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Language taken ‘by itself’

An interpretation of Aristoteles and Heidegger

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Prelude

My ambition with this paper is to try to answer the question: *how* is language treated as an object of science? But to ask this question also implies to ask about the conditions for a linguistic investigation, and the reason for this is that a scientific investigation of language always is carried out within language. My ambition, then, is to try to articulate what this means. This paper will in most of its parts try to understand what it is that conditions a scientific investigation of language. The *how* that I am trying to find will not be rendered by singling out the different stages of an investigation of language.

The argument that a scientific investigation of language always is carried out within language cannot be problematized without the help of an actual text and must be situated in the structures that a scientific investigation of language consists of.

When I refer to the science of language in this paper it will be in a most general way. It is quite obvious that the science of language is not a homogenous discourse and that there are disparate groupings within it. Anyhow the various parts within the discourse have science as their common denominator, i.e. they are all in one way or an other way science. It is therefore important to describe in a brief way what constitutes science as science.

All sciences, and therefore also the science of language, are of the opinion that the method used by it reveals the truth. In its investigations science makes its object into a subject, e.g. language becomes a subject, determined by a predicate. The predicate is thought to be the result of a method, and the method is understood as separated from the object, which in turn grants science its objectivity.

Although the science of language is a science, it differs from other sciences in the sense that it cannot, in any absolute way, separate the object from the method, because you would find that any attempt to do so would result in the disappearance of the method or silence, which in the end is the same.

It is furthermore important to make a distinction on the one hand between that which the science of language understands as its method and, on the other, the conditions which I will try to articulate. But it is also important to be attentive to the fact that the conditions that I am trying to articulate in no way can be found anywhere else but in the method use by the science of language.

The text that has been chosen in order to articulate the conditions a scientific investigation of language is Aristotle's *De interpretatione*. The reason for this is that the text very well serves as a point of departure and that one can find implicit conditions in this text. Furthermore Aristotle's text is often considered to belong to the canon of what is known as the science of language and contains some of the ideas which has determined the way in which language is perceived. The name of this chapter is *Language as a method*.

The fact that this paper has an ambition to articulate that which conditions the science of language and that the science of language is a science, it becomes obvious that the conditions of science as such also must be articulated. This will be done with the help of Heidegger's *Being and time*. The reason for this is that Heidegger in his text states the opinion that language is the foundation of science and that he discusses how the object of science is constituted. The paragraphs used in this paper are closely related to *De interpretatione*, and this because Heidegger 'recycles' some of the ideas Aristotle formulates in *De interpretatione*. But in the end my interpretation of Heidegger focuses more on some of his general ideas than on the three of four paragraphs referred in this paper, exclusively. The name of this chapter is *The conditions and object of scientific thought*.

The last chapter in this paper has been given the name *How is language treated as an object of science?* And contains a more complex formulation of the first chapter with help of the second.

Why, then, is language the subject of this paper? This because to think about language is to enter the sphere of the conditions of thought as such; when a human being thinks she uses language and can "vittna om vad hon ägde för att kunna ärva" (Höld) But to use language doesn't only mean to endorse a world, but also to be sensitive to that which is given or denied, revealed in a thought or a word. But it also means to make a claim to the world, the others and things. But at the same time language contains a heritage of a world which in its material form no longer exists. Language gives a testimony to these worlds gone by, and therefore has an understanding of it, of the others and of things.

Language as a method

In this chapter I will discuss the conditions of a scientific investigation of language. But in order to do so I must follow the way of such an investigation. *De interpretatione* will serve as the point of departure for such an undertaking.

Definition is one of the cornerstones in the method used by the science of language. A definition fixes the meaning of a word and by so doing transforms the word into a concept. To create concepts by way of defining words is also Aristoteles' motive in *De interpretatione*, and he begins his text with the following:

Let us, first of all, define noun and verb, then explain what is meant by denial, affirmation, proposition and sentence.¹

Πρωτον δει θεσθαι τι ονομα και τι ρημα,
επειτα τι εστιν αποφασισ καταφασισ και
και αποφανσις και λογος .16a1-3

Notwithstanding the fact that Aristoteles' terminology has become common property, his own motive was really to define some of the elements in language:

/a/ noun is a sound having meaning established by convention alone but to no reference whatever to time, while no part of it has any meaning, considered apart from the whole.

Ονομα μεν ουν εστι φωνη σεμαντικη κατα
συνθηκεν ανευ χρονου, ης μηδεν μερος
εστι σημαντικον κεχωρισμενον. 16a20-23

¹All quotations used in this paper are taken from *The Loeb Classical Library*. Harvard University Press. Translated Harold by P. Cooke, M A.

In the same way he defines that which we would call verb, proposition and sentence etc, and with help of these definitions he continues the investigation. (Chapter 1-4)

1 It could seem that by doing so Aristotele only identifies the already obvious, parts of speech, clause elements and their relationship, syntax. But Aristotele's text is rather an act of transition, i.e. when he enters upon his project, he is not in possession of those concepts which now belong to the science of language, while it is by defining 'noun' that he transforms the word into a concept. Because defining is a part of the method in the science of language it is also favourable to describe in a few words what a definition is and what it means to define something. Once again I will turn to Aristotele.

The greek word for definition is ορισμος and means *boundary or limit*, but the meaning of the greek word is wider than the english word definition, while it implies both physical and discursive boundaries, and the english word is only used to denote discursive sense. When something is defined in the discursive sense, what is going to be defined is already given. This obvious fact actually contains the whole problematic with the act of defining i.e.: that which makes the definition possible must on the one hand be given, while it on the other hand hasn't been articulated into the form of a definition. There is a gap between on the hand the ambition and the possibility to define and on the hand, the fix and useable definition. The bridge over this gap is a discursive act, conditioned by the not yet articulated but already given and this act is carried out by "dianoia, the faculty/.../of discursive thought."² (Leblond JM 'Aristoteles on definition' from *Studys on Aristoteles* op.cit. page) This is the reason why Aristotele can state the elements that he intends to define (noun, verb and proposition etc) without having a discursive understanding of the way in which these elements are separated from each other, he says:

/n/ow since we must know that the fact actually exists,
it is surely clear that the question is 'why is this *matter*
so-and-so?' e.g 'why are these material a house?'

επει δε δει εχειν τε και υπαρχειν το ειναι, δηλον
δη οτι την υλην ζητει δια τι [τι] εστιν, οιον ταδι

²LeBlond 'Aristoteles on definition' from *Studys on Aristoteles* page 354 published by Jonathan Barnes
Cordon: Duckworht 1975-1974 4 volumes

διὰ τὸ ὅτι ὑπαρχειν ὁ ἡν οικία εἶναι.³

In order to understand what Aristotele means by this it is important to focus on the ‘why’, and the reason for this is that ‘why’ seeks the articulation of an already given fact i.e ‘this *matter*’; that the matter is a so-and-so, that is, a house, cannot be questioned, but at the same time it isn’t articulated ‘*why* it is a house’. The act of defining is the articulation of this ‘why’.

Now there arises a question if the articulation of the ‘why’ only confirms something quite obvious, i.e. that a house is a house. It would certainly be so if a definition was nothing but the result of an insight into the essence of a house and would be communicated in one word or in a tautology, but “defining is not a matter of grasping an essence but of analyzing it”(Leblond JM 355-354), and this means that a person who looks at a house and says ‘house’, has on the one hand identified a possible object for a definition, but hasn’t on the other hand articulated this identification in the form of a definition. To have an insight into the essence of a thing is an important step on the way to definition, but this insight must be articulated.

The conclusion is that the role of a definition isn’t to separate things and phenomenon which would simply be in a blur without the definition, but to articulate the way in which things are differentiated. A house doesn’t come into being through a definition, just as little as Aristotele invented nouns and verbs, nevertheless the elements denoted as ‘noun’ and ‘verb’ become concepts through the act of defining.

It may seem as though a scientific investigation of language is constituted by the act of making the right definition. And this is surely so, but only within its own realm.

The conditions that I am trying to articulate with the help of *De interpretatione* are connected with the possibility of making a definition. These conditions reveal themselves in that which Aristotele calls ‘by itself’. At various times in the text Aristotele says that a word is to be taken ‘by itself’. To explain what Aristotele means by this and why this can be understood as a condition we have simply to listen to Aristotele, and he says:

/a/ noun or a verb by itself much resembles a concept
or a thought which is neither combined nor disjoined.
Such is ‘man’, for example, or ‘white’, if pronounced
without any addition.

³Metaphysics 1041b4-7

συν ονοματα αυτα και τα ρημα εοικε τω
 συνθεσεως και διαρεσεως νοηματι, οιον το
 ανθρωπος η το λευκον, οταν μητα μεν
 προστεθη τι. 16a13-16

It should immediately be said that the greek word used by Aristotele for ‘by itself’ varies throughout *De interpretatione*,⁴ but this is of no great importance, and the point is that the different words are synonymes for one and the same condition. But for the sake of clarity I will only use the term ‘by itself’. So, then, what does ‘by itself’ mean? This term has on the one hand a methodological funktion in Aristotele’s text, but is on the other hand the name for the condition that I am trying to articulate.

If *De interpretatione* is read word by word ‘by itself’ can be thought as a mere technical term which guides the reader through the argumentation, and Aristotele never gives the term any explicit explanation. Let me illustrate what I mean:

/t/ake the proper name ‘Goodsteed’, for instance.
 The ‘Steed’ has no meaning *a part*, as it has in the
 phrase ‘a good steed’.

εν γαρ τω Καλλιππος το ιππος ουδεν καθ
 εαυτο σημαινειν, ωσπερ εν τω λογω τω
 καλος ιππος 16a22–23

In this kind of argument it is on the one hand quite easy to understand what Aristotele means with the term ‘by itself’, but on the other hand it is also possible to get a notion of the way in which ‘by itself’ can be thought as the name of the condition that I am trying to articulate. It is most important to clearly distingusih between the technical function that Aristotele gives to the term ‘by itself’ by his way of argumenting and the fact that this term also is the name of a

⁴Aristoteles uses ‘by itself’ in the following places in the four first chapters of *De interpretatione*: 16a14 *auta*/ 16a22, 16a25, 16b26 *kechorismenon*/ 16a23, 16b20 *auto*, *kath eauto*/ 16a26 *kath eauto* and 16b35 *kath auto*

condition. The difficulty this paper stands before is that the two different meanings that are assigned to 'by itself' doesn't exist separately. So if the technical function of the term first becomes more clear then it is perhaps possible to articulate the way in which the term is the name of a condition.

By using the term 'by itself' Aristotele wants to prove that letters has meaning when they are part of a word, and that words only have meaning within a sentence and that they have semantic functions. (16a1-17a9) Each time Aristotele wants to illustrate this he supplies either one part of a word, a whole word or one part of a composed word and says that these words or parts of words have or do not have a given meaning or property.

In the beforementioned quotation Aristotele minds nouns and verbs that have been taken out of a sentence and consequently are in no position of stating anything true or false, as Aristotele furthermore considers truth and falsity to be related to combination and division. That is to say, a noun or a verb 'by itself' can not state a fact. (16a13-18) A noun or a verb uttered out of context wouldn't mean anything and "the speaker stops his process and the mind of the hearer acquiesces/ ιστησι γαρ ο λεγων την διανοιαν, και ο ακουσας ηρεμησεν." (16b21-22)

When one reads *De interpretatione* 'by itself' is revealed as something quite obvious and the term can be understood as having a technical function. And to a certain extent that is correct. When Aristotle uses the term he wants to direct the attention upon a specific isolated element in language. How, then, can 'by itself' also be understood as the name for the condition that I am trying to articulate? *'By itself' is a condition in the sense that it is the method that makes it possible to speak about language within language.* This can be shown with help from *De interpretatione*.

Each time Aristotle uses the term 'by itself' it is in connection with an explanation of an element in language. The argument which is to explain the element takes its point of departure in a single word or a combination of words, these words are put within '...', (not) but at the same time is '...' the place in the text where the explanation exposes the element. But this doesn't imply that the element that Aristotle attempts to explain can be understood just from a singular word, taken by itself. The explanation of an element relies upon two things: 1) that the words put within '...' is given the two assignments of being a tool and of being itself, and 2) that a context is established.

That the words within ‘...’ are tools means that they are examples of a category, and the fact that the same words are themselves is due to Aristotele’s ambition to illustrate a certain word. For example: when Aristotle wants to explain in what way a verb or a noun functions he gives two examples of a noun. The word that Aristotle supplies is on the one hand just an example of the category noun, but it is on the other hand, and at the same time, the two specific words ‘man’ and ‘white’.

The reason that the words within ‘...’ can be themselves and at the same time function as tools is that a context has been established. It is the context that makes it possible for Aristotle to say ‘man’ and at the same time let it be understood as an example of a noun. Because although the word that Aristotle supplies is to be understood only as an example of the category noun it is also a specific word, i.e. it is a noun but also the given noun ‘man’.

In Aristotele’s argumentation a word taken by itself doesn’t belong to the context in which it is itself, i.e. when it isn’t used as a tool or an example of a grammatical category. One can say that the conclusions that Aristotle comes to actually don’t take place in the text as such. When he gives an example of a noun ‘by itself’ the word isn’t ‘by itself’ in an absolute way. Aristotle only wants to explain what would happen *if* a word was taken ‘by itself’, but when he himself uses a word taken ‘by itself’, it belongs to a context and functions as a tool. This is the reason why Aristotle can say that “the speaker stops his process and the mind of the hearer acquiesces” and then continue without any speaker having stopped any process. The result of all this is that Aristotele doesn’t follow his own rules.

How, then, is it possible to understand the conclusions made by Aristotele. Because ‘by itself’ as a condition makes it possible to speak about language within language, and that the argument used by Aristotele is a reference to the same language in which his argument takes place and not some other merely thought language.

To make it evident that ‘by itself’ is that which conditions an investigation of language I shall use the concept ‘double hearing’. This concept is not to be understood as the condition of the condition, rather it is to be thought of as a concept which widens the understanding of the way in which ‘by itself’ is a condition.

If a word taken ‘by itself’ shall both function as a tool and be itself it is necessary that these two functions are to be heard in the same word - at the same time. Because when Aristotle gives an example of the category noun with the word ‘man’, a *noun* must be heard in this word.

But nowhere in the the word 'man' can a *noun* be found. Despite all this one can understand Aristotle and the reason for this is that the context makes it possible for a word 'by itself' to be a function, i.e. 'man' functions as an example of a *noun*. So when Aristotele says 'man' it is also possible to hear the context to which it belongs. A word 'by itself' is heard as both itself and as the function it has been given by the context. Double hearing means that the context is heard within the single word and that the single word is heard having its point of departure in the context.

A word taken 'by itself' has *double* functions, one function is to be itself and the other to be an example, and this *double* function must be *heard* within the same word. As a result of this *double* function language is *heard* within language.

In *De interpretatione* 'by itself' can be understood as a form of objectifying. That which is objectified are certain elements. But what happens when language as such becomes an object, that is when language is taken 'by itself'? In the prelude it was said that it isn't possible to do such a thing. Despite this the science of language is of the opinion that it studies the whole language and not merely its elements. How can language as such become an object? It is in order to answer this question that Heidegger can help. Through a discussion about 'the ontological boundary' between theory and praxis he captures the structures of the objectifying act sa such.

The object and condition of the scientific way of thinking

The ambition here is not to comment upon Heidegger's *Being and time*, it is rather interested in two of the central concepts of the text: "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand". With the aid of these two concepts we can come to a deeper understanding of 'by itself'. But in order to explain in what way these two concepts should be understood it is necessary to give a short exposition of the wider arguments to which they belong. But in so doing the arguments as such can also be helpful in understanding 'by itself'. The focus will be set upon paragraph 69b in which Heidegger discusses the conditions of the scientific way of thinking through the help of "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand". It is also important for this paper that he in this paragraph states the opinion that the conditions of science is due to language. Furthermore Heidegger discusses how the object of science is constituted. In order to understand which role "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand" have in these discussions it can be clarifying to explain in a few words the main theme in paragraph 69b.

What Heidegger wants to articulate in this paragraph is "the *ontological genesis* of the theoretical attitude".⁵ (357) This doesn't mean that he is on the search for one particular time in history when science was born out of some given material circumstances, and he doesn't give an account of the story of the evolution of thought. Rather he wants to understand science in an ontological way and create "an *existential conception of science*"(357) He is interested in the existential conditions for science when ever science is practiced. He understands "science as a way of existence" and "as a mode of Being-in-the-world".(357)

The ontological genesis of the theoretical attitude doesn't mean that an individual thinks in one way at one point in time and then changes his or her way of thinking. It is important to keep in mind that Heidegger wants to articulate an existential conception of science and not the birth of "the *ontical* history and development of science". (357) The theoretical attitude isn't the result of "the *disappearance of praxis*"(357). Rather Heidegger is of the opinion that the life of praxis is in need of a theory and the life of theory is in need of a praxis and that there is "by no

⁵All quotations are taken from *Being and time* and I refer to the page number of Heidegger's original text. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson

means patent where the ontological boundary between ‘theoretical’ and ‘atheoretical’ behavior really runs!”(358) This means that there isn’t a clear distinction between praxis and theory.

Through the two concepts “ready-to-hand” and “present-at-hand” and a third concept the “circumspective concern” Heidegger attempts to capture the theoretical attitude. It is vital not to mix the ‘circumspective concern’ with any kind of praxis. As a concept it is a label for the conditions underlying the way in which any form of praxis understands itself on the basis of the world in which it takes place.

The phenomenon that Heidegger wants to describe and which he calls ‘readiness-to-hand’ is not *what*, for instance, a hammer is, but *how* a hammer is. A close look at the word reveals that it is a ‘substantiviert adverb’, which means that it describes something. But that which Heidegger wants to describe with the aid of this concept are not some properties as, for instance, ‘heavy’ or ‘light’, he is rather interested in a description that understands in what way a hammer is on the basis of the context to which it belongs.

‘Readiness-to-hand’ doesn’t mean that the entities which are ‘ready-to-hand’ are something physical with a set of properties. This may seem as a contradiction in terms, the word ‘readiness-to-hand’ has the word ‘hand’ within it and one could easily think that it denotes something concrete. But Heidegger says about a hammer, for instance, “in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically.”(69) That the hammer withdraws doesn’t mean that it disappears in the sense that it doesn’t exist, it just means that it isn’t the hammer’s physical properties that are in focus. This also means that in a given context the properties of a hammer can be important but they do not constitute the way in which a hammer is understood.

Even though the concept ‘readiness-to-hand’ isn’t supposed to describe a hammer’s physical properties, the word ‘hand’ can be a guide towards an understanding of the concept. The reason for this is that ‘readiness-to-hand’ is used to articulate *how* a hammer is, i.e. what makes a hammer a hammer. The way in which a hammer becomes itself is in the use of it, Heidegger says:

the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the
more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial

does our relationship to it become and the more unweidly
is it encountered as what it is - as equipment. (69)

That the hammer is an equipment only means that it is ready-to-hand. An equipment, a hammer, for instance, is ready-to-hand, but the way in which an equipment is Heidegger calls readiness-to-hand. So, then, in what should we understand what an equipment is? Or in other words: what does it mean that a hammer is ready-to-hand. The first that has to be said is that there is never just “an equipment”, that is to say never a singular isolated equipment.(68) The reason for this is that every equipment only can be ‘seen’ in the presence of other equipments and as a part of a given context. But the way in which an equipment is, is revealed in its use, Heidegger says: “/t/he hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ of the hammer.”(69) That is to say, the act of hammering is that which lets the hammer be understood as a hammer. It is the use of an equipment or its possible use that describes in what way the equipment is, i.e. *how* it is.

But how, then, can a hammer be the object of a scientific way of thinking if it is understood on the basis of its use. According to Heidegger it isn’t due to a halt in the practical use of the hammer that gives space for the act of thinking. The reason for this is that the genesis of the theoretical attitude is not the result of the disappearance of praxis. It is once again important to keep in mind that Heidegger seeks an ontological understanding of how a hammer can become the object of science. Heidegger’s ambition is not to articulate the moment where the hammer is transformed from an equipment to an object of science, and he is interested in the conditions that constitutes an object of science.

In order to articulate these conditions Heidegger has to find the ‘place’ of their existence. This ‘place’ is a specific understanding of language. As a point of departure for the articulation of this understanding Heidegger discusses an assertion, he says:

/w/hen we are using a tool circumspectively, we can say,
for instance, that the hammer is too heavy or too light. (360)

The circumspective assertion understands the hammer on the basis of its use and context, and the assertion is not interested in the hammer as a physical thing, and the hammer which is too

heavy or too light is simply exchanged for another tool. But the circumspective assertion can also be understood in another way, Heidegger says that it:

can also mean that the entity before us, which we already know circumspectively as a hammer, has a weight-that is to say has the property of heaviness. (360)

That the circumspective assertion can have another meaning should not be understood as if it were up to an individual to mean one thing or another. What the assertion *can* mean is that the hammer becomes an object for a scientific way of thinking. That which differs between the two meanings is the understanding of the word 'is', Heidegger says: "The circumspective question as to what this particular thing that is ready-to-hand may *be*, receives the circumspectively interpretative answer it *is* for such and such purpose." (149) That is to say, if some one asks what a hammer *is*, the answer isn't a predication of the hammer but rather an explanation of the possible use of the hammer. The 'what' that the question seeks is not some adjective but rather a 'such and such purpose'. In the circumspective assertion of the hammer the word 'is', is understood as the reference to a world, a context or the possible use of the hammer. But the word 'is' *can* also be understood as *copula*, as in the assertion 'the hammer is heavy'. This means that the hammer is given a predicate which in turn is the same as the hammer being present-at-hand. The way in which the circumspective assertion differs from the predicative assertion is that it understands entities as ready-to-hand and doesn't focus so much on a specific thing, while the predicative assertion sharpens its perspective and focus on one particular being. To exemplify this it is possible to say that a hammer understood as ready-to-hand belongs to a context, which in turn gives the hammer its meaning, while a hammer understood as present-at-hand becomes a thing with a set of properties e.g weight. The hammer that is present-at-hand has also lost its context, Heidegger says:

In the 'physical' assertion that 'the hammer is heavy' we *overlook* not only the tool-character of the entity we encounter, but also something that belongs to any ready-to-hand equipment: its place. Its place becomes a matter of indifference.

When the hammer is given a predicate it loses its context and *can* be an object of science. The possibility for something to become an object is due to the assertion. Once again it is necessary to point out that Heidegger isn't interested in the birth of the ontic science, and science as such didn't arise because a group of people at one point in history started to talk in predicative assertions.

But if the assertion is 'the place' where the genesis of the theoretical attitude can be understood, it is perhaps suitable to give a short exposition of what Heidegger means by assertion.

According to Heidegger the assertion has three functions which all are intertwined with each other. The first function is "*pointing out*", the second is "*predication*" and the third is "*communication*". (154-155) The assertion as 'pointing out' means to "letting an entity be seen from itself." (154) That is to say that if a hammer is too heavy and it is pointed out in an assertion it is a given hammer in a given context that are intended. The assertion as 'predication' gives the hammer an attribute e.g. 'too heavy'. The hammer is still in the field of vision but now as an entity with a given property. Furthermore the hammer as an entity becomes a subject and too heavy becomes the predicate. The assertion as 'communication' is a "letting someone see with us what we have pointed out" and "shares with the Other the entity that has been pointed out in its definite character" (155) To sum up Heidegger says that "we may define 'assertion' as a 'pointing-out' which gives something a definite character and which communicates". (156)

Within the scientific way of thinking assertion as predicative has a priority while the other two are in some way forgotten. How this manifests itself can be shown through a short discussion of copula.

According to grammar copula has no meaning and functions only as a link between subject and predicate. Within the predicative assertion 'the hammer is heavy' grammar understands 'is' as a link which combines the hammer with its properties. But copula *can* have a broader function. In the assertion as 'pointing out' the objective complement lets the hammer's such-and-such purpose be seen. This means that 'is' is not thought of as a link, the reason for this is that the hammer isn't understood as an isolated entity with properties, 'is' and the objective complement are not to be found separate from each other, rather these make it obvious that a certain hammer in a certain context is in a certain way. Copula and the objective complement can

in the assertion as 'pointing out' be understood as a *how* and they give to the hammer its identity, and this identity, that is its predicate, is nothing else than the world of the hammer.

When copula is understood as just a link between subject and predicate the assertion becomes a predication, and when the assertion is a predication, a hammer, for instance, is present-at-hand, and when a hammer is present-at-hand a scientific way of thinking *can* arise. This doesn't mean that every predication is a scientific way of thinking, rather it is quite the opposite: a scientific way of thinking is only possible as long as there are predicative assertions. The existing science can confirm this, its work, i.e its method, consists on most parts in making the right definitions.

The scientific way of thinking understands the object of its assertions as present-at-hand. But what happens when it isn't a hammer that the scientific way of thinking has as its object of, but rather language, i.e the same language in which both the method and the object are to be found?

How is language treated as an object of science?

To answer these questions I begin with explaining the statement that the possibility of a definition is connected with 'by itself' but only in order later to speak about the science of language in general.

When Aristotle takes a word 'by itself' it is present-at-hand, and it is so in the sense that it doesn't belong to the context it usually belongs to; but at the same time it is ready-to-hand in the sense that it is a tool. All this means, as been said before, to speak about language within language and that this is the condition that makes Aristotle possible to understand although he doesn't follow his own rules. Despite all this the science of language is of another opinion, it understands the object of its investigations as separated from the language that makes propositions. For the science of language there is on the one hand Language and on the other hand there are assertions which predicate Language (when I speak of 'Language' I mean language as an object of science). Compared with the hammer, which can belong to a new context when it is predicated, a word 'by itself' is a part of Language. The science of language understands a word 'by itself' as one part of Language and it is within the structure of Language that words have a meaning and it is Language that can be divided into categories. Within the realm of its own understanding the science of language is conditioned by the discrepancy between its own language and its object. The language that belongs to the science of language is called meta-language. But the meta-language is something that has to be created. To create concepts for the meta-language is therefore the method that the science of language uses and it is through defining that these concepts come into being.

What the science of language forgets is that the possibility to create a meta-language is conditioned by separating the words that the meta-language consists of from the very language they are to observe, i.e. that a word is taken 'by itself'. Because only after this can a word through definition become a concept with a fixed meaning. That which makes the definition possible to understand is in turn nothing else than the language the concept shall describe. So even how much the science of language uses definitions and a meta-language to reach an objective 'sight', this 'sight' can only move within language itself and it also has the character of language.

For the science of language the meta-language is a tool which has the capability to say something about its object i.e. Language, the result of this is that the science of language

understands the meta-language as ready-to-hand and Language is present-at-hand within the assertions made by the meta-language. The consequence of this is that Language in being present-at-hand also is taken 'by itself'.

The science of language is fed on its the belief that it in its assertions talks about Language and not merely some part of it, but by so doing it forgets the meta-language. This doesn't mean that the meta-language is transparent and can't be seen, it just means that the science of language doesn't think of the meta-language because it is used i.e ready-to-hand. In this sense the meta-language is also 'forgotten'. A few lines of Rilke can here serve as an explanation. The motif is to lovers:

/w/hen you give yourselves, each to the other's mouth
and join - drink for drink - oh, how strangely the drinker
evades his part of the act. ⁶

In Rilke's poem the two lovers doesn't experience thier own body as its moving toward the other. In analogi with this the science of language understands Language as another body and yet forget its own. But in this understanding the science of language 'evades' the fact that to use the meta-language is an gesture made in and by language, and that this gesture dosen't refer to another body i.e. Language, but it is talking about language within language. All this is forgotten when Language is taken 'by itself'.

Within the science of language all the examples given by it are present-at-hand e.g is 'man' present-at-hand as a noun, but it is also thought a part of Language. The concept Noun is within the meta-language a category and the particular noun is understood as just as an example of that category. But as said before, a discussion about language is only possible if the words also are ready-to-hand. This is conditioned by double hearing and means that a discussion about language is carried out within language.

If the objectivity of a science is granted by fact that the method is seraprated from the object and that the conclusion is separated from the method, then there can be no positive science about Language. The reason for this is that the method used by the science of language is a

⁶Rilke Rainer Maria, *Duiono Eligierna* page 17 1961 University of California Translated by C.F Mac Intyre

method which is carried out within language, i.e the same language which is being investigated. When ever an investigation of Language is done there is language, the meat-language is just a remainder of that fact. But for the science of language the use a meta-language is just an innocent method with wich it is possible to say something 'true' about Language. So even how much a meta-language is used Language as such will be silent, but at the same time there is in every investigation of language the idea of Language which is revealed in the use of 'by itself'. What ever argument is supplied when Language is explained, 'by itself' grants the object of the argument, and 'by itself' is perhaps the textual place or moment when Language becomes a thing. i.e something present-at-hand. Despite all this every argument about Language returns to its own conditions and reveals itself as an process in which a word 'by itself' is experienced as a studdering tune in a melody that is stuck in a rut, a tune which also bear witness of that melody which makes it possible to studder.

