

# Λόγος as an Anti-Psychologistic Conception of Meaning Heidegger's Interpretation of the Aristotelian Notion of Language in the Light of Its First Courses (1921-1927)

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**Abstract** The article attempts to clarify Heidegger's interpretation of the Aristotelian concept of λόγος, often misunderstood as a mythical and obscure conception of language. As it is shown, Heidegger's interpretation aims, first and foremost, to underline the potentiality of λόγος as a historical element against the psychologistic conception of meaning and language, common in the philosophical and philological context of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. In this way, I try to grasp the significance of Heidegger's interpretation of Greek philosophy, offering the basis for a re-evaluation of his exegetical work.

**Keywords** λόγος. Meaning. Anti-Psychologism. Meaningfulness. Aristotle. Heidegger.

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## 1 Introduction

One of the most famous passages of the “Introduction” of *Being and Time*, if not of the whole book, is dedicated to “the concept of logos” (*B. Der Begriff des Logos*).<sup>1</sup> In less than four pages, this concept is analysed by Heidegger to obtain its “primary” (*primäre*) and “basic meaning” (*Grundbedeutung*) (43): “to make manifest ‘what is being talked about’ in discourse” (43). With this definition and for the first time in Heidegger’s published work, the λόγος is linked to the ἀληθεύειν and the ἀποφαίνεσθαι; a relationship that, as is well known, shapes one of the fundamental ideas of his interpretation of Greek thinking and language in general. That relationship resonates in the famous *dictum*: “language is the house of Being” (*die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins*, GA 9, 313).

However, Heidegger’s description of the λόγος in *Being and Time* is famous, above all, because of the difficulties it implies to the readers, given the multiple references to Aristotelian writings and other no less thorny Greek terms (such as ἀπόφανσις, δηλοῦν, σύνθεσις, ἀλήθεια, ψεύδεσθαι, αἴσθησις or νοεῖν); moreover, the complexity of this short passage increases because of Heidegger’s argumentative strategy (Dreyfus 1990, 30-1; Blattner 2007, 27-9). Through the description of the “concept of logos”, he seeks a double objective: first, to expose what he considers to be the original and basic idea of the λόγος in ancient Greek philosophy; second, in doing so, he tries to clarify the notion of phenomenology, i.e. of the “*logos* of phenomena”<sup>2</sup>.

Thus, the problem to understand Heidegger’s interpretation of the λόγος becomes even more challenging when, after describing its ground and apparently profound meaning in the light of the Aristotelian writings, he affirms (GA 2, 46):

The expression ‘phenomenology’ can be formulated in Greek as λέγειν τὰ φαινόμενα. But λέγειν means ἀποφαίνεσθαι. Hence phenomenology: ἀποφαίνεσθαι τὰ φαινόμενα – to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself. That is the formal meaning of the type of research that calls itself ‘phenomenology’. But this expresses nothing other than the maxim formulated above: ‘To the things themselves!’

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**1** Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*, henceforth GA, 2, 43-6

**2** This interpretation of λόγος is only the second step of a description of the meaning of “phenomenology”, while the first step focuses on a complex discussion about another Greek term: “phenomenon” (GA 2, 38-43).

After reading this passage, an immediate question arises: to what extent does an exam of the λόγος in Aristotle, as well as its relation to the φαίνεσθαι and the ἀλήθεια, clarify the lemma ‘to the things themselves!’? This conclusion even leads one to doubt the necessity of such an excursus between Aristotelian concepts. More importantly, other questions remain unsolved: what is λόγος? What does it mean “to let (something) be seen from itself” (46) or “to make manifest ‘what is being talked about’ in discourse” (43)?

In this paper, I would like to answer these questions on the basis of an analysis of Heidegger’s writings before *Being and Time*. In doing so, I will not deal with all the aspects of the Aristotelian concept of λόγος pointed out by Heidegger’s interpretation; my intention is only to delineate the first ineluctable and sometimes forgotten most basic goal of Heidegger’s description of λόγος, by virtue of which it is possible to understand the difficult §7 and the relationship of the λόγος with other Greek concepts, such as the ἀλήθεια (which represent, according to Heidegger, an “ontological theory of truth”).

In my opinion, this basic goal consists in the fight against the psychologist theory of meaning as “internal state” that traverses Heidegger’s first lecture courses (and not only his doctoral work, *GA 1*, 59-188; see e.g. *GA 57/58*, 63 ff.; *GA 20*, 124 ff.; *GA 2*, 61 ff., 178). In this way, I try to demonstrate how his interpretation of λόγος in Aristotle illuminates some aspects of phenomenology. The first and most fundamental, on which I will concentrate here, is the *anti-psychologistic conception of meaning and language* presupposed in this kind of investigation and discovered by Heidegger in the Aristotelian notion of λόγος.

To expose the anti-psychologistic Heideggerian exegesis of λόγος, I will first focus on Heidegger’s criticism of classical studies of Aristotle, which would have neglected this aspect of the Aristotelian notion. In Heidegger’s view, previous researchers of Aristotle (from Trendelenburg to Jaeger) misunderstood Aristotle by following the philosophical literature determined by psychologism and saw him as the first advocate of an instrumentalist theory of language and a psychologistic conception of meaning (2.).

Starting from Heidegger’s criticisms, in a second moment I will expose his alternative interpretation: the λόγος is not a cognitive capacity, among others, of the human mind, but it is the *way of Being of human existence*, the structure of *Being in the world* (3.). As it will be shown, this idea leads to deny that language is an instrument that can be used to express our ‘internal’ mental acts (i.e. the ‘meaning’ of the objects for psychologism of nineteenth-century philosophy).

At the end of this analysis of Heidegger’s interpretation of the λόγος, it will be possible to return to the section on “the concept of logos” (*GA 2*, 43-6) and understand the relationship to the particu-

lar conception of ἀλήθεια in Aristotle (4.). So, from the anti-psychologicistic theory discovered by Heidegger through the study of Aristotle, it would be possible to glimpse the foundation of a pre-predicative or pre-judgmental theory of truth that Heidegger presents with the Greek term 'ἀλήθεια' and which today it is still the center of an intense polemic (see Berti 1990, Cordero 2020).

## 2 Heidegger's Criticism of the Psychologicistic Interpretation of Aristotle

### 2.1 Fundamental Lines of Aristotle's Psychological Interpretation: From *De Interpretatione* 16a3-8)

Heidegger's interpretation of λόγος starts from a radical opposition to the instrumentalist conception of language attributed to Aristotle, which was very usual at the time (see Kampe 1870), as it is still today (see e.g. Noriega-Olmos 2013). This understanding 'seems evident' from the famous opening paragraph of the *De Interpretatione* (16a3-8):

Ἔστι μὲν οὖν τὰ ἐν τῇ γωνῇ τῶν ἐν τῇ ψυξῇ παθημάτων σύμβολα, καὶ τὰ γραγόμενα τῶν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ, καὶ ὡσπερ οὐδε γράμματα πᾶσι τὰ αὐτά, οὐδε φωναὶ αἱ αὐταί - ὧν μέντοι ταῦτα σημεῖα πρώτων, ταῦτά πᾶσι παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ ὧν ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα ἤδη ταῦτά.

Words spoken are symbols or signs of affections or impressions in the soul; written words are the signs of words spoken. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies (Harold P. Cook 1962).

According to the psychologicistic reading, in this famous passage the Stagirite claims that external objects to the mind (τὰ πράγματα) (level 1) would generate certain internal affections to the soul or "representations" (τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθήματα) (level 2); those representations, then, could have their further expression in the language, in the λόγος, either in the spoken or in the written one (level 3 and 4). Therefore, in *De Interpretatione* 16a3-8 the λόγος is shown as a symbolic instrument for the possible communication with others about the representations of our soul or mind. As Lo Piparo has demonstrated (2005, 34), this conception could be summarised in the following scheme [tab. 1]:

**Table 1** Psychologicistic conception of *De Interpretatione*, 16a3-8

Λόγος language	Level 4	τὰ γραφόμενα (τὰ γράμματα) Written marks	σύμβολα / σημεῖα Symbols / signs
	Level 3	τὰ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ (φωναί) Spoken sounds	
Mental processes	Level 2	τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθήματα Affections of the soul	ὁμοιώματα Images
	Level 1	τὰ πράγματα Things	

From this general exegesis it follows that ‘meaning’ is something generated by the mind, only thanks to the “affections of the soul” (τὰ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ παθήματα), and therefore is an ‘internal state’ of it. This theory has a certain corroboration in the *De Anima* – to which Aristotle refers in the fragment of the *De Interpretatione* (16a8-9) –: from perception (*De Anima* B 416b33 ff.), simple characteristics of the object are *unified* by the mind creating internal images (φαντασῖαι) of an object (*De Anima* Γ 427a15 ff.; see too *Met.* A 980a25 ff.), which ‘correspond’ to the object outside. Moreover, it is this union of perception that makes it possible to create a true or a false image and, therefore, true or false knowledge of the things, as Aristotle says in the following lines of the *De Interpretatione* (16a3-9)

Ἔστι δέ, ὡσπερ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὅτε μὲν νόημα ἄνευ τοῦ ἀληθεύειν ἢ ψεύδου, ὅτε δὲ ἤδη ᾧ ἀνάγκη τούτων ὑπάρχειν θάτερον, οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ· περὶ γὰρ σύνθεσιν καὶ διαίρεσιν ἔστι τὸ ψεῦδος καὶ τὸ ἀληθές.

As at times there are thoughts in our mind unaccompanied by truth or by falsity, while there are others at times that have necessarily one or the other, so it is in our speech, for combination and division are essential before you can have truth and falsity.

In sum, according to this interpretation, based on the mentioned passages of *De Interpretatione* and *De Anima*, it is possible to infer that the Aristotelian theory of language and meaning is very close to the one proposed in Locke’s *Essay* ([1690] 1975, book 2, ch. 32; book 3, chs. 1-2); moreover, this understanding seeks to underline that the Stagirite, not the English philosopher, is the father of the psychologicistic explanation of signification and the judicative theo-

ry of truth<sup>3</sup>. Such an assumption is what Heidegger tries to deny on numerous occasions during his lecture courses and in *Being and Time* (GA 2, 284).

## 2.2 Heidegger's Alternative Exegesis of *De Interpretatione* (16a3-8)

To understand Heidegger's alternative exegesis, it is necessary to reconstruct his objections to the interpretation that I have just presented (GA 21, 150 ff.). Therefore, it is convenient to go back to the central passage of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* (16a3-8), on which the understanding of the other quoted passages (*De Anima* B 416b33 and *De Interpretatione* 16a9-13) depends.

First of all, as Heidegger points out, it should be noticed that in this famous passage, there is no explicit mention of λόγος. Aristotle refers to the 'spoken words' and the 'writing', but not to λόγος - only in *De Interpretatione* 16b26 does this notion appear. Moreover, the παθήματα τῆς ψυχῆς should not necessarily be interpreted as *internal* states of the soul. Heidegger underlines that Aristotle does not use the term 'affection' (πάθη), which *could* be understood as a 'state (of mind)<sup>4</sup>, but παθήματα, "that which moves and is apprehended as moving" (Heidegger GA 21, 167); according to Heidegger, παθήματα is to be understood in the general sense of 'apprehending something', a sense that doesn't refer to the division between the "external world" and my "intern state of mind". The same would be true for τὰ πράγματα, that Heidegger prefers to translate as "the thing in its use" (167), following the original sense of the word (i.e. πράξις). Far from attributing any particular value to etymology, Heidegger aims to disassociate the idea of 'thing' from its meaning as 'external object to the mind', ascribed to it by a psychologistic reading of this passage. So, for Heidegger, the whole text of *De Interpretatione* could be understood without the division between the internal and external world, which Aristotle does not explicitly state.

The same could be said about ταῦτα ὁμοιώματα πράγματα (*De Interpretatione* 16a8) read as "representation" or "correspondence with things" (Heidegger GA 21, 167; also, Lo Piparo 2005, 31). Moreover, attributing 'representation' or even 'correspondence' to ὁμοίως is at

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<sup>3</sup> Of course, things are more complicated in the literature of the early twentieth century (see, for example, Külpe 1915). Still, I will not enter into the details of that discussion since my goal in this paper is to clarify Heidegger's point of view.

<sup>4</sup> Although this is not the only sense that can be attribute to it. "Aber im Text steht nicht πάθη, was allenfalls Zustände bedeuten könnte, sondern παθήματα, das, was begegnet und als Begegnendes hingenommen wird, Affektion in einem weiten Sinn" (GA 21, 167). The meaning of the term πάθη is more complex, as the famous §29 of *Sein und Zeit* shows (see GA 2, 138).

least problematic, given the wide use of the latter within the *corpus aristotelicum* (in addition to Heidegger or Lo Piparo, see Martínez Marzoa 1998). Therefore, also the idea of σύνθεσις and διαίρεσις (*De Interpretatione* 16a13) as a cognitive or psychological union of simple ideas is not present in Aristotle's text. The Stagirite merely indicates that "combination and division are essential before you can have truth and falsity" without specifying in what terms this combination and division should be understood. Because of the indetermination of this passage, the psychologistic reading could be a possible interpretation of the famous passage (see Kampe 1870, Noriega-Olmos 2013), but not the only one, nor necessarily the most adequate.

As Heidegger tries to show in his courses, one can read the Aristotelian *De Interpretatione* without presupposing the division between the internal and the external world, as psychologism claims. It is precisely this division presupposed by psychologism that is denied by Husserl in his phenomenological investigations (see, for example, Husserl [1907] 1973, where the term 'Reduktion' appears for the first time), in which Heidegger, as is well known, was immersed in his first years as a teacher in Freiburg. Thus, it is understandable why Heidegger entitles his courses as *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* (Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle, GA 61 and 62) and why, recalling these years, Heidegger says (GA 14, 97):

The more familiarity I gained with phenomenological vision, the less I was able to separate myself from Aristotle and the other Greek thinkers, and the more I was able to interpret Aristotle's writings.

### 2.3 Heidegger's Alternative Reading: From *De Interpretatione* to *De Anima*

Nevertheless, if the *De Interpretatione* (16a3-8) must not be understood in psychological terms, what is 'language' (λόγος) by Aristotle? If it is not a tool through which one can transmit the internal meaning, what is it then? For Heidegger, what Aristoteles means with λόγος has to do with a mode of existence of human existence. Following the famous statement of *Politics* (A 2, 1253a9), λόγος is what characterises human beings as opposed to other animals: the human being is ζῷον λόγον ἔχον. To deny the psychologistic interpretation, Heidegger claims that in that famous sentence ἔχειν must not be understood in terms of 'having', e.g., a faculty, something that we can use or not (as the psychologistic interpretation of language seems to admit). The λόγος is essential; a human being cannot be thought without the λόγος as, for example, Aristotle points out in *Nicomachean Ethics*: "what is proper to the mode of existing [ψυχῆ] of the human being is the activity

according to the λόγος or not without the λόγος [κατὰ λόγον ἢ μὴ ἄνευ λόγου]" (1098a7-8; 1097b28-1098a14; again, on the usual interpretations of this fragment see Lo Piparo 2005, 15). The λόγος or language is not a 'tool' that human beings can use or not to express their representations, an 'organ' of their mind, but something inseparable from our existence. But to prove that the discussion must focus on *De Anima*.

So, this alternative reading depends on the significance attributed to the investigation of the *De Anima* and its central notion, the ψυχή, on which the core of the question lies. If ψυχή is understood as 'mind' or 'inner consciousness', then the above-quoted fragments of *Nicomachean Ethics* or *Politics* can be understood in a psychologistic way. That is why in his first courses, Heidegger pays more attention to the *De Anima* rather than the *De Interpretatione*. Only by elucidation of the meaning of ψυχή as a mode of being or existing or living (and not reducing it to psychologistic terms, like soul or mind), it is possible to grasp the original understanding of ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, and, therefore, of the λόγος.

### 3 The λόγος as a Mode of Being of Human Existence: The Meaningfulness of the World

#### 3.1 Heidegger's Anti-Psychological Reading of *De Anima*

Heidegger focuses his attention on the first pages of book B to achieve an anti-psychologistic reading of the *De Anima*. Here, Aristotle points out that it would be wrong to conceive the ψυχή in terms of something that is 'within' the body or somehow separable from it, for ψυχή is to the body as the form is to the matter (*De Anima* B 412b5-10). Just as there is no wax without some shape, there is no living being, no life (ζωή), without ψυχή. An ontological 'independence' of the mind, reflected in the psychologistic division between the internal mind and the external objects, is never affirmed by the Stagirite. Therefore, Heidegger states (GA 22, 182):

Aristotle has outlined in his treatise *Περὶ ψυχῆς* the first delineations of an ontology of life. It would be entirely wrong to see it as a psychological study or to call it so.

This statement is a clear reference to books such as Kampe 1870, where the work *Περὶ ψυχῆς* is always mentioned as Aristotle's *Psychology* (Kampe 1870, 51). But, in my opinion, Heidegger's statement does not mean that Aristotle is only a philosopher of the ontology of life, nor that it is impossible to admit a particular psychologist dimension in the *De Anima*. Considering this treatise as mere psychology would



be a misunderstanding of it, but, at the same time, it would be inconsistent to deny that it contains some of the basis for the psychological or biological study of the human being. Although a few other statements could give another impression<sup>5</sup>, Heidegger himself claims that both phenomenology and psychology “have their spiritual and historical roots in Greek philosophy” (GA 61, 92). Nevertheless, recognising this dimension of *De Anima* does not imply that its psychological understanding is the original and the most philosophical relevant.

In its original sense, the ψυχή is the configuration that life adopts in its ‘existing’, that is, in its relation to the world (*intentio*) as something living, without presupposing an intra- or extra-corporeal reality. Here arises again the importance of Husserl’s theory of intentionality in Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle. As Heidegger himself explains in his courses (GA 20, 46 ff.), the main discovery of Husserl’s phenomenology consists in the negation of the psychologistic explanation of consciousness, according to which the mind is related to external objects through different kinds of capacities, like ‘perception’, ‘thinking’, ‘remembering’, etc. In opposition to this theory, Husserl affirms that all these terms are only *modi* of my intentional relation with objects, not different kinds of relations with different objects (‘the thing itself’, ‘the representation’, ‘the concept’, etc.). In fact, all the *modi* have a relation between them (see GA 20, 59). From this perspective, the *De Anima* can be understood as a phenomenological analysis *ante litteram*: instead of being an object ‘inside’ the world with different faculties that allow it to create a relation to ‘other objects’, ψυχή would be the ‘place’ where the world in general, i.e. the structure of the whole world in its different *modi* of relation opens up. ψυχή, as well as ‘consciousness’ by Husserl, is not an object in the world, but the correlation to the world. Actually, in Heidegger’s view, that’s the reason why Aristotle can claim in *De Anima*: ἡ ψυχή τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ (De Anima Γ 431b21; see GA 2, 19). Therefore, what Aristotle tries to define in *De Anima* is the kind of *modus* of intentionality that can be ascribed to the human being.

This conclusion highlights that the different ‘possibilities’ (δύναμεις) of the ψυχή described by Aristotle in his treatise, among which the λόγος stands out, should not be understood under the idea of ‘faculty’ or ‘capacity’. The Greek term, ἡ ψυχή, expresses the modes in which the living entity exists; so, intellect, sensation, motion, stillness, nutrition, and growing (see De Anima B 413a20) are not characteristics that are added to or subtracted from the body, but several modes of being of the existence called ‘life’. Therefore, Heidegger ([1922] 2007, 27) claims:

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<sup>5</sup> For example, when Heidegger claims “There is no trace in Aristotle of either that concept of truth as ‘correspondence’ or of the usual conception of the λόγος as a valid judgment and much less of a ‘theory of representation’” (GA 62, 377; see GA 2, 284).

δύναμις means: 'can'. Aristotle understands the self as δύναμις: 'I can' (in which 'I' and 'can' are not split).

In other words: I am not something *in* the world (something 'vorhanden'), and, apart from it, I 'can' do something in it, like understanding it. My existence is not independent of that act. This conception is opposed to the description of the psychologist, according to which, first of all, we perceive some qualities, then we create φαντασῖαι or mental images and, afterwards, if necessary, we express those images through language. Therefore, the λόγος or 'language', as a mode of the ψυχή, must be understood as a way of existing, of being in the world. One does not just *use language but lives in it*.

### 3.2 The Implication of Heidegger's Interpretation: the Meaningfulness of the World as the True Nature of Λόγος

The λόγος is the human being's way of existing, which is qualitatively and ontologically different from the *modus* of other living beings. But what is, therefore, the language, if not an instrument? It is clear that, in any case, language is the place of meaning. As Aristotle points out: "λόγος is significant speech [σημαντική]" (*De Interpretatione* 16b19). Now, Heidegger interprets this statement in a more radical way (compare to 2.1). If λόγος is always σημαντική and, at the same time, λόγος is the necessary way of being of human existence, there can be no experience or element in our linguistic world without meaning.

For example, if someone, during a speech, suddenly says 'wrrable', it is not true that it means nothing, that this person has pronounced something 'without sense'. In hearing this sound, one can think that maybe it is a way to create perplexity or that it is just a joke. In any way, it would be wrong to affirm that that sound has no meaning because I cannot relate it to an 'internal state of mind'; on the contrary, it is significant because for the human being everything has a meaning; *the world only opens up as the place of meaning*. It is not that there are some elements in the world, like sound or perceptions, that have no meaning or that must be connected to other elements (representations) in order to have it. Even when I come across something I do not know, like an unexpected sound, that same not-knowing does not appear meaningless, but *as something*; the sound is maybe a burst pipe, or the neighbor falling, etc. Moreover, all things are always linked to a course of action because of their meaning. This unexpected sound can mean 'we must leave the building' or 'someone needs help'.

In his first course on Aristotle in 1922, Heidegger attempts to formulate this conception of λόγος by talking about the 'meaningfulness' of the world in general (GA 61, 90-1):

Meaningfulness is a categorical determination of the world; the objects of a world, the things belonging to the world, are experienced in the character of meaningfulness. [...] Objects do not in the first place exist as bare realities, e.g. objects of nature, invested in the course of experience with a character of the world [i.e. of meaningfulness].

The human being never perceives neutral sounds, simple, *pure data*, to which it then attributes a meaning. The λόγος always articulates our world, i.e. is *meaningful*. Thus, ζῷον λόγον ἔχον indicates an animal that always lives in a meaningful world. This is the original sense of ‘having language’ and ‘living’ in it. This is the ground meaning of the famous statement: “language is the house of Being” (*die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins*) (GA 9, 313).

This reading can ultimately be corroborated through the difference established by Aristotle in the first pages of his *Politics* between the voice (φωνή), capable of emitting sounds, and the language, the λόγος (*Politics* 1253a10-15):

ἡ μὲν οὖν φωνὴ τοῦ λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος ἐστὶ σημεῖον, διὸ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχει ζῴοις [...], ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστὶ τὸ συμφέρον καὶ τὸ βλαβερὸν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ ἄδικον: τοῦτο γὰρ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἴδιον, τὸ μόνον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ καὶ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων αἴσθησιν ἔχειν.

The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well [...], but speech [λόγος] is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities.

So, there is a difference between the ψυχή, determined by pain and pleasure, and the ψυχή of human life, determined by what is just and unjust or good and evil. Only the latter dimension makes the meaningfulness of the world, since it represents the λόγος and, therefore, the existence of the human being as such. In the light of Heidegger’s interpretation, the essence of the human being consists in being always in a world traversed by meaning or values in general that makes things appear ‘as something’<sup>6</sup>, as Aristotle affirms

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<sup>6</sup> Here in a broader sense: all things are always seen ‘as something’, judged by their usefulness, their aesthetic impression, etc. Heidegger is critical with regard to the concept of value, as it is used by neo-Kantian philosophy. See e.g. GA 56/57, 29-62; 129 ff.

with the values ‘right and wrong’. Those values can be – as Aristotle says – good and bad or right and wrong (*Politics* 1253a15), but also others, like the usefulness. There is nothing in the world, in our experience, that does not concern one kind of end or value, because there is nothing no-related to meaningfulness. From this point on, the question about these fundamental values or meanings of our immediate relation to the world arises, as Heidegger underlines in *Being and time* (GA 2 90-118). In any case, that is a further question that must not be answered here.

Thus, the main point of Heidegger’s interpretation of λόγος is that language is not an instrument and, at the same time, meaning is not something internal or mental. ‘Meaning’ is the articulation of the world, so nothing meaningless could have a place in it and language cannot be reduced to a set of sounds that maybe express the thoughts. Both affirmations are two sides of the same coin, and both are expressed by the notion of λόγος in the *corpus aristotelicum*. Hence, this Aristotelian concept is the cornerstone of the anti-psychologicistic conception of language and meaning – something that Heidegger, moreover, applied to all Greek thinkers (see GA 18, 107; GA 19, 190-2).

#### **4 Conclusion: Toward a New Conception of Truth and Phenomenology**

The anti-psychological notion of meaning that arises from the Aristotelian λόγος has significant consequences for the understanding of truth and phenomenology. In conclusion, I would like to dwell, briefly, on these two aspects.

##### **4.1 The Relationship Between λόγος and ἀλήθεια in Psychologism**

For the psychologist, language is a *medium* between mental processes and things of the external world; according to this theory, truth values are only in language, specifically in judgment (as described by Heidegger GA 62, 377; GA 21, 167). Therefore, truth is conceived as the correspondence between our judgments (reflections of mental images) and things, implying that there is no truth outside the judgment since perception is neither true nor false. As it was pointed out in 2.1, if in the perception of something there is no ‘combination’ or ‘separation’, there is no truth or falsity (*De Interpretatione* 16a3-9). If I perceive the colour ‘white’, there can be no possibility to be wrong in that. On the contrary, if I affirm: ‘the book is white’ (i.e. the book appears *as* being white, *as* something white), here there is a combination (σύνθεσις) and therefore, the possibility to be wrong: ὅτι μὲν

γὰρ λευκόν, οὐ ψεύδεται, εἰ δὲ τοῦτο τὸ λευκὸν ἢ ἄλλο τι, ψεύδεται (*De Anima* Γ 428b20-5).

Late nineteenth-century studies interpreted Aristotle's works from this perspective, describing him as the father of the judicative theory of truth (see Maier [1886] 1970, 6). According to that, ἀλήθεια by Aristotle is only possible in the unity of two elements, and this structure is not the structure of all kind of experience, but only the structure of judgments, since the pre-judicative experiences (like perception, for example) does not imply it.

## 4.2 Heidegger's Alternative Reading of ἀλήθεια

As explained in 3.2, Heidegger's interpretation shows that for Aristotle there is no such thing as 'meaningless' in the world and, from this important assumption, Heidegger affirms that all our experience "has the structure of something [that appears] as something" (*GA* 2, 198). As mentioned before, something like 'x-rable' or a simple 'sound' always appears, according to Heidegger, 'as' being something referring to some values or ends in general. Following this consideration, one can affirm that this happens even in those experiences that are not judgments (where traditionally the structure of 'something that appears as something' was placed), i.e. this happens even in the pre-judicative experiences. Since everything, even perception, is understood from meaning, everything is judged as useful or useless, or as right or wrong, etc., i.e. as having a value in general, 'as' something (*Als*) (see *GA* 2, 197-212). For example, 'the wall of my room' appears to me as 'boring' or 'something that must be painted'. The 'pure perception' of a 'quality' appears to me 'as' useful or not in order to a concrete course of action, etc. That 'as', usually identify with the value of truth or falsehood, is the structure of all relations to the world, not only of judgment. Therefore, if that is correct, and ἀλήθεια (truth) means the structure of 'something that appears as something', then there cannot be an experience that is not 'true' in a particular way.

The confirmation of this conclusion from the Aristotelian notion of λόγος is found by Heidegger in Aristotle's statement of *De Anima*, where he claims that only in the combination (σύνθεσις) and separation (διαίρεσις) can be falsity; otherwise, *it is always 'true'* (ἀεὶ ἀληθής) (*De Anima* Γ 427b11). It is important to stress that Aristotle does not affirm that perception is neither true nor false, as stated by the judicative theory of truth (see, for example, Russell 2001 [1912], 70). Aristotle repeats several times that perceptions are *true*, but not false: εἶτα αἱ μὲν ἀληθεῖς (*De Anima* Γ 428a5). This theory implies that there must be, at least, two kinds of truths, as Aristotle points out in *De Anima* (Γ 430a25 ff.): the first one con-

cerns the “intellection of indivisible things” (νόησις τῶν ἀδιαρέτων), while the second one the “intellection of compound things” (νοήσις τῶν διαρετῶν) (Γ 430a26)<sup>7</sup>.

Following Aristotle, Heidegger assumes that there must be two kinds of truths; he does not deny that the judgment is characterised by the possibility of being true or false; the only assertion that he seeks to cancel is that judgment is the *only* place for truth. In Heidegger’s terms: there are two kinds of ‘as’ in which the world is shown, the pre-judicative ‘as’ and the judicative ‘as’ (see GA 2, 210). So, in line with Aristotle, Heidegger differentiates between an apophantic or judicative ‘as’ (*als*) (‘the table is showing itself *as* brown’ or ‘the table is brown’) and a more original, pre-judicative ‘as’ (*als*), named by Heidegger “hermeneutical” (GA 2, 210-11), e.g. ‘the table shows itself as being solid enough to keep the book’.

From this assessment, Heidegger deduces that the ἀλήθεια or truth is the basic articulation of the world, as it was a correlative notion to the notion of ‘meaning’. Every relation to the world is mediated by an ‘as’ and, therefore, by what Heidegger calls ἀλήθεια. So far, the world always appears having meaning, the world ἀληθεύει, is opened as truth. The reason why Heidegger uses this term lies in the fact that, according to him, the source of this pre-judicative or pre-predicative theory comes from Aristotle and from Greek philosophy in general.

For the sake of concreteness, I will not dwell further on the question of ante-predicative truth, which remains one of the fundamental objections against Heidegger’s interpretation of Aristotle and Greek philosophy. With this brief indication, I only aimed to show that this theory has no mythical character (as claims Cordero 2020), allowing to grasp further aspects and a further discussion of it (as the one developed by Berti 1990).

#### 4.3 The Relationship of λόγος and ἀλήθεια as the Ground of the Phenomenological Analysis

In sum, Heidegger’s first reading of Aristotle’s philosophy is aimed against a determinate interpretation of the notion of λόγος, by which language is considered an instrument to communicate mental and internal images of our mind to others; on the contrary, as he claims,

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<sup>7</sup> That is the reason why Heidegger’s interpretation of truth does not contradict the affirmation of *De Interpretatione* 16b33: “Not every sentence is a statement-making sentence, but only those in which there is truth or falsity. There is no truth or falsity in all sentences: prayer is a sentence but is neither true nor false”. According to Heidegger’s interpretation, prayer is a kind of truth, but not the same as it is the object of study in *De Interpretatione*.

λόγος signifies 'meaningfulness', an essential characteristic of human understanding of the world and of human life in general. The direct consequence of this re-reading shows that ἀλήθεια, traditionally only associated with 'judgment', must be understood in a broader sense, so that the place of truth can also be pre-judgmental. Heidegger's anti-psychologistic reading of the λόγος in Aristotle constitutes one of the pillars of his exegesis of Greek philosophers, but also the ground of his existential analytic. Therefore, Aristotle stands as a philosophical "example" (*Vorbild*) to be followed (GA 63, 5). The relationship between λόγος and ἀλήθεια is the most fundamental learning that phenomenology can extract from Aristotle's *corpus*. In order to explain that, Heidegger starts *Being and Time* with the excursus of §7; and that is the reason why Heidegger wants to present phenomenology through the λόγος, translated as "to make manifest 'what is being talked about' in discourse" (GA 2, 43).

By defining the λόγος as "to make manifest 'what is being talked about' in discourse" Heidegger defends, first and foremost, that 'meaning' ('what is being talked about' in discourse) is not something internal in our mind. Thus, philosophy must consider the idea of meaning for *what it is*, namely what is *manifest* in speaking, in language, *without presupposing* the psychological (and most natural) conception of it. This elimination opens a new view of truth and of the 'world', which is no more understood as the set of objects, but the *space of meaning*. The phenomenology, therefore, must be an analysis of this 'space' and its possibility<sup>8</sup>. Only from this new standpoint one can see what language is and penetrate in other aspects of it. In short, with this formulation of λόγος and the particular excursus of §7, Heidegger wants to avoid a specific way of thinking reality that makes impossible a real philosophical investigation. With this assessment, Heidegger is presenting his philosophical project.

This explains why a treatise like *Being and Time* has to resort to a definition of λόγος that *seems* empty, like the following: "what is 'being talked about' in discourse", but by which 'no theory' about the 'meaning' is presupposed; discovering such theory is the goal of the rest of the book. The same reason explains why Heidegger sees in his Greek translation of the title "λέγειν τὰ φαινόμενα" a precise expression of the motto: "To the things themselves!" (GA 2, 46). This lemma contains first (although not only) an anti-psychologistic program. So, the justification of the original or primary sense of λόγος coincides with the clarification of Heidegger's philosophical goal. Hence, the

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<sup>8</sup> To cancel this kind of psychological presupposition is the starting point of phenomenology, not only Husserl's, but Heidegger's too, although he uses other terms and references. For the importance of Husserl's starting point in Heidegger's (more radical) thought, see von Herrmann 1981; 2000.

central importance of an analysis of the concept of λόγος at the very beginning of his investigation, as it is presented in the “Introduction” of *Being and Time* (*B. Der Begriff des Logos*) (43-6).

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