

**Andrzej Ostrowski**

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8374-6884>

*Institute of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology*

*UMCS in Lublin*

*andrzej.ostrowski@mail.umcs.pl*

## TO BE WISE OR TO THINK?

**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is both to try to answer the question: *To be wise or to think?* and draw the reader's attention to implications regarding wisdom and thinking that can be derived by analyzing the content of M. Heidegger's treatise *What Is Called Thinking?* Special attention is paid to the thesis he put forward – *we do not think yet*. In this way, the role of the artist and art in arriving at a definitive answer to the question posed by Heidegger is emphasized. The conclusions that result from the analyses are additionally illustrated with an example taken from fiction. It serves as an exemplification, so one of the many possible forms of aesthetic thinking inherent in artistic creation is referred to in the considerations, like in the case of Heidegger pointing to poetry.

**Keywords:** wisdom, reason, thinking, stupidity, Heidegger

To avoid interpretive misunderstandings, the way key concepts are understood is generally predefined or, if possible, defined. In the given case, such concepts are thinking and understanding, but also wisdom and reason. As these considerations refer to M. Heidegger's statements on thinking and the fundamental thesis he posited: *we do not think yet*<sup>1</sup> – the attempt to specify how to understand key concepts, not to mention their definitions, can be considered unfounded on the assumption that understanding is an effect of thinking, and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?*, transl. Janusz Mizera, Józef Tischner, [in:] *Filozofia współczesna*, T. 1, ed. Zbigniew Kuderowicz, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1990, pp. 297-309.

reason as a cognitive ability is its condition. Nevertheless, without being able to define the term thinking, many will claim to think and understand; the same is true of other activities we are able to perform without being able to explain what they consist in.

In Heidegger's case, the problem is more difficult, because in attempting to explain what the essence of thinking is, he started from the thesis that *we do not think yet*. To realize this attempt, he first appealed to poetry, pointing out that conclusions about thinking also apply to all art.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, despite the universality of Heidegger's conclusions about thinking, it is reasonable to introduce the phrase "aesthetic thinking" into the consideration. Underlying this proposal is the assumption that aesthetic thinking is inherent in at least any artistic creation. Accepting this assumption, it is possible to put forward a thesis: any artistic creation is one of the possible forms (a possible expression) of aesthetic thinking regardless of the extent to which aesthetic thinking affects the creative process and, consequently, also its effect (the work) and art in the broadest sense. Accepting the proposed assumptions, one can – without falling into contradiction with Heidegger's position – state that through aesthetic thinking it is possible to express not only the way artists think, but also the essence of thinking in general. Accepting this thesis leads to the conclusion that distinctions between distinguishable types of thinking are apparent, or that, while maintaining otherwise justifiable differences, they have a common source, which is fully revealed when attention is turned to artistic creation, especially poetry.

Heidegger opted for the second possibility, with the not insignificant role assigned to artistic creativity in demonstrating the essence of thinking in general. In doing so, he made use of selected philosophical theories.

In the common-sense view, thinking and wisdom, but also understanding and reason, are considered interdependent. Wise persons, implicitly using reason, is generally not denied the fact that they think and understand something. These relationships are so obvious that they are usually not subject to detailed analysis. However, paying attention to Heidegger's reflections on thinking gives us an opportunity to put forward the thesis that the mentioned dependencies are not so obvious after all, which is expressed to some extent in the title of the article – *To be wise or to think?*

If Heidegger's thesis that *we do not think yet* is accepted, a number of problems arise, which can be expressed by such questions as: can anything be inferred while we do not think yet? How is it possible to answer the question of what it means to think if *we do not think yet*? Can one be wise without thinking?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> A different kind of problems arise when discussing the issue of thinking in the context of Heidegger's philosophy as a whole (fundamental ontology and its implementation) and

The purpose of the article is not only to try to answer its core question, but also to draw the reader's attention to implications regarding wisdom and thinking that can be derived from the thesis that *we do not think yet*.<sup>4</sup> The conclusions that result from the considerations are further illustrated with an example taken from fiction. It serves as an exemplification, so one of the many possible forms of aesthetic thinking inherent in artistic creation is referred to in the paper, like in the case of Heidegger pointing to poetry.

### Why do we not think yet?

Heidegger's introductory thoughts on thinking, contained in his short treatise *What Does It Mean to Think*, can be summarized in three theses:

*We do not think yet.*

*We do not think yet*, because we cannot think.

We know that we do not yet know how to think, because we ask the question: *what does it mean to think?*<sup>5</sup>

In considering the conditions of readiness to think, which must be learned, Heidegger tacitly assumed that the relationships expressed in the theses are: first, recognized; second, understood. Posing the question of *what it means to think* indicates not only that we do not know how to think and thus *do not think yet*, but also that we are ready to learn to think. The problem, however, is that the condition for posing such a question is, paradoxically, thinking. This conclusion can be reached based on Heidegger's statements, as at the beginning of his reflections he claimed: "We get to what it means to think if we think ourselves".<sup>6</sup>

Knowing what thinking is precedes thinking. Therefore, one can think not only without knowing what thinking is, but also without knowing that one is

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considering different meanings of the words: *heißt, Denken* and the question *Was heißt Denken?* On this subject, cf., e.g., J. Żelazna, *Pytanie Heideggera: Co znaczy „myśleć istotnie”?*, [in:] „Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici”, Filozofia XIV - Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne - Zeszyt 250 - 1993, p. 91; cf. also the next pages.

<sup>4</sup> In the article, reader's attention is drawn to the consequences that can be derived from the analysis of Heidegger's assumptions in the proposed interpretive approach, in contrast to the article *Sztuka jako źródło myślenia?*, in which the issue of the initiation of thinking is considered (cf. A. Ostrowski, *Sztuka jako źródło myślenia?*, [in:] ed. Teresa Pękala, *Myślenie estetyczne*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, Lublin 2023, pp. 79-89). Even though the two articles deal with different issues, they can be considered complementary, especially since their considerations start from the same premises.

<sup>5</sup> Taking this thesis as a general principle leads to the conclusion that if we pose a question about anything, we do not know what it is, we do not understand it, or we cannot do it.

<sup>6</sup> M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?...*, p. 297.

thinking, because in order to know that one is thinking one must know what thinking is. In response to the question of how we know that *we do not think yet*, one must cite the second and third theses. *We do not think yet*, because not only do *we not know how to think*, but we also *do not know what it means to think*, whereby, however, according to Heidegger's quoted statement, to answer the question of what it means to think one must think. When, then, does thinking begin, since, as is already known, one can think not only without knowing what thinking is, but also without knowing that one thinks? Posed in this way, taking into account the premises taken from Heidegger's considerations analyzed, the question is most easily answered by pointing to the moment when the question was posed: *what does it mean to think?* At the moment of realizing that *we do not think yet*, we begin to think, although *we do not yet know what it means to think*. However, the proposed solution is perplexing, because its adoption allows us to ask: without thinking, is it possible to come to the conclusion (here: to realize) that we do not think yet? A positive answer to such a question, however, is unacceptable, since one would have to assume that conclusions are not the result of thinking. Thus, it is less troublesome, although not unproblematic, to say that *one must think to conclude that one does not think yet*.

In order to avoid accusations of absurdity or, as Plato would say, insolence,<sup>7</sup> which can be spoken of on account of the indicated interrelationships concerning the assertion that *we do not think yet* and thinking as a necessary condition for it, it is proposed here to consider this condition as a kind of pre-thought that precedes thinking (in Heidegger's case this would be "proper thinking", a term he introduces only at the end of his consideration). An additional assumption is that, unlike thinking, which must be learned, pre-thinking is given to everyone. The rationale for making the last assumption is to simplify deliberation. For example, it is then unreasonable to ask about conditions for the initiation of pre-thinking, since sooner or later it will manifest itself in almost everyone, whether someone helps them with it or not, just as almost everyone will eventually begin to crawl and then walk by adopting an upright posture. Heidegger assumed that man is inherently endowed with the ability to think because he is a rational being.<sup>8</sup> The ability to think, however, is not the

<sup>7</sup> Plato is referred to because of the source of the problems addressed by Heidegger. The analogies to which reader's attention is drawn are therefore not accidental, with Heidegger not mentioning Plato at all in the text analyzed. In the case of thinking as a condition of constitution, *we do not think yet* is an analogous problem, but in relation to knowledge, Socrates wrote: „Do you not think it impudent, not knowing what knowledge is, to take upon yourself to explain what it consists in knowing something?” (Platon, *Teajtet*, [in:] *Ibidem*, *Protagoras*. *Teajtet*, transl. Wł. Witwicki, Antyk, Kęty 2002, p. 172 [196 D]). The solution to this problem in Plato's philosophy leads to further issues that Heidegger also addresses, namely: memory (mnemosyne) and what the object of recollection is.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?...*, p. 297.

same as thinking. Interpretively, it is proposed here to equate this ability with pre-thinking, which will allow us to focus attention on thinking, which, according to Heidegger's thesis, we have yet to learn. The ability to think understood as pre-thinking is thus a given, while thinking is a task.

Thinking as a task to be performed must be preceded by learning to think, with Heidegger paying special attention to willingness to undertake such learning. His answer to the question: "What does it mean to learn?" is: "Man learns insofar as in his action and inaction he directs himself to that which materially appealed to him. We learn to think by paying attention to what gives rise to thinking".<sup>9</sup>

One part of the learning process is the search for an answer to the question: *what does it mean to think?* In other words, it should be said, as Heidegger intended, that thinking as a problem that gives rise to thinking has "spoken" to the subject, and the subject has paid attention to it. Thinking is thus relational, but the cause of the fact that we do not yet think is also interdependent, according to Heidegger. The cause is both the subject, who insufficiently turns "to what remains to be thought" (insufficiently pays attention), and, to a somewhat greater extent, the object, which "to think (*zu-Denkende*) itself turns away from the human being and has long since kept itself turned away".<sup>10</sup> It is also worth noting that, according to Heidegger, that which gives rise to thought is always (that is, according to Heidegger, now and then) "serious". "That-which-is-most-serious shows itself in the fact that we do not think yet".<sup>11</sup>

Many "lovers of wisdom" would like to know the unequivocal, unquestionable answer to the question of *what it means to think*, especially since, in the context of the position that Heidegger took after E. Husserl, practicing philosophy does not yet mean that we think.

"Showing interest in philosophy does not yet prove one's readiness to think. Even the fact that we spend years engaged in the treatises and writings of great thinkers does not guarantee that we think, or even that we are ready to learn to think. Engaging in philosophy may even delude us most persistently with the appearance that we think, because, after all, we 'philosophize'".<sup>12</sup>

One must assume that Heidegger deliberately provokes us to stimulate thinking. The proverbial stirring of a "pot of philosophers" in this case is not

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 300; cf. also the next pages.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 299.

a thoughtless act. Even though the analyzed content was originally prepared for a radio lecture, i.e., aimed at a wide audience, it should not be thought that most of them understood what Heidegger had to say and made an effort to learn to think, not to mention to think itself, due to the controversial nature of the main thesis. However, it can be expected that, because of their interest in philosophy, at least the interested party is obliged to seek an answer to the question of what it means to think, to finally start thinking.

In considering thinking, however, Heidegger went as far as to be even more provocative, for he turned his attention to the fundamental issue of species identity. Even though in theoretical terms the issue is strictly philosophical, in practice it affects every representative of *homo sapiens sapiens*, as Heidegger made the activity of "pointing" to what is "to be thought" a condition of being human. "Man, therefore, is not first of all man and then also occasionally someone who points, but: attracted by what withdraws, in drawing to it and so pointing into the withdrawal, man is only man. His essence lies in being such a pointing man".<sup>13</sup>

Heidegger's statement implies that we exist as human beings insofar as we point remotely to that which, as unknowable, withdraws. If attention to pointing is identified with an attempt to answer the question of *what it means to think*, it should be remembered, however, that according to Heidegger's starting thesis, *we do not think yet*.

The originality of Heidegger's position is evidenced neither by the implicitly adopted concept of man as being *in statu nascendi*, nor by his attention to pointing, which, with some simplification, can be identified with thinking as the constitutive element of man, since this type of solution in philosophy had already been propounded earlier, e.g., by Descartes. On the other hand, it is possible to speak of originality because of the radicality of the thesis *we do not think yet*, and the resulting consequences in the form of the conclusion that since we do not think yet, we are not human yet.

Again, to avoid the accusation of absurdity, which can be spoken of this time due to the indicated relation concerning the statement "... in drawing to it and so pointing into the withdrawal, man is only man," a human who is yet to become a human by means of pointing (to be a human is to indicate) can be called a pre-human.

The solution that the unknowable (what gives-to-think; what is at a distance), as opposed to the known (what is given), stimulates thinking can also be considered as an element testifying to the originality of Heidegger's position. This can be claimed even though there is an analogy to the sophistic issue

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 303.

raised by Plato, regarding a lack of object's knowledge of the thought sought, making it impossible to find. This problem was solved by Socrates in Plato's dialogue *Menon*. Knowledge of the sought appears due to memory (nativism) and recalling it (anamnesis).<sup>14</sup> Heidegger, on the other hand, without mentioning either Plato or Socrates, referred to memory and recollection (remembrance) to express the essence of thinking using the example of F. Hölderlin's poetry. However, in contrast to the position expressed by Socrates, adopting Heidegger's solution leads to a negative consequence that will occur after the final recognition of the unknown. Obtaining full knowledge of what was "to-think" means that the state of stimulation to think will disappear; the activity of "pointing" will also disappear, and the human will be annihilated, i.e., they will return to the pre-human form. Thus, one can derive the conclusion that one is only a human being while one is a pre-human being.

If one is already human, however, a scenario that includes a return to the pre-human form is unlikely because of a simple relationship: the more we know, the less we know. Expanding the scope of knowledge simultaneously reveals the vastness of the area of ignorance. Even though Heidegger did not take into account the quantitative factor in the analyzed reflections on thinking, one can nevertheless risk the thesis that the expanding scope of ignorance intensifies the activity of "pointing", which allows us to conclude that the more we "point", the more human we are.

The de-subjective condition for the unknowable to "give-thought" is "pointing" to the unknowable. The unknowable must therefore be the object of intention, having recognized it; first, that it is; second, that it is unknowable. The object of thought is only that which has been recognized as the unknowable. On the other hand, that which is known (given), since it does not "give-it-to-think", is the object of knowledge (knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*), the possession of which testifies to reason, as a cognitive capacity, and, as a rule, its accompanying wisdom as the ability to use this knowledge to give advice, solve some problem, decide on an action, etc., Therefore, nothing follows from the mere fact of having knowledge without the ability to use it, so wisdom accompanying reason is assumed, while being contrasted with thinking, since it is connected only with the unknowable.

Although attention is here paid to knowledge in the broadest sense, the conclusion about the opposition of wisdom to thinking is also in line with Heidegger's statement about science, and therefore also scientific knowledge acquired according to certain rules that meet the requirements of scientism.

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Platon, *Menon*, [in:] *Ibidem, Gorgias. Menon*, transl. Paweł Siwek, PWN, Warszawa 1991, pp. 160-161 [80D-81D]. In this case, Socrates does not justify this solution, but invokes priests, priestesses, Pindar and other divine poets.

From his considerations, it follows that what is "to-think" (that which gives-to-think), i.e., what is "unknowable" is not the subject of science. According to Heidegger: "Science does not think".<sup>15</sup> In addition to this controversial thesis, he stated, among other things:

"That which opens up will never be proven, if to prove means: to derive assertions about some state of affairs from the relevant assumptions by a chain of conclusions. Whoever wants to prove and have proved such a thing which has opened, of itself appearing and hiding at the same time, by no means makes judgments according to the highest and strict measure of knowledge."<sup>16</sup>

The solution presented, which is to equate the ability to use the knowledge one possesses (knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*) with wisdom, while contrasting it with thinking, is a major simplification, but it is sufficient to indicate the difference between wisdom and stupidity, reason, and its absence (possibly a little reason, or wits). Given that one can make use of the knowledge one possesses in many ways, including inappropriately, wisdom that makes use of knowledge received through reason guarantees that this knowledge will be used appropriately. Due to the desire to simplify considerations, criteria that prove the proper use of knowledge are abstracted from in the paper.

The issue of thinking was further problematized by Heidegger with the assumption that the condition of thinking is reason (*ratio*), which "*develops into thinking*".<sup>17</sup> In other words, to think one must have reason, but to have reason one must think. Considering the reason from which thinking begins, it will be a little reason (wits) that can potentially grow to a proper size, thus enabling proper thinking. Feedback is a troublesome concept when the question of initiating this process is raised. A way out of this theoretical difficulty is possible with the adoption of the already proposed solution of referring to pre-thought and pre-human, and accepting that some primordial form of reason, which will consistently be referred to here as pre-reason, is also given along with these elements.

### **Are wisdom and reason needed to understand anything?**

The title of the article (*To be wise or to think?*) implicitly includes the thesis that thinking as an alternative to being wise (wisdom) implies stupidity, on the assumption that stupidity is the opposite of wisdom. However, this perverse

<sup>15</sup> M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?...*, p. 301.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 297.



thesis, which contradicts common sense, is based on the results of an analysis of Heidegger's reflections on thinking. The premises of the thesis are as follows:

- *we do not think yet*

- the object of thinking is that which is unknowable (that "to-think", that which "gives to think", that which "gives-to-think", that which is "pointed out")

- the object of knowledge (knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*) is what is known, what is given

- what is known (given) testifies to reason as a cognitive ability and wisdom as the ability to use knowledge, that is, what is known (given);

- what is known (given) does not stimulate thinking.

Based on these premises, one can distinguish the following positions in opposition to each other: reason – lack of reason (pre-reason), knowledge (what is known, given) – lack of knowledge (what is not known) and wisdom – thinking.

The premises and the distinguished positions make it possible to formulate a syllogism: if thinking is the opposite of wisdom, and wisdom is the opposite of stupidity, then thinking is stupidity. As a scheme of inference, a syllogism is unreliable, but in this case it is proposed to accept it. Heidegger did not equate thinking with stupidity and did not oppose it to wisdom, but such a conclusion follows from an analysis of his reflections on thinking. Even though the possibility of an accusation of absurdity (e.g., one must think to conclude that one does not think yet) has been signaled regarding some of Heidegger's ideas, it is nevertheless assumed that none of his theses are wrong but must instead be properly interpreted.

To answer the question: "*Are wisdom and reason needed to understand anything?*", the previous findings will be used while referring to exemplification drawn from fiction, i.e., one of the many possible forms of aesthetic thinking signaled in the introductory part of the article. Since Heidegger's basic thesis – *we do not think yet* – is controversial, and the analysis of his reflections on thinking leads to many non-obvious interpretive solutions, it will be illustrated with an equally controversial example, from which equally non-obvious, but nevertheless analogous conclusions to those reached so far are drawn. Given this condition, books whose main character is Winnie the Pooh<sup>18</sup> will be refer-

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. A. Milne, *Kubuś Puchatek. Winnie The Pooh* (bilingual version), transl. Irena Tuwim. Prószyński S-ka, Warszawa 2003, [First edition: 1926 – transl. into Polish 1938] and A. A. Milne, *Chatka Puchatka. The House at Pooh Corner* (bilingual version), transl. Irena Tuwim. Prószyński S-ka, Warszawa 2021, [first edition: 1928 – transl. into Polish 1938]. It is worth mentioning that Winnie the Pooh has lived to see many post-original versions of his adventures over time.

red to. An additional rationale for the choice made is that, in addition to the adventures of Winnie the Pooh and his friends, these books are on the subject of thinking. They emphasize, first of all, the effort it takes to initiate and continue this process. Each of the characters has a problem with thinking. For some of them, thinking and coming up with something is easier, while for others it is more difficult. A separate issue is the effect of thinking, that is, the quality of the conclusions<sup>19</sup> which thinkers come to. Another rationale for choosing Winnie-the-Pooh books is that they are most probably the first reading on the subject of thinking that children have been acquainted with since the late 1920s, through listening to the stories or reading on their own.

Even though whole books in which Winnie The Pooh's adventures are described have been referred to in the paper, the focus is on only one passage taken from the book *The House at Pooh Corner*. The length of the quote arises from the need to include the context necessary to understand the conclusion.

“What I think,” said Pooh, “is I think we'll go to Pooh Corner and see Eeyore, because perhaps his house has been blown down, and perhaps he'd like us to build it again.”

“What I think,” said Piglet, “is I think we'll go and see Christopher Robin, only he won't be there, so we can't.”

“Let's go and see *everybody*,” said Pooh. “Because when you've been walking in the wind for miles, and you suddenly go into somebody's house, and he says, 'Hallo, Pooh, you're just in time for a little smackerel of something,' and you are, then it's what I call a Friendly Day.”

Piglet thought that they ought to have a Reason for going to see everybody, like Looking for Small or Organizing an Expotition, if Pooh could think of something.

Pooh could.

“We'll go because it's Thursday,” he said, “and we'll go to wish everybody a Very Happy Thursday. Come on, Piglet.”

They got up; and when Piglet had sat down again, because he didn't know the wind was so strong, and had been helped up by Pooh, they started off. They went to Pooh's house first, and luckily Pooh was at home just as they got there, so he asked them in, and they had some, and then they went on to Kanga's house, holding on to each other, and shouting, “Isn't it?” and “What?” and “I can't hear.” By the time they got to Kanga's house they were so buffeted that

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<sup>19</sup> The quality of the conclusions can be „measured” by the logicity of the argument, given the appropriate premises (with respect to the topic of consideration), and the possibility of achieving a practical effect, i.e., solving a problem, for example: how to reasonably, that is, for some reason, drop in on someone to get a small LITTLE SOMETHING?

they stayed to lunch. Just at first it seemed rather cold outside afterwards, so they pushed on to Rabbit's as quickly as they could. "We've come to wish you a Very Happy Thursday," said Pooh, when he had gone in and out once or twice just to make sure that he *could* get out again.

"Why, what's going to happen on Thursday?" asked Rabbit, and when Pooh had explained, and Rabbit, whose life was made up of Important Things, said, "Oh, I thought you'd really come about something," they sat down for a little... and by-and-by Pooh and Piglet went on again. The wind was behind them now, so they didn't have to shout.

"Rabbit's clever," said Pooh thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Piglet, "Rabbit's clever."

"And he has Brain."

"Yes," said Piglet, "Rabbit has Brain."

There was a long silence.

"I suppose," said Pooh, "that that's why he never understands anything".<sup>20</sup>

In the case of children, reading about thinking is important because one of the activities that adults force on children from their earliest years is actually thinking. Abstracting from the means used (books, puzzles, riddles, developmental toys, etc.), coercion can take various forms, for example: encouragement (please, think a little), command (think about it), or order (you have to think). Various forms of coercive thinking are generally accompanied by appropriate voice intonation, body language, a promise of reward or threat of punishment, but not an explanation of what the activity consists of. Consideration of this premise further confirms the validity of the question posed by Heidegger: *What does it mean to think?*

Winnie the Pooh knows that he must think, although no one has taught him how to think and has not explained what thinking is all about; on the contrary, he has repeatedly heard from his friends, led by Christopher, that he is a silly Old Bear, or a Bear with very little brains, even pooh, which in common-sense terms means that he not only understands nothing, but also can't think of anything. However, from the passage of text quoted, confirmed by others, it is clear that "Pooh could". In addition, from the statement he made about Rabbit, it is clear that Pooh understands everything, at least in terms of matters that directly affect him and that he initiates.

It is difficult to explain what thinking consists of when, according to Heidegger's thesis, we do not yet know how to think and, consequently, we do not think yet; it is even more difficult when we do not realize it. Therefore, it can

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<sup>20</sup> A. A. Milne, *Chatka Puchatka. The House at Pooh Corner...*, pp. 162, 164, 166.

be said that even as adults we are at the stage of pre-thinking. If so, it is not easy to resist the conundrum that as adults, not knowing ourselves what it means to think, we require children to think while pretending to think. It can be assumed that this situation will not change with the acceptance of Heidegger's proposition as to the understanding of the essence of thinking. Using Hölderlin's poetry<sup>21</sup>, Heidegger pointed to *mnemosyne* – specifically understood memory, i.e.:

"Memory here is the concentration of thinking, which, focused, remains with what is already thought in advance, as it constantly wishes to be thought before everything else. Memory is the concentration of thought on what is to-be-thought before everything else. This focus protects with itself and conceals within itself that which, in everything that exists and pledges itself as essential and past, is left to be thought in advance. Memory, the notion centered on that-to-think, is the source basis of poetic creativity. The essence of poetry, therefore, consists in thinking".<sup>22</sup>

Heidegger, seeking an answer to the question of the essence of thinking, also appealed to Parmenides and his statements on "taking over" and "being of being." The following Heidegger's thesis is crucial to the use of Parmenides' position: "The essential feature of thinking so far is taking over (*Vernehmen*). The power of taking over is called reason".<sup>23</sup>

In interpretive terms, it has already been established that *it is necessary to think in order to come to the conclusion that we do not think yet*. To avoid the possibility of an accusation of absurdity, it has been proposed that the thinking necessary to formulate the statement that we do not yet think should be referred to as pre-thinking, which is a given, meaning that it is a natural human predisposition. From Heidegger's quoted statement, which acts as an introductory premise to allude to the philosophy of Parmenides, it follows that pre-thinking (here: "thinking so far") consists in acquisition that depends on reason. It will be recalled that, according to Heidegger, reason "develops in thinking". Therefore, in interpretive terms, reason, which is given as a natural human predisposition, has been referred to as pre-reason. Heidegger explains taking over, which expresses the essence of thinking, as follows:

<sup>21</sup> More on this, cf. C. Woźniak, *Martina Heideggera myślenie sztuki*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2014, especially p. 183.

<sup>22</sup> M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?...*, pp. 303-304. With *mnemosyne* understood in this way, it is again worth noting Plato's position and Socrates' statement, this time regarding memory being compared to a wax tablet, the gift of the Muses' mother, *Mnemosyne* (cf. Platon, *Teajtet...*, p. 165 [191 C-D]), whereas Plato calls thinking „The conversation that the soul has with itself, whatever it takes into account.” (idem, p. 161 [189 E]).

<sup>23</sup> M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?...*, p. 307.

"Taking over is the translation of the Greek word *noein*, which means: to notice that which makes itself present, to apprehend and take over the noticed as making itself present. This embracing taking over is pre-presenting in the simple, broad and yet essential sense that we allow what is before us to behave as it behaves".<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, in direct reference to the philosophy of Parmenides, Heidegger stated: "...thinking as taking over takes its essence from the being of being (...) the being of being means: the presence of the presenter, the presentation of the presenter. (...) Thinking as taking over takes over that which presents itself in its presentation".<sup>25</sup>

In addition to considering the essence of thinking, Heidegger also refers to the philosophy of I. Kant, which gives rise to another statement: "The essential feature of thinking is representation. Presenting develops taking over. Representation itself is re-presentation".<sup>26</sup>

Paying attention to Heidegger's proposed understanding of the essence of thinking opens up many interpretive possibilities. However, this issue is only hinted at here, since it is not the main subject of the analysis. Instead, Heidegger's proposal has been referred to, in order to show that his answer to the question of *what it means to think* by pointing to the essence of thinking does not change the situation of adults who, while requiring children to think, do not think themselves. For it turns out that knowing the answer to the question of *what it means to think*, contrary to possible expectations in this regard, does not yet mean that we think. Otherwise, it would have to be assumed that anyone who knows *what it means to think* not only thinks, but is an artist – a poet, possibly a representative of another art, and in addition a follower of both Parmenides' and Kant's philosophies, at least to the extent to which Heidegger refers, assuming that they are possible to combine.

Nor will the situation of adults, including professional philosophers, change when they abstract from Heidegger's sources of inspiration and their consequences. While pre-thinking (in Heidegger's case, wrong thinking) is given to everyone and consists (after Heidegger in "apprehending being in its being" ("representing objects in their objecthood"), "...we do not think properly as long as we remain unthinking of what being of being consists in, when it appears as presence".<sup>27</sup> At this point of consideration, the question must be posed: who fulfills this condition when they think that they think?

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 309.

In the context of Heidegger's considerations and the findings so far, forcing adults to think is nothing more than prior activation and development of pre-thinking in children, which is a natural ability, so we do not need to learn it, unlike the need to learn to think (think properly). Thus, it is only a matter of accelerating the activation of the pre-thinking process, which is a condition for thinking.

Learning is associated with school, even when the teaching process is not institutionalized. The process of education is also often referred to as "school" in everyday language (e.g., idiomatic Polish expressions using the noun "school"). If the process of learning to think is referred to as school, then the stage preceding school will be the pre-school stage. From this it follows that the difference between children and adults lies only in the fact that the latter are in the older group and, as a rule, know more. Therefore, they have more brains and are wiser, i.e., able to use the knowledge they have to the extent of their abilities, they know *what*, *how* and *why*. One does not have to go through an institutionalized school-education process to know what invaluable role elders play in personal development, with this being experienced more acutely within school-education facilities.

The choice of Winnie the Pooh as an example does not mean that the thesis: "Winnie the Pooh was a great philosopher" is being advocated here, as in the case with some authors inspired by the character and his adventures.<sup>28</sup> The author is also not pursuing what is absent or so deeply hidden in the books about the adventures of Winnie the Pooh that, except for selected authors inspired by this literary character, no one is able to perceive it. The point is only an example with which to illustrate selected aspects of Heidegger's deliberations and the conclusions that follow them. The quoted passage has been used because of Winnie the Pooh's explicit statements: "Rabbit is clever", "Rabbit has Brain", and because of the statement made by him concerning Rabbit: "this is why he never understands anything".<sup>29</sup>

It should be mentioned that the thesis of Rabbit's cleverness and brains is based on many premises. In the quoted passage, Winnie the Pooh additionally only confirms what the reader can learn about from other passages in the

<sup>28</sup> Cf., for example, J. T. Williams, *Kubuś Puchatek i filozofowie*, transl. Rafał T. Prinke, Dom Wydawniczy REBIS, Poznań 1998, especially pp. 13, 140. Williams also posited that Winnie the Pooh inspired Heidegger's considerations in his treatise *What Is Called Thinking?* (cf. p. 145).

<sup>29</sup> In the Polish translation, to which I also refer, English *brain* has been translated as *reason*, while *clever* has been translated as *wise*, where *clever* can also be translated as, among other things, *capable*, *resourceful*, *intelligent*; in the proposed interpretation, the ability to use the knowledge one has (knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*) is equated with wisdom.

books. First and foremost, Rabbit has knowledge. For example, he knows what a "RESOLUTION" is. He can prepare a plan of action and carry it out, albeit with varying results. Similarly, he handles many important matters with varying results, since his "life consisted of Important Matters alone". He also knows how to write and read, albeit with some problems, and how to explain difficult-to-understand concepts or various kinds of issues (also with some problems). In other words, Rabbit knows *what*, *how* and *why*, because he is smart and has brains; nevertheless, according to Pooh, "he never understands anything." The most important thing in all this is that silly Bear, Pooh with very little brains, even fluff, points out the reasons why Rabbit "never understands anything" - cleverness and brains.

If Rabbit, with his knowledge, cleverness and brains and the fact that he "never understands anything" is considered not as an individual case, but as an example of a general principle, then it must be concluded that cleverness, brains and knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why* do not guarantee understanding; while literally reading the statement made by Pooh, one must even conclude that they make it impossible to understand anything.

The Bear with a very little mind, even fluff, thinks a lot out of necessity, because in this way he compensates for the lack of reason, wisdom and knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*, while most often he is not sure that what he comes up with is invented correctly. It is a consequence of the lack of knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why* (precisely, it is the lack of knowledge of the criteria that confirm the correctness of the conclusions). However, if understanding is taken as an overriding value, the possibility of formulating a more radical position will arise. Thinking will then not compensate for the deficiencies of reason and wisdom but will be an alternative to reason and wisdom. In accepting this position, however, it should be borne in mind that thinking and understanding accompany stupidity, since it has been contrasted with reason and wisdom. One who is wise and has reason (big reason) does not think because they know *what*, *how* and *why* - unfortunately, at the expense of not understanding anything; alternatively, they think only when the knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why* is insufficient - but then at least they understand something in terms of what they have thought of.

### **To understand one must think, or the apotheosis of stupidity**

Based on the statement that Winnie the Pooh makes about Rabbit, and keeping in mind Heidegger's theses, one can speak of the following relationship: if someone has wisdom and reason (implicitly, knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*, and the ability to use it), then the consequence is non-thinking and inability to understand. If they feature stupidity (as the opposite of wisdom) and pre-understanding, i.e., very little reason, wits, even fluff (implicitly, lack

of knowledge of *what*, *how* and *why*, or lack of the ability to use it), then the consequence is thinking by necessity and consequently understanding.

Opting for thinking can thus be interpreted as the apotheosis of stupidity. Consideration of the indicated dependencies leads to a dilemma: to have reason and be wise, and consequently know a lot and understand nothing like Rabbit, or to have little reason, even pooh, and be stupid, and consequently think and understand like Winnie the Pooh.

A far-reaching analogy to this dilemma is the question: to remain a wise man (a scientist, an educated man) and make use of found and possibly newly acquired knowledge, or to abandon everything and become a philosopher who, thinking and remembering the danger of achieving wisdom, which is the disappearance of thinking and non-understanding, only aspires to wisdom since he or she is a devotee of it.

It is clear from Heidegger's considerations confirmed by the example of Winnie the Pooh that it is impossible to combine these positions. However, they are inseparable from each other on the basis of their aforementioned opposition. It can even be said that they condition each other in terms of specifying how to understand them. Accordingly, reason will act as a point of reference and, in Heidegger's deliberations, a specifically understood context, for the absence of reason (pre-reason). The same will be true of knowledge (what is known, given) and lack of knowledge (what is not known), as well as wisdom and thinking. In the case of Heidegger's considerations, the counterpart of the reference point is the context, since Heidegger, after demonstrating why *we do not think yet*, recommends waiting in the known, the given. It will be recalled that Heidegger's reason for *not thinking yet* was more on the subject's side. So, the subject, despite its openness and readiness to think, is left to wait.

"To 'wait' means here: to look around properly inside what has already been thought, for what is unthought, what is still hiding inside, what has already been thought. By waiting in this way, we find ourselves thinking on the way to that-to-think".<sup>30</sup>

Various approaches have been used in philosophy to avoid falling into the danger of complacency, which is associated with mental stagnation and lack of understanding, the cause of which is already acquired knowledge and the authority of reason. In contrast to Heidegger's proposals, these were also actions (activity) of a radical nature. If one cannot afford the extravagance of

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<sup>30</sup> M. Heidegger, *Co znaczy myśleć?...*, p. 306.



abandoning hitherto acquired knowledge in favor of thinking, as postulated, admittedly for different reasons (e.g., Plotinus, Descartes, Husserl, or Shestov), then at least it is worth starting from scratch each time. This means starting without assumptions, as proposed by Socrates, who, playing the role of the ignorant and, in addition, ironic fool, necessarily had to think in order to be able both to match those who knew and, seemingly inadvertently, demonstrate not only the fallacy of their knowledge in conversation. However, if we also cannot afford to be active along the lines of Socrates, it is at least worth remembering, following Heidegger, that "Showing an interest in philosophy does not yet prove one's readiness to think."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

## BYĆ MĄDRYM, CZY MYŚLEĆ? (streszczenie)

Celem artykułu jest zarówno próba udzielenia odpowiedzi na tytułowe pytanie *Być mądrym, czy myśleć?*, jak i zwrócenie uwagi na konsekwencje dotyczące mądrości i myślenia, które można wyprowadzić analizując treść rozprawy M. Heideggera *Co znaczy myśleć?* Szczególną uwagę zwracam na postawioną przez niego tezę – *jeszcze nie myślimy*. Podkreślam przy tym rolę artysty i sztuki w dochodzeniu do ostatecznej odpowiedzi na postawione przez Heideggera pytanie.

Wnioski, które wynikają z przeprowadzonych analiz dodatkowo ilustruję przykładem zaczerpniętym z literatury pięknej. Przykład ten pełni rolę egzemplifikacji, tym samym w prowadzonych rozważaniach nawiązuję do jednej z wielu możliwych form myślenia estetycznego właściwego twórczości artystycznej, podobnie jak zrobił to Heidegger wskazując na poezję.

**Słowa kluczowe:** mądrość, rozum, myślenie, głupota, Heidegger

**Andrzej Ostrowski** – PhD, assistant professor at the Department of History of Philosophy and Comparative Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Research interests: history of modern and contemporary philosophy, existential philosophy, idealist Russian philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.