebilde heissen nach dem ‘Verbum’ *graphein* die *grammata*”). This implies, as Heidegger expressly says, writing in its essential source is manuscripture (“Die Schrift ist in ihrer Wesensherkunft die Hand-schrift”). And I shall add what Heidegger does not say but seems to me even more decisive—manuscripture *immediately* bound to speech that is, more probably, the *system of phonetic writing*, unless what gather- to, what gathers together *Wort, zeigen*, and *Zeichen* does not always necessarily pass through the voice and unless the speech Heidegger speaks of here is essentially distinct from all *phonē*. The distinction would be strange enough to warrant emphasizing. Now Heidegger does not breath a word of this. He insists, on the contrary, on the essential and primordial co-belonging of *Sein* (Being), *Wort* (word), *legein, logos, Lesen, Schrift* as *Hand-schrift* (handwriting). Moreover, this co-belonging that gathers them together stems from the movement of the very gathering together Heidegger reads, here as elsewhere, in *legein* as *Lesen* (“das ‘Lesen,’ das heißt Sammeln,” gathering). This motif of gathering together (*Versammlung*) governs the meditation of *Geschlecht* in the text on Trakl, umm, that I shall evoke o-, on, on Friday. Here, the protest against the typewriter also belongs—this is a matter of course—to an interpretation of technology, to an interpretation of politics starting from technology. Just as *Was heisst Denken?* will name Marx a few pages after its reading of the hand, so this seminar of, mm, uh, ’42, ’43 situation Lenin and “Leninism” (“Leninism” is the name Stalin gave, Heidegger says, to this metaphysics). Heidegger recalls the word of Lenin: “Bolshevism is the power of the Soviet + electrification.” And, uh, when he has writing, when he was writing that, Germany was just entering an, into war with Russia and with the United States,

and it is not, uh, the United States, uhh, are not spared either in this seminar—but there was not yet the electric typewriter. [laughter from audience]

Um, this apparently positive evaluation of handwriting does not disclude, on the contrary, a devaluation of writing in general. This devaluation takes on sense within this general interpretation of the art of writing as the increasing destruction of the word or of speech. The typewriter is only a modern aggravation of the of the evil. This evil comes not only through writing, writing but also through literature. Just before the citation of “Mnemosyne,” *Was heisst Denken?* advances, advances two trenchant affirmations: First, Socrates is “Socrates is the purest thinker of the West. This is why he wrote nothing [laughter from audience] [der reinste Denker des Abendlandes. Deshalb hat er nichts geschrieben].” He knew how to hold himself in the wind and in the withdrawing movement of what gives itself to be thought (*in den Zugwind dieses Zuges*). In another passage, which also treats of this withdrawal (*Zug des Entziehens*), Heidegger again distinguishes man from animal, this time from the migratory birds. In the very first pages of *Was heisst Denken?* before citing “Mnemosyne” for the first time, he writes, quote: “Once we are drawn into the withdrawal [*Zug des Entziehens*], we are, we are . . . but completely otherwise than the migratory birds, we are drawing toward what draws, attracts us by its withdrawal,” unquote. The choice of example here, an example which is omitted in the English translation, uhh, the choice of example (migratory birds, here) stems from the German idiom: “migratory bird” is said *Zugvogel* in German (there is a *Zug* here which is useful from Heidegger). We men, we are, in the drawing, in the *Zug* of this withdrawal (the, of the being, {*r'être/êtres/être*}), *nur ganz anders als die Zugvögel* (otherwise than the mi-, mm, um, -gra-, migratory birds). The second trenchant affirmation: thought declines the moment one begins to write, *on coming out of thought, in escaping, going out, in escaping* thought in order to take shelter from it, as from the wind. This is the moment when thought entered literature (*Das Denken ging in die Literatur ein*). Sheltered from thought, this entry into writing and literature (in the broad sense of this word) would have decided the destiny of Western science as much *qua doctrina* of the Middle Ages (teaching, discipline, *Lehre*) as *qua* the science of modern times. This is naturally a matter of what constructs the dominant concept of discipline, teaching, and the university. So one sees being organized around the hand and speech, with a very strong coherence, all the traits whose incessant recurrence I have elsewhere recalled under the name logocentrism. Whatever the lateral or marginal motifs that simultaneously work, umm, over, the, uh, this thing, mm, logocentrism, I would like to suggest that it dominates a certain and very continuous discourse of Heidegger, and does so from the repetition of the question of Being’s sense, the sense of Being, the destruction of classic ontology, the existential analytic redistributing the (existential and categorial) relations among *Dasein*, *Vorhandensein*, and *Zuhandensein*.

While the economy imposed on me for this discourse prohibits me from going beyond this first reference-marking in the Heideggerian interpretation of the hand. In order to bind better, in a more differentiated coherence, what I am saying here to what I said elsewhere about Heidegger, notably in “*Ousia* and, and *Grammē*,” one would have to reread a certain page of “The Anaximander Fragment,” uh, think for Heidegger in [16:04]{*die ausrede/die alles wege/the alles wege/the aus wege/the auswegen*}, that is, of a text that also names “Mnemosyne” and to which, umm, umm, with which, umm, my text, “*Ousia* and *Grammē*,” explains itself. This page by Heidegger recalled that in *chreon*, which is generally considered by “*necessity*,” there speaks

ē cheir, the hand, i-, in, in, in Greek: “*chraō*,” says Heidegger, “means: I handle, I bring my hand to something [*ich be-handle etwas*].” And the rest of the paragraph, too difficult to translate since it holds, it handles so closely the German idiom (*in die Hand geben, einhändigen, aushändigen*: to hand back to its rightful owner, then to hand o-, over, to give up, *überlassen*), umm, the rest of the paragraph, withdraw the participle *chreōn* from the values of constraint and obligation (*Zwang, Müssen*). And at the same time withdraw from these values the word, the German word, *Brauch* by which Heidegger proposed to translate *to chreōn* and which means, in everyday German, “need,” in everyday German, “need:” *Brauch* means “need.” Emm, so, it is not necessary, implies Heidegger, it is not necessary to think the hand starting from need. In French, *Der Brauch* is translated by *le maintien*, what, beside, indeed, some drawbacks or false senses, exploits the chances of a double allusion: to the hand, *maintien*, and to the now, the *maintenant*—that preoccupy the specific concerns of this text. If *brauchen* translates well, as Heidegger says, the *chreōn* that permits thinking the presence in its presence, the present in its presence (*das Anwesende in seinem Anwesen*), if it names a trace (*Spur*) that disappears in the history of Being as that history unfolds itself as Western metaphysics, if *der Brauch* is indeed “the gathering (*Versammlung*): *o logos*,” then, before all hand techniques, all surgery (*chirurgie*), the hand does not have no hand in this.

The hand of *the* man, of man as such: no doubt you have remarked (and I will conclude here), you have remarked that Heidegger does not only think the hand as a very singular thing that would rightfully belong only to man. He always thinks the hand *in the singular*, as if man did not have two hands but, this monster, one single hand. [*mild laughter from audience*] Not one single organ, of course, in the middle of the body, just as the Cyclops has one, uhh, a single eye in the middle of the forehead, even though this representation, in which leaves something to be desired, also gives ri-, rise to thought. No, the ha-, *the* hand of man, *the* hand of man, this signifies that we are no longer dealing with prehensile organs or instrumentalizable members that *hands* are. *Hands* are organs. But *the* hand is not an organ. Apes have prehensile organs that resemble hands; the man of the typewriter and of techniques in general uses two hands. But the man that speaks and the man, the man that writes with *the* hand, as one says, isn’t he the monster with the single hand? Thus, when Heidegger’s, when Heidegger writes: “Der Mensch ‘hat,’” quotation mark, “‘hat’ nicht Hände, sondern die Hand hat das Wesen des Menschen inne” (“Man ‘has’ no hands, but the hand occupies in order to have th-, in hand man’s essence”), this supplementary precision does not just concern, as we saw in the first inst-, instance, the structure of “having” the word Heidegger places, places in quotation marks and whose relation he proposes to invert, eh? (umm, “Der Mensch,” the, the, the man *has* no hands, but the hand has the man). He concerns the difference the between the plural and the singular: *nicht Hände, sondern die Hand*. What reaches man through *logos* or speech (*das Wort*) can be only one single hand. Hands—that is already or still the organic or tech-, technical dissipation, dispersion. So one will not be surprised, faced with the absent, absence of all allusion, for example in the Kantian style, to the play of differences between right and left, to the mirror, or to the pair of gloves. You know Kant’s text. This difference cannot be *sensible*, say-, says, uhh, says, uhh, implies Heidegger. For my part, having already treated in my manner of the pair of shoes o-, of the left foot and right foot in Heidegger, I shall not go any further today on this path. I will content myself with two remarks. *On the one hand*, the, the sole sentence in which Heidegger, to

my knowledge, names man's hands in the plural seems to concern precisely the moment of prayer, or in any case the gesture in which the two hands join together (*sich falten*) to make themselves only one in simplicity (*Einfalt*). Gathering together (*Versammlung*) is always-, always what Heidegger privileges. *On the other hand*, nothing is ever said of the caress or of desire. Does one make love, does man make love, with the hand or with the hands? And what about sexual difference in this regard? Heidegger's protest can be imagined [*mild laughter from audience*], uhh: This question is derivative; what you call desire or love presupposes the coming [the, uh, *l'avènement* {*ce/se/see?! the*}] of *the* hand since speech; there is no love without speech; and as soon as I alluded to the hand that gives, or gives itself, promises, lets go, gives up, hands over, and engages in the alliance or oath, you have at your disposal everything you need to think what you commonly call making love, caressing, or even desiring. —Perhaps, but why not say it? [*mild laughter from audience*]

Uhh, I just, I just said “the word ‘*Geschlecht*’” (Uh, thi-, this last remark should serve me as a transition t-, toward this word, this mark *Geschlecht* that we should now, following another text here o-, on Friday.) I just said “the word ‘*Geschlecht*:’” that is, “the word ‘*Geschlecht*,’” that is because I am not so sure a determinable and unifiable referent. I am not so sure one can speak of *Geschlecht* beyond the word “*Geschlecht*”—which then is found necessarily cited, between quotation marks, mentioned rather than used. Next, I leave the word in German. As I have already said, no word, no word for word will suffice to translate this word that gathers, in its idiomatic value, stock, race, family, species, genus, gender, genre, generation, sex. Then, after saying the word “*Geschlecht*,” I amended and corrected myself: the “mark ‘*Geschlecht*,’” I clarified, the “mark ‘*Geschlecht*:.’” For the theme of my analysis would come down to a sort of composition or decomposition that affects, precisely, the unity of this word. Perhaps it is no longer a word. Perhaps one must begin by gaining access to it from its disarticulation or its decomposition, in other words, its formation, its information, its deformations or transformation, its translations, the genealogy of its body unified, starting from or according to the dividing and the sharing of the words’ {*morceaux/morsels/, morceler/mostly*}. We are going then to concern ourselves with the *Geschlecht* of *Geschlecht*, with its genealogy or its generation. But this genealogical composition of “*Geschlecht*,” of the mark “*Geschlecht*” (say the mark, not to say the sign, the, the, the, the linguistic sign, mm? And not to oppose the man, man to the animal here), this genealogical composition of “*Geschlecht*” will be inseparable, in the text of Heidegger (we’ll interrogate {it} Friday), from the decomposition of human *Geschlecht*, from the decomposition of the man.

[*applause from audience*]

[*end of recording*]