

# LANGUAGE, INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF BEING

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Life experiences and the study of Plato had led me quite early to the insight that the truth of a single proposition cannot be measured by its merely factual relationship of correctness and congruency; nor does it depend merely upon the context in which it stands. Ultimately it depends upon the genuineness of its enrootedness and bond with the person of the speaker in whom it wins its truth potential, for the meaning of the statement is not exhausted in what is stated. It can be disclosed only if one traces its history of motivation and looks ahead of its implications.

(Gadamer, 2007: 331)

## INTRODUCTION

There is a certain way in which one “comes into being” in language. This, however, does not assume that one has a “way of being” before one comes into being in language, which is pre-linguistic or extra-linguistic. On the contrary, it only suggests the possibility of one constantly encountering different — and in one sense, infinite — possibilities of being by virtue of one’s situatedness in a particular linguistic and historical horizon. Language contains such infinite possibilities and owing to the fundamental linguisticity of one’s being, one has the possibility of encountering this infinity in the course of existence. Each such possibility offers a possible “way of being” as they transform man’s ontological core, altering his way of being in the world. It also refers to one’s recognition of intersubjectivity and the process of mutual and collective constitution of meaning that happens in our day-to-day life. The linguisticity of one’s existence implies that intersubjectivity is embedded in one’s being, as language is necessarily a domain of intersubjective subsistence and constitution of meaning. It is therefore, inevitable that one is constantly constituted and reconstituted in the intersubjective domain of language.

This paper is an attempt to understand the nature of this intersubjectivity that constitutes the core of language. It tries to show, how language, while on the one hand determines our specific facticity and therefore, our finiteness, on the other hand enables us to transcend this specificity and transform and evolve into other possible ways of being. It examines how we encounter and engage with the other in language and also the phenomenon of “otherness”. To explain this process that constitute man’s way of being, this paper draws from the works of German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. It explains how the phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches of these thinkers initiate a paradigm shift in our understanding of the conceptions of knowledge and truth, by replacing the model of ‘perception’ advocated by the consciousness-centered philosophy with a model of ‘understanding’. In this hermeneutic model, the being of man is not situated outside the reality which it cognizes—as in the case of perception and representation—but is constitutive of the process of creating, representing, comprehending and transforming it. This paper, therefore, tries to argue that this model, which as Heidegger and Gadamer claim is rooted in the ancient Greek conception of “truth as unconcealment”, emphasizes the aspect of “individual transformation” that is involved in the processes of comprehending knowledge and truth and, therefore, proposes a way out to many conceptual riddles traditional philosophical thought grapple with; relationship between subject and object, between oneself and other minds, between finite and infinite, the realities of man and the world, etc. By proposing a different perspective — which actively involves the being of man in the process of understanding the conception of reality or Being — the phenomenological-hermeneutic approaches suggest certain other ways to situate the problem, which makes methods and solutions in the traditional line unwarranted. The central aspect to these approaches is the recognition of the fundamental linguisticity of all being, including the being of man.

Martin Heidegger’s notion of *Dasein* captures this sense of being, which humans possess, by virtue of their unique rootedness in particular linguistic horizons. *Dasein* is the being of man, which is a “being-in-the-world”, in the midst of other human beings and objects to whom and which it is ontologically connected. The world is given to this existential situation of man in language, and he comports to it from where he is positioned in it by virtue of being rooted in a specific ontological space determined by that situation. Such

rootedness implies two things. First, it limits our scope of comprehending the world and our grasping of meanings to a particular horizon. This defines the situatedness that characterizes human existence. This also defines our particularity and subsequently points to the fact that there are aspects of reality that are not revealed to our specific situation. Hans-Georg Gadamer points out, there is an important dimension of reality that lies beyond what we perceive and can accurately represent. However, this is not to acknowledge the possibility of an unknown terrain of reality like the Kantian *noumenal* realm, but only an acceptance of a certain kind of limitation that characterizes our existence. The second aspect of the rootedness suggests that, this limitation, however, does not amount to a complete separation from those other aspects and dimensions of reality that are not currently available to us. Our situatedness in the intersubjective linguistic horizon, rather suggests the possibility of accessing many more dimensions of reality in it, by virtue of the very fact that this horizon of meanings virtually contains infinite possibilities of being.

All our encounters with meaning and truth — and also our “coming into being” in language — happen in this common intersubjective realm, which in a sense is infinite, as it contains virtually all possibilities of being. The essential linguisticity of being also implies that it is given in language and, therefore, is embedded in the actual and possible conversational contexts where language actualizes itself as a concrete reality. Such contexts, in turn, involves man as a concrete and finite entity. Hence, the infinite is always found manifested in and through the finite and is accessible only with such finite manifestations, which are historical and linguistic. The being that is to be understood, declares Gadamer, is language. (Gadamer, 2004: 243) To bypass the language-reality dichotomy in this way is to proclaim that all understandable being is language.

This position exposes a very interesting and important aspect about language-reality relationship and also the relationship between man and being. Heidegger conceives language as the house of being and affirms that human beings dwell in its home. (Heidegger, 1939: 239) But as Gadamer says, “other is not just himself at home in language, but rather “being” [*Sein*] is there in the language that we speak with each other. (Gadamer, 2007: 136) Hence language, man and being are intimately interconnected. He never envisages a reality that is inaccessible in language or is beyond language. Instead, he asserts two important things that reveal the interconnectedness between man and being; first, as mentioned above, being is there

in the language that we speak and second, it is important for an event of language use to have the person of the speaker in whom it wins its truth potential (ibid.: 331). The meaning of the statement is not exhausted in what is stated. The latter is always found related to conditioned and situated existences in which it realizes its truth potential. Gadamer here refers to the Greek-Aristotelian idea of the process of *phronesis* — the application of the universal to the particular — and *aletheia* — the unconcealment or disclosure of being to man. Accordingly, it has been argued that, the universal, though transcends the particulars, occurs always and only in the latter where it finds its truth potential.

Language makes us encounter truth; as being gives itself in it as disclosure to man, revealing a unique dimension of itself and also making us realize a unique aspect of our reality in relation of this disclosure. In this sense, we may find language ontologically significant. It may enable us not merely to “know” but to, what Martin Heidegger calls, “undergo an experience” with language. This is to be, or to come into being in a certain way in language. By this Heidegger means language befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us. (Heidegger, 1971: 57) This is a form of submission, where we submit our being to language and in that process, gets transformed by it. In this sense, it decides our ontological status and defines our being by touching the innermost nexus of our existence. (ibid.) It both defines and fulfills our ontological space.

Viewed in this way, language — as something that transforms us — places us in relation to truth and knowledge dynamically, so as to change our being by continuously unravelling its different dimensions in each moment of disclosure and subsequently making us realize our potentials of “being” in different ways. Such disclosures bring both reality and man’s being to its structural fold and eventually materialize the “coming into being” that happens in language. As mentioned above, language, according to Heidegger, is the house of being, and since human beings dwell in its home, it is their ontological domain. It is in language being gives itself to man. But the disclosure of being happens only in relation with a finite being, which nevertheless also comes into existence as a linguistic entity and comes into being in each such events of disclosure.

To reiterate what is stated above, the intersubjective domain of language, therefore, on the one hand determines the finiteness of human existence and on the other hand suggests man infinite

possibilities of being through constant disclosures and unconcealment of being. While being infinite in terms of the possibilities it offers to *Dasein*, language also takes recourse in *Dasein*'s specific being for its concrete manifestations. The first will explain the finiteness of human understanding—its perspectival nature. This involves an understanding of the essential temporal nature of the being of man, which is revealed by Heidegger with the three ways of understanding *Dasein*: as being-ahead-of-itself, as being-already-in-the-world and as being-alongside other things in the world. It also brings out the essential mediated character of the experience of truth. Secondly, it suggests the possibility of the overcoming of any specific rigid individual perspective in the intersubjective horizon of language, where we constantly encounter the infinite horizons that language brings to us and, therefore, the possibilities of infinite “ways of being” in the world it suggests to us. The features of facticity and linguisticity—both being aspects of the intersubjectively rooted finite being of *Dasein*—need further elaboration.

#### FACTICITY, UNIVERSAL LINGUISTICALITY AND TRUTH

For Heidegger, facticity is a fundamental feature of *Dasein*. Heidegger says that the possibility of *Dasein*'s Being-as-a-whole is manifestly inconsistent with the ontological meaning of care and care forms the totality of *Dasein*'s structural whole. (Heidegger, 1978: 236, 279) The primary item in care according to him is the aspect of “ahead-of-itself”, which invariably determines *Dasein*'s Being. It is present in all of *Dasein*'s states of existence and in all of its attitudes towards the world and itself. He adds:

“The ‘ahead-of-itself’, as an item in the structure of care, tells us unambiguously that in *Dasein* there is always something *still outstanding*, which, as a potentiality-for-Being for *Dasein* itself, has not yet become ‘actual’. It is essential to the basic constitution of *Dasein* that there is *constantly something still to be settled*”. (ibid.)

Citing Heidegger's description of *Dasein*'s “care”— as “ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within the world)” — Robert J. Dostal points out that this reveals the three temporal dimensions of *Dasein*. The “ahead-of-itself” stands for future, “Being-already-in’ for past and “Being-alongside” the present. *Dasein*'s potential to live in truth is based on this temporal structure. Dostal observes that for the most part, the present is the predominant aspect of the temporal triadic unity of human experience and, hence, *Dasein* is fallen and inauthentic and

lives in untruth, by getting lost in the present and in the anonymous crowd. Dostal adds that truth happens in the authentic present moment in which we resolutely face our future as mortals, as Being-towards-death. Though for the most part *Dasein* is in untruth, in its authentic moments of existence, it finds itself in the truth. (Dostal, 1994: 52-53)

Gadamer's analysis of facticity, which follows Heidegger's analysis of the temporal dimensions of *Dasein*, clarifies this aspect further. He approaches this scenario from a different perspective and draws certain other conclusions from this existential structure of *Dasein* and its potential for living in truth. He focuses on those moments where truth is encountered and observes that owing to its essential facticity and structural incompleteness, *Dasein's* encounter with truth (and also with the world) happens from definite perspectival horizons. The disclosure of the world—which happens in language—thus takes place in a nonobjective manner and hence in a noncognitive fashion. As mentioned above, the element of care constitutes the totality of *Dasein's* structural whole. This makes *Dasein's* perspective peculiar and in a unique sense the disclosure of the world and truth to that perspective “subjective”. But this is not the subjectivity of the consciousness-centric philosophical tradition, as it functions outside the cognitive framework of encountering the world. In other words, it is not the subjectivity that encounters the objective world so that its encountering moments are haplessly imperfect. In such encounters the world discloses to the being of man in significant ways, where the latter's existential situation, the sum total of attitudes, approaches, concerns, purposes and projects are brought to the world, which then appears an integral part of it. *Dasein's* encounter then is a participatory kind and, hence, the knowledge that results and truth that appears in such disclosing encounters are potentially transformative. Cristina Lafont observes that Heidegger, thus, substitutes the model of “perception” paradigmatic of the philosophy of consciousness, with the model of “understanding” (Lafont, 1999: 59), where the being of man is wholly involved. While the former separates the subject from the world or the object and relates truth and knowledge with the accuracy of the former's representing relationship with the latter, Heidegger prefers to go back to the ancient Greek tradition in order to reinvent the original Greek idea of truth as *aletheia* or disclosure or unconcealment of Being. Here the disclosure happens as an event of understanding, which involves the “giving of Being” to the existential context of

the being of man, which nevertheless is situated in a linguistic horizon. Hence, the primary structure of our relationship with the world can only be analyzed as understanding, where the Being of the world is disclosed to our unique environment, which is determined by 'care'.

This model of understanding significantly alters the ideas of knowledge acquisition and accent to truth and also the ideas about the reality of man and the world and their interrelationships. The thesis of facticity drastically deconstructs the idea of a pre-structured world, understood both by the realist and the idealist traditions. Instead of a mere totality of objects and facts, the world is something that is presented to *Dasein* in the hermeneutic medium of language. Heidegger says that the fundamental *existentialia*, or the Being of the "there", the disclosedness of Being-in-the-world, are states-of-mind and understanding and he asserts that discourse is also existentially equiprimordial with them. (Heidegger, 1978: 161, 203) Discourse is very important for him, as it is the existential-ontological foundation of language. It is the articulation of all intelligibility of what is "there", and hence underlies both interpretation and assertion. (ibid.: 204) It is in discourse that being is presented, disclosed and concealed.

Again, this essential aspect of finitude of human existence is not in contradiction with the idea of multiple possibilities of being humans having in their specific situations. Both finitude and infinity are encountered from the same ontological domain; the intersubjective domain of language. The universal linguisticity of human existence refers to the way we 'exist as conversation' within a specific linguistic horizon, where we nevertheless encounter infinity, as all possibilities whatsoever are contained in the language we speak. The possibilities of human existence depend on the possibilities of disclosure that happens in language, with *Dasein* being placed dialectically in the discourse, which determines the being-already-in structure of its existence. Gadamer combines his hermeneutical understanding of Hegel—which proclaims that only the whole is truth—with this and argues that this shows the essential limitation of any one specific perspective. The very possibility of our experiencing the world and gaining any knowledge whatsoever depends on the fact that our primordial form of being in the world is 'understanding'. Hence, while it is not adequate to take the true claim of any one perspective as incomplete, it is equally inadequate to consider it as incorrect and erroneous. The disclosure that happens in each encounter with being has a unique validity of its

own, as it unravels certain true and valid aspects of being to the existential situation of a *Dasein's* historical being, depending on the latter's potentials and possibilities. While *Dasein* historicizes being by appropriating it to its unique situatedness, it simultaneously transcends its historicity in such encounters and evolves into something "more" than what it was before. This is the dynamism of the being of disclosure and for Gadamer this is the most important implication of the application of the Hegelian truth regarding the limitation of facticity in hermeneutics. But, as seen above, this situation—all our encounters with reality presuppose that we are already placed in language in certain ways—also suggest that we are conditioned by our facticity and are also prejudiced by our historicity.

This essential 'prejudicial' nature of our understanding calls for a drastic reversal in our conceptions of knowledge and truth. Since we always find ourselves in language and specific linguistic horizons, Gadamer says that we are prejudiced by them, as they constitute our essential hermeneutic medium to encounter reality and to ascend to truth and knowledge. But this is also to recognize that there is no truth or reality whatsoever that is not given to man in and through such hermeneutic medium. In fact, our situatedness in such a medium also situates us to a universe of infinite possibilities, which are given to us in a process of unconcealment of Being. The truth and reality of Being are not accessed in any other ways. There is not such truth or reality of Being independent of this *aletheia* of Being to *Dasein*, which involves the latter not as a mere spectator, but essentially as a participant whose inner core is transformed in this process. As we have seen earlier, the universal can never appear without a particular. Hence objectivity, as conceived by the consciousness-centric epistemological tradition is an undesirable ideal.

This prejudicial nature of our ontological status and existential situation — and the fact that we experientially dwell in our historically conditioned linguistic horizon — seems to be imposing tremendous limitations on our abilities to ascent to truth. This may make our perspectives haplessly limited. To overcome this ineluctable vulnerability Gadamer proposes the rehabilitation of prejudices and a constant recreation of the self where it constantly reinvents itself as well as discovers the fulfillment of its being in the intersubjective domain of language. This is to reinvent and recreate the infinite moments of intersubjectivity language is capable of nurturing and procreating. Situatedness in linguistic horizons not

only limits, but also throws open possibilities of being that makes human life a constant endeavour of discovering within oneself novel possibilities of coming into being in language.

#### INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND ENCOUNTERING OTHERNESS

As mentioned above, the dynamism of all engagements with Being embroil the whole of man's being, which subsequently comes across and actualizes infinite intersubjective moments to which it is necessarily related by virtue of being placed in a whole to which it is a part. This happens in all our encounters with language. We speak or talk which others can understand. In other words, most of these speech and talk are for others and are carried out already in ways which others have suggested us. Gadamer develops the idea of tradition, following all the implications of this situation and by supplementing the paradigm of "understanding" reiterated by Heidegger, highlights its value and role in our knowing and understanding. In a peculiar way, the other is not an "object" to which I am placed against as a subject. It is rather a reality to which I myself contribute. Heidegger shows that the moments of intersubjectivity are already constitutive of *Dasein's* structural ontology, which is evident from its "Being-already-in" structure. Gadamer further elaborates this structurally intersubjective nature of our encounters with being and engagements with others and explores its normative dimensions in the very fact that we are "beings who have logos or language". We create ourselves and the world in and through language in which we always find ourselves. It is in this sense that language is described as our ontological domain as well as our essential hermeneutic medium.

Gadamer substantiates this view with an etymological redescription of the ancient Greek definition of man, as a "being who has logos" as a "being, who has language" (Gadamer, 2008: 59). Language is here a living reality, which places man in a dynamic relation with infinite conversational contexts and as a result enables him/her to create and reinvent him/herself in such infinite contexts and moments. Even in my most private self-descriptions, I do paradoxically contribute to the creation of the other, as all such self-descriptions necessarily presuppose a context of pre-understood meanings, which are reflected in what both others and we speak. In the real sense, this is neither self-creation nor creation of others, but the creation of an intersubjective description which suits both others and us. Therefore, these moments of intersubjectivity are

actually moments of transcendence, where we transcend our individual horizons and transpose ourselves to a common intersubjective plane. They enable us to transcend our immediate temporal and spatial horizons. Gadamer asserts that words and language obviously stand at the beginning of human history and the history of humanity. (Gadamer, 1998: 3) He adds:

“Since we are a conversation and can hear from one another—in these lines of Hölderlin, mankind’s conversation with one another and with the divine sound like a single conversation. Because we are a conversation, we are the one story of mankind. In constantly discovering more early cultures, more of the oldest traces of human life, and in investigating ethnic islands hitherto unreached by the stream of world-historical tradition, we come to know more and more of this story”. (ibid.: 3-4)

The shift of attention to language as conversation and dialogue, which can be treated as the essence of language, helps Gadamer to overcome the conceptual difficulties associated with the idea of world engagements and knowledge dominated by the model of perception. Thus, in the event of one coming into being in language, there are possibilities of discovering the other and oneself in its intersubjective sphere. This intersubjectivity is both discovered as well as created. It is discovered by discovering the other and created by bringing into our engagements with being a peculiar perspective, our existential situation. Hence, it is at the same time both dialectical as well as dialogical. The disclosure of being, which is the ‘there’ happens only in language, and in language we essentially encounter an otherness, with which we have to necessarily engage with. Such engagements not only change the status of what appears as the other, but also transform us in essential ways. In language, we encounter two different types of otherness. One is the reality, which is revealed to us in apparently direct ways. This happens through a language that is already there. A talk is already there in which we also participate. Hence, understanding presupposes a context of pre-understood meanings with which we encounter the otherness of the ‘there’. Another important context where we come across otherness is when we meet with the horizons of other people where they too express the ways in which Being is revealed to them. This may offer serious challenges to our ways of being as the other may radically vary from me in terms of their accounts of the disclosure of Being. Gadamer’s accounts of knowledge and understanding attempt to resolve the problems related to such diverse accounts. He does not endeavour to “know” what others “know”, but to “understand”, the diverse aspects of reality through language that

we speak with each other. This happens when we participate in conversations that are ongoing and continue them ceaselessly. But being part of such conversations is to constantly encounter otherness, by questioning others and get questioned by others. This is not just to perceive reality, but understand it as unconcealment. It gives itself to us as answers to our questions and, hence, we relate with it the whole of our being. Such events of unconcealment suggest us different ways of being, by revealing hitherto unknown aspects of our being.

#### TRUTH AS UNCONCEALEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE AS DISCLOSURE

This model of understanding — engaging in ceaseless conversations, often arriving at consensus and often not — recognizes truth and knowledge as associated with disclosure or unconcealment. But as mentioned above, this disclosure involves our being in its entirety. But these events of disclosure are context specific and, hence, never represent being or reality in its entirety. In other words, the whole of being is never revealed to us owing to our essential historicity and facticity. This makes the experience of truth and assimilation of knowledge necessarily historical events, which happens to us as historical beings. Hegel shows how historicity imposes limitations on our perspectives as it makes our vision partial and incomplete. The striving for completion, Gadamer argues, can never be actualized in the form of “absolute knowledge” in the Hegelian sense, as historicity is final and fundamental to our being. According to Heidegger, the experience of truth is at the same time an experience of disclosure as well as the experience of the withdrawal of being. This is because, owing to the historicity and finitude of man — to which being gives itself as disclosure — the whole of being is never accessed in human understanding. In every event of disclosure, being transcends the finite moments to which they happen and hence they are also moments of withdrawal of being.

Knowledge, in this sense, cannot claim finality and absolute status. It is partial and incomplete. This incompleteness owes to the finite ontological situation of *Dasein*. Knowledge as disclosure here happens as an event of truth where some hitherto concealed aspect of being is unravelled to us. This is a unique event, because it is intimately connected to the context of a particular *Dasein*. In other words, the unconcealment is with respect to a unique ontological context, which only a particular *Dasein* is capable of bringing to the world. In Gadamer’s words, in this unique context, a truth potential

is realized. It is uncovering, where *Dasein* discovers its possibilities by relating itself with being. In such moments of disclosures, the truth about Being is 'unconcealed' to *Dasein*.

But this involves the possibility of us taking the way in which being is disclosed to us as absolute and fundamental. We may identify what is disclosed to us as the whole of truth. But knowledge is, at the same time, both disclosure and concealment or withdrawal and the appropriate view would be to have a pluralistic conception of truth. Accordingly, many accounts of the same phenomenon are possible, because a single, perspectiveless, exhaustive account is precluded by the inherent richness of the phenomenon as well as the inherent embeddedness of phenomena in historical contexts (Dostal, 1994: 9). We come across the realization of our certain potentials of our being in every such event of disclosure, as in every such instance, the disclosure is made specifically to us. Gadamer explicates this with his theory of prejudices. He says that when we understand a proposition, we understand it as an answer to a question, which we raise and which presupposes our peculiar ontological horizon. The horizon of the question is rooted in our existential situation. In this sense, every understanding is self-understanding, as the unconcealment that is involved in the process also fulfills our being with what it preserves for us; only for us. Hence, in our understanding of being, we gain specific answers to our questions, unique responses to our projections that necessarily involve a realization about the different possibilities we have; different ways in which we can "come into being in language".

The thesis of pluralism also underlines the importance of conversation. Knowledge about being is never a complete appropriation, but only a partial disclosure that involves a concealment as well, which invites us to see other possibilities. Language, thus, perpetually invites us to its conversational structure, offering us diverse possibilities, where we can potentially gain an "I-lessness", if not a complete transcendence of perspectives. It presents before us as a process of unravelling where the different accounts of the same phenomena that are embedded in different historical contexts are synthesized in the intersubjective moments that constitute every conversation. In this sense, language enables a fulfillment of our being. This is because, as Gadamer says, language is essentially conversation and our being is not independent of the 'conversation we are' and can potentially be fulfilled by the infinite perspectives of a conversation.

Moreover, language also enables the achievement of an I-lessness.

Gadamer says that whenever we speak, we speak to someone and whatever is said has to be placed before the eyes of the other person to whom we speak and speaking does not belong in the sphere of the “I” but in the sphere of the “we”. Language unifies I and the thou and hence he asserts that the actuality of speaking consists in the dialogue. (Gadamer, 2008: 65-66) Gadamer writes:

...in the successful conversation they both come under the influence of the truth of the object and are thus bound to one another in a new community. To reach an understanding with one’s partner in a dialogue is not merely a matter of total self-expression and the successful assertion of one’s own point of view, but a transformation into a communion, in which we do not remain what we were. (Gadamer, 2004: 371)

This is the moment of fulfillment we may attain as the result of our successful participation in the creation of the moments of intersubjectivity that happen in conversations. The very fact that we are able to participate in a conversation implies our participation in such moments of intersubjectivity. In such moments, we discover the other; the discovery of the other perspectives to which disclosure happen and the recognition that they might be a better account of the phenomenon which is uncovered to me. This may enhance my awareness about it and may suggest revision to my own views. In a peculiar sense, this is self-creation by means of a fulfillment of our being with the enhancement of our individual perspectives. It is also self-understanding. Gadamer writes:

...in the end all understandings are reducible to a common level of an “I know how to go about it”, that is, a self-understanding in relation to something other... it is to discover what is hidden in the soul and apprehend how we ought “to go about it”. In this case one rightly says that accomplishing an understanding is to form a project from one’s own possibilities. (Gadamer, 2004: 130-131)

The disclosure that makes possible the experience of truth and knowledge begins and ends with self-understanding within the enclosure of a language that befalls on us and envelops us. It also helps us to transcend and, thus, it functions like a ladder. Once we reach there we may throw it away, not in order to free ourselves from it completely, but for venturing into it — to its conversational structure — and see what lies beyond. As Hegel says, each perspective is limited and knowledge is a constant search for the infinite. Acknowledging our essential linguisticity, we may conclude that this search happens in our being part of a ceaseless conversation, potentially with the whole of humankind.

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