τὰ δεσποτῶν γὰρ εὖ πεσόντα θήσομαι, τρὶς ἕξ βαλοὺσης τῆςδὲ μοι φρυκτωρίας.

I shall take advantage of the dice that have fallen well for my masters—this beacon-watch has thrown me a triple six!

— Aeschylus, Agamemnon 32–3
Fig. 1: Two knucklebones (ἀστράγαλοι), a type of Greek dice. Left with the χίον (1) side up, right with the κῶιον (6) side up. Both have the πρανές (4) side facing forward, marked by the horn-like protrusions and de left side of the knucklebones.

Fig. 2: Two knucklebones (ἀστράγαλοι), a type of Greek dice. Left showing ὑπτιον (3) side, right showing the πρανές (4) side.
Fig. 3: A South-African Boer ox wagon made from a jawbone (kakebeenwa) pulled by ten oxen made from knucklebones (dolosse). (Voortrekkersmonument, Pretoria SA).
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Prefatory Remarks

In this thesis, it is our aim to discuss several aspects and developments of the Greek concept of πτῶσις, commonly known as case. This term was first coined by Aristotle in relation to both the grammatical and the philosophical category of the ὑποκειμένον (hypokeimenon) or subject. It is our contention that the concept of πτῶσις (ptōsis), as it was first developed by Aristotle and inscribed by the Stoic philosophers in a grammatical regime, can be deployed to inspect several aspects of Martin Heidegger’s concept of the Verfallenheit or fallenness of Dasein, and that a reading of his work through the lens of Stoic grammatical theory reveals several complications of the concept of the subject that have, in our opinion, not yet been brought to the fore.

Our interest for what is called case dates back to a first — or, what we would like to think of as first — encounter with philosophy, namely the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus by Ludwig Wittgenstein. The famous, often quoted first paragraph of this work reads “The world is all that is the case.”¹ The vertical, monolithic presence of this sentence has fascinated us ever since. However, as we discovered later on, the German original includes an essential punctuation mark that is lost in the English translation: “Der Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist.”² There is a comma behind alles, everything, making the sentence ambiguous. Was der Fall ist can be interpreted as either referring to the antecedent Der Welt ist alles, or merely to alles, as is proposed by the English translation. Thus this sentence, read by itself, allows for other interpretations, such as “The world is everything, which is the case.”

The Dutch artist and theorist Dick Raaijmakers suggested to read Wittgenstein’s paragraph in a third way, namely as “The world is all as it has fallen.”³ This potential reading of the German sentence is definitely lost in the English translation. Raaijmakers takes the German Fall literally to mean “fall,” which has a gravitational connotation that we will constantly keep in mind during our work. We will have to be aware of the physical concept of fall when discussing the metaphysical concept of πτῶσις, case.⁴ It is the (metaphorical) oscillation between these two poles — physical and metaphysical — that will interest us throughout this thesis.

1 Wittgenstein 1974, 5, §1.
2 Wittgenstein 1977, 11.
3 Raaijmakers 1984, 59.
4 In this sense, we are staying close to Heidegger when he states in Phänomenologische Interpretationen ausgewählter Abhandlungen des Aristoteles zur Ontologie und Logik (Phenomenological Interpretations from Selected Treatises by Aristotle on Ontology and Logic) that “Im Lichte des angesetzten Faktizitätsproblems ist Aristoteles nur die Volleldung und konkrete Ausformung der vorangegangenen Philosophie; zugleich aber gewinnt Aristoteles in seiner ‘Physik’ einen prinzipiellen neuen Grundansatz, aus dem seine Ontologie und Logik erwachsen[,] Das zentrale Phänomen, dessen Explikation Thema der Physik wird, ist das Seiende im Wie seines Bewegtseins” [GA62].
The following chapters are also an exercise in restraint. As Wittgenstein already suggested, the concept of case offers a fragmented view on the world, focusing on single or multiple items at the same time: “Each item can be the case or not the case while everything else remains the same.”\(^5\) But the items that will be the case in our inquiry will pertain directly to the course set out above: an investigation of the Aristotelian concept of \(\pi\tau\omega\iota\varsigma\) vis-à-vis Heidegger’s concept of \(\text{Verfallenheit}\) and their common “substrate,” the subject as (becoming) \(\text{Dasein}\). This dissertation is an attempt, as Jacques Derrida formulated, to interpret the moment, the present before the fall, to interpret being-thrown as passivity, [which] could be reinscribed into a problematics much later than subjectivity (active or passive). What means “throw” before all syntaxes? and being-thrown before the fall, whether Platonic or Christian?\(^6\)

We are interested in exactly this “being-thrown before the fall,” that which sets the fall in motion. But at the same time, this means that we will have to suspend the theological issues concerning the fall from Paradise, and the legions of falling angels. It is not the Christian concept of sin that we will concern ourselves with, but again, just like Heidegger proposed, we intend to read Aristotle without the burden of Christian interpretation. Likewise, we will refrain from explicitly addressing the psychoanalytic discourse with its abundance of case studies, although, in our concluding remarks, we will not be able to resist their attractive force. Similarly, a linguistic investigation into the empirical manifestations of case systems, the way in which case manifests itself formally and superficially in language, as we have investigated before\(^7\) will remain external to this thesis. We are aware that these excisions potentially weaken our intended thorough reading of the concept of case, but instead we suggest that by focusing on the singular relation between \(\pi\tau\omega\iota\varsigma\) and \(\text{Verfallenheit}\), there will emerge a potentially new reading that may thence be applied to the above domains of theology, psychoanalysis, and linguistics.

There are two methodological issues that we would like address before discussing the general organization of this thesis. The first one pertains to our philological method, and the second one to the concept of paradigm. Because of the entanglement of philosophy and grammar marking the origins of this inquiry, our approach can neither be exclusively philosophical nor solely grammatical; it departs from the acknowledgement that the occidental study of grammar\(^8\) has emerged from a philosophical

\(^7\) Van Gerven Oei 2005.
\(^8\) The study of grammar of course emerged in other parts of the world as well, such as the magnificent Sanskrit
debate over the heritage of Aristotle’s thought, which itself is partially founded on the reworking of Platonic concepts, and that grammatical categories in their turn have supplied a basis for philosophical considerations about language.

This complex relationship becomes specifically acute at the moment that we link these developments to the conception of subject. As has already been remarked by Friedrich Nietzsche in Beyond Good and Evil, the subject as a philosophical category is, perhaps erroneously, intimately bound up with grammar: “Aren’t we allowed to be a bit ironic with the subject, as we are with the predicate and object? Shouldn’t philosophers rise above the belief in grammar?” In other words, Nietzsche urges the philosopher to fall out of his role which always already assumes the structural integrity of language as something external to philosophy proper.

In Nietzsche, this displacement within philosophy becomes apparent in his use of philological techniques, which are in a precise sense, “ironic.” They interrupt and disrupt, as Paul de Man suggested, the canonical philosophical argument as it has been built up carefully over the centuries, with its own, “philosophical” pattern of clearings and shadows. And it is these philological techniques that will be featured prominently in the main part of this thesis. That is, in the commentary and exegesis of both antique and modern texts. In doing so, we will try to follow the line of thought that Werner Hamacher arrives at in his wonderful essay Für — Die Philologie (For — Philology):

Philology […] is the epochē of the — and also always its own — historical language-world, in favor of another. It clears out to create space for what is to come. But because it doesn’t create anything but space — philology is decreation —, it forms the medium in which all languages can speak. It doesn’t however say anything except the beginning of saying. Like parabasis and parody, philology is a para-logy, in which the logos just speaks forth, but does not signify.

 grammar written by Pāṇini. However, the intensive interaction between the grammatical and the philosophical domain remains a particularly Western phenomenon.

9 Nietzsche 2002, 35 [1968, 50, §34]. Whenever we have consulted both the original version of a text and the English translation, the reference to the original has been placed between square brackets.

10 For example, when Nietzsche claims that “The strange family resemblance of all Indian, Greek, and German philosophizing speaks for itself clearly enough. Where there are linguistic affinities, then because of the common philosophy of grammar (I mean: due to the unconscious domination and direction through similar grammatical functions), it is obvious that everything lies ready from the very start for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems; on the other hand, the way seems as good as blocked for certain other possibilities of interpreting the world” (Nietzsche 2002, 20 [1968, 28, §20]).


12 Hamacher 2009, 43.
Hamacher’s statement about philology as a “medium” resonates with Hans-Georg Gadamer’s claim that (philological) hermeneutics operates in an “in-between.” In between an acquired familiarity with the texts that we will read, and their strangeness, in the space that is opened up by choosing this or that interpretation, which is prejudiced by the line of inquiry that we have suggested above. Thus negotiating between interpretation and distrust, the philological inquiry that we will undertake in this text is threefold, pertinent to both authors that are featured most prominently, Aristotle and Heidegger, and the school that in this thesis will act as an intermediary, the school of the Stoics.

This will also mean that, as said, we will ignore the majority of interpretations of Aristotle that have been formulated until Heidegger. Our prime target is the collection of texts that is attributed to him and the Greek language in which they are written. In doing so we intend to follow the philological approach of the readings of Martin Heidegger and Pierre Aubenque. As the latter formulated: “We do not pretend to bring something new to Aristotle, but on the contrary to unlearn everything that the tradition has added to the primitive Aristotelism.”

The second methodological point that we want to raise, pertains to the way in which we intend to provide a definition for the concept of πτῶσις. Here we would like to refer to the argument developed by Giorgio Agamben in his essay What is a Paradigm? In it, he argues for to the idea of a “philosophical archaeology,” which is driven by a inquiry into examples, instead of hierarchically organized structures. He mainly provides illustrations of this type of reasoning from the work of Michel Foucault, but also from the — for us — pertinent domains of grammar and hermeneutics, namely the grammatical inflection and the hermeneutic circle, which we will both encounter at length further on.

As soon as we encounter the first articulation of πτῶσις in Aristotle, it will become clear that there is no possible way of determining the “definition” of case as a concept productive in grammar and/or philosophy. This is the result of the fact that Aristotle himself never defines it as a concept. Throughout our survey, we will find multiple instances, examples of case, without determining any definitive, shared quality. In this sense, we would like to propose to approach our research into case as the uncovering of the paradigm of case. Agamben bases his observations about paradigms on

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14 Aubenque 1962, 3.
15 Agamben 2009, 9–32.
16 The Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev, for whom case is intimately linked with the concept of paradigm, poetically states that “a paradigm can be compared to a movie, and each of its members to a single image. When the movie is played, the members of the paradigm fall into place one after another and are projected onto the screen” (Hjelmslev 1968, 207).
Prefatory Remarks

a definition given by Aristotle, who will be the subject of the first Chapter, in his Analytica Priora. This argument he later repeats concisely in his Rhetorica:

It has been said that a paradigm is an induction and what it is an induction for. It neither proceeds like from particular to universal, or like from general to universal, nor like from universal to universal, but like particular to particular, like to like — whenever both are under the same genus, and one is better known than the other.

Agamben calls this movement from the particular to the particular, from example to example, from things to other things that resemble them, a “paradoxical type of movement” and it is true that Aristotle, both in the Analytica Priora and in the Rhetorica, states that paradigms, examples, should only be used if syllogistic or deductive reasoning are not sufficient to prove the argument or to persuade the opponent. The movement of the paradigm is para-do-xical in the sense that its type of reasoning goes along itself and away from the doxa, the rule.

And what we intend to show in this thesis is that there is no rule for case, and that case itself, its development as concept has never followed the straight road from for example universal rules to particular word forms, but has always proceeded along examples as such. We will follow this paradoxical movement — a movement by analogy — from particular to particular, a movement that we will find to proceed according to case.

In his review of Jean-Claude Milner’s book Introduction à une science de langage, entitled “Philosophy and Linguistics,” Giorgio Agamben states the following:

The history of the relations between philosophy and the science of language […] is so rich in exchanges, crossings, and accidents that any attempt to distinguish the two with precision appears both necessary and impossible.

It is our intention to elaborate in the first chapter one of these “accidents,” one of these Zufälle between what we can nowadays, albeit only with difficulty, may distinguish as the neighboring domains

17 cf. APr. 69a13–6. A list of sigla is provided before the bibliographical index.
18 Rhet. 1357b26–30: παράδειγμα δὲ ὧτι μὲν ἐστιν ἐπαγωγὴ καὶ περὶ ποια ἐπαγωγή, εἴρηται· ἔστι δὲ οὕτω ως μέρος πρὸς ὅλον συμ’ ὡς ὅλον πρὸς μέρος συμ’ ὅλον πρὸς ὅλον, ἀλλ’ ὡς μέρος πρὸς μέρος, ὡς δοξα πρὸς δοξα, ὡς ὁμοίως πρὸς ὁμοίως — ὡς ὁμοιοὶ μὲν ἤ ὑπὸ τὸ αὐτὸ γένος, γνωριμιώτερον δὲ βάτερον ἢ βατέρον.
19 Agamben 2009, 19.
20 Agamben 1995, 62.
of linguistics and philosophy. In the this chapter, we will lay out the different texts in which Aristotle introduces and reworks the concept of πτῶσις. Those will comprise sections from the Categoriae, Rhetorica, Poetica, De Interpretatione, the Analytica Priora and Posteriora, and the Sophistici Elenchi. In reading them, we will be assisted by scholia (commentaries) by commentators such as Ammonius Hermiae and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) so as to establish a relation between Aristotle’s concept of case and the case of the subject, which will be our main case throughout. This case is better known under its common alias: the nominative.

We will consider the Aristotelian concept of πτῶσις, as he develops it both in a “logico-philosophical” framework of homonymy, synonymy, and paronymy in the Categoriae, and a “linguistic” framework as offered in the Poetica. We can only put these terms between quotation marks, because any exercise in formally distinguishing the two domains in Aristotle’s work is as unnecessary as it is impossible. Instead, I propose to read πτῶσις through the prism of “all” of Aristotle’s work on the concept, even though this “all” is itself a creation of centuries of grammarians, philosophers, and philologists compiling, fabricating, and forging his oeuvre. Therefore, reading a concept such as πτῶσις through Aristotle’s work cannot be but the same as reading it through the lens carved and polished by both linguistics and philosophy together. It is in this context that we will risk to take position on the relation between πτῶσις and one of the aspects of what we now tend to call the philosophical category of the subject, the ὑποκειμένον.

The second chapter will focus on the school of the Alexandrian grammarians, specifically Dionysius Thrax and Apollonius Dyscolus in the light of Stoic philosophy as it is developed after the death of Aristotle. Our reliance here will be on the massive volumes of scholia written on Dionysius Thrax’ Ars Grammatica and citations of Stoic philosophers in secondary sources. The absence of primary Stoic sources forces us in this specific environment to rely on the philological technique of comparing endless recessions of commentaries on commentaries, both ancient and modern. Our reading will pass through the different conceptualizations of the category of case both in Stoic philosophy and some of its critics, and the different ways in which case occupies a canonical position in the Stoics’ theory of signification. We will thus be able to arrive at the Stoic concept of the grammatical subject and the idea of ontological differentiation.

A short excursus after the second chapter will provide an additional interpretation of this concept of ontological differentiation along the lines of the work of the American artist Matthew Barney, and Derrida’s work on the relation between sexual and ontological differentiation in Heidegger.

In the third chapter we will build a case for the interpretation of Heidegger’s concept of Verfallenheit in relation to the interplay between case and subject that has been discussed in the previous two chapters. During the entire length of his career, Heidegger has intensively connected with and
commented on classical Greek philosophy, and it is our intention to show the interrelations between conceptual developments in Greek thought and Heidegger’s own philosophical trajectories. We will therefore largely bracket the influence of medieval philosophy on his thought.

Our argument will be based on a close reading of the early essay *Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation* in relation to pertinent paragraphs from *Being and Time*, which introduce the concept of *addiction* into philosophical language. We will have recourse here to an analysis based on Avital Ronell’s work on drugs in *Crack Wars* in line with Jacques Derrida’s essay *Plato’s Pharmacy*. It will be our intention to show how *Dasein’s Verfallenheit* into Being-in-the-world closely resembles the structure of the Aristotelian concept of πτῶσις. The chapter will end with a reading of the work on case by the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev in relation to a passage from Aristotle’s *Historia Animalum*, and the implications of our reading for the relation between subject and case. In this sense, we feel that the work that we will undertake in this chapter is tangential to Alain de Libera’s project to formulate an “archaeology of the subject,”21 which we will do here against the background of the birth of linguistics while being aware both of its necessity and impossibility.

Based on the insights provided to us by Aristotle, the Stoics, Heidegger, Derrida, and Ronell, we will conclude this chapter with a rereading of a passage from Aristotle’s *Historia Animalium*, and a reconsideration of the metaphor of the dice as first proposed by the Stoics to describe the fall of the subject into the spoken sentence.

With the final examples from this thesis, the dice from Aristotle’s *Historia Animalum* and Marcel Broodthaers’s *Un coup de dés…*, we thus return to the physical paradigm for grammar, or a grammatical paradigm for philosophy, or a philosophical paradigm for physics. And even though Heidegger’s backtracking to Aristotle’s *Physics* may not be apparent from his courses on Aristotle, this becomes clear at the moment he defines the Greek term λόγος as a gathering instead of as reason, discourse, sentence, proposition, or whichever other logocentric determination. In doing so, Heidegger goes back to the *Physics* as if this were the place of the “original meaning.” This originality derives from Heidegger’s attachment to the *Physics* as on the one hand the completion of earlier Greek thought and the fundamental determination of being of the “how of its being-moved.” He states: “Aristotle says (*Physics* Θ 1, 252a13): τάξις δὲ πᾶσα λόγος, but every order has the character of bringing together.”22 Even the abstract logos is in the end physical. We will be faithful to Heidegger in this sense that we will never lose sight of this fundamental interaction between physical and metaphysical categories.

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21 cf. Libera 2007. We would like to thank Giorgio Agamben for providing us with this reference.

Just like in the opening of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, where the sentinel’s throw of dice unleashes the full force of the *actus tragicus*, once the dice have been thrown, the only thing that happens is an unstoppable cascade, or as Raaijmakers playfully states, “inevitable and disastrous nosedives.” It is our intention to only offer a fragment of this ongoing vertiginous movement. And it might be “more than a superficial accident [Zufall] that now […] we find ourselves forced to proceed from linguistic considerations.” That is, in our case, the establishment of the concepts noun and verb in Plato’s *Sophist* in the preamble to the chapters, which will provide the ground to our subsequent investigations.

All translations from Greek and Latin sources in this thesis, unless indicated otherwise, are our own. Whenever possible we have consulted multiple translations, as well as the excellent glossing interface of the Perseus Digital Library. In principle, we have consulted the Oxford Classical Text editions for Aristotle and Plato, supplemented with the bilingual Loeb Classical Library editions published by Harvard University Press. Both the texts of the *Ars Grammatica* and the scholia, are quoted from the heavily annotated Teubner series *Grammatici Graeci* and for the translation of many of its passages we are heavily indebted to the work of the French classicist and philologist Jean Lallot.

As is the case with any task that demands the time and energy proper to a dissertation, we cannot but express our highest gratitude to our supervisor Avital Ronell, whose work and teaching serve as continuing inspiration and excites a constant awareness of the importance of careful and caring reading. Likewise, we owe our thanks to our other teachers at the European Graduate School who have taken the time to painstakingly instruct our thinking: Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, Judith Balso, Diane Davis, Christopher Fynsk, Peter Greenaway, Werner Hamacher, François Noudelmann, Wolfgang Schirmacher, Elia Suleiman, Siegfried Zielinski, and Slavoj Žižek. We would also like to thank Casper de Jonge for his bibliographic lemmas on Greek grammarians, Willem Flinterman for elucidating certain aspects of Arabic grammar and etymology, and Ingrid Paardekooper for instilling in us our love for the Greek language at young age. As none of this work would have been possible without the institution of the university library, we would also like to thank the libraries of Leiden University, the Hoger Instituut Wijsbegeerte Leuven, the online Perseus Digital Library, and their respective teams of librarians. Our thanks also extend to the ones that sustain our presence in the world through love, friendship, and conversation: Alessandro De Francesco, Anthony Gow, Jérôme Le Page, René Mahieu, Marin Nikolli, Jonas Staal, Adam Staley Groves, John Van Houdt, and our family, Oei Swan Ien, Wim van Gerven, and Willem-Victor van Gerven Oei. This thesis was

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23 Raaijmakers 2009, 317.
largely conceptualized under influence of Beethoven's *Piano Sonatas*, masterfully executed by Daniel Barenboim, and Sunn ì O))))'s *Dimensions and Monoliths*. Let us hope some of their inventiveness and intensity has pervaded the current work.
§1 A detour through case

In the chapter “The Grammar and Etymology of ‘Being’” of the Introduction to Metaphysics, Martin Heidegger embarks on a questioning of the linguistic character and the original meaning of the word “Being” (Sein). The inquiry he sets out follows a double path, a path through grammar and a path through etymology. That is, an interpretation of the grammatical nature of the word “Being” and an interpretation of the formal nature of this word.

In this preamble we intend to give some directions for our walk following the trajectory of the grammar of Being. Even though etymology is intimately linked to our enterprise of determining the nature of case, we will for the moment disregard this aspect of Heidegger’s investigation in the Introduction to Metaphysics. But the fact that, as we will see in Chapter 1, the concept of etymology appears at the same time as the concept of case within the context of Aristotle’s definition of paronymy as expounded in the Categoriae, indicates its proximity to everything that we will claim.

We will therefore suspend Heidegger’s etymological inquiry, because he turns toward it only after his grammatical inquiry fails. But at the same time, this failure will give some essential clues about our project. The grammar of Being, just like its etymology, will be read by Heidegger from its Greek origins onward: “The fact that the development of Western grammar began with Greek meditation on the Greek language gives this process its whole meaning.” We will accompany him in this meditation.

According to Heidegger, the meaning of words has, in the first place, not only to do with their formal elements like letters or sounds. The meaning “takes these formal elements as clues to definite directions and differences in direction in the possible meanings of words.”

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1 We will write Being with a capital in the context of Heidegger’s thought, following the convention of Macquarrie and Robinson in their translation of Sein und Zeit.

2 For a short overview of the ravages of etymology in modern times we would like to refer to the acerbic treatise La preuve par l’étymologie by Jean Paulhan (1953).

3 Heidegger 2000, 60 [GA40, 61].

4 Heidegger 2000, 55 [GA40, 56].
of the detours and alternative routes that words take on their way toward meaning. The hints of these directions of meaning are in the first place given by the directions of the inflections of words.

In the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger gives for example the following paradigm of the verb “to go”: “he goes, we went, they have gone, go!, going, to go — these are inflections [Abwandlungen] of the same word according to definite directions of meaning.” “Went” might seem a little strange here in translation, yet the German word *gingen* in fact perfectly fits into the list of inflections. (We could say that in English “went” went too far astray, going into a completely different direction than the rest of the paradigm; its detour from “go” cannot be backtracked. As foreigners to this language, we needed to “learn” this exception, whereas the other forms are supposedly regular.)

The different inflections of this sort are defined by the concept of case (πτῶσις), that is, “any kind of inflection [Abwandlung] of the fundamental form (deviation, declension).” Yet this *Abwandlung*, as a walking-away from the fundamental form (Grundform), will prove that the fundamental form itself, whatever this form might be in case of the verb “to go,” is in fact an *Abgrund*, an abyss in which the words, nouns, verbs, and even the subject will keep falling. The fundamental form will be the form that is deferred, always implicit, but never actually realized in language. And Heidegger is aware of this.

The concept of case is introduced by Heidegger in order to determine the form and formal elements, to read the topographical clues, of Being (Sein), be it as a verb or as a noun. We have to inspect these forms of Being and see what they are up to, Heidegger tells us, in particular the noun (Substantivum) and the verb (Verbum or Zeitwort), which “even today are taken as the fundamental forms of words and of language in general.” But which comes first, which one is the most fundamental in the determination of Being? Already in his choice of words — Substantivum and Verbum — Heidegger reveals a certain preference leading his argument into a direction that he will later return to. For he chooses as German word for noun, not the Greek term ὄνομα (onoma), but the Latin word for a “substantive,” a word that carries all the metaphysical weight of subject and substance. In the same context of the determination of Being, he does not approach the verb as a Greek ῥῆμα (rhēma), which derives from a root meaning “to speak,” but again as a Latin word “verb,” which also means “word” itself. And in spite of, or more precisely, owing to these latinized approaches to Being, Heidegger is unable to reach any conclusion.

Because, why does he start like this? Isn’t Heidegger already leaving the Greeks even before he has returned to them? Why does he, at the onset of his inquiry into the nature of Being make this

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5 Heidegger 2000, 56 [GA40, 56].
6 Heidegger 2000, 62 [GA40, 63].
7 Heidegger 2000, 59 [GA40, 60].
false, already unrooted, Latin start? It shouldn’t surprise us that he is unable to make any start with either noun or verb in his grammatical inquisition of Being, and Heidegger quickly takes a Notweg, an emergency exit by analyzing Being as an infinitive form: sein, “to be”: it is neither a substantive nor a verb, but somewhere in between. But this choice for an infinite mode as possible origin of Being at the same time suggests possible finite modes, and the concept of mode as such.

What does it mean, this infinite mode that Heidegger opts for? This mode, a word deriving from the Latin word modus, is, according to Heidegger, a “bland”4 translation of Greek ἔγκλισις (enklisis): a sideways inclination, a movement to the side. We are again on the initial territory meaningful directions, but only under a different header, and from a different direction: Being is not approached as Verbum or as Substantivum, but as a modus itself. Even though Heidegger states, casually, that in the beginning it was the concept of case (πτῶσις) as Abwandlung that determined any kind of deviation, he nevertheless elaborates the rest of his argument, which is an argument of deviation, by means of the concept of ἔγκλισις, as if he wanders away from case itself. To speak with Derrida, Heidegger “avoids” case and its relation to Being by deviating through a “mode.”

In Heidegger’s analysis, the concept of the infinitive mode has become a barren, latinized residue of the Greek term ἔγκλισις ἀπαρεμφατικός, as a negation of the deviation [Abweichung] that is capable of making manifest in addition person, number, tense, voice, and mood.[...] The original Greek, which refers to the look of a thing and the self-manifestation of what stands in itself or inclines [neigt] itself, has vanished. Now the determining factor is the merely formal notion of limitation.9

In other words, calling Sein an infinitive does not reveal anything about its inclination, its deviation, its moves, or motives, it only shows the limits of the word itself. So again we are faced with the abyss of the Latin appropriation of Greek elementary notions, which Heidegger cannot stress often enough — except in the case of the nouns and verbs, which he actively avoided.

But at the same time this direction diverts our attention from the detour, the emergency exit taken by Heidegger to avoid the formulation of πτῶσις in relation to the infinite Sein: as an Abwandlung, a Fall that now also begins to appear to us as a Falle, a trap that he is trying to escape from. For, in all his writings on language, Aristotle — who will become the main reference point for Heidegger’s in-

8 Here and on many other occasions Heidegger criticizes the Latin translations of originally Greek terms. “Roman thought takes over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally original experience of what they say, without the Greek word” (Heidegger 1993, 149). This all the more raises the question why he started out his journey with Verbum and Substantivum. Did he maybe want to get lost?
A Case Study

vestigation of Greek grammar — refers to both nominal and verbal inflection with the word πτώσις.

So why does Heidegger prefer the later, and therefore less original word inclination (ἔγκλισις) in his quest for Being? As a philosopher that so often stresses the return to the “first” terminology of the Greeks, why is he using this unoriginal, uprooted words?

In the beginning — Heidegger’s Greek beginnings that is — it was πτώσις that determined any kind of deviation, but only “after the difference between these word forms had been more clearly worked out were the inflections that belong to them also designated with separate terms.”

This more clear elaboration however, does not take place within Heidegger’s text other than through the movement of text itself, as a deviation from and the tracking of the deviation of Being. Deviation as case, in its primary meaning as fall, has been put on a sidetrack to give space to a mere inclination, that was only elaborated later on in the history of Greek grammar — a history that Heidegger himself seems not at all too interested in. For the fully accepted, specialized use of the term ἔγκλισις for verbal inflection and πτώσις for nominal inflection is only found after Aristotle in Stoic grammar. And the fact that the Stoics are largely absent from all of Heidegger’s writings, makes his reference to ἔγκλισις here even more mysterious.

Moreover, this detour through the inclination of the infinitive for the sake of Being seems to be corrupted, at several intersections and crucial points, by unfortunate Latin translations and false etymologies. Medieval interpretation and modern forgetting has already cut us off from the original Greek sense of Being. “So far, there has been no really thoroughgoing investigation of this happening that has been so fundamental for the establishment and formation of the whole Western spirit.”

Perhaps this “occidental” spirit as the “unquestioned possibility of the question” as Derrida tries to formulate, is this unquestioned origin of ἔγκλισις, of the Neigung, the tendency of the question as such and its assumed relation with the fall of πτώσις. The vertigo before the abyss of language that makes us bending down looking into it. The vertigo caused by the potentiality of falling causes our ever so slightly increasing inclination to ask the question and demand an answer. This is the vertigo already described Socrates in Plato’s Cratylus:

The very ancient men who invented names were quite like most of the present philosophers who always get dizzy as they turn round and round in their search for the nature of things,

12 The term occidental in its determination of everything western already in itself designated the fundamental nature of the fall. Occident derives from the ob-caedere, setting of the sun. Caedere and cadere both partake in the Latin semantic field of falling and all its derivations.
13 Derrida 1989, 10 [1990, 21].
and then the things seem to them to turn round and round and be in motion.¹⁴

In order to remain in Heidegger’s leap from *πτῶσις*, through the loopholes of a “more clear elaboration” somewhere and sometime else and in absence of any “really thoroughgoing investigation,” we will now have to backtrack to the two fundamental terms of the Greek engagement with language, which was expressed, ironically, without a word for language. We will have to speak not of *Substansium* and *Verbum*, but of ὄνομα and ῥῆμα. As we will elaborate below, both are parts of the Greek λόγος. For these are the terms that Heidegger returns to as soon as he realizes that the infinitive is not going to help him any further on his quest for Being. These two words, ὄνομα and ῥῆμα, will appear to us to stand in a very close relation to *πτῶσις*, and our chances of making a beginning with the analysis of this term that Heidegger seems to have cast aside — at least in its Greek appearance — will be greater if we investigate their origins.

*Πτῶσις* itself has been translated, depending on the translator, author, context, time, and everything else that befalls a text, with *Abwandlung, ptōsis*, derivation, declination, conjugation, inflection, case, or fall. It is this semantic field that will be of our interest. *Πτῶσις* as the derivation of one word from another, as falling from one word in and onto the other. As the specific declination, conjugation, or inflection of nouns, verbs, and everything in between. As a grammatical feature only available to nouns. As the fall of an idea, a die, a wrestler. As a physical fall and as the trap of Being that Heidegger tried to avoid at all costs.

The supposed origins from which I will describe the archaeology of *πτῶσις* lies in Plato’s dialogue *the Sophist*, at the moment he lets a Stranger deal with nouns and verbs. Again, these origins have no value; these origins, etymologies, or truths, if you like, of these words are not proving anything, but rather provide a mode of *reading* several episodes in the development of philosophy. A development that has proven fertile for both classical theological conceptions of sin and apocalypse, grammatical concepts of case and syntactical structures, and philosophical terms like contingency, chance, and fallenness. In other words, we will be reading the allegory of case, the way in which this concept “reads itself differently.”

¹⁴ *Crat. 411b–c*, translated by Harold N. Fowler: οἱ πάνυ παλαιοὶ ἄνθρωποι οἱ τιθέμενοι τὰ ὄνομα παντὸς μᾶλλον, ὡσπερ καὶ τῶν νῦν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν σοφῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ πυκνὰ περιστρέφεσθαι ζητοῦντες ὅπῃ ἔχει τὰ ὄντα εἰλιγγιῶσιν, κάπετα αὐτοῖς φαίνεται περιφέρεσθαι τὰ πράγματα καὶ πάντως φέρεσθαι.
§2 Introducing the Stranger

As said, the first occurrence of the terms ὄνομα and ῥῆμα as dividing the Greek λόγος happens in Plato’s dialogue the *Sophist*. At the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates, Theaetetus, and Theodorus meet again after their previous dialogue, the *Theaetetus*, the day before.

Theaetetus had been introduced as a geometer (γεωμέτρης) to Plato by Theodorus, who is also a practicing mathematician.15 Theodorus had stressed that he was not in love with Theaetetus, who actually looked like Socrates: “he is not beautiful, but he is like you with his snub nose and protruding eyes.”16 As Theodorus and Socrates talked inside the gymnasium, Theodorus praised Theaetetus’ capacities as a student. At a certain moment, the freshly anointed young Socrates-lookalike arrived with a group of friends and was introduced to Socrates. (That both Theaetetus and Theodorus are mathematicians, geometers, and that the *Theaetetus*, as a dialogue, is recalled by the great mathematician Euclid, already prepares us for the geometry of ὄνομα, ῥῆμα, and πτῶσις that we will encounter many times. The geometrical semantics of point (σημεῖον), line (γραμμή), direct (εὐθύς), straight (ὀρθός), throwing out (ἐκβάλλειν), and falling in (ἐμπίπτειν) will reappear throughout their history as signs, letters, nominative cases, derivation, and Verfallenheit. Not that they will be central. But they will be constantly there.)17

Back to Athens. Today, Socrates, Theaetetus, and Theodorus meet again as planned, but the latter brings someone along, a Stranger. The Stranger hearkens from Elea, home of Parmenides, whom he is a friend of. Theodorus speaks of him also as a “very philosophical man.”18 They all recall Parmenides by his reputation as the one who claimed that “being is, and nonbeing is not.”19 The so-called sophist claim which left them all bit exhausted after the dialogue *Parmenides*.

16 *Theaet.* 143c, translated by Harold N. Fowler: οὐκ ἔστι καλός, προσέοικε δὲ σοὶ τήν τε σιμότητα καὶ τὸ ἔξω τῶν ὄμματων.
17 The possibility of mathematics as a metaphorical source is in itself a problematic issue which seems to escape Derrida’s critique of occidental metaphysics as “white mythology,” an elaboration of originally sensory metaphors that already in its determinations “original,” “sensory,” and “metaphor” does not seem to escape metaphoricity as such: “Apart from the text of mathematics of which it is difficult to see how it could furnish metaphors in the strict sense (being attached to no fixed ontic region, and having no sensible or empirical content), all regional forms of discourse, in so far as they are not purely formal, provide metaphorical content of the sensible kind for philosophical discourse” (Derrida 1974, 26). It has been Alain Badiou’s important contribution to philosophy to use mathematics by way of citation in the realm of philosophical ontology, thus in fact transforming areas of mathematics into philosophical metaphors par excellence. Several interpretations of Badiou’s work point into this direction, e.g. Gillespie 2008 and Belhaj Kacem 2009, and Van Gerven Oei & Van Houdt 2011.
18 *Soph.* 216a: μάλα δὲ ἄνδρα φιλόσοφον.
19 In his commentary on the this dialogue, Heidegger cites Parmenides’ fragment 6: ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μηδὲν δ’ οὐκ ἔστιν (*GA*19, 237).
But its question still remains: can we speak of nonbeing (μὴ ὄν) — can we speak of what is not? Or as Heidegger formulates the problem in his lecture on this dialogue: “How can λόγος enter into a possible κοινωνία [communion] with μὴ ὄν [nonbeing]?” This is the wager of the dialogue, as the sophist, the anti-philosopher, will be defined in relation to this (not) speaking about nothing, and will thus negatively determine the philosopher’s chances. The question of nonbeing is what separates the philosopher from the sophist. For, according to Plato, it is the philosopher who employs the right, the true discourse, and the sophist has to be questioned about the validity of his claim as formulated by Parmenides. The sophist is therefore the test case around which the importance of the philosophical project is structured. Avital Ronell puts his predicament in even stronger terms: “the Sophist yields truth only under violent interrogation and stress.”

The argument goes that if there can be no communion between λόγος (discourse) — the revelation of being — and nonbeing it will be impossible to determine the sophist as the one who is “the factual existence of μὴ ὄν itself.” As the Sophist aims to define the philosopher’s task negatively vis-à-vis the sophist, the absence of clearly definable sophistry also annihilates any concept of philosophy. As Heidegger repeats Plato, Parmenides’ claim that nonbeing is not has to be nailed down as a false discourse (λόγος ψευδής), a false revelation of being.

To say that the sophist is wrong, means to have the courage to “hypothesize that nonbeing is: for falsehood does not enter into being otherwise.” Even though the great Parmenides, the Stranger’s teacher, claimed that the being of nonbeing would never be subjected or conquered, this will be exactly what happens next, all to the greater glory of philosophy. The Stranger does not enter the dialogue as a defender of Parmenides, but rather as a mole with inside information. He diverts us from Parmenides’ actual argument and assists Socrates — and therefore Plato — in dismantling the Parmenidean foundation of the widespread sophistry of the those days. The Stranger helps Plato destroy his master.

But Socrates is anxious. He suspects the Stranger to be some god, perhaps even Zeus himself, the god of strangers and hospitality. He tells Theodorus that the Stranger might be “observing” them, as they are having “cheap arguments,” and might even “refute” them, as if he were “some god of questioning, of testing even. And as we know from Ronell,
testing scans the walls of experience, measuring, probing, determining ‘what is’ of the lived world. At the same time, but more fundamental still, the very structure of testing tends to overtake the certainty that it establishes when obeying the call of open finitude.\(^{16}\)

Socrates is afraid that the dialogue will be overtaken by its own aim, that sophistical refutations themselves might be refuted, that opening up to definite realm of *grammaticality* will in the end prove disastrous to a genuine destruction of sophistry. He is afraid that the means of *grammar* as a tool to be employed against sophistry might prove too powerful and do more harm than good. And perhaps he also afraid that we, as strangers to these texts — *any* text — might overtake his dialogue without paying due attention to the exact nature of his argument, that we might not be Heidegger’s student, dutifully searching the pockets of every word.

But perhaps Socrates is only playing a trick on Theodorus, whose name means “gift of god” or “god-given.” (If it was a joke, this is clearly wasted on Aristotle, who explicitly states elsewhere that “dorus [δωρος; i.e., gift: δῶρον] in Theodorus does not mean anything”).\(^{27}\) But Theodorus takes Socrates seriously and assures him that it will not be the Stranger’s intention to crash test Socrates’ dialogue.

Socrates offers the Stranger his hospitality, just in case. And in return the Stranger brings some gifts, the philosophical tools to unmask the sophists’ discourse as anti-philosophical: nouns, verbs, logic, in short: grammar. These gifts, these doses — and as we will discover, data and dice — are the “spoken refutations that are therefore the best and most valid of the purifications.”\(^{28}\) Being spoken, they belong to the λόγος, the discourse, the sentence, the gathering of language as it reveals Being. As gifts presented on the occasion of the Stranger’s arrival, they immediately relate to Jacques Derrida’s *Gift* as poison and present, cause and cure of malady\(^{29}\): both the medicine to differentiate sophistry from philosophy and philosophy’s addiction to it. But according to Plato, the sophist is the one who od’s on these refutations, who enjoys these purifications too much. His cathexis is that of a “fierce wolf” and not of the “gentlest dog.”\(^{30}\) the dog here obviously being the philosopher.

After this first shot, philosophy’s canine preoccupation — obsession — with the sophist will no longer be a particularly Greek affair, as many a philosopher after Plato and Aristotle will try to sniff out who is speaking the right, straight, geometrical language, a language that can speak meaningfully about both being and nonbeing. In other words, the philosopher who speaks of truth also talks

\(^{16}\) Ronell 2005, 5.

\(^{27}\) *Poet.* 1457a13–14: ἐν τῷ Θεόδωρος τὸ δωρος οὐ σημαίνει.

\(^{28}\) *Soph.* 230d: τὸν ἐλεγχόν λεκτέον ὡς ἄρα μεγίστη καὶ κυριωτάτη τῶν καθάρσεων ἔστι.

\(^{29}\) cf. Derrida 2004, 133n56.

\(^{30}\) cf. *Soph.* 231a.
straight, without embellishment. Speaking of nonbeing will require the utmost restraint from the
part of the philosopher so that he will not fall into the trap of mere sophistry. This is the wager of
the Sophist, and its consequences reach all the way down to the battle that some contemporary phi-
losophers like Alain Badiou are waging against the “anti-philosophers.”31 When this dialogue is over,
the sophist will forever remain an “imitator of the things that are,”32 and a “pedant of grammars.”33 In,
again, other words, the Stranger is hooking us up with shots to keep philosophy healthy.

At the moment that the Stranger and Theaetetus are half-way through with their dialogue, the
former has proved to the latter that the notion of falsehood and nonbeing are correlative. This possi-
ably deals the decisive stroke to sophistry, but he has to pull the break before the black hole of infinity
which allows no escape;34 the Stranger is not yet prepared to assert, against his father Parmenides,
that nonbeing is. To make this crucial step, the Stranger needs to engage in an analysis of the λόγος
before they can really speak of nonbeing. And in this analysis, on the edge of the abyss of discourse,
the terminology of nouns and verbs will be introduced. They are the fruit of the Stranger’s vertigo,
his inclination to be absorbed by the black hole of infinite babble, of Heideggerian Gerede. They are
his escape from the way down.

As a way of getting to grips with himself, the Stranger makes three requests to Theaetetus.35 A
triple demand framing the second half of the dialogue. First, he wants them to flinch, detract them-
selves (παρασπασώμεθα) from the Abgrund in a spasm of fear, if only shortly (κατὰ βραχύ). Heideg-
gerian existential Angst overtakes him as he faces the depths of grammar. Then, he begs, requests,
excuses himself (παραιτοῦμαί) in front of Theaetetus: “Do not assume that I am becoming some sort
of parricide (πατραλοίαν).” He only intends to test Parmenides’ claim against the weapons of philo-
sophical, grammatical dissection.

And, by the way, it is Plato, presenting his writings “from out of the death of Socrates,”36 who is
now forced to commit a second “violent eruption against the venerable paternal figure of Parmenides,
against his thesis of the unity of being; without the disruptive intrusion of otherness and nonbeing,
of nonbeing as other in the unity of being, writing and its play would have not been necessary,” as
Derrida tells us in his essay Plato’s Pharmacy, his reading of the events as they unfold. “Writing,

31 Badiou aligns himself along Plato against sophistry, but against Plato’s One and along the sophists in favor of a
“Platonism of the multiple” (Badiou 1999, 103; see also Badiou 2009a).
32 Soph. 235a: μιμητής ὤν τῶν δόντων.
33 Badiou 2009a, 9.
36 Derrida 2004, 162 [1972, 204].
and therefore grammar in general, “is parricidal.” Though this is not his intention, by presenting his grammatical gifts the Stranger deals Parmenides a final blow. This interpretation is repeated in Derrida’s commentary on the same passage during a conversation with Anne Dufourmantelle in Of Hospitality.

It is the Stranger [étranger, i.e. ξένος] who, by putting forward the unbearable question, the parricide question contests the thesis of Parmenides, puts in question the logos of our father Parmenides, *ton tou patros Parmenidou logon.*

The third “little” request of the Stranger is to forgive him when he appears to be a bit of a maniac (μανικός) when expounding his argument against his father, shifting his feet, moving from one side to the other, turning his position. The “paternal logos is upside down,” Derrida states, and so might be the Stranger, “a crazy person who reverses everything from head to toe, from top to bottom, who puts all his feet on his head, inside out, who walks on his head.”

This “upside down,” head-first crash position of the λόγος, that is folded into the word πτώσις as fall will be further addressed in the first two chapters, in the flinch of the upward fall of the ὄνομα from its horizontality into a “state,” a position and its subsequently fallenness into Being-in-the-world in the third and last chapter.

Our arrival at Heidegger will not be fortuitous: not only is his thought infused with a thorough knowledge of the texts by Plato and Aristotle that are of value for our research into πτώσις, his own quest for Being, *Sein und Zeit,* opens with a quote from the *Sophist,* the text that founds the nature of Being by means of the introduction of grammatical tools. And even though Heidegger, in his *Introduction to Metaphysics* and elsewhere, follows Nietzsche in distrusting grammatical concepts, the concept that will be the focus of our inquiry will lie at the basis of the persisting mania in and of Being.

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37 Derrida 2004, 162 [1972, 204].
38 Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000, 5 [1997, 13].
41 From Soph. 244a: δῆλον γάρ ὡς ὑμεῖς μὲν ταῦτα (τί ποτε βούλεσθε σημαίνειν ὁπόταν ὧν φθέγγησθε) πάλαι γιγνώσκετε, ἡμεῖς δὲ πρὸ τοῦ μὲν ὑφεμεθα, νῦν δ’ ἥπορήκαμεν; cf. Heidegger 2006, 1.
§ 3  Noun-words and time-words

Back, once again, to Athens. In the second half of the *Sophist*, the stranger hands Theaetetus the tools to cut the sophists’ discourse to shreds. Two of the words from the grammatical toolkit that are discussed belong to the *Grundstrukturen*, the basic structural elements of the λόγος: ὄνομα and ῥῆμα.¹²

For there is, I suppose, for us a twofold kind of revelation through sound about and surrounding being-present, [...] one called “noun-words” [ὀνόματα], the other “time-words” [ῥήματα]. [...] We call time-word, I suppose, the revelation being about the actions [πράξεων], [...] and the vocal sign about those effecting [πράττουσι] these [actions] is given the name noun-word.¹³

Plato often employs ὄνομα as meaning just “word.” But the Stranger introduces here the more constricted, grammatical use of the word to prepare Theaetetus for battle with the sophists. As Heidegger noticed, this confusion that will keep on occurring in Plato’s and, to a lesser extent, Aristotle’s use of the word ὄνομα, is based on the fact that Greek lacks a word for language. Such a word would have allowed us to, alongside discourse (λόγος) and sound (φωνή), to provide a background to distinguish between ὄνομα—“word/name” and ὀνόμα—“noun.”¹⁴ In spite of the invention of the concept of language as an abstract manifestation of our tongue (γλώσσα), this has in the end not prevented the nonbeing of the word for language from anchoring in the phonologocentric metaphysics as it is developed here under our very eyes. Heidegger’s fantasy of a Greek word for language betrays him, and Derrida immediately seizes his prey: “Western metaphysics, as the limitation of the sense of being within the field of presence, is produced as the domination of a linguistic form.”¹⁵

“I suppose,” the Stranger says, in some way, somehow (ποι), that there is “a twofold kind of revelation.” Of being as λόγος, Heidegger adds. For him, λόγος always reveals being. This “twofold kind,” genre, gender, Geschlecht, is both double and ambiguous, disagreeing and split (διττόν).¹⁶ The revelation of being in discourse is in itself double and split in two genders, noun-word and time-word. As

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¹³ Soph. 261e–262a: ΞΕ: [...] ἔστι γὰρ ἡμῖν που τῶν τῇ φωνῇ περὶ τὴν οὐσίαν δηλωμάτων διττόν γένος. [...] τὸ μὲν ὀνόματα, τὸ δὲ ῥήματα κληθέν. [...] τὸ μὲν ἐπὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν ἐπιτεθὲν ῥῆμα που λέγομεν. [...] τὸ δὲ γ’ ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐκείνοις πράττουσι σημείον τῆς φωνῆς ἐπιτεθέν ὄνομα.
¹⁴ As the terms are used in Plato and Aristotle, I will translate ὄνομα and ῥῆμα with noun-word and time-word respectively, unless the context dictates a different meaning, such as word for ὄνομα. From Stoic philosophy on I will consistently translate with the more familiar Latin terms noun and verb, as they correspond much better to the Stoic conception of these terms.
¹⁵ Derrida 1976, 23 [1967, 37].
¹⁶ For an extensive treatment of the concept of Geschlecht in Heidegger’s thought please refer to Derrida 1990(a).
we already stated, ὄνομα is often used as word for word, and it seems that ὄνομα only became to mean noun-word once opposed to ῥῆμα. The latter term is often used to refer to a sequence that is neither ὄνομα, word, name, noun, nor λόγος, discourse, sentence.  

Ὅνομα and ῥῆμα present the difference between the action-about (πρᾶξις) and what the action is about (πρᾶγμα): “The noun-word [ὄνομα] is the revelation [δήλωμα] of the action-about [πρᾶγμα]; the time-word [ῥῆμα] is the revelation of the what of the action-about [πρᾶξις].” Therefore, it cannot be the case that the λόγος itself is split into noun-word and time-word, but rather that they both reveal a specific aspect of the λόγος. On the one hand a naming of what the action is about, on the other hand a speaking (εἴρειν) of the speaker (ῥήτωρ) of the action-about, rhetorically, ironically, or in any other way.

The Stranger tells Theaetetus, who is initially a bit overwhelmed by the technical tools given to him, that only in combination, interweaving (συμπλοκή) the noun-word and the time-word can make the “first and smallest” discourse, the sentence. This is the only possibility for the discourse to become direct (εὐθύς). A direct, straight sentence, fit for the straight discourse that avoid all pitfalls, infinities, and abysses that the sophistic discourse abounds in. Armed with the noun-word and the time-word, their combination, their syntax, any philosopher can do the proper job. It all starts with the smallest sentence: “a man learns” (ἄνθρωπος μανθάνει). Within the pedagogic environment of this first philosophical claim that is determined to be a sentence, Theaetetus has learned about the noun-word and time-word, and he will be able to do rest of the math himself.

47 cf. Ildefonse 1997, 94.
49 cf. Soph. 262c.
50 Soph. 262c.
Heidegger: I’m going back to Aristotle. Why don’t you stay?

— Avital Ronell, Crack Wars
Chapter One
Aristotle

§4 Homonymy, synonymy, paronymy

The Categoriæ by Aristotle is the first book of the Organon, the standardized collection of Aristotle’s six works on logic: Categoriæ, De Interpretatione, Analytica Priora, Analytica Posteriora, Topica, and De Sophisticis Elenchis. By way of the common title placed onto those texts after Aristotle’s death, Organon is already taking sides. The title itself reveals to us something about the post-Aristotelean interpretation of this work. The title, meaning instrument, method, or organ was introduced by the Peripatetics, Aristotle’s followers from the Lyceum. They claimed that the Organon was just a philosophical tool, a mere technical supplement to Aristotle’s Metaphysics. Contrarily, the Stoics, a school rivalling the Peripatetics, claimed that the Organon was an integral part of Aristotle’s philosophy, that could not be separated from it like a toolbox of logical operations.

In many ways, this debate has not yet been settled. Logic operates on the borders between philosophy and mathematics and determines the margins — and therefore possibility — of both. As it is our intention to dive into a concept that derives from this field, it can be no surprise that this term itself attaches to both, never definitely deciding in which domain it will fall. Nevertheless, we will take sides in the debate between the Peripatetics and Stoics in favor of the Stoic interpretation. A “sanitization” of Aristotle by cutting up his philosophical oeuvre into a metaphysical core and logico-technical margins runs contrary to the terminological intertwining of both.

The opening section of the Categoriæ presents to us three semantic relations: homonymy, synonymy, and paronymy. The first two will in later centuries develop in the illustrious concepts of univocity and equivocity. But these are not our main concern here. We will stay as close to Aristotle’s Greek as possible. According to his Rhetorica, homonyms are useful for the sophist to develop his wicked arguments.1 For example: “if every man is a living being, how come the drawing that you refer to as ‘man’ is not living?” Both a man standing in front of me and a drawing of a man can refer to the name “living being,” and as such, they are homonymous. The sophist immediately takes the opportunity to confuse us, but Aristotle will deal with him somewhere else.

The second semantic relation defined in the opening section is synonymy. According to Aristotle, synonyms are useful for the poet to enrich his language. It allows him to use verbs like “strolling” and “walking” to signify the same type of action without the reader getting confused; we understand that

1 cf. Aubenque 1962, 123.
they are synonymous.\(^2\) In his essay “Homonyms,” Agamben determines the relationship between homonyms and synonyms as follows:

Synonyms for Aristotle are entities that have the same name and the same definition: in other words, phenomena insofar as they are members of a coherent class, that is, insofar as they belong to a set through participation in a common concept. These same phenomena, however, that relate to each other as synonyms become homonyms if considered with respect to the idea […]\(^3\)

So homonyms and synonyms are intimately linked within the Aristotelian system of categories.\(^4\) Depending on our perspective, two terms can appear either homonymous or synonymous. But the third relation, the relation of paronymy seems to occupy a position somewhat separated from the first two. It is this concept that interests us most as it introduces πτῶσις in Aristotle’s philosophical system. Its definition can be translated as follows:

Paronymous are called those things, differing from something through case [πτῶσει], that have an appellation according to [that] name [of this something], like grammarian [γραμματικός] from grammar [γραμματικής] and courageous-man [ἀνδρεῖος] from courageous [ἀνδρείας].\(^5\)

But for whom or what is this useful? Aristotle suddenly stops talking about relations between ideas and words. Instead, we are suddenly talking about a purely formal relation. And it seems as if, whereas homonymy is useful for sophists and synonymy useful for poets, paronymy doesn’t serve anyone at all; neither the sophist, nor the poet.

Both homonymy and synonymy are also addressed in the *Rhetorica* in the context of the use of metaphors in speech. These metaphors can be introduced through semantic devices like homonymy and synonymy, depending on the aim of the orator. And even more than the sophist or poet, the ora-

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\(^2\) cf. *Rhet.* iii 2.7: τῶν δὲ ὀνομάτων τῷ μὲν σοφιστῇ ὁμωνυμίαι χρήσιμοι (παρὰ ταῦτα γὰρ κακουργεῖ), τῷ ποιήτῃ δὲ συνωνυμίαι, λέγω δὲ κύρια τε καὶ συνωνυμία οἷον τὸ πορεύεσθαι και τὸ βαδίζειν: ταῦτα γὰρ ἀμφότερα καὶ κύρια καὶ συνώνυμα ἀλλήλοις.

\(^3\) Agamben 1998, 75.

\(^4\) cf. Aubenque 1962, 173ff. Like many other commentators, Aubenque fully disregards the role of paronymy in Aristotle’s philosophy of language.

\(^5\) *Cat.* 1a12–15: παρώνυμα δὲ λέγεται ὅσα ἀπὸ τινὸς διαφέροντα τῇ πτώσει τὴν κατὰ τοῦνομα προσηγορίαν ἔχει, οἷον ἀπὸ τῆς γραμματικῆς ὁ γραμματικός καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀνδρείας ὁ ἀνδρεῖος.
tor is supposed to be attentive to them, because “the metaphor has clarity, suaveness and strangeness, which cannot be apprehended through something else.” Paronymy is again explicitly absent from this context. It has no metaphorical power, it works linearly from word to word, purely on the level of the signifier.

Perhaps we could say that paronymy lacks a certain strangeness; it doesn’t introduce multiple meanings. On first sight, it doesn’t even concern itself with meaning. The Greeks call something strange τὸ ξενικόν. And in this precise sense paronymy lacks the strangeness of the grammatical devices introduced by the Stranger (ξένος) in the Sophist, it is a formal procedure which seems to relate the form of one word to the other. It is neither clear nor suave, and brings with it no strange, foreign, or exotic fragrance from a different language or logic. Not even from Elea.

The concept of πτῶσις is evoked within this context of paronymy, or denomination as it has been classically translated. This semantic relation between two words founds and supports the study of the relation between words based on their form, hence of both etymology and grammar. As Pierre Aubenque states: “Πτῶσις designates in general manner any modification of the verbal expression not bearing on the meaning, but on the manner of signification.” Thus, according to Aristotle, it is possible and legitimate to establish a relation between two words, between “grammar” and “grammarioan,” between “courageous-man” and “courageous,” based on their shape and form. But this shape or form of the word is still far from being formalized in the morphological analyses that are common in contemporary linguistics. Aristotle is not able to talk about morphemes, he doesn’t cut up words into different morphological elements.

The furthest Aristotle seems to be willing to push this similarity between words can be found in his Ethica Eudemia. In this work, he paronymously relates courageous-man (θρασύς) and courage (θάρσος) to being-courageous (θαρρεῖν). By furthest we mean here largest deviation in form. The confirmation of a relation between these words based on a perceived common root θρα-/θαρ- is not a small feat, because to indicate such a relation means at least to have a (sub)conscious understanding of the morphological features of roots and endings that does not push the derivation over its limit. Because there is a limit to paronymy, and we may determine this limit as the “truth” of the derivation — i.e., the ἔτυμος from which our word etymology derives.

We will now have to inspect in what way paronymous derivation operates in the field of language. A paronymous relationship is not merely restricted to the type of derivation that shifts from the abstract noun “grammar” to the denominative actor “grammariam.” There are also other types. Aristotle

6  Rhet. iii 2.8: καὶ τὸ σαφὲς καὶ τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ τὸ ξενικὸν ἔχει μάλιστα ἡ μεταφορά, καὶ λαβεῖν οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτὴν παρ’ ἄλλου.
7  Aubenque 1962, 184n3.
8  cf. EE 1228a33–37.
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claims in his *Topica* that when someone has a certain type of knowledge, for example grammatical knowledge, this is always predicated paronymously, derivatively, from the knowledge in question. For example, knowledge of grammar (γραμματική) can be expressed by the sentence “he has grammar” (γραμματικὴν ἕξει) or by the word “grammarián” (γραμματικός), both deriving from “grammar.”

Thus, paronymous relations do not only exist between couples like “grammar” and “grammarián,” but also between “grammar” (γραμματική) and “(he has) grammar” (γραμματικὴν), two forms that cannot be distinguished in English, unless we think of the relation in difference between “he” and “him.” The relation between cases is a paronymous relation.

Paronymous relations, produced by πτῶσις, thus envelop everything from etymological relations to morphological derivations, nominal inflections, and verbal conjugations. And it should immediately be added that all these terms are absent from Aristotle’s vocabulary in the specialized, technical, and grammatical sense that they are used today. In at least a part of his texts, there is no definite separation between what we can nowadays technically distinguish. All words falling into other words do so solely within a paronymous relation.

Even though this coordinating structure doesn’t have the elevating powers of metaphor, it cannot be underestimated, as it provides a method for finding a certain type of meaning inside words for those who do not accept the sterility of the infamous arbitrariness of the sign. Even if “grammarián” is an arbitrary sign, telling me nothing about the external manifestation of a general or particular grammarián, we can claim that it is related, paronymously, by derivation, through πτῶσις, to “grammar” in whichever form that word may appear to us.

In Aristotle’s exposition, “grammar” and “grammarián,” “courage” and “courageous-man” come to us as mere words. They are not in any way specified as adjectives or nouns. They appear to us as ὄνοματα in the pre-Sophist Platonic sense of the word, as words. Their respective relations are only determined as paronymous, differing through case. Derivation by case works from one word to the other, and is therefore a procedure that can be called relative or indirect. Paronymy never points to the origin of a word, but only inscribes it into a chain without beginning or end. In this sense, case as πτῶσις as paronym inscribes itself in the chain of concepts-sous-rature that Derrida broke into with his word *différance*.

Case is the minimal difference between “grammar” and “grammarián,” and because of this differential quality, distributing the same meaning through different forms, this concept cannot remain without metaphysical charge for very long. However, it must be stressed that this charge is absent at the moment of the introduction of paronymy and case in Aristotle’s logical system. Case becomes

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10 cf. for example Derrida 1982.
charged at the moment paronymy acquires a direction: a direction from qualities toward concepts charged with these qualities. Thus case acquires an accidental nature as it enters the category of qualities: “grammarian” derives from “grammar,” “courageous-man” derives from “courageous,” and not the other way round. The paradigmatic structure of paronymous relations is thus quickly structured into a hierarchical top-down model.

§5 Qualities and relatives
A little further on in the Categoriae, Aristotle discusses the category of quality. This discussion will give us a first indication of the There are several types of qualities, depending on how the quality in question relates to the thing that has the quality. Examples include virtues like being just, physical strengths like being a good runner, affective qualities like sweetness, but also mania as an affective quality of the soul, and finally qualities that relate to the shape, such as straightness or curvature. Aristotle concludes:

So qualities are what-have-been-said [εἰρημέναι], and those [who possess the qualities] are what-are-said [λεγόμενα] according to those [qualities], derivatively [παρωνύμως] or in whichever other way from them.11

Aristotle establishes the qualities that have already been said: they are, literally, perfect, which is signified by the perfect participle of speaking (λέγω), εἰρημέναι. These refer to the four types of qualities that were discussed before. In other words, there are certain things being said (λεγόμενα), which are said derivatively, paronymously (παρωνύμως) from these aforementioned qualities, and also certain things that are said from them in whichever other way, i.e., certain things semantically related to a quality but not as such recognizable because there is no paronymous connection between the words. Nevertheless, it seems that for Aristotle, the majority of relations between qualities and qualifieds is regulated through paronymy, and therefore through case:

Indeed on most and nearly all [of those things] are called derivatively, like white-man from whiteness, grammarian from grammar, and just-man from justice, and similarly in the other [cases]. […] Thus those are called what-are-said [λεγόμενα] from the what-have-been-said

11 Cat. 10427–b11: ποιότητες μὲν οὖν εἰσὶν αἱ εἰρημέναι, ποιὰ δὲ τὰ κατὰ ταύτας παρωνύμως λεγόμενα ἢ ὀπωσοῦν ἄλλως ἀπ’ αὐτῶν.
The “what-are-said” (λεγόμενα) refer to the derivatives — qualifieds — “grammarians,” “white-mans,” and “just-man.” The “what-have-been-said” (εἰρημέναι) to qualities like “grammar,” “white,” and “just” are thus said according to paronymy, according to case, and in this being said paronymously they become qualifieds. “Or in whichever other way,” Aristotle adds. Hence it seems there is no one to one relation between paronymy and the derivation of qualities; there are other ways. This implies that paronymy, and therefore case, cannot be reduced to or equated with the a single semantic relation between two words.

But this is not the only asymmetry. Some words may be qualified in a way that does not derive from an abstract quality, even though there is a paronymous relation. For example, a runner (δρομικός) or a boxer (πυκτικός) does not derive his skill from any innate quality, but from physical prowess. Even if there might be a paronymous relation with other words, such as running (δραμεῖν) or boxing (πυκτεύειν), the runner or boxer does not derive his quality from “the what-have-been-said qualities.” It is derived from the knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) of running or wrestling. Conversely, there may be relations between qualities and qualifieds that are not paronymously derived. For example, a serious-man (σπουδαῖος) derives his quality from integrity (ἀρετή). However, σπουδαῖος does not paronymously derive from ἀρετή in any way; they are not etymologically related. Fortunately, Aristotle can reassure us. “Yet such a thing does not happen very often.” Therefore, even though involved in the dissemination of qualities, paronymy and case are not exclusively bound to it. There are exceptions on both sides: qualifieds that do not derivatively relate to qualities, and derivations that have nothing to do with qualities, but with, for example, sciences. Even though there are many overlaps in the linear inheritance of qualities, derivation seems to have a more complex relational structure that is neither injective nor surjective.

A final type of semantic relation covered by Aristotle in the Categories deploying paronymy are the so-called πρὸς τι, which are usually translated as the category of relatives and literally mean the “for something.” He lists several examples of these relatives. For example, knowledge is always white, grammatically correct male. Perhaps even himself.

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12 Cat. 10a29–32: ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν πλεῖστων καὶ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ πάντων παρωνύμως λέγεται, οἷον ἀπὸ τῆς λευκότητος ὁ λευκὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς γραμματικῆς ὁ γραμματικὸς καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὁ δίκαιος, ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων. [...] ποιὰ οὖν λέγεται τὰ παρωνύμως ἀπὸ τῶν εἰρημένων ποιοτήτων λεγόμενα ἢ ὡσαύτως ἄλλως ἀπ’ αὐτῶν.

13 Note how the examples that Aristotle chooses throughout for his derived qualities give us the image of a just, white, grammatically correct male. Perhaps even himself.

14 cf. Cat. 10a34–b5.

15 cf. Cat. 10b5–9.

16 Cat. 10b9: οὐκ ἐπὶ πολλῶν δὲ τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐστίν.
knowledge of something, and perception is always perception of something. These are called relative, because they always refer to something else. Now, the thing that is referred to is sometimes a case of the relative that refers to it.

But it [sc. the relative] will sometimes differ by case [πτώσει] according to the expression, like the knowledge [ἐπιστήμη] of the knowable [ἐπιστητοῦ] is called knowledge and the knowable [ἐπιστητὸν] for knowledge [ἐπιστήμη] [is called] the knowable, and perception [αἰσθησις] of the perceptible [αἰσθητοῦ] is called perception and the perceptible [αἰσθητὸν] for perception [αἰσθησις] [is called] the perceptible.

The structure of the derivation of relatives is not one-way, as in the case of qualities, but seems to operate in two directions. A relative does not derive, but differs. It will differ according to the expression (κατὰ τὴν λέξιν). We note here that this expression (λέξις) — manner of speaking — finds itself in a paronymous relation with speaking, calling (λέγειν) and discourse, sentence, ratio, logos (λόγος), and the relation between expression and discourse will be subject of investigation later on. A relative will differ (διοίσει) by case, according to the manner of speech, according to the way that the speaker addresses the issue. For each example given by Aristotle, two manners of speaking the same relation are given. One with a genitive: “like the knowledge of the knowable is called knowledge” and “perception of the perceptible is called perception,” and the inverse construction with a dative: “the knowable for knowledge is called the knowable,” and “the perceptible for perception is called the perceptible.”

The difference in case for both relatives is double. First, the two word couples presented by Aristotle are both in the same relation, a relation of the πρὸς τι, but with a different formal derivation. On the one hand we have ἐπιστήμη and ἐπιστητὸν, and on the other, αἰσθησις and αἰσθητὸν. Both derivatives ending in -τὸν are the referent of the referring nouns ἐπιστήμη and αἰσθησις which have a different form even though their semantic relation, and their case, is similar. If we could analyze them with contemporary morphological tools, we would say that both words have a different suffix for abstraction: -μη and -ας.

Second, the cases are different according to the way the relation between the terms is expressed by the speaker. Knowledge as knowledge of the knowable and perception as perception of the perceptible, or the knowable as knowable for knowledge and the perceptible as perceptible for perception.

17 cf. Cat. 6b6–8.
18 Cat. 6b33–6: πλὴν τῇ πτώσει ἐνίοτε διοίσει κατὰ τὴν λέξιν, οἷον ἡ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστητοῦ λέγεται ἐπιστήμη καὶ τὸ ἐπιστητὸν ἐπιστήμῃ ἐπιστητῶν, καὶ ἡ αἰσθησις αἰσθητοῦ αἰσθησις καὶ τὸ αἰσθητὸν αἰσθήσει αἰσθητῶν.
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Aristotle opposes two ways of expressing the same relation of πρός τι by two different sets of cases: ἐπιστητοῦ and αἰσθητοῦ versus ἐπιστήμη and αἰσθήσει.

Note once again that these cases have no names. They can be compared both in structure and in form, but there is no fixed paradigm or standard way of deviation to be found. Aristotle’s conception of paronymy and case is far from a grammatical one. As it is developed in the Categoriæ, it provides us with a way to describe philosophical, metaphysical structures between qualities and relatives, between concepts in general. Nevertheless, these structures are never comprehensively founded on paronymy through case. On both sides there is always a remainder: “in whichever other way.” This is also a way that the future will carry away, that will differ in the future, a δι-οίσειν of the οἶμος, the road, the way. In subsequent readings of Aristotle and many others we will slowly find out that this “whichever other way” will lead philosophers, logicians, grammarians, and linguists to constrain the derivative force of πτῶσις, nailing it to other philosophical concepts, thus creating the massive garbage heap that we call etymology, the true logos of whichever other way.

§6 The paradigm of case

The manner of speaking, the expression (λέξις) that we encountered in the Categoriæ, where the concept referred to the two different ways in which a relative can operate, is one of the focal points of Aristotle’s Poetica. Traditionally, the concept of λέξις is translated with diction, and it represents one of the six constituent parts of tragedy. Aristotle does not define λέξις as such, but tells us that its study includes a knowledge of the usage of the different modes of expression, such as commands, prayers, stories, threats, questions, and answers.

The expression therefore, just like the title of the treatise — Poetica — already reflects, captures a broader spectrum of linguistic acts than the narrow bandwidth of philosophical language that Aristotle is claimed to have established in the Organon. In other words, the λέξις subsumes all speech acts that are excluded from the discourse of logic, the proposition, the declarative sentence (λόγος ἀποφαντικός) and which Aristotle will ban from philosophy in De Interpretatione when he states “[truth or falsity] are not present in all [sentences]; a prayer is a sentence, but it is neither true nor false.” This, however, is not the case for the λέξις.

As we have seen, on the one hand, Aristotle organizes paronymy, and therefore case, at the basis of his logical framework. But on the other hand, Aristotle wants to constrain its effects, for no

21 DI 17a3–4.
philosophy has use for words deriving into infinity. This tendency already became clear in the linear organization of qualities and the closed circuits of the relatives. In the *Poetica*, he will continue this process of constraining, and case will be organized as an element of the expression and present to us its engagements with other parts of speech:

The parts of all expression [λέξεως] are letter-phoneme [στοιχεῖον], syllable [συλλαβή], conjunction [σύνδεσμος], noun-word [ὄνομα], time-word [ῥῆμα], joint-article [ἀρθρον], case [πτῶσις], and sentence-discourse [λόγος].

The enumeration of the eight parts of the expression is condensed to the extent that a one-on-one translation is nearly impossible. But the order in which they are treated seems to be determined from small to large parts of the expression. (In the discussion of the different parts, ἄρθρον is treated between σύνδεσμος and ὄνομα.)

Let us inspect the position of πτῶσις within this definition. The στοιχεῖον is the smallest, indivisible, meaningless sound from which a composed sound can be formed, it is the elementary sound. On the other side of the scale we encounter λόγος is the largest unit. A λόγος is a meaningful sound, composed of noun-words and time-words, either one or many. “Kleon walks” is a λόγος, Homer’s *Iliad* is a λόγος. According to this organization, πτῶσις has a range larger than ὄνομα or ῥῆμα, but is limited by the borders of the λόγος. This seems indeed to be so, as case both influences noun-words and time-words, but does not extend beyond the sentence, the largest unit of λόγος. In the *Poetica*, case is defined as follows.

A case of a noun or a verb is [1] according to the meaning of of-that or to-that and things like that, [2] according to [the meaning of] one or many, like men or man, and [3] according to [the meaning of] the things-belonging-to-the-delivery-of-speech, like according to [the meaning of] a question, a command. For walked? or walk! are a case of a time-word according to [the meaning of] those forms.

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22 *Poet.* 1456b20–1: τῆς δὲ λέξεως ἁπάσης τάδ’ ἐστὶ τὰ μέρη, στοιχεῖον συλλαβή σύνδεσμος ὄνομα ῥῆμα ἄρθρον πτῶσις λόγος.
25 *Poet.* 1457a18–23: πτῶσις δ’ ἐστὶν ὄνόματος ἢ ῥήματος ἢ μὲν κατὰ τὸ τοῦτο ἢ τούτῳ σημαίνον καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα, ἢ δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἐνί ἢ πολλοίς, οἷον ἀνθρωπος ἢ ἀνθρωπος, ἢ δὲ κατὰ τὰ ὑποκριτικά, οἷον κατ’ ἐρώτησιν ἐπίπλασιν τό γάρ ἐβάδισεν: ἢ βάδιζε πτῶσις ῥήματος κατά ταύτα τὰ εἴδη ἐστίν.
A case is always a case of a noun-word or time-word. It does not have a form or shape of its own, there is no list, enumeration, or paradigm of inflectional endings that could be designated as case system. Just like the λόγος cannot consist of only strings of nouns or verbs without nouns, πτώσις cannot manifest itself without nouns or verbs. At the same time, a case can never be a case of anything other than a noun-word or time-word. There are no cases of syllables or conjunctions; these cannot be inflected. So whereas in the Categoriae Aristotle remains vague about the possibilities of the application of πτώσις, to which type of words it could apply, the definition from the Poetica offer us a more detailed, yet also more confusing image.

In example [1], πτώσις applied to an ὄνομα results in a change of inflection,26 the noun-word falls “according to” what is signified by the inflected pronoun “of-that” (τούτου) and “to-that” (τούτῳ).27 Example [2] shows a change in number of the ὄνομα, which, assuming that case works the same for nouns-words and time-words, might as well be a change in number of a verb, and [3] shows that also the moodsPE of a ῥήμα are regulated by πτώσις.

This third type of inflected time-word form, the command or the question, is formed through case “according to the things-belonging-to-the-delivery-of-speech.” These ὑποκριτικά are those things belonging to the ὑπόκρισις, the answer or reply as it is given by the author on the stage to the choir, the playing of a part, but also the delivery of the orator. Thus, πτώσις also coordinates the structure of the speech act as a whole. Its influence ranges from changes in nominal inflection, to the inflection of the whole sentence as it is coordinated by the time-word, albeit always within the borders of the λόγος. The activity of case halts at the border between sentence and paragraph.

In the Poetica, Aristotle defines πτώσις as something that we cannot but consider as a zone of undecidability between meaning and meaninglessness. On the one side of the spectrum from smallest to largest elements of the λέξις, we encounter the letter-phoneme (στοιχεῖον) as the unit, the atom of the φωνή, even before any signification. This letter-phoneme is followed by the syllable (συλλαβή), the conjunction (σύνδεσμος), and the joint-article (ἀρθρον), all of them a “meaningless sound” (φωνὴ ἄσημος).29 On the other side we encounter the familiar triad of noun-word (ὄνομα), time-word (ῥήμα), and sentence-discourse (λόγος), each of which is a “meaningful sound” (φωνὴ σημαντική).30 Case finds itself again in a no-man’s land, and Aristotle refuses to make a decision.

26 Again, inflection as a term does not mean anything to Aristotle. The first example from this quotation just happens to coincide with a description of what contemporary linguistics would call nominal inflection.
27 Similarly, differences in gender can be ascribed to πτώσις. For example, case can reveal a masculine (ἄρρεν), feminine (θῆλυ), or neutral (μεταξύ) pronoun (cf. SE 173b26–30).
28 cf. fn.20?
29 cf. Poet. 1456b35; 38; 1457a6.
30 cf. Poet. 1457a10–11; 14; 23–4.
Thus the place and structure of case resembles in many ways the topics that Giorgio Agamben seems to cover (and he covers case, as we will see in § 1) under the names of “halo,” “exemplum,” “quodlibet,” “limbo,” and so on and so forth. All of these terms dwell in a realm of undecidability between form and content, between heaven and hell, between qualities and qualifieds. Agamben’s research is a research, as he says himself, into “a topology of the unreal,” and he claims that “Only a philosophical topology, analogous to what in mathematics is defined as an analysis situ […] would be adequate to the topos outopos, the placeless place.” Along the same lines and points we propose to map out a topology of the trap, the black hole of case, which already in its definitions as formulated by Aristotle seems to dwell between meaning and nonsense.

So what is it that collects these different characteristics of πτώσεως? How are we to think of case as it is developed here by Aristotle as both the fall and the guide to the fall of noun-words and time-words? How is case thought in Aristotle? We have seen several instances, both in the Categoriæ and the Poetica, where case is described without giving additional supporting terminology. Paronymy, indeed, but this word itself seems to occur only in the context of case and is quite rare otherwise. But upon closer inspection, we more than often discover πτώσεως in the context of a specific preposition: κατὰ τοῦνομα…, κατὰ τὴν λέξιν…, κατὰ τὸ τούτου ἢ τούτῳ σημαίνον…, κατὰ τὸ ἐνι ἢ πολλοὶς…, κατὰ τὰ ὑποκριτικά…, κατὰ ταῦτα τὰ εἴδη…. What we can say about case — perhaps — is that it always falls “according to” (κατά).

Even though classically schooled philologists tend to translate something like κατὰ τὸ τούτου ἢ τούτῳ σημαίνον with “expresses either the relation ‘of,’ ‘to’” (S.H. Butcher) or “signifies either ‘of’ or ‘to’ a thing,” (W.H. Fyfe), there are no “relations” or “things” explicitly mentioned in the Greek text. There is only an “according to” a “meaning” (σημαίνον) as present participle of “to mean/signify” (σημαίνειν). When Aristotle discusses the case of a noun-word, there is a meaning: a meaning according to τούτου or τούτῳ, “of-that” or “to/for-that” respectively. There’s no “thing,” but merely an index.

Some interpreters such as A.J. Jenkinson even go as far as to designate these different “thats” as “genitive or dative.” But they are time travelling, because the Latin words genitive and dative only come into play long after grammar is established as an art on its own and calcified into the regime of Latin philosophy and grammar. In Aristotle, case only operates according to vectors like of-that,
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to-that, one, many, question, command: no names, only directions. Case signifies accordingly “from above down toward' something” as Heidegger paraphrased the preposition κατά.35

In Aristotle's philosophy case is constantly shown by analogy: this falls according to that. It operates neither as a closed procedure governed by an overall, centralized authority, nor as a disjunct field of unrelated morphological incidents. Case rather forms a chain in which each case could stand as an example for another case. In this sense “of-that” (τούτου) and “to/for-that” (τούτῳ) function as paradigms along the lines defined by Agamben in his essay What is a Paradigm?, He defines an element of a paradigm as follows: “a singular object that, standing equally for all others of the same class, defines the intelligibility of the group of which it is a part and which, at the same time, it constitutes.”36 Thus, an expression like “according to of-that” occupies no privileged position toward other “of-” noun-words. It merely defines their intelligibility, for whichever other “of-” noun-word would suffice to establish the analogy.

An analysis of case as a purely paradigmatic phenomenon also absolves us from the need to find an “original” expression of case, as if each case would have a fixed model in Greek grammar. As a part of the expression, case is neither an indivisible sound (φωνὴ ἀδιαίρετος) like a letter, a meaningless sound (φωνὴ ἄσημος) like a syllable, conjunction, or joint-article, or a composed meaningful sound (φωνὴ συνθετὴ σημαντικὴ) like noun-words, time-words, and the sentence-discourse. Case is not even a sound. It is only according to another meaning. Case cannot be disconnected from either noun-word or time-word, there are no means to write τούτ-ου or τούτ-ῳ after which we can point to -ου or -ῳ as the carriers of the inflection. Case means “according to” these full, uninterrupted forms.

At this point we can also recall Heidegger, who had already put us on the right track. “All these πτώσεις are inflections [Abwandlungen] of the same word according to definite directions of meaning.”37 This direction of meaning is organized through κατά. A scholar commenting on the grammar of Dionysius Thrax, which we will encounter below, already stated this point with precision: “It should be noted that the five cases are [cases] of signifieds, not of sounds.”38 But not only that. A case also means “according to the appellation of the word,”39 the noun-word as it is uninflected and underived. Case is therefore always double: signifying according to something else, and signifying to the appellation of the word it is itself. As Alexandre Delamarre states in his essay on case:

The object of Aristotle is not […] to establish a grammar, but to think this heteronomy in the

35 Heidegger 1992a, 23 [GA26, 29].
36 Agamben 2009, 17.
37 Heidegger 2000, 56 [GA40, 56].
38 Σ’ 230, 34–5: ἰστέον δὲ ὡς τῶν σημαινομένων, οὐ τῶν φωνῶν εἴσιν ἀι πέντε πτώσεις.
39 Cat. 1a13: τὴν κατὰ τοὔνομα προσηγορίαν; cf. also DI 16b1–2: λόγος δὲ ἐστιν αὐτοῦ τά μὲν ἄλλα κατὰ τὰ αὐτά.
effective act of signification, as it is taken within a language or a discourse.\textsuperscript{40}

To think this heteronomy means to think case without a governing principle, that is, to think case as a paradigmatic structure. This also means that πτῶσις is the only component of the Aristotelian λέξις that resists metaphoricity, abstraction, as we already preliminarily concluded after reading its initial definition in the \textit{Categoriae}. As Derrida argues, for Aristotle, anything that is nominalizable can be a metaphor.\textsuperscript{41} Being essentially without proper meaning and without proper sound, case is an emergency exit from the metaphysical λόγος because it is resists nominalization. In Greek, anything can be nominalized, from conjunctions to whole sentences. This doesn't hold for case. But perhaps we should say, precisely because this structural resistance, it precisely \textit{defines} the metaphor: for “Analogy is metaphor par excellence.”\textsuperscript{42}

\section*{§7 Noun-words and time-words}

Aristotle starts \textit{De Interpretatione}, the book that follows the \textit{Categoriae} in the \textit{Organon}, by expressing a need. “First it is necessary to be posited what a noun-word and what a time-word is[.]”\textsuperscript{43} There is a necessity of first decisively positing, stating, placing upright (θέσθαι). This positing is formulated through the so-called medium form of the aorist infinitive,\textsuperscript{44} as if the noun-word (ὀνομα) and the...

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} Delamarre 1980, 325.
\item \textsuperscript{41} cf. Derrida 1974, 33ff. In spite of discussing all other elements, Derrida avoids (or forgets?) the concept of case in his discussion of the definition of the λέξις in Aristotle, while in fact claiming to have discussed “this whole semantic theory, this theory of lexis and the noun” (Derrida 1974, 41).
\item \textsuperscript{42} Derrida 1974, 42.
\item \textsuperscript{43} \textit{DI} 16α1: πρῶτον δεῖ θέσθαι τί ὄνομα καὶ τί ῥήμα.
\item \textsuperscript{44} This means that the infinitive in Greek is not as indefinite as the German one. Greek infinitives can have a voice like active, medium, or passive, and can be marked for tense; in this case the so-called aorist. In the Preamble I have referred to Heidegger’s quest to determine the nature of the infinitive Being (Sein), which in German is also indefinite for tense and voice. Strictly speaking, Heidegger’s substantivized infinitive \textit{das Sein} is therefore even less definite than the Greek infinitive \textit{το εἶναι} which at least gives us information on the tense (present) and voice (active). Heidegger brushes this issue aside: “now of course, and particularly in Greek, there is also the infinitive in the passive and middle voice, and on in the present, perfect, and future, so that the infinitive at least makes manifest voice and tense. This has led to various disputed questions concerning the infinitive, which we will not pursue here. We will clarify only one point in what follows. The infinitive form \textit{λέγειν}, to say, can be understood in such a way that one no longer even thinks about voice and tense but only about what the verb in general means and makes manifest” (Heidegger 2000, 71 [GA 40, 71–2], my emphasis). If Heidegger wants to interpret infinitives like to say and to be as if “one no longer thinks about voice and tense” why constantly refer back to the Greek etymology which is founded on exactly an \textit{inclination} (ἔγκλισις) of the verb, an inclination indicating its tense and voice? Why trace the etymology of Being, only to un-think exactly what makes an etymology of the infinitive \textit{as case} available in the first place?
\end{itemize}
time-word (ῥῆμα) posit their own finite (aorist) definition in the infinitely indecisive, undeterminable gesture of the placing itself. This stating and being stated is also done in the simplest way possible, as a θε-σθαι, as a root comprising a mere consonant and vowel, Aristotle's syllable (συλλαβή) par excellence: a taking-with (συλ-λαβή) as “a meaningless sound composed [συν-θετή] from a voiceless [sound] and a sound”\(^{45}\): θῆτα-epsilon, “the.”

Thus, a taking-with and subsequent self-placement of, first, what is an ὄνομα, and then, what is a ρῆμα. Remember that Plato had the Stranger first define the time-word, and only then the noun-word, i.e. the two terms in reversed order: a ρῆμα was called “the revelation being about the actions,”\(^{46}\) and an ὄνομα was called “the vocal sign about those effecting these [actions].”\(^{47}\) For Plato, the noun-word was dependent on the time-word, it was subordinated, lying under it. It was a mere sign of a sound, a vocal sign of those effecting the action. The appearance, the revelation, the means-of-making-known of the action was the privilege of the flow in time, the flow of the discourse, the ρῆμα.

However, in Aristotle's definition of noun-word and time-word, this order is reversed. First the ὄνομα, then the ρῆμα. It is also in this order that they are discussed in the remainder of the text. Terminology pertaining to both will always first be introduced in relation to the noun-word, and only then applied to the domain of the time-word. Among this terminology we again encounter case (πτῶσις), and this time in the most "grammatical" description to be found in Aristotle's oeuvre.

In Plato's Sophist, the introduction of noun-word and time-word was essential for the dissection of the discourse of the sophist and the establishment of a philosophical language that can speak affirmatively of nonbeing. But for Aristotle, the noun-word and the time-word need to be redefined in the process of developing a strict, coherent, logico-philosophical language of the declarative sentence (λόγος ἀποφαντικός).\(^{48}\) In the first paragraph of De Interpretatione noun-word and time-word need to be established, and negation (ἀπόφασις), affirmation (κατάφασις), declaration (ἀπόφανσις), and sentence (λόγος) defined. And only once these are settled, the declarative sentence,\(^{49}\) either true or false, excluding all non-propositional speech acts will emerge in its full force.

Plato’s Stranger said that “doubtless, there is never a sentence being spoken consisting of only noun-words, nor of time-words spoken without noun-words.”\(^{50}\) And Aristotle’s declarative sentence

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45 Poet. 1456b34–6: συλλαβὴ δὲ ἔστιν φωνὴ ἄσημος συνθετή ἐξ ἀφώνου καὶ φωνῆν ἔχοντος.
46 Soph. 262a: τὸ μὲν ἐπὶ ταῖς πράξεσιν ὄν δήλωμα.
47 Soph. 262a: τὸ δὲ γ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἐκεῖνας πράττουσι σημείον τῆς φωνῆς.
48 As we saw in the Poetica, the domain of the λόγος extends from the smallest sentence to the size of the Homeric epic. In De Interpretatione however, the λόγος is never larger than a sentence, hence this more specific translation.
49 cf. DI 16a1–2.
50 Soph. 262a: οὐκοῦν ἐξ ὀνομάτων μὲν μόνων συνεχῶς λεγομένων οὐκ ἔστι ποτὲ λόγος, οὐδ' αὐτ ῥημάτων χωρίς ὀνομάτων λεξθέντων.
similarly must contain a combination of a noun-word and a time-word. These are defined as follows. “A noun-word is a meaningful sound [φωνὴ σημαντικὴ] according to convention without time,” and “a time-word is time being added to the meaning [προσσημαῖον χρόνον] [sc. of the noun-word], of which no part means something separately.” The latter definition slightly diverges from the definition given in the *Poetica*, which rather plainly states that “a time-word is a meaningful composed sound with time.” In *De Interpretatione*, this addition “with time” is specified. The time-word adds time to its meaning, to its signification.

Aristotle subsumes the time-word under the noun-word as a noun-word, a meaningful sound according to convention, with the additional meaning of time. This addition is to be taken quite literally, as Aristotle states that “health [ὑγίεια] is a noun-word, but is-healthy [ὑγιαίνει] a time-word.” The time-word is literally “longer.” The time-word is a special type of noun-word, for “when they are spoken by themselves, the time-words are noun-words and mean something.” So, contrary to Plato, for whom the ὄνομα in a discourse adds the actor to the ῥῆμα, Aristotle makes the ῥῆμα add the definition of time. And its added value is not in relation to the Platonic “action,” but in relation to the non-temporality of the noun-word.

Both noun-words and time-words signify “by convention.” And the conventionality of noun-words — names, nouns, words — carrying the seeds of the arbitrariness of form as developed by Saussure, is again repeated some lines later, when Aristotle claims that noun-words are held together by a language community, by convention, the gathering ground for the λόγος. “According to convention [συν-θήκην], because nothing is of noun-words by nature, but [only] whenever they become thrown-together [σύμ-βολον].” Words are symbols, literally thrown together (συν-) into complete artificiality. This throwing-together however may only in a few cases result in a legitimate noun-word or time-word that may be used in a declarative sentence.

§8 Excluding cases

The structure of the declarative sentence imposes strict rules on the form of the noun-words and time-words that are allowed in it. These rules are necessary to secure the stability of the philosophi-
cal utterance. Aristotle starts by excluding negated noun-words and time-words from the declarative sentence.

“Not-man is not a noun-word. Truly, no noun-word, that we need to call it by, is available. […] But let it be an indefinite noun-word [ὀνόμα ἀόριστον].”

There is no proper noun-word that is available to cover the meaning of “not-man,” it can therefore not participate in the declarative sentence, in which noun-words are definite, not indefinite. The implication of this exclusion is that a sentence like “not-man is white” is not a well-formed declarative sentence in Aristotle’s philosophical framework. Similarly,

is-not-healthy and is-not-ill I do not call time-word; for they add time to their meaning and always predicate according to something, yet no noun-word is available [ὀνόμα οὐ κεῖται] to [express] their difference; but let it be an indefinite time-word [ἀόριστον ρῆμα].

Negated noun-words and negated time-words are indefinite noun-words and indefinite time-words, they are ἀόριστον, without border, without definition, without horizon, infinite. Aristotle is forced to circumscribe them in this way; as time-words and noun-words, yet “indefinite.” In both cases, they are indefinite because there is no “available” noun-word to sustain them. This “is available” is expressed by the verb form “lies (itself)” (κεῖται). We have to read this in the sense that there is no “appellation according to the word” (κατὰ τοὔνομα προσηγορίαν) that a negated noun-word or time-word can stand on. For example, in the way that “is-healthy” stands on “health.” “Not-is-healthy” has no ground available to stand on, is indefinite, and is therefore not allowed in the declarative.

A commentator on this passage from around 500 AD, Ammonius Hermiae, signaled this dependency of the noun-word and time-word on their definiteness already in the first lines of De Interpretatione. The act of positing, stating, placing the noun-word and time-word upright (θέσθαι) is in itself an act of definition, as it raises them, horizontally lying around, being “available,” into a vertical position in which they can be employed in the declarative sentence. That there is no name lying around (ὀνόμα οὐ κεῖται) for “not-man” or “is-not-healthy” also prevents a successful definition of

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57 DI 16a29–32: τὸ δ’ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ὄνομα· οὐ μὴν οὐδὲ κεῖται ὄνομα ὅ τι δεῖ καλεῖν αὐτό, […] ἀλλ’ ἔστω ὄνομα ἀόριστον.

58 DI 16b11–14: τὸ δὲ οὐχ ὑγιαίνει καὶ τὸ οὐ κάμνει οὐ ρῆμα λέγω· προσηγορίαν μὲν γὰρ χρόνον καὶ ἀεὶ κατὰ τινὸς ὑπάρχει, τῇ διαφορᾷ δὲ ὄνομα οὐ κεῖται· ἀλλ’ ἔστω ἀόριστον..

59 cf. Cat. 1a13.
these nouns and verbs as such. At the beginning of his long meditation on this positing as definition Ammonius states the following:

Now, for *positing* [θέσθαι] has been used as a substitute for defining [ὁρίσασθαι], calling the definition [ὁρισμόν] according to other significations there, which we were calling, meaning. Because in many ways *positing* is called manifest [φανερόν].

The positing is the establishment of a definition, a horizon from out of the horizontality in which the words lie, waiting to be raised. This raising makes them manifest as noun-word or time-word, a manifestation (φανερόν) *from* (ἀπό) which the sentence is declared, becomes manifest (ἀπό-φανσις). Hence, declaration can only exist by definition.

The two-dimensional, horizontal *Flatland* of words only acquires a manifest horizon through its extension into verticality of the definition of noun-words and time-words. A becoming-vertical that coincides with the throwing-together, the symbolization of noun-word and time-word. The definition of words is as miraculous as a tower un-collapsing from its own scattered debris. It is in this semantic space of throwing-together and placing upright, that the falling of πτώσεως reappears at Aristotle’s horizon. And now that we have treated the subject of indefiniteness as relating to noun-words and time-words, we can start reading Aristotle’s definition of cases of noun-words and time-words.

Of-Philo [Φίλωνος] or to-Philo [Φίλωνι] and the like are not noun-words but cases of a noun-word [πτώσεις ὀνόματος]. Their discourse [sc. of the cases] is the others [sc. noun-words] according to those [sc. the cases], but together with is or was or will-be they are neither true nor false — as always with a noun-word, — e.g. Of-Philo is (not); for in no way this is true or false.

The cases of Philo are neither noun-words like Philo nor indefinite nouns like not-Philo, they are cases of a noun-word. They are not yet fully symbolized, thrown together, but somewhere halfway, inclined between the horizontality of undefined words and the verticality of discreet noun-words. Still falling, not yet upright, or upright no more.

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60 Amm. in Ar. Cat. comm. 9, 4–7: τὸ γὰρ θέσθαι νῦν ἀντὶ τοῦ ὁρίσασθαι παρείληπται, λεγόμενον μὲν καὶ κατ’ ἄλλων σημαινομένων ἐνταῦθα δὲ τὸν ὁρισμόν, ὅπερ ἐλέγομεν, σημαίνον. ὅτι δὲ κατὰ πλείονας τρόπους τὸ θέσθαι λέγεται, φανερόν.

61 DI 16α32–b5: τὸ δὲ Φίλωνος ἢ Φίλωνι καὶ δόσα τοιαῦτα οὐκ ὀνόματα ἀλλὰ πτώσεις ὀνόματος. λόγος δὲ ἐστιν αὐτοῦ τὰ μὲν ἀλλὰ κατὰ τά αὐτά, ὅτι δὲ μετὰ τοῦ ἐστιν ἢ ἣν ἢ ἦσται οὐκ ἀληθεύει ἢ ψεύδεται, — τὸ δ’ ὄνομα ἄει, — οἷον Φίλωνὸς ἐστιν ἢ οὐκ ἐστιν· οὔδὲν γὰρ πω ὡστε ἀληθεύει ὡστε ψεύδεται.
Recall that in the *Poetica*, πτῶσις is the only term that is neither defined as meaningful sound, like time-words or noun-words, nor as meaningless sound, like syllables or letters; cases are a mere “according to”: “A case of a noun or a verb is according to….” This same phrasing reappears in *De Interpretatione*. Whereas noun-words and time-words are defined as meaningful sounds, the discourse of the cases of Philo — i.e. the way they are “collected” into meaning — is the noun-word “Philo,” belonging to “other” (ἄλλα) noun-words that were mentioned earlier, according to those cases of Philo (κατὰ τὰ αὐτά). We explicitly translate “those” (τὰ αὐτά), which can only refer to “of-Philo or to-Philo” as neuter words: “the of-Philo,” “the to-Philo.” A noun-word “according to” is always according to something else — “of-that,” “to-Philo” — never according to a specific case as such. The “according to” of case is voiceless, a silent fall of meaning. And this double signification of the case of a noun-word, according to a noun-word and according to a case actively recalls the double articulation of case in the *Poetica* as discussed above.

Aristotle argues that cases of noun-words cannot form a declarative sentence together with a time-word, that they cannot effectively participate in the determination of truth or falsity (οὔτε ἀληθεύει οὔτε ψεύδεται). Aristotle is determined here. There is no need “just” to call them something, for the lack of a better word, as he did with the indefinite — aorist — nouns. “Of-Philo” and “to-Philo” are called cases of noun-words. The upright position of the noun is assumed, but it is incomplete, unsettled, as if it is unbalanced, carrying the weight of additional letters that don’t belong there. Cases of noun-words are not noun-words because they contain a voicelessness. They are an incomplete symbolization because their κατά has prevented them from fully closing off their horizon of meaning; they are inclined to move away, to move on.

§9 Unmasking sophistic use of case

For Aristotle closure and finitude are a necessity of the declarative sentence, and therefore of philosophical discourse in general. In Plato’s *Sophist*, the Stranger provided the concepts of time-word and noun-word for Theaetetus to learn how to defeat the sophist on his own territory. Aristotle argues in favor of definite terms in his declarative sentence, the sentence of logic, for the very same reason. The case of a noun-word is precisely not a noun-word because otherwise sophists could indeed legitimately make statements like “Of-Philo is.” According to Aristotle, this type of sentence does not denote any truth or falsity. And since the access to truth is what differentiates the philosopher from the sophist, this access must be shielded from any possible contamination, including case.

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62 *Poet.* 1457a18–19.
63 *DI* 16b5.
This argument is elaborated in Aristotle’s *Sophistici Elenchi*. And whereas Socrates was still afraid that the Stranger, being some kind of god of refutation, might take on *him*, Aristotle is bold enough to directly refute the sophists. In the following passages he tries to refute several types of solecism (σολοικισμός), so-called grammatical mistakes, or “barbaric” use of language. He first states the sophistic argument, and then refutes it using grammatical arguments. The way in which he develops these arguments will give us additional insight into how Aristotle relates to the concept of case.

[Sophist:] “What [ὁ] you say truly, is that [τοῦτο] truly so? You say something is a stone [λίθον]; so something is a stone [λίθον].”

[Aristoteles:] [No.] Rather to say stone is not saying it [ὁ] but it [ὅν], and not that [τοῦτο] but that [τοῦτον]. So if someone would say “What [ὅν] you truly say, is that [τοῦτον] so?” you would not seem to speak correct Greek, just like one would also not say “What [ἡν] you say, is that [οὗτος] so?”

The argument is difficult to follow in the English translation because it cannot express the Greek cases and genders and also because Aristotle has to give the whole argument without any available grammatical terminology that would help us understand it. The argument of the sophist exploits one feature of the Greek language: neuter pronouns look similar in the nominative and the accusative case. Compare this for example with the difference in English between “he” and “him,” and the absence of any difference between “it” and “it,” no matter whether it is subject or object.

In fact, this is not only a feature of ancient Greek or English but of all Indo-European languages. The absence of any difference between nominative and accusative, the usual cases for subject and object, in case of neuter nouns (“things”) has led to speculations that Indo-European might have originally been a so-called ergative language, in which, contrary to a nominative language like Greek or German, the objects of transitive verbs are marked with the same case as subjects of intransitive verbs. A thorough discussion of the implications of this thesis however, is beyond the scope of this text. Suffice it to say that the idea that the subject is not as “straight” and “nominative” as has been assumed by philosophy ever since Aristotle is developed by Heidegger at the same time as the linguistic discovery that nominativity is not always the norm.

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64 SE 182a10–15: “ἄρ’ ὃ λέγεις ἀληθῶς, καὶ ἐστὶ τοῦτο ἀληθῶς; φής δ’ εἶναι τι λίθον· ἐστιν ἄρα τι λίθον;” ἤ τὸ λέγειν λίθον οὐκ ἐστι λέγειν ὁ ἄλλ’ ὁν, οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἄλλα τοῦτον. εἰ οὖν ἐροιτό τις, “ἄρ’ ὁν ἀληθῶς λέγεις, ἐστι τοῦτον;”, οὐκ ἄν δοκοίη ἐλληνίζειν, ὥσπερ οὐδ’ ἐροιτό, “ἄρ’ ἢν λέγεις εἶναι, ἐστιν οὕτος.”


66 About 25% of the world’s languages is ergative (cf. Dixon 1994, 2).
We can analyze the sophist’s argument as follows. In the premise “What [ὃ] you say truly, is that [τοῦτο] truly so?” the neuter relative pronoun “what” has the accusative case, being the object of “say,” and the demonstrative pronoun “that” has the nominative case, being the subject of “is.” That we can analyze these differences again assumes a grammatical apparatus available to neither the sophist nor Aristotle, so when the sophist concludes that when “You say something is a stone [λίθον]; so something is a stone [λίθον],” he talks as if in the premise both “it” and “that” were in the accusative case. We would call this sentence ungrammatical, but since Aristotle’s theory of case is based on the “according to,” the sophist seems to correctly process “stone” (λίθος) according to the presumed accusative of the demonstrative pronoun (τοῦτο) in the premise, thus analogically stating the ungrammatical λίθον.

Aristotle’s counter-argument is that, contrary to “what” (τοῦτο), stone (λίθος) is not a neuter word: “[No,] rather to say stone is not saying it [ὃ] but it [ὁν], and not that [τοῦτο] but that [τοῦτον].” The sophist makes the mistake of declining his noun “stone” according to the wrong set of pronouns; he uses the neuter pronouns instead of masculine pronouns. The sophist is not speaking correct Greek and makes a mistake as if he mixes up feminine (ἡν) and masculine (οὗτος), of which Aristotle gives an example in the last sentence.

Aristotle seems to develop in this argument an additional structure next to the “according to” of case, which he deploys in order to refute the sophist. The sophist should have known that the noun “stone” is declined according to a specific set of nouns, i.e. the masculine nouns. But then, how is he supposed to know that as the logical pronoun to use in the question “What you say, is that so?” is neuter, both in Greek and in English? Just think about a question about a stone that would ask “Whom you say, is that so?” That sounds as strange in English as it would sound in Greek. In other words, if the pronoun in the question is supposed to be neuter, but the noun in the answer is clearly masculine, how does Aristotle determine which set, which paradigm to use? The masculine or the neuter one? And why not the feminine one? At least Aristotle’s argument presupposes an insight into the complex and irregular morphological structure of Greek noun, which is otherwise totally absent from his work. Aristotle seems to appeal to some kind of naturalness of grammatical gender, while in fact it is a highly arbitrary feature of all Indo-European languages.

The problem becomes even more confusing at the moment that Aristotle states that indeed the previous argument is a solecism because the word “stone” has the wrong case, but that if the same argument would be repeated with a neuter word like “wooden stick” (ξύλον) there would be no problem, because this word “does not differ”67 in form between subjects and objects, just like the

67 SE 182a16: οὐδὲν διαφέρει.
neuter pronouns. This basically means that for Aristotle there is no difference between what we call nominative and accusative neuter nouns, because they show no difference. And if showing difference is the only guide in determining the right case at the right instance, how is he going to differ a masculine word like “stone” (λίθος) from a neuter word like “affect” (πάθος)? This would be practically impossible.

And yet, he does make this difference. In order to refute another sophistic argument he explicitly distinguishes between the “what” (τοῦτο) that corresponds to the “nominative stone” (λίθος), and the “what” (τοῦτο) that corresponds to the “accusative stone” (λίθον).

[Soph.:] “So I understand that [τοῦτο]? That [τοῦτο] is a stone [λίθος]; so I understand a stone [λίθος].”

[Arist.:] [No.] Rather, “that” [τοῦτο] does not mean the same in “So I understand that?” and in “That is a stone,” but in the former [it means] “that” [τοῦτον], and the latter “that” [οὗτος].

The sophist makes an argument that is the counterpart of his former one. Instead of erroneously placing an accusative case of stone where a nominative should be, he places a nominative case of stone in the position of the object, which should be an accusative case. Not “I understand a stone [λίθος],” but “I understand a stone [λίθον].” In order to make this clear Aristotle has to introduce a difference between two neuter pronouns (τοῦτο and τοῦτο) that do not show any difference. He does this by way of using masculine pronouns (τοῦτον and οὗτος), which are, when reinserted into the sophist’s argument, ungrammatical because of the reasons mentioned above. The phenomenon of case, and more specifically, the non-difference of the neuter nominative and accusative cases, thus forces Aristotle to accept something like a difference without difference. A difference that only becomes visible after substitution.

This problem of nominative versus accusative, which becomes much more opaque as soon as we get rid of this anachronistic terminology, is perhaps the reason for Aristotle to ignore the accusative case in De Interpretatione altogether. Recall that “of-Philo or to-Philo and the like are not noun-words but cases of noun-words.” This “and the like” most certainly includes the important accusative case “Philo” (Φίλωνα), but this form is not mentioned explicitly. As Aristotle’s aim is to establish the vocabulary for a logic, the logic of the declarative sentence, he carefully leaves out any potentially
explosive material, especially when it leads to thorny contradictions as we have just found in the 
*Sophistici Elenchi*.

**§10 The first declarative sentence**

As Aristotle tells us in *De Interpretatione*, a declarative sentence must consist of a noun-word and a time-word. Like noun-words, these time-words are not supposed to be indefinite, like “not-is-healthy” or “not-is-ill.” Neither should they be cases of time-words, meaning any time except for the present tense. Aristotle formulates this as follows:

> Similarly, was-healthy or will-be-healthy is not a time-word, but a case of a time-word; it differs from the time-word, which adds the present time to its meaning, the [cases of a time-word] the surrounding [time].

Although the argument seems almost parallel to the argument Aristotle provides for the cases of noun-words, there is one essential asymmetry. In *De Interpretatione* ὄνομα and ῥῆμα are differentiated through the aspect of time. A noun-word is a “meaningful sound without time,” whereas a time-word “adds time to its meaning.” For a time-word, time is therefore something supplementary, additional, extra.

So, whereas πτώσις directly affects the ὄνομα, its “meaningful sound” according to something else — “of that,” “to that” — case affects only the supplement of the time-word, i.e. time itself. That a verb is inflected does not prevent it from entering into a sentence, it does not produce non-sense like a case of a noun-word does. “Of-Philo is” is not a sentence and will never be one. “Was” however is not yet a sentence. Moreover, the verbal inflection does not only seem to affect the verb, but the whole discourse as such: not only on the level “according to the things-belonging-to-the-delivery-of-speech,” but also on the level of time itself. The time-word in itself is therefore always already ecstatic, standing out inside the “now.”

According to Aristotle’s definition in *De Interpretatione*, only the present time, third singular indicative, of the time-word, the time-word without case, “is-healthy,” may enter into a proposition together with a noun-word without case. There does not seem to be an apparent reason for this, except for the fact that this constellation of time, person, and mood seems best suited to his logical ar-

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70 *DI 16b15–18:* ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὸ ὑγίαινεν ἢ τὸ ὑγίαινεὶ ὁ ῥήμα, ἀλλὰ πτώσις ῥήματος διαφέρει δὲ τοῦ ῥήματος, ὅτι τὸ μὲν τὸν παρόντα προσσημαίνει χρόνον, τὰ δὲ τὸν πέριξ.


72 *Poet.* 1457α21.
guments. However, there is no formal aspect of the verb form (e.g. shortness, regularity) that would provide a ground for assuming so.

In a similar way, Heidegger privileges the same verb form in relation to Being, and this practice continues to this day in the realm of so-called analytic philosophy.

In short, we thus understand the verbal noun “Being” on the basis of the infinitive, which in turn remains linked to the “is” and to the manifoldness we have pointed out in this “is.” The definite and particular form “is,” the *third person singular of the present indicative*, has priority here. […] We take “to be” as the infinitive of “is.” To put it the other way around, we involuntarily [unwillkürlich] explain the infinitive “to be” to ourselves on the basis of the “is,” almost as if nothing else were possible.73

In other words, the infinitive that we labored on in the Preamble, merely seems to be a derivative of the privileged third person form, again, as in Aristotle, without any apparent reason except for our weak *will*. Derrida subsequently remarks:

Heidegger occasionally reminds us that “being,” as it is fixed in its general syntactic and lexicological forms within linguistics and Western philosophy, is not a primary and absolutely irreducible signified, that it is still rooted in a system of languages and an historically determined “significance,” although strangely privileged as the virtue of disclosure and dissimulation; particularly when he invited us to meditate on the “privilege” of the “third person singular of the present indicative” and the “infinitive.” Western metaphysics, as the limitation of the sense of being within the field of presence, is produced as the domination of linguistic form.74

It is within this “limitation of the sense of being” that we have interpret the exclusion and excision of the cases of time-words and cases of noun-words from philosophical language proper: “Philo is healthy” is the Aristotelian prototypical declarative sentence. “Philo,” a noun. “is healthy,” a verb. Of all the possible smallest, first, exemplary sentences that Aristotle could find, he chose these two words as examples in *De Interpretatione: Φίλων and ὑγιαίνει*. That Aristotle never explicitly writes the sentence Φίλων ὑγιαίνει should not make us blind to the fact that the whole discourse of exclusion sketched out in the first sections of *De Interpretatione* completely circulates around these two words.

74 Derrida 1976, 23 [1967, 37].
The logic that Aristotle applies to exclude the noun-word as such from the cases of noun-words (in modern terms: not to treat the nominative as a case) is, as we have seen above, less obvious for time-words. For there is no formal argument to do so: time-words in the present are not necessarily “shorter” than time-words in other tenses, nor do they seem more elementary, as is often the case with noun-words without case (nominatives). In fact, many time-words in the present tense seem to be longer, and more elaborate than for example their equivalents in the aorist. It is therefore not surprising that the terminology of “cases of time-words” which would be in some way parallel to the cases of noun-words, is soon abandoned, after which the domain of case is strictly the noun-word, as Heidegger already suggested in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

Aristotle has managed, for a moment and at considerable cost, to cure philosophical statements from the abominations of impure words. *For a moment*, because the exclusion of time surrounding the present from the universal statements of declarative sentences paradoxically implies that the statement made in the present, caught between past and future, is as momentary as it is universal.

One of the more beautiful commentaries struggling with this ecstatic status of the present tense is the commentary of the Muslim scholar Ibn Rushd (Averroes) to which I will return in the next section.

The uninflected verb is the one which signifies present time in the language of many nations, and the inflected is the one which signifies the time which exists as though it revolves around the present time — namely, past and future time. There is no particular form in the Arabic language for present time. In fact, the form for it in the speech of the Arabs is the same for the present and the future — like our saying “he is getting/will be getting healthy” (*yasiḥḥu*) or “he walks/will walk” (*yamšī*). [… ] Present time is the one the mind takes as actually existing and as designated — like our saying “this hour” and “this moment.” […] Whether or not what is imagined about the present exists the way it is imagined is not something that needs to be discussed in this place.

The problem that Ibn Rushd faces here is exactly the problem of the supposed universal status of the third person present indicative, which appears in all its complexity once it has to be translated to a non-Indo-European language. But our recourse to the issue of time in grammar can only be momentary itself, for a further unfolding of this relation cannot be accorded more time or space in this text.

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76 Ibn Rushd 1983, 130; translation modified with material from 2000, 86.
Let us go back to this signature sentence of Aristotle’s logic, Philo is healthy, ok, doing fine, which “implies the actual or empirical nonpresence of the signer,”77 as Derrida tells us. “Philo is healthy” signals the nonpresence of the philosopher Aristotle, and perhaps the nonpresence of his philosophy as such. The nonpresence of the tautologies of the declarative sentence, which in their eternal presence emanate nothing other than a hermetic self-closure: “a correct, healthy discourse [ὑγιής ὁ λόγος],”78 as a scholar from the first century remarked.

Philosophy is signing away its own health and sanity through Aristotle’s attempts to rid philosophy of sophistry. But now it will find itself threatened by the gifts of the Stranger, the Gift of the Stranger: the concepts noun-word and time-word, here working together to contain philosophy’s “having-been present in a past now or present which will remain a future now or present.”79 The cure from the Stranger from Elea is indeed, as Socrates feared, made by some god of refutations: a refutation to end all refutations.

What is at stake in Aristotle’s enumeration of the different case forms of noun-words and time-words, is nothing other than the sanitization of philosophical language, a sanitization that is still at work when Heidegger in all certainty claims:

The standard way of examining language is still the grammatical way. Among words and their forms, it finds some that are deviations, inflection of the basic forms. The basic position of the noun (the substantive) is the nominative singular: for example, ὁ κύκλος, the circle.

The basic position of the verb is the first person singular present indicative: for example, λέγω, I say.80

Significantly enough, all the “smallest sentences,” all prototypes of discourse that we have encountered so far — Plato’s “A man learns,” Aristotle’s “Philo is healthy,” and Heidegger’s “I say circle” — expose basic forms of their respective discourses: Plato’s pedagogy, Aristotle’s spring cleaning, and Heidegger’s hermeneutic circles emerge as they speak their “first” philosophical words.

Aristotle’s formulation of the first declarative sentence of philosophy does not solve all the issues surrounding the place of case within his philosophical and grammatical system. We already shortly

78 Σ 550, 29.
80 Heidegger 2000, 68 [GA40, 69]. Note that Heidegger seems to contradict himself here, as the “basic position” of the verb “to be” was supposed to be “is,” a third and not a first singular person. Moreover, Heidegger does not use the word “noun,” but rather “headword” (Hauptwort) to describe “circle.” In this sense he is still faithful to Aristotle, whose ὄνομα is literally “ahead” of the ῥῆμα: The separate time-word is still a noun-word.
addressed the problems concerning the cases of time-words. But before we can properly address the issues at hand in the realm of the noun-word, we first have to introduce one additional piece of Aristotelian terminology.

§11 Calling the noun-word

The *Analytica Priora*, which follows the *Categoriae* and *De Interpretatione* as the third book of the *Organon*, deals with the basics of Aristotle's deductive, or syllogistic logic. Together with the *Analytica Posteriora* it lays down the rules for the type of reasoning that we have just encountered some examples of in the *Sophistici Elenchi*. In order to know how to proceed in a syllogism, it is essential to understand the cases of noun-words, as they indicate the different roles in the sentence, the different relations that structure the sentence. A syllogism proceeds from various premises to a logical and necessary conclusion, and the discussion of case again takes up an essential part in the description of the parameters for a felicitous deduction. The following citation serves to get the cases of the terms in the premises straight. Because for example claiming that “all men are mortal” can only be properly done by “calling the noun-word.”

For we say simply, that all terms [ὁροις] are always to be posited according to the callings of the nouns [κλήσεις τῶν ὄνομάτων], e.g. man or good or contraries, not of-man or of-good or of-contraries, but the premises are to be accepted according to the cases of each [ἑκάστον πτώσεις].

Aristotle is going to tell us simply, plainly and only once (ἁπλῶς) what will be the case. Whenever we are dealing with an argument, we have to inspect our derivations and always fix our horizons on the callings of the noun-words, on what is called a noun-word. Note how Aristotle once again chooses his words carefully. Both the words for terms or boundaries (ὁροις) and positing (θετεόν) recall the definiteness that was implied in the first sentence of *De Interpretatione*, when Aristotle stated his intention to define noun-words and time-words. The perfective adjectival form θετεόν recalls from the aorist the infinitive θέσθαι and ὄρος is related to the verb that Ammonius Hermiae suggested as a translation for θέσθαι: to define (ὁρίσασθαι). Thus the setting-up, positing of our terms is again a definite business, avoiding the infinity of what is without border or infinite (ἀ-όριστον).

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81 *APr*. 48b39–49a2: ἁπλῶς γὰρ τοῦτο λέγομεν κατὰ πάντων, ὅτι τούς μὲν ὁροὺς ἀεὶ θετεόν κατὰ τὰς κλήσεις τῶν ὄνομάτων, οἷον ἄνθρωπος ἢ ἀγαθόν ἢ ἐναντία, οὐκ ἄνθρωπος ἢ ἀγαθόν ἢ ἐναντίων, τὰς δὲ προτάσεις ληπτέον κατὰ τὰς ἑκάστον πτώσεις.
Just the like noun-words and time-words from *De Interpretatione*, terms of a syllogism are definite parts. In *De Interpretatione*, they are the elements of a declarative sentence, whereas in the *Analytica Priora* they are the terms, the elements of deductive reasoning, of logic. That this setting-up — or better: setup, as we are dealing with a perfective form (θετέον) — is again formulated as an “according to” (κατά) should make us attentive to the precise status of these callings, call-forms, dialing presets (κλήσεις) of noun-words. If we are encountering a definition here, why is this definition according to something else, a “calling”? Is it because, as an anonymous scholar put it, “because through it we name the nouns for children and through it we name”?

We will have to suspend this question for the moment, as these callings only appear to us once in the entire *Analytica*. But the terms are inclined to listen beyond their definite, defined, terminal borders set-up by the θετέον. And Aristotle, through this invasion of the “according to,” the calling of the noun-words, will make way for the generalization of the concept of case, not as a supplement to a “clean” noun-word, but as a necessary component of any placement of any noun-word: a noun-word soon will always be a case of a noun-word.

The calling forms of the noun-word are the terms in a deduction. We can only reason about “man,” “good,” and “contraries” when they are called in a correct way. So terms are not defined, posited according to “of-man,” “of-good,” or “of-contraries.” Other noun-words can only be accepted according to their case in the premise of the deduction. Because otherwise, the relation between the terms wouldn’t be correctly interpreted. Again we have already encountered this in the fragments of the *Sophistici Elenchi* which we discussed. A failure to recognize the case and relation of noun-word makes you sound like a foreigner, a “barbarian,” or for that matter, a sophist.

The “according to” of the cases regulates the inter-nominal relations inside the premise. The premise has to be accepted, assumed (ληπτέον) according to the the cases of each of the terms (κατὰ τὰς ἑκάστου πτώσεις). It is an acceptance that follows the track of the fall of each of the terminal nouns into their case. Thus the premise as a whole is regulated by case, which is confirmed by Aristotle’s definition in the *Poetica* of case being unit larger than both the noun-word and the time-word, bordering on the sentence. Aristotle provides us with the following matrix for the different cases of nouns as they appear in the premises of syllogisms:

Either what is to-that [τούτῳ] e.g. “equal-to” [ἴσον], or what is of-that [τούτου], e.g. “double-of” [διπλάσιν], or that [τοῦτο], e.g. “hitting” or “seeing” [τύπτον ἢ ὁρῶν], or that [οὗτος], e.g. “man [is] a living being” [ἄνθρωπος ζῷον], or in whichever other way the noun falls [πίπτει]

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82 Σν 383, 29–30: ὅτι δι’ αὐτῆς τὰ ὀνόματα ἐπιτίθεμεν τοῖς παισὶ καὶ δι’ αὐτῆς ὀνομάζομεν.
according to the premise.83

Even though many translations fill in the standard nomenclature for cases in this citation,84 Aristotle does not explicitly deploy any grammatical terminology. Nowhere in Aristotle’s oeuvre do we encounter words like dative, genitive, accusative, or nominative. We are still in a framework of a certain “calling” of a noun-word, and “cases of noun-words” in which they fall. Note that the word for falling (πίπτει) is paronymously, derivatively related to the noun πτῶσις as we have encountered above: they both have the root π(ε)τ-. Aristotle does not prescribe different case forms depending on the structure of the premise; he shows how a noun-word, a term in the deduction can “fall according to the premise.” It is the relational structure of the premise as such that aligns itself to the different cases of nouns, the different — and finite — number of ways in which a noun can fall and acceptable within the premise.

Those cases are exemplified first by giving an inflected form of a pronoun, the series τούτῳ, τούτο, τοῦτο, ὦτος, combined with a context in which the specific form might occur: respectively “equal to that,” “double of that,” “hitting/seeing that,” and “is a living being.” Or in whichever other way (ἢ εἰ πως ἄλλως), because there are naturally other ways in which the premise can be structured like “half of that,” “hearing that,” and so on. The number of cases however has been definitely limited, because there is no more “and the like” (ὅσα τοιαῦτα), as in De Interpretatione, to be found. And except for one or two additional “cases” that the coming generations of grammarians and logicians will quarrel about, this number of four forms will remain the basic number of cases.

Four different ways of falling, three of which we have encountered before in De Interpretatione and elsewhere. The fourth one however looks unfamiliar — or strangely familiar: “that” (ὦτος). This form stands out for several reasons. Whereas Aristotle has discussed other forms like τούτῳ and τούτο before, this form has remained absent until now. Like the other three, which model for the cases of noun-words as previously defined by Aristotle, it is a demonstrative pronoun, demonstrating and guiding the cases of nouns according to and along its shape. But this shape is different. The other three pronouns are all neuter, whereas ὦτος is masculine; the other three do not have the shape of the calling form of the noun, the noun as such, but this one does. And what is the case that this calling form-lookalike models for? It is the case according to which something or someone is something else: “man [is] a living being” (ἄνθρωπος ζῷον). The relation is-living-being (ζῷον) not only demands

83 APr. 49α2–5: ἢ γὰρ ὅτι τούτῳ, οἷον τὸ ἴσον, ἢ ὅτι τούτου, οἷον διπλάσιν, ἢ ὅτι τούτο, οἷον τὸ τύπτον ἢ ὁρῶν, ἢ ὅτι ὦτος, οἷον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷον, ἢ εἰ πως ἄλλως πίπτει τοῦνομα κατὰ τὴν πρότασιν.

84 For example, “either the dative, e.g. ‘equal to this,’ or the genitive, e.g. ‘double of this,’ or the accusative, e.g. ‘that which strikes or sees this,’ or the nominative, e.g. ‘man is an animal’…” (A.J. Jenkinson).
a case just like is-double-of (διπλάσιν) or any of the other examples, but it demands the specific case according to οὗτος. Now, what is this οὗτος? Is it a case, and if so, which one?

Οὗτος looks in every aspect like the calling form of the noun-word, which Aristotle discussed just two sentences before:

The terms have to be posited according to the calling of the noun-word [κατὰ τὰς κλῆσεις τῶν ὄνομάτων], like man [οἶον ἄνθρωπος] […]; the premises have to accepted according to the cases of each [of the terms] [κατὰ τὰς ἑκάστου πτώσεις], […] e.g. that, like man is a human being [οὗτος, οἶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷον].

Two times “man,” two times ἄνθρωπος, and in its repetition the word changes from calling form of a noun-word, the term “man,” into part of the premise, falling into the case required by the term “is-living-being.” Either Aristotle is contradicting himself, or we have to bend our mind and accept that case has nothing to do with a specific form of a noun. We have ended up with the same problem that Aristotle found himself in when trying to take down the sophist in the Sophistici Elenchi: two forms that look the same, but that he wants to be different. The calling of a noun-word “man-1” (οἶον ἄνθρωπος) cannot be the same as the case of a noun-word “man-2” (οὗτος, οἶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῷον); Aristotle would contradict himself.

Because of the apparent introduction of a case (οὗτος) that looks like the calling form of the noun-word — which is by definition not a case —, such as will be developed within Stoic thought, this passage is often considered to be a “proto-Stoic” development in Aristotle. But recall that for Aristotle, so it seems, the calling of the noun-word is by definition caseless, namely, a pure noun that can partake in a declarative sentence. Nevertheless the question remains. According to what guidelines is this οὗτος supposed to fall? How could the form ἄνθρωπος be derived other than as “calling form of the noun-word”? This question of the case of this οὗτος, the issue of the nominative as case and its relation to the subject will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

§12 A discourse of something

For a moment we will need to backtrack to Plato’s Sophist and review some of its passages, because this dialogue introduces an essential concept that we need to understand the interrelation of the above terms. Near the end of the dialogue, after the Stranger has presented the analysis of the λόγος
as the interweaving (συμπλοκή) of noun-words and time-words, and the first and smallest sentence “a man learns,” he wants — once again — to make a small comment.

Stranger: But there’s still something small.

Theaetetus: Like what?

Stranger: A discourse, whenever it be, needs to be a discourse of something [τινὸς εἶναι λόγον], if not it is impossible.\(^8^6\)

This “something small” is “is only apparently self-evident”\(^8^7\) as Heidegger states in his reading of this passage. A discourse (λόγος), will it ever be, has to be a discourse of, about something (λόγος τινός). This something that the action is about is located at the perimeter of the action, what Plato calls the “about what” (περὶ οὗ).

The Stranger presented Theaetetus with the sentence “Theaetetus sits,”\(^8^8\) and asked him to formulate, to phrase, what the sentence is about. He wanted to know two things: its perimeter (περὶ οὗ), and of whom (ὅτου) the sentence was.\(^8^9\) Theaetetus answered: “it is clear that it is about me and of me.”\(^9^0\)

It is clear, it has been made known, it is revealed (δῆλον) by the revelation of being (δήλωμα) in the discourse made by both the noun-word and the time-word, that the discourse is about, around me, that it is revealed in my surroundings (περὶ ἐμοῦ), and it is of me, about me as theme of the discourse (ἐμός). This “of me” is, as Heidegger confirms, “what grammar calls the subject of the sentence.”\(^9^1\) In other words, the subject of the sentence “Theaetetus sits” is “Theaetetus.” And the Stranger repeats that “it was of impossible things that a discourse be a discourse about nothing.”\(^9^2\) “Those things are most right [ὀρθότατα].” Theaetetus confirms. Please note the qualification here: “most right,” because “rightness” will play an essential role in the determination of the case of the subject, the nominative.

The Stranger’s introduction of the tools to dissect the λόγος, the determination of the λόγος as a λόγος τινός, and therefore the introduction of a finite area of revelation in which one could speak of truth and falsehood has finally ended the search of the Stranger and Theaetetus, which seemed still an endless quest in our Preamble. Now that they have finished within the realms of finitude, it


\(^{8^7}\) Heidegger 2003, 414 \([GA\text{19}, 598]\).

\(^{8^8}\) Soph. 263a: Θεαίτητος κάθηται.

\(^{8^9}\) Soph. 263a: φράζειν περὶ οὗ τ᾽ ἐστὶ καὶ ὅτου.

\(^{9^0}\) Soph. 263a: δῆλον ὅτι περὶ ἐμοῦ τε καὶ ἐμός.

\(^{9^1}\) Heidegger 2003, 415 \([GA\text{19}, 600]\); translation amended.

\(^{9^2}\) Soph. 263c: τῶν ἀδύνατων ἢν λόγον ὄντα μηδενὸς εἶναι λόγον.
is comprehensible why Aristotle would rather keep noun-words and time-words away from the infinite: truth and falsehood might not be accessible anymore. Moreover, by determining the perimeter of the sentence, its borders, its horizon, the Stranger had succeeded in sowing one of the first seeds of a type of grammatical and philosophical subject that will be fully developed by Heidegger in his concept of Dasein.

Heidegger in his turn recognizes the Platonic subject as the something (τινός) of the λόγος τινός in Husserl’s concept of intentionality, as the first to recapture this particular notion of the subject, only to later subsume it under the last great subject of occidental philosophy: the transcendental ego. But we didn’t make this detour through Plato in order to arrive at Husserl, but to determine the possible nature of Aristotle’s oὗτος: the case that looks like the calling of a noun-word, which is not supposed to be a case. As Heidegger observed, Plato’s subject will go underground for more than two thousand years, and it is underground that we will have to look for its traces.93 A first clue can be found in the paragraphs just after the definition of paronymy in the Categoriae:

Of beings, what is called according to the (being-)subject [καθ’ ὑποκειμένου] of something, is in no (being-)subject, like man [ἀνθρωπός] is called according to the (being-)subject of a certain man [τοῦ τινὸς ἀνθρώπου], but is in no (being-)subject [ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ οὐδενί].94

In other words, when we say “a certain man is a man,” we say that being a man is called according to the subject (a certain man) but that being-man is not in the subject itself. Being-subject, subject, substrate, or suppositum (ὑποκειμένον) is literally what is (presently in the state of) lying under (ὑπο-κειμένον). It lies under the availability of the noun in the way that we remember from De Interpretatione: “Not-man is not a noun-word. Truly, no noun-word, that we need to call it by, is available...

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93 In a recent publication, the French scholar Alain de Libera digs out the subject from its historical and historicist context: “On a là [sc. in §2 of the Categoriae], à l’évidence, le terreau de l’idée de sujet-agent: celle d’un sujet qui serait en même temps principe d’opération. On est encore loin, semble-t-il, du «sujet moderne»: ce sujet-opérateur n’est ni un «moi» ni un «je». (Libera 2007, 53). Libera’s archaeological method focuses solely on the concept of subject, and therefore reaches a depth in Aristotle’s work on the subject that we cannot match. Our focus will remain throughout on the relation between case — specifically, the nominative case — and what will be called the subject.

94 Cat. 1a20–2: τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν καθ’ ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δὲ οὐδενί ἐστιν, οἷον ἀνθρώπος καθ’ ὑποκειμένου μὲν λέγεται τοῦ τινὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ δὲ οὐδενί ἐστιν; for a discussion of this citation and its context, cf. Libera 2007, 63ff. We have written “(being-)subject” in order to stress the fact that in Aristotle’s Greek the subject is always a participle of the present indicative, and therefore does not have a “definite” border as the word “subject” alone might suggest.
In that case there is no noun-word that “is lying” (κεῖται) for the indefinite noun-word “not-man.”

It is precisely the subject that underlies any availability of the noun-word, as it lies at the bottom of the discourse. The subject, after a momentous rise at the end of the Sophist, has become literally subterraneous. Whereas in the Sophist it is still an essential part of the discourse, for Aristotle it has become so obvious that it is rarely mentioned, let alone treated within the context of the λόγος, when he talks explicitly about the parts of the discourse. In the next citation on this subject, Aristotle introduces the concept of transitivity, but, more importantly, he establishes a relation between speaking and predicating according to a certain subject. In other words, he defines the relation between, for example, “man” and “learns” in the sentence “a man learns.”

Whenever one thing [ἕτερον] is predicated [κατηγορίζεται] according to something else [καθ’ ἑτέρου], like according to a subject [καθ’ ὑποκειμένου], all things said according to the predicate [κατά τοῦ κατηγορουμένου], will also be spoken [ῥηθέται] according to the subject; like man is predicated according to a certain man, and living-being according to man; therefore living-being will also be predicated [κατηγορηθέται] according to a certain man; because both a certain man and man are a living-being.

So, added to the dynamics of being according to subject and being in a subject (position, we might add), we find in this passage the concepts of predication and speaking. In this citation from the Catégories, Aristotle connects the (future) promise of being spoken (ῥηθέται) — which we can follow in its genealogy all the way to the time-word (ῥῆμα) — and the (future) promise of being predicated (κατηγορηθέται). The latter term truly loses all its meaning in its latinized translation. For it is exactly as a speaking “according to the agora” (κατ’ ἀγορᾶς) that we must understand this technical term. This predication, a public preaching, is a gathering of language within the confined, limited space of the central square in order to accuse, prove, and organize. Thus Aristotle establishes an intimate link between a future being spoken (ῥηθέται) and predicated upon (κατηγορηθέται). And it is this predication according to something (καθ’ ἑτέρου) as the subject (καθ’ ὑποκειμένου) which means to gather language within the perimeter of the subject.

95 DI 16a29–31.
96 Cat. 1h10–15: ὅταν ἕτερον καθ’ ἑτέρου κατηγορήται ως καθ’ ὑποκειμένου, διὰ κατὰ τοῦ κατηγορουμένου λέγεται, πάντα καὶ κατὰ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ρηθέται-οἷον ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τοῦ τινὸς ἄνθρωπος κατηγορεῖται, τὸ δὲ ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τοῦ ἄνθρωπος κατηγορεῖται, τὸ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ὑποκειμένων κατηγορεῖται· οὖν τὰς ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶ καὶ ἄνθρωπος.
Thus Aristotle actually maintains the twofold distinction that Plato established through the λόγος τινός: the difference between its perimeter (περὶ οὗ), and of whom (ὁτου) it is. For example, a predicate like “man” is always called both according to the being-subject of, for example, a certain man, an of-whom — Plato’s ὅτου, and Aristotle’s other (ἕτερον) — and in its predication onto the subject it speaks according to the surroundings, the perimeter, the Umkreis of the subject — Plato’s περὶ οὗ, and Aristotle’s range of the predicate (κατηγορούμενον).\(^97\) The double articulation of the λόγος τινός rises to the surface in the description of Aristotle’s subject (ὑποκειμένον) as “other,” viz. the subject, and “according to the agora.”

This subject makes another appearance in De Interpretatione, in a familiar semantic neighborhood. The time-word (ῥῆμα) is the “sign of what is being said according to something else (καθ’ ἑτέρου),”\(^98\) and this sign of what is being said according to something else is “also always a sign of the things that are beginning (τῶν ὑπαρχόντων),” that begin as soon as the speaking commences. And this verb, this sign of the things that are beginning at the same time like the sign of “the things according to the subject (τῶν καθ’ ὑποκειμένου).”\(^99\) Thus in De Interpretatione the time-word (ῥῆμα) acts as the place-holder for the whole complex of speaking and predicating that was elaborated in the Categoriae: when something is spoken according to the subject, it will also be predicated according to it. The time-word (ῥῆμα) is the sign of this speaking and predicating as they are beginning to become present.

§13 The case of the subject

We can now, equipped with the concepts introduced in the previous section, return to our question concerning the case of οὗτος in the Analytica Priora. Given is the relation “is-living-being” (ζῷον), which, just like “is-double-of” (διπλάσιν) demands a case. This case is in case of the relation is-living-being a case according to οὗτος. So what is this οὗτος according to?

In the sentence ἄνθρωπος ζῷον [ἐστιν], “[is-]living-being” is predicated — according to the definitions in the Categoriae — according to something else, which is the subject, that is, “man.” As we recall from the Analytica Priora, man (ἄνθρωπος), in this sentence, is also the noun “falling according to the premise.” This premise being a predication of living-being onto man as a subject. This premise has therefore to be “accepted according to the cases of each [term].” In other words, the sentence-premise “man is a living-being” has to be accepted according to the case of “man,” which falls both

\(^{97}\) cf. APo. 82b17–18. In the sentence “the log is white,” white is the predicate (τὸ κατηγορούμενον) and log is what is predicated upon/of (τὸ οὗ κατηγορεῖται).

\(^{98}\) DI 166b–7: ἔστι δὲ τῶν καθ’ ἑτέρου λεγομένων σημείον.

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according to the premise as signified by οὗτος, and according to the subject. Thus οὗτος, the case of “man,” falls according to the being-subject of “man.” There is no other way. If we accept “is-living-being” as a predicate, “man” must be the subject. And if man falls according to “that” (οὗτος), “that” must fall according to the subject. Therefore the case of οὗτος coincides with the case of the subject and therefore is the case of the subject.

This then has the consequence that it becomes impossible that in a sentence like “Philo is healthy” Philo is not a case of a noun-word. If we accept, as Aristotle claims himself, that “is healthy” is a time-word, it is a sign of a predication, and therefore it speaks and predicates according to something, which is — for example — the subject, Philo. And this also implies that the “calling of the noun-word,” this strange appellation made to it can also be none other than a case of a noun-word in disguise — if we accept “man” in “man is a living-being” as οὗτος and as a case of a noun — namely the case of the subject. In the development of grammar, this case will slowly start to attach itself to the “callings of the nouns” (κλήσεις τῶν ὄνομάτων): a calling (κλήσις) that will soon change into an inclination (κλίσις). It is this case that will soon, as we move to Stoic philosophy, be called nominative.

Even though the relation between this nominative case, the calling form of the noun-word, and the subject position as such is never explicit in Aristotle, nor in many of his Greek commentators, the coincidence of terms that I just pointed out will not remain unnoticed elsewhere. A definite link between the subject and the nominative case will be made through the commentaries of Muslim scholars like Ibn Rushd (Averroes) who saved Aristotle and other Greek philosophers from the oblivion of the early Middle Ages. Many kinds of grammatical surface features that were available, even obvious to the Greeks, appeared not as obvious to the Muslim scholars when translating and commenting on Aristotle.

For example, the clear distinction in form between the nominative case and the other cases in Greek that has led Aristotle and others to distinguish between the calling form of the noun and the other, “real” cases of the noun is absent in Arabic. The three different cases in Arabic, ending in -u(n), -a(n), and -i(n) look “alike” when compared to Greek patterns like οὗτος versus τὸῦτον, τοῦτω, τοῦτον. The effect of this translation problem becomes apparent as soon as we inspect a short commentary of Ibn Rushd on the lines of De Interpretatione that deal with cases of noun-words.

Moreover, when a noun is put into the accusative or genitive case or altered in some similar way, it is not said to be a noun in an absolute sense, but an inflected noun. Then again, some nouns are inflected and others uninflected. The definition set down for the noun encompasses both of these. Nonetheless, the difference between the inflected noun and the unin-
flected noun — which, in the speech of the Arabs, is the noun in the nominative case — something like “was” [kāna], “is” [yakūnu] or “is now” [huwa al-ān] is added and it is said “is Zayd” [Zaydan kāna] in the accusative or “is Zayd” [Zaydin kāna] in the genitive, they will be neither true nor false. The uninflected noun — which is called direct noun — becomes true or false when one of these is added to it — like our saying in the nominative case “Zayd was” [Zaydun kāna] or “Zayd existed” [Zaydin wujida].

By the nature of his own language, which clearly exhibits some sort of “ending” with the nominative case on equal level with the others, Ibn Rushd is forced to define the “uninflected” calling form of the noun-word as a case, contrary to Aristotle’s explicit definition in De Interpretatione. It just becomes the form, the inflection of a noun that fits best with a verb: the case of the subject al-marfū’. And a similar move will be made by the Alexandrian grammarians when contemplating the Aristotelian heritage as processed by the Stoics and Peripatetics.


101 The term al-marfū’ is the passive participle of the verb rafa’a, operating in the semantic field of “to lift (up), to erect, to start, to present, to remedy.” When used in the passive it acquires a meaning of “appearing, coming in sight.” As a word it means “nominative” or “indicative.” In his interpretation of Aristotle, Ibn Rushd cannot but be influenced by the debates in the Alexandrian school, which we will encounter shortly. It can therefore well be possible that the “name” for the nominative case/calling form of the noun is in some way or other a translation of a Greek term invented after Aristotle. However, the immediate relation between subject form, nominative, and so-called “uninflected” noun has nowhere been more clearly formulated than in his commentary on Aristotle. Notice also the additional meaning “to remedy” which will become relevant at the end of §xx.
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§14 Stoic logics

The Stoics, moving away from Aristotle’s philosophical project, developed the grammatical vocabulary — at different, and not always commensurable points in their philosophical project — that still dominates the contemporary incarnation of the study of grammar: linguistics. Unfortunately, none of the works written by Stoic philosophers from this period have survived intact, and attributions can only be made through later commentators like Apollonius Dyscolus, one of the most famous Alexandrian grammarians, who quotes the Stoics in his reaction on and elaboration of the Ars Grammatica of Dionysius Thrax, and Diogenes Laertius, who, around the third century AD, wrote The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers. At three points the Stoics seem depart from Aristotle’s organization of the λόγος as λόγος ἀποφαντικός, of discourse as the declarative sentence as defined in De Interpretatione.

In the first place, the Stoics separate the proper name from the noun. Both Plato and Aristotle make no formal distinction between for example the proper name “Kalippos” and the noun “man”; both of them are an ὄνομα, a noun-word. The Stoics however introduce a rigid distinction between both. Whereas the former introduces a “proper quality,” proper to a single part of the discourse, the latter introduces a “common quality.” Diogenes Laertius reports that according to Diogenes [of Babylon], the appellative [noun] is a part of the discourse meaning a common quality, like “man,” “horse”; the name is a part of the discourse disclosing a proper quality, like “Diogenes,” “Socrates.”

1 From this point on we feel it is less problematic to translate the concepts ὄνομα and ρῆμα with respectively noun and verb. Their Stoic definitions are much closer to our current usages of these words. The impossibility of retaining either of the translations noun-word/time-word or noun/verb throughout this whole chapter signals a structural aporia, a discontinuity in the history of the ὄνομα and the ρῆμα in particular and grammatical terminology in general. As case stands in direct relation to these terms, case itself partakes in this structural break, the effects of which will become clear in the following sections.

2 Vit. Phil. vii, 58: ἔστι δὲ προσηγορία μὲν κατὰ τὸν Διογένην μέρος λόγου σημαίνον κοινὴν ποιότητα, οἷον Ἀνθρώπου Ἱππος ὄνομα δὲ ἐστὶ μέρος λόγου δηλοῦν ἰδιαν ποιότητα, οἷον Διογένης Σωκράτης.
The difference between a proper name and a noun is the difference between a part of the discourse with denotes a proper quality and one that denotes a common quality. This separation prevents all kinds of problems in predication and for example makes the difference between sentences like “Socrates is a man” and “Socrates is Diogenes” easier to deal with. Nevertheless, the problem of the referentiality of proper names will persist in linguistics until today, as the difference between common and proper quality cannot be properly formalized.

Second, the Stoics offer a criticism of the perceived symmetry between ὄνομα and ῥῆμα in Aristotle’s philosophy. As I have already tried to show in the reading of the passages from Aristotle’s Categoriae and the Analytica Priora, the speaking of the ῥῆμα has become intimately related to the concept of predication as preaching, “speaking according to the agora” (κατηγοροῦμενον). Nevertheless, the noun and verb are presented on a more or less discursively symmetrical way in De Interpretatione: anything that holds for the noun-word, also holds for the time-word, even though the first asymmetries become visible in his treatment of case in both domains.

The development inside Aristotle’s writing, which slowly separates the verb from the noun owing to the former’s increasing discursivity, becomes definitely established in Stoic thought. The verb (ῥῆμα) is subsumed under the predicate (κατηγόρημα), which becomes the nodal point of the elocution, of the straight discourse (ὀρθός λόγος). It therefore also becomes the basis of the discourse on active and passive sentences, transitivity and intransitivity, and case structures based on the valence of the verb, as expounded in contemporary linguistics.

This development also has consequences for the cross-categorical concept of case. Whereas in Aristotle, it seems that “the movement of case, as describing a grammatical reality, is in its morphological occurrence, which is the modification of a form by derivation, irreducible to the nominal cases. The Stoics will be the first to isolate them from the verbal inflections.” The Stoics will have been the first to isolate πτῶσις as a technical term, constrain it to nouns and forget as quickly as possible its origins in general derivation from any word to the other.

And in the third place the Stoics definitively incorporate, though not without enduring controversy, the nominative, the calling form of the noun, into the system of cases. This means that they include within a closed system of the cases of nouns, the derivations “according to,” its point of origin. What in Aristotle is referred to as a mere noun-word, or calling form of the noun, the noun without case, now becomes part of a system of case: the zero-inflection is acknowledged as inflection. Stoic
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grammar is therefore also one of the birth grounds of the idea of the so-called zero morpheme: the morphological unit that signifies without being overtly expressed within language.

By the way, this inclusion of the origin into the system itself, the inclusion of the noun as a case of a noun, seems to have a fascinating parallel in the field of mathematics, a field that in many cases seems to share vocabulary and metaphorical space with Greek grammar, as we indicated before. For Aristotle, “the being for one is the beginning of the being for some counting.” In other words, one is not a number itself, but the beginning of the counting of the series of natural numbers. Chrysippus, the same Stoic philosopher that claimed that the calling form of the noun (nominative) is in fact a case of noun, talks about the number one as the “multitude one” (ἕν πλῆθος), as a number like all other numbers (multitudes). Thus, for the Stoics, one is a number, and the nominative is a case: the one is immanent to the multiple.

The Stoics criticized Aristotle on the level of the declarative sentence (λόγος ἀποφαντικός). They attacked the anteriority placed by Aristotle on the ὄνομα and ρῆμα over the Platonic concept of interweaving (συμπλοκή). For them, the interweaving of the elocution as λέκτον, “sayable” becomes primary. In De Interpretatione, the truth or falsity of a sentence is analyzed in terms of its parts and their subsequent combination. For the Stoics however, this process starts immediately at the level of the full elocution. This has many consequences for their logical procedures. For example, an operation like negation will function on a propositional level, on the level of the λέκτον, and not on the level of any of the parts of the sentence. Thus we find the in Stoic philosophy a movement away from Aristotle’s term logic toward a propositional logic.

So Aristotle says that “Socrates is not white” [Σωκράτης οὐκ ἐστὶ λευκός], and not “Socrates is not-white” [Σωκράτης ἐστὶ οὐ λευκός] is the negation of the affirmation “Socrates is white” [Σωκράτης ἐστὶ λευκός]. But there are people [sc. the Stoics] who think that not even a proposition taken in this way is a negation. For they think that one should not just posit what negates before “is” or before the predicate; rather, a negation has what negates placed before the entire affirmation or proposition. And they think that the negation of “Socrates is white” is “It is not the case that Socrates is white” [οὐχὶ Σωκράτης ἐστὶ λευκός] and not “Socrates is not white.”

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5 Meta. 1016b17-18: τὸ δὲ ἑνὶ εἶναι ἄρχῃ <τοῦ> τινὶ ἐστὶν ἄριθμῷ εἶναι.
6 Kroll 1902, 140, 10.
7 Soph. 262c.
9 Alex. in Ar. AP. 1 comm., 402, 1–8 [Alexander of Aphrodisias 2006, 98–9].
Those people that believe that the negation of “Socrates is white” operates on the level of sentence are the Stoics. This also immediately clarifies the main difference between Aristotelian and Stoic logic. The former is based on terms like “white” and “is healthy,” while the latter functions on a propositional level, in which the terminals can be variable.

Only the rediscovery of Stoic logic at the end of the nineteenth century by mathematicians like Gottlob Frege, and the subsequent proliferation of propositional logic clearly proved the falsity of Kant’s claim about the absence of any progress in logic, that “since the time of Aristotle it has […] been unable to take a single step forward, and therefore seems to all appearance to be finished and complete.” On the contrary, compared to Aristotle’s simple logic of terms the approach of the Stoics appears to be in fact thoroughly modern, but — like many other things — had simply been forgotten.

In order to be able to analyze the Stoic contributions to the concept of case as developed by Aristotle, we will thus have to focus first on this unit of the elocution, the sayable, the λέκτον. Again we must be aware of the fact that an exhaustive treatment of this highly complex term is beyond the scope of this dissertation. We will only treat those aspects that are immediately relevant for an understanding of the Stoic concept of case.

A λέκτον is either incomplete — a sole predicate (κατηγόρημα) — or complete — a (straight) case and a predicate: “an incomplete sayable combined with a straight case [ὀρθῇ πτώσει] becomes a proposition.” This “straight case” is one of the Stoic terms for what Aristotle termed the calling form of the noun, the case of the subject, the nominative. A full proposition always includes such a nominative case. It is also possible to extend a predicate, consisting of a sole “straight” verb, by a noun in a non-nominative case. But this elocution remains incomplete; a straight case is still needed in order to complete it: “straight [verbs] are those who become a predicate through the combination with one of the oblique cases [τῶν πλαγίων πτώσεων].” For example, the predicate “hits Plato” can be completed by adding a straight case: “Socrates hits Plato.” The addition of the straight case not only creates a proposition, it also “completes [ἀποτελεῖ] the straight and most direct discourse [ὀρθὸν καὶ εὐθύτατον λόγον].”

In Stoic theory, both the sayable or the elocution and the predicate are defined as incorporeal (ἀσώματον), in the sense that they possess no material form. Contrarily, a straight, or in fact, any case of a noun, as an agent or a patient in relation to a bare predicate, is considered to be a body, that is, corporeal (σώμα). This opposition between incorporeal and corporeal is an important distinction in

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10 Kant 1997, x [1787, B viii, 13]; cf. Heidegger 1992a, 4 [GA26, 4].
11 Vit. Phil. vii.64: λεκτὸν ἐλλιπὲς συντακτὸν ὀρθῇ πτώσει πρὸς κατηγορήματος γένεσιν.
12 Vit. Phil. vii.64: ὀρθὰ μὲν οὖν ἑστὶ τὰ συντασσόμενα μιὰ τῶν πλαγίων πτώσεων πρὸς κατηγορήματος γένεσιν. Oblique cases are all cases except the nominative.
13 Σμ 383, 27–8.
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Stoic philosophy and also thoroughly affects the organization of the λέκτον. Therefore, we will have to inspect this distinction a bit more detail, in order to understand the precise function of πτώσις in Stoic logic as we will address in §16. This distinction is most clearly elaborated in relation to the Stoic concept of cause.

Sextus Empiricus defines a cause, an incorporeal effect of the body, in the broadest sense as “that through which the coming-into-effect (ἐνεργοῦν) comes into full completion (ἀποτέλεσμα).” This means that for example in “the melting of the wax,” (ἡ χύσις τοῦ κηροῦ or τὸ χεῖσθαι τὸν κηρὸν) “melting” could be both noun “the melting” (χύσις) and verb “melting” (χεῖσθαι), caused by the heat of the sun. The cause as coming-into-effect can therefore be both related to nouns and to verbs, to corporeal cases and incorporeal predicates.

This liberal interpretation of the nature of causality is constrained by Clement of Alexandria, who lived around the same time, to the coming-into-effect as a strictly incorporeal, hence predicative function. Nouns cannot express this, only verbs. This constraint will definitely relate coming/bringing-into-effect, activating to predicates; it triggers the formation of active predicates. These “active” predicates also at the same time always contain “straight” verbs. In the reformulation of the grammatical organization of the sentence by the Stoics, straightness becomes inextricably linked to action, activity. Clement provides us with the following definition of causality in relation to corporeals and incorporeals.

The Stoics say that the whole causal body [πᾶν αἴτιον σῶμα] becomes for a body [σώματι] the cause of some incorporeal [ἀσωμάτου τινὸς αἴτιον], like: “the lancet” = a body, “for the flesh” = for a body, of the predicate “cutting” = of an incorporeal; and again: “the fire” = a body, “for the wood” = for a body, of the predicate “burning” = of an incorporeal.

I have employed this rather formal translation to stress the nature of the Greek original, which is included in the section “Fundamentals of the Physical Doctrine,” supposedly written by the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus. For the Stoics, language was inherently physical, where collisions of words describe collisions of bodies. Two bodies: the lancet and the flesh, an incorporeal cutting of the lancet into the flesh is the result. Two bodies: the fire and the wood, an incorporeal burning of the fire.

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14 Sextus Empiricus 1961, iii, 14: εἴη τὸ αἴτιον τοῦτο δι’ ὃ ἐνεργοῦν γίνεται τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα.
15 cf. Stoic Vet. Fr. 3, 262–3, §8
16 Stoic Vet. Fr. 2, 119, §341: εἰγε Στωϊκοὶ μὲν πᾶν αἴτιον σῶμα φασί σώματι ἀσωμάτου τινὸς αἴτιον γίνεσθαι, οἷον σῶμα μὲν τὸ σμιλίον, σώματι δὲ τῇ σαρκί, ἀσωμάτου δὲ τῷ τέμνεσθαι κατηγορήματος, καὶ πάλιν σῶμα μὲν τὸ πῦρ, σώματι δὲ τῷ ξύλῳ, ἀσωμάτου δὲ τοῦ καίεσθαι κατηγορήματος.
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into the wood is the result. This causal relationship between fire and the burning, lancet and the cutting, is always from the body toward the incorporeal, never the other way round.\(^7\)

The examples chosen by Chrysippus to illustrate the incorporeal dynamics of the elocution, cutting and burning, are not accidental. Both actions refer to the metaphors that are used by Socrates in the Cratylus to compare speaking with.

[Socrates:] Then actions also are performed according to their own nature, not according to our opinion. For instance, if we undertake to cut anything, ought we to cut it as we wish, and with whatever instrument we wish, or shall we, if we are willing to cut each thing in accordance with the nature of cutting and being cut, and with the natural instrument, succeed in cutting it, and do it rightly, whereas if we try to do it contrary to nature we shall fail and accomplish nothing?

[Hermeogenes:] I think the way is as you suggest.

[Socr. :] Then, too, if we undertake to burn anything, we must burn not according to every opinion, but according to the right one? And that is as each thing naturally burns or is burned and with the natural instrument?

[Herme. ] True.

[Socr. :] And all other actions are to be performed in like manner?

[Herme. ] Certainly.

[Socr. :] And speaking is an action, is it not?

[Herme. ] Yes.

[Socr. :] Then if a man speaks as he fancies he ought to speak, will he speak rightly, or will he succeed in speaking if he speaks in the way and with the instrument in which and with which it is natural for us to speak and for things to be spoken, whereas otherwise he will fail and accomplish nothing?\(^8\)

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17 cf. Stoic. Vet. Fr. 2, 121 [§349].

18 Crat. 387a–c, translated by Harold N. Fowler: [Σωκράτης:] κατά τὴν αὑτῶν ἄρα φύσιν καὶ αἱ πράξεις πράττονται, οὐ κατὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν δόξαν. οἷον ἐάν τι ἐπιχειρήσωμεν ἡμεῖς τῶν ὄντων τέμνειν, πότερον ἡμῖν τιμήτων [ἐστίν] ἐκαστοῦ ὡς ἄν ἡμεῖς βουλῳσθήμεθα καὶ ψ ἀν βουλῳσθήμεν, ἢ ἐάν μὲν κατὰ τὴν φύσιν βουλῳσθόμεν ἐκαστοῦ τέμνειν τοῦ τέμνειν τε καὶ τέμνεσθαι καὶ ψ πέφυκε, τεμοῦμεν τε καὶ πλέον τι ἡμῖν ἔσται καὶ ὀρθῶς πράξομεν τοῦτο, ἐὰν δὲ παρὰ φύσιν, ἔξαμαρτησούμεθα τε καὶ οὐδὲν πράξομεν; [Ἑρμογένης] ἔμοι γε δοκεῖ οὐτως. [Σω. :] οὐκόν καὶ ἐάν καίειν τι ἐπιχειρήσωμεν, οὐ κατὰ πάσαν δόξαν ἔκαστον δέ κάειν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν ὀρθήν; αὕτη δ᾽ ἐστίν ἢ ἐπεφύκει ἐκαστοῦ κάεσθαι τε καὶ κάειν καὶ ψ ἐπεφύκει; [Ερ. :] ἐστι ταῦτα. [Σω. :] οὐκόν καὶ τάλλα οὕτως; [Ερ. :] πάνυ γε. [Σω. :] ἀρ όν οὐ καὶ τὸ λέγειν μία τις τῶν πράξεων ἐστίν; [Ερ. ] ναί. [Σω. :] πότερον οὖν ἢ ἂν τῷ δικῇ λεκτέον εἶναι, ταύτῃ λέγων ὀρθῶς λέξει, ἢ ἐάν μὲν ἢ πέφυκε τὰ πράγματα λέγειν τε καὶ λέγεσθαι καὶ ψ, ταύτῃ καὶ τούτῳ λέγη, πλέον τε τί ποιήσει καὶ ἐρεῖ: ἢ ἂν δὲ μή, ἔξαμαρτησεται τε καὶ οὐδὲν ποιήσει;
By referring to the examples from above dialogue, Chrysippus explicitly refers to a tradition in which words are instruments that have to be correctly employed to produce a felicitous elocution. As Socrates says: “A name […] is a kind of instrument,” which he subsequently compare with a shuttle that is used for weaving. Here we basically come full circle to the Stoic emphasis on the anteriority of the “interweaving” of the elocution to the words, “instruments” or “bodies” themselves.

It is not only in this respect that the Stoic concept of λέκτον is organized very differently from Aristotle’s λόγος ἀποφαντικός. The Stoics speak of a “straight” case and “oblique” cases. The former “completes” a sentence, just like the “something” in Plato’s “discourse of something” (λόγος τινός): a sentence should be about something, the subject. The latter can be combined with “straight” verbs to form predicates which can then be completed by a noun in a “straight” case. Thus Stoics forge the bond between incorporeal causation, active verbs, straight nouns, complete sentences, and the subject as straight noun, relations that make their propositional logic a feasible alternative to the rudimentary Aristotelian system. And in doing so, they explicitly refer back to a Platonic tradition that had been ignored in Aristotelian logic. Now that I have given a short — perhaps too short — introduction into the Stoic organization of the λέκτον, we can move to a reading of the result of the clash between Aristotle’s λόγος and the Stoics’ λέκτον.

§15 Case on the move
Recall that the Stoic claims that we have discerned above were highly controversial and often attacked by the followers of Aristotle’s school, the Peripatetics, who sided with Aristotle on all three points of Stoic criticism that I listed above. One of the primary sources that collects the traces of this debate is the Ars Grammatica (τέχνη γραμματική) attributed to the Alexandrian grammmarian Dionysius Thrax, and the subsequent collection of scholia — studies, exegeses — on this text which assemble the arguments underlying the dry, prescriptive, and apodeictic language of the Ars Grammatica.

The title Ars Grammatica suggests that at that time — in the second century BC — there should have been something which could be described as an art (τέχνη) of grammar (γραμματική). However, many elements, such as the definition of grammar mentioned in the first few lines, and the subsequent elaboration of it, in no way adhere to the program formulated. Even though the first collection of grammatical knowledge of the name “grammar,” the Ars Grammatica exhibits all the features of a text mainly trying to broker a compromise, not to offer a coherent view on Ancient Greek grammatical theory.

19 Crat. 388a: ὄργανον ἄρα τί ἐστι καὶ τὸ ὄνομα.
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Illustratively, in the first lines of the Ars Grammatica, Dionysius Thrax defines grammar as “the practice-craft [ἐμπειρία] of what is for the most part being said among the poets and prose-writers.” So whereas the title of the treatise is called art (τέχνη), the first sentence redefines this art as a practice, a craft, an activity that does not require prior knowledge (ἐμπειρία). Through this activity we acquire “empirical” knowledge of language. This places the grammarians close to the fields of knowledge which we nowadays tend to call physics or psychology — a position relished by many a contemporary linguist — and further away from a toolbox of philosophical techniques that a certain “art” would suggest.

The ambiguous definition of grammar resulting from the incoherent title and first lines of the Ars Grammatica was immediately criticized by Dionysius’ contemporaries, like the Peripatetic Ptolemy and a certain Asclepiades, who for example wanted to change ἐμπειρία into τέχνη, and thus conform the first lines to the title. This contradiction is illustrative for the internal contradictions of the Ars Grammatica, as it constantly tries to mediate between Stoic and Peripatetic influences. The Peripatetics argued for grammar as a τέχνη, an art that could be apprehended by applying the rules, for the Stoics it was an ἐμπειρία, much more intertwined with philosophical activity, as we will see below.

Sextus Empiricus, in his typically precise way, offers an additional point of criticism to Dionysius’ definition. First of all, when Dionysius defines the field of research as “the practice-craft of what is for the most part being said among the poets and prose-writers,” the “for the most part” seems to him rather silly when compared to the infinity of language. He ascribes this phrase to the “thickness” of Dionysius and other Alexandrian grammarians. Another issue he has with Dionysius’ definition of grammar is that it excludes everyday, common language, and only focuses on written language per se. This argument is still valid today, as many linguists focus in their work solely on written, normalized textual material.

Incorporating several, often contradictory positions in the Ars Grammatica, Dionysius is careful not to take a clear position and assumes the encyclopedic posture of merely listing the “facts.” So his art — suspending all the issues with this term as such — of grammar is divided into six parts comprising the study of prosody, poetical tropes, presentation skills, etymology, the establishment

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20 AG 629b2–3: ἐμπειρία τῶν παρὰ ποιηταῖς τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ λεγομένων. All translations from AG are based on Lallot 1998, whose generous annotations I have thankfully used in the elaboration of this text. Cf. also Sextus Empiricus 1961a, 34 [Adv. Math. 1, §57].
of analogies, and critical reflection on poetry, which is "the most beautiful of the whole grammatical art."\(^2\)

The first few sections indeed, as promised, treat tones and prosody, but as soon as Dionysius arrives at section six, the subsequent treatment of his parts of grammar is abandoned and he starts discussing letters, syllables, words, nouns, verbs, and so on, which as such do not fit in any one of the six parts of grammar that he has promised the reader to discuss. Thus, in the *Ars Grammatica*, there is clear gap between the actual formulation of these six major parts of the grammatical art, most of which remain untreated, and the definition of the art of grammar itself, which overlaps, or even coincides, with the field commonly attributed to philology. This is the result of the establishment of grammar as a more or less independent set of research topics within Stoic dialectic. As classicist Michael Frede states:

Grammar came to be a subject of its own, independent of dialectic, only by being lifted out of this context and being put into a new one: it was made the first, introductory part of philology, sometimes also called “the technical part.” And since philology was called “grammar,” our subject acquired the labels “grammar” or “art of grammar.”\(^5\)

Nevertheless, the *Ars Grammatica* ironically provides the first fully compiled overview of the distinctive field of what we nowadays call “grammar” instead of philology. Whereas its attribution to Dionysius Thrax and the date of its writing are still point of discussion,\(^4\) its influence cannot be underestimated. The *Ars Grammatica* is both a “final” word and a compromise in the debate between the Stoics and the Peripatetics, mediated through the Alexandrian school from Dionysius’ hometown, which dealt mostly with philology.

The *Ars Grammatica* has been translated into, and modified for, languages as divergent as Syriac (Semitic) and Armenian. The fact that it could be adapted to these languages, *and still make sense*, proves the relative stability of its underlying grammatical structure, much more so than for example the Arab translation of *De Interpretatione* as discussed above.\(^7\) That this structure is as bare and apo-

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\(^{24}\) *AG* 629b9: ὃ δὴ κάλλιστόν ἐστι πάντων τῶν ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ.

\(^{25}\) Frede 1987, 321.

\(^{26}\) For an overview of all the issues concerning the status of this text, refer to, among others, Law & Sluiter 1995.

\(^{27}\) For example, the adaptability of the case system proposed by Dionysius Thrax can be illustrated by the fact that the Armenian translation has added a sixth, instrumental case to the Greek list of five (Greek only possessed the instrumental in petrified Homeric expressions like βίηφι, “with manly force” [Odyss. vi, 6; cf. Rix 1992, 135]): “Neque id obstat quod in fragmento, de quo agimus, etiam instrumentalis (*aŗachagan*), quo Graeci non utuntur, casuum numero insertus est” (Uhlig 1883, lxii).
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dectic as possible has most probably helped its adaptation to other languages, as it became the point of orientation for what has subsequently and properly been referred to as grammar.

Our main focus will be on the twelfth section, which deals with case. In his grammar, Dionysius proposes to categorize cases not as an important part of discourse between the time-word and the λόγος (as in Aristotle’s Poetica), or as a special case of etymological relation (as the Categoriae partially suggest), but as being of the same, rather insignificant order as genders (γένη) or numbers (ἀριθμοὶ). This has remained unchanged ever since. Nevertheless, as we intend to show, this reclassification will still bear the traces of both the Aristotelian concept of case and the Stoic logic of the λέκτον as expounded above.

In spite of its categorical degradation, case becomes increasingly important as a grammatical term. Except for the fact that it regulates the different roles in the Stoic λέκτον, it provides the basis for the definition of the noun as such. §12 of the Ars Grammatica opens with the declaration: “A noun is a cased part of the sentence.”

The influence of Stoic thought on the Ars Grammatica not only excised the verb from the domain of case, it also made case the determining factor in differentiating between nouns and verbs; for “A verb is an expression without case.” There is very little left of Aristotle’s circumlocutory description of the different cases, always trying to be faithful to the “according to” and not appealing to case as a signifying term in itself. Dionysius Thrax is more straightforward: There are five cases, comprising Aristotle’s three cases of nouns, the calling form of the noun a.k.a. the case of the subject, and a fifth one, which makes its first appearance in this grammar.

There are five cases of nouns: straight [ὁρθή], genitive, dative, causative, vocative. The straight [case] is called nominative [ὁνομαστική] and direct [εὐθεία], the genitive possessive and paternal, the dative epistolary, the causative †according to the causative, † and the vocative

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28 cf. AG 634b15.
29 AG 634b11: ὄνομα ἐστι μέρος λόγου πτωτικοῦ.
30 AG 638b4: ῥῆμα ἐστι λέξις ἄπτωτον.
31 There is still a debate on the “fifth” case, which Chrysippus might have thought to be the adverbial one (cf. Hjelmslev 1935, 4). Dionysius Thrax however, lists as the fifth case the “vocative” which is also the first manifestation of this case, as belonging to the list the four main ones: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative). Diogenes Laertius reports on a work written by Chrysippus, a student of Zeno, who wrote the work On the Five Cases, in one part, which would already include the straight, direct, nominative case (Περὶ τῶν πέντε πτώσεων α’, cf. Vit. Phil. vii.192). See Lallot 1998a, 714 for discussion.
32 As the text is corrupt at this point (signaled by the daggers), there is some discussion about the “explanation” of the causative/accusative seems to be rather tautological (cf. Lallot 1998, 51n23). Another possible reading could be “according to the cause” (κατ’ αἰτίαν, cf. Uhlig 1883, 32n1), which is highly plausible considering the arguments given in
2. The Stoics

appellative.\textsuperscript{33}

As happens often in the \textit{Ars Grammatica}, Dionysius merely gives us a list of terminology, and we have to refer to the scholia to find elaborations, often contradictory. Let us start at the beginning with the word for cases (πτώσεις). In the scholia we encounter an etymological explanation of πτῶσις as deriving from the verb “to fall” (πίπτω):

They are called cases, because the sound falls differently, passes [μεταπίπτει], from one into the other; case is the modification [μετασχηματισμός] of a cased expression, the final syllable turning [τρεπομένης] from one [form] to the other.\textsuperscript{34}

This sense has since been conveyed: the Latin cadère means “to fall” as does the German fallen. Until now we have just conjectured this relation between a falling movement and case, but this scholium is the first one to state this specific etymology of the concept of case explicitly.

As we already found out, from now on case only applies to nouns. Whereas Aristotle’s πτῶσις was never described as a change of form, but rather as a falling of one word according to another, the scholia explicitly speak of a modification (μετασχηματισμός), referring to the form (σχῆμα) of the noun. The scholia therefore orient us toward a formalist approach to case, instead of case as a vital part of discursive expression. This modification of external form as case affects only a specific part of the noun, and not the noun as a whole — again an essential difference with Aristotle’s conception. It makes the final syllable turn from one form in to the other. This turning (τρεπομένης) is characterized as a “movement [κίνησις] happening along the end.”\textsuperscript{35} Thus case has changed, under the influence of the Stoic redefinition of discourse, from an “according to” which holds for any word — noun or verb — into a change of form as a turning, a movement along and according to the end of a noun (κατὰ τὸ τέλος).

Also the sense of this κατά seems to have changed. Whereas in Aristotle, the analogical formation of case was according to the whole (pro)noun, Dionysius and his commentators introduce a split

\textsuperscript{In. 49.}

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{AG} 636b4–7: Πτώσεις ονόματων εἰσὶ πέντε· ὀρθή, γενική, δοτική, αἰτιατική, κλητική. Λέγεται δὲ ἡ μὲν ὀρθὴ ὀνομαστικὴ καὶ εὐθεία, ἡ δὲ γενικὴ κτητικὴ τε καὶ πατρικὴ, ἡ δὲ δοτικὴ ἐπισταλτικὴ, ἡ δὲ αἰτιατικὴ κατ’ αἰτιατικὴν, ἡ δὲ κλητικὴ προςαγορευτική.

\textsuperscript{34} Συστ. 230, 21–3. cf. also Συστ. 382, 37–383, 2; Συστ. 551, 10–11: Πτώσεις λέγονται, ἐπειδὴ ἡ φωνή ἀπ’ ἄλλου εἰς ἄλλο μεταπίπτει· πτώσις δὲ ἐστι πτωτικῆς λέξεως μετασχηματισμὸς τῆς τελευταίας συλλαβῆς ἄλλοτε εἰς ἄλλο τρεπομένης. As for the translations of the \textit{Scholia} on the \textit{Ars Grammatica} (Hilgard 1901), and the attributions to them made by Apollonius Dyscolus (Schneider & Uhlig 1910), I have consulted the notes in Lallot 1998a whenever possible.

\textsuperscript{35} Συστ. 383, 3–4: κατὰ τὸ τέλος γινομένη κίνησις.
within the noun, cutting it into what will be called a root and an ending, the final syllable of the noun. By claiming that case “happens” at and along the end of the noun itself and not according to the whole noun or pronoun, this redefinition facilitates the development of the modern, paradigmatic structure of case as a series of endings. Nevertheless, the splitting of the noun enacted by Dionysius and his commentators distantly resonates Aristotle’s earlier observation that the case of a noun signifies according to both its case and its appellation: a noun signifies according to both its ending and its root. Whereas in Aristotle case was not able to support signification independently, in the Ars Grammatica it becomes a signifying element. Because of the introduction of this formalism, the paradigms of different cases can acquire more complex structures. And so, as this movement along the end of a word can now be described as “an inflection (κλίσις) along the end of the word,” we are reaching the point where we will be able to perceive the movement, the definitive turning from the calling (κλῆσις) of the noun into the inflection (κλίσις) of the noun.

§16 The straight case and the generic name

For the moment, I would like to focus on the first case in Dionysius’ list, the straight (ὀρθή), nominative (ὄνομαστική), or direct (εὐθεία) case. We recognize the form of this noun as being according to the case of the subject, as we have established in the previous chapter. The de facto inclusion of this calling form of the noun into a system of cases is a Stoic invention, taken over by Dionysius Thrax. As we read the different commentaries on this — controversial — inclusion, it will appear that it is exactly this organization of the noun form, which Aristotle declares to be the only noun “proper,” that gives us a glimpse of the nature of πτῶσις and its relation with the subject.

As to the nature of this straight, direct, or nominative inflection, there are two visions defended in the scholia commenting on the Ars Grammatica. The first holds that Aristotle’s calling form of the noun is still in no way a case of a noun. Basically, these scholars point to a supposed mistake made by Dionysius Thrax, who has clearly included it as one of the five cases: “There are five cases of nouns: straight,” and so on. These supporters of Aristotle, the Peripatetics, contest this position.

The second perspective that is defended in the scholia is in line with the Stoics and Dionysius Thrax. These scholars include the nominative as one case among others. And although the Stoics seem to have lost in some fields of the philosophical debate (for example, their propositional negation would be forgotten until its rediscovery by Frege), it seems that the inclusion of the nominative case, the case of the subject, the calling form of the noun, the straight case, into a paradigm of cases will meet a better fate: the five (four+one) basic cases are still part of the canonic occidental system.

of descriptive linguistics. But all of this only at the expense of fundamental breaks with the concept of case as it was thought through by Aristotle. And these are discontinuities that his followers could not have avoided, even if they seem to have tried to save at least the formalist aspects of his thoughts on grammar.

In the scholia on the *Ars Grammatica* the struggle between the two different interpretations of case is even fought out between two citations from the same author, as if the internal contradiction within Aristotle’s thought is retroactively projected on a commentator. The debate is concisely summarized Ammonius Hermiae’s commentary on Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione*:

Concerning the form of nouns according to the direct [case] [*κατ’ εὐθείαν*], it is sought by the elders whether it is proper to call it case [*πτῶσιν*] or not, or otherwise noun [*ὄνομα*]; as according to it all things are named, and the other cases of a noun come into being through the modification of the direct [case]. Aristotle stands for the second opinion, all the Peripatetics follow him, but the Stoics stand for the first opinion, and likewise all followers pursuing the grammatical art.37

Notice first the fundamental shift in the description of case. The paradigm of case is no longer called according to an example, like falling “according to of-that,” but according to a *name*: the direct case. This name, just like “nominative” or “straight,” organizes a set of cases of nouns under the same denominator. This introduction of *names* for the different cases is strictly correlative with the possibility to talk about a certain modification of form at the end of the noun, and thus separate the signifying element of case from the “rest” of the noun — which, however, cannot be properly called noun on its own. The introduction of case as bearing signification is immediately accompanied by the introduction of signs indicating case.

The first approach mentioned by Ammonius, the one favored by the followers of Aristotle, claims that the nominative is not a case. Echoes of this idea can be found in other statements throughout the scholia, like: “The direct [case] is called case, in so far as [*καθό*] it falls differently [*μεταπίπτει*] into the other cases[].”38 In other words, the direct case itself does not fall differently, but is called after the


38  Σ* 550, 25–6: ἡ δὲ εὐθεία καλεῖται πτῶσις, καθό μεταπίπτει εἰς τὰς λοιπὰς πτῶσεις.
way according to which \((\kappaα\theta\'\ δ)\) it falls into the other cases. And if \(\piτ\omega\zeta\zeta\) is established by proxy of a \(\muετ\alphaτπ\omega\zeta\zeta\), it cannot be a case itself.39 This position is summarized by Apollonius Dyscolus, who is quoted in the scholia: “Appolonius says in ‘On cases,’40 that the direct [case] cannot properly be called case, but only by extension.”41

But even though the Peripatetics seem superficially to defend Aristotle’s claim that the calling form of a noun is not the case of a noun, the way in which they do this immediately shows the impossibility of bridging the gap between them and him at the moment that a name, and therefore signification, is introduced in relation to case. By acknowledging that there is a direct case, named “case,” they support the fundamental change of position enacted by the Stoics. Cases have names: cases signify, and they signify on their own. The discussion whether the direct case is truly a case is rather insignificant when compared to the introduction of the term “direct,” which is fully contrary to Aristotle’s approach. Thus by deploying this terminology, the Peripatetics in fact already have lost.

The same Apollonius that just defended the Peripatetic position is also claimed to have stated the opposite, and unfortunately we have no surviving work from this grammarian to prove one or the other position. But the contradiction that is attributed to him shows the ferocity of the debate. Apollonius, who is in one commentary cited to defend the thesis that the nominative is a case, in another commentary is quoted to have claimed the opposite. The editors of the scholia, Richardus Schneider and Gustavus Uhlig, state in their compilation of Appolonius’ remaining fragments, that these two contradictory opinions “cannot be matched”:42

Properly speaking, [as the Peripatetics claim,] there are no five cases, but only by extension; for the direct [case] is not properly a case, but only by extension. However, Herodian and Appolionus say that [the direct case] can be properly called case[.].43

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39 cf. Lallot 1998, 53n19
40 This text has not survived, but is reported by Diogenes Laertius in Vit. Phil. vii.192: Περὶ τῶν πέντε πτώσεων α’
42 Schneider & Uhlig 1910, 65, 26–7: “in concordiam redigi non possunt.”
43 Σ’ 546, 5–8; cf. Schneider & Uhlig 1910, 65, 28–30: πτώσεις εἰσὶ πέντε οὐ κυρίως, ἀλλὰ καταχρηστικῶς· ἡ γὰρ εὐθεία οὐκ ἐστὶ κυρίας πτώσις, ἀλλὰ καταχρηστικῶς. Οἱ μέντοι Ἡρωδιανὸς καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος λέγουσιν, αὐτήν κυρίως καλείσθαι πτώσιν· cf. also Priscian’s, nearly literal translation in his Institutiones Grammaticae, which is very much influenced by Appollonius Dyscolus’ commentary on Dionysius Thrax: “nominativus casus non est, sed abusive casus dicitur, quod facit alios casus, quamvis multi [in his igitur Herodianus et Appollonius] de hoc dicant, quod ideo casus sit dicendor, quod a generali nomine cadant omnium specialium nominativi” (Hertzius 1855, v 46, 172, 5).
This second, Stoic interpretation has to justify the inclusion of the nominative case in the case system by proving that the nominative case is indeed a case, that is, that it is indeed “falling” in one way or another. But for the nominative any notion of *modification* should be excluded, as it is clear to all that the nominative is the first of the cases and therefore does not change its *form*. Thence the Stoics posit a generic name (γενικὸν ὄνομα), which comes before all five cases. This generic name is defined analogically to the “generic” in general. And it is here that the distinction between corporeals and incorporeals becomes relevant.

Generic [γενικόν] is what can potentially be divided into many forms [εἴδη], like living-being, plant; specific [εἰδικὸν] is what is divided out of the genera [γένους], like bull, horse, dog, grape-vine, olive-tree. […] A generic name is what is predicated [κατηγορούμενον] into what is according to many [ways] and differing in form [εἴδει].

A generic name can be divided into many separate, specific forms, and these specific forms in their turn compose the sets of generic forms. Thus concrete forms, ideas, concepts (εἴδη) are derived from an undifferentiated set of generic forms. The set of all bulls in the world determines that generic bull, which in its turn can be divided into all the concrete bulls in the world, having whichever shape. The generic is therefore a strictly immanent concept. In a similar way, the scholar to whom the above quote is attributed, Heliodorus, claims that the generic noun falls into different forms, expressed by different cases. This falling into is also a form of predication, which, as the Stoic concept of predicate (κατηγόρημα) implies, operates on the level of the discourse, the sentence. This means, that from now on, case is in any case proper to any form of the noun. Every noun that appears in a sentence is always already inflected as it has a form: “For case is proper of the noun.” That case is *proper* (ἴδιον) is strictly analogous to the logic proposed in the above citation. It is proper (ἴδιον) in the sense that it is derived as *form* (εἴδος) from the generic name; both words derive from the same root.

The generic name as theorized by the Stoics literally “falls into” one of the five cases, one of which is the nominative, the “straight” case. The next question is whether this case is also properly an inflection (κλίσις). For what does it mean to have a “straight” inflection, which comes close to being an oxymoron? This is precisely the question also asked by one of the commentators in the scholia: “If it is straight, how can it be a case?” There are several answers that give an account based on the
relation all the cases have to the generic name. For example, all cases have fallen from the generic name, and in this sense they are all cases, no matter whether they are straight or not: “Because it has fallen from the incorporeal [ἀσωμάτου] and generic into the specific; straight [ἀρθή], because it has not yet been moved into the oblique [πλάγιον][.].” The fact that all cases fall thus takes precedence over their secondary nature as “inclination.” The nominative, straight case is just not yet “oblique”; it arrives earlier than for example an accusative or dative.

Another explanation from the scholia relates the determination of the nominative as straight to so-called “straight verbs” that they like to combine with: “Because from it [there are], as called by the Stoics, straight verbs [ἀρθά ῥήματα], which are active [ἐνεργητικά], like ‘Socrates hits.'” The reason that nominatives are called straight is because they combine with straight, active verbs. This fact, that we will explore more thoroughly later on, first directs our attention to this term “active” in the verbal, predicative domain that runs parallel to this concept of the generic name.

Recall that we briefly discussed above some formal aspects of Stoic nouns and predicates that feature this concept “active.” Nouns, as terms that have fallen from the incorporeal generic into the specific have become a body (σῶμα). An encounter of one body with another, causal body, is the cause of an incorporeal predicate. For example, the body “lancet” is the cause for the body “flesh” to be “cut” according to the incorporeal predicate “cutting.” The act of predication of the lancet onto the flesh is here strictly analogous to the movement of the generic “cutting of a body” into the specific “cut flesh.” When Clement of Alexandria tries to give a precise account of the relation between cause (αἰτίων) and verbs, sayables, predicates, and propositions, he formulates the following.

So “becoming” and “cutting,” causes of some things, are incorporeal effects being-present [ἐνέργειαι οὖσαι ἀσώματοι]. Into which discourse the causes of predicates or, as some say, sayables are […] or, even better, they are said to be the causes of predicates [κατηγορημάτων], like of “[he] cuts” (τέμνεται), a case of “to cut” (τέμνεσθαι); and the causes of propositions [ἀξιωμάτων], such as of “a boat is produced” (ναῦς γίνεται) which is again a case of “to

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48 Σ’ 230, 26–8: ὅτι ἐξ αὐτῆς τὰ καλούμενα παρὰ τοῖς Στωϊκοῖς ὀρθά ῥήματα, ἃ εἰσιν ἐνεργητικά, οἶον “Σωκράτης τύπτει.”
49 And this logical procedure of a body causing for another body an incorporeal predicate can assist us in interpreting the so-called “problematic” reconstruction of the source of the name for the accusative case (cf. fn. 32). If we would read Dionysius Thrax’ definition, as is suggested by Schneider and Uhlig, as ἢ δὲ αἰτιατικὴ κατ’ αἰτίαν, this is not merely “tautological” as Lallot suggests, but refers to the strict conception of causal relationships between bodies and incorporeals. In case of the lancet causing the flesh to be cut, the flesh is definitely declined according to the accusative, according to the cause: the lancet.
produce a boat” [ναῦν γίνεσθαι].

This complex definition is revealing on several levels. First of all, it seems indeed to posit the verbal counterpart of the “generic name,” namely the infinitives “to become” — here specifically intended in the sense of “to produce” — and the by now familiar verb “to cut.” They are, like any verb, incorporeal (ἀσώματοι), and are always already being-present (οὖσαι) and comings-into-effect, activations (ἐνέργειαι). In the discourse, in the gathering of these words, the causes are present. In fact, they present, in their neutral coming-into-effect, the causes of actual predicates (κατηγορημάτων) and propositions (ἀξιωμάτων).

For example “cuts,” in which case the infinitive, generic verb “to cut” falls into a predicate “cuts,” is a case (πτῶσις) of the infinitive predicate “to cut.” These incorporeal, generic verbs are also causes of propositions such as “a boat is produced” (ναῦς γίνεται), which is a case of “to produce a boat” (ναῦν γίνεσθαι). And even though many of our sources, including some of Aristotle’s texts, had already relegated case (πτῶσις) from the verbal domain, it reappears here as one of the many falls occurring in the Stoic world. Not in the derivative sense as employed by Aristotle, but as a description of the fall of the infinitive, generic verb into the sentence, the fall of predication that is strictly analogous to the fall from the incorporeal into the body of a noun.

Now, as we touched upon briefly, the straight fall of the generic name into the nominative case is expressly related to active (ἐνεργητικά) verbs. In other words: verbs that embody and effectuate a cause. The cause of the cutting (as in the “the knife cuts the flesh”) — the knife — is as straight as the “cutting” as a coming-into-effect, falling in the same way. Perhaps we should say that the generic name falls precisely in this sense according to the active verb, and vice versa. Whereas Aristotle made the first step to relate the case of the subject to predication in general, the Stoics made this relation specific in calling both nominative nouns and active verbs straight, thus arriving at terminological clarity. The following citation explicates their position.

For there is a generic name having-around all expression of that name, such as the generic

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51 Note that “boat” (ναῦν) in this sentence is in the accusative case, and not in the nominative as we would expect. For the moment, I can only speculate on the reason of this, which is possibly related to the definition of the accusative.

52 Note that in the previous quote of Clement also verbs that by modern grammatical standards are considered to be medium (τέμνεται, γίνεται) are for Stoic grammar still considered to be active.
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man, and from that generic name it falls into me, into you, into every action; and in so far as it fell from the generic name, [there is] a case according to it, in so far as it fell straight \( \kappaα\delta\ ο\̲ρθω\̲ς \ έπεσεν \), like when dice are falling straight, it is called according to that straight and direct; for straight means the being-present of the action and it is put together with straight verbs \( \o\̲ρθο\̲ι\̲ς \ ρή\̲μα\̲σι \), i.e. active \( \ε\̲νεργη\̲τικο\̲ις \) [verbs].

The generic name has around all expression of that name in specific forms: nominative, genitive, and so on. Just like the generic man (\( \gamma\varepsilon\varepsilon\varepsilonικο\̲ς \ άνθρω\̲πος \)) has around all expression like “man” (\( \acute\ανθρω\̲πος \)), “of-man” (\( \acute\ανθρω\̲που \)), and so on. This generic then falls from its incorporeal status, its logical definition, into the bodily realm of language where it attaches to participants in a discourse or its topic. When it fell straight, like when dice…

“Like when dice are falling straight.” A metaphor. Or better: an analogon. Suddenly, ignored by Aristotle, a physical paradigm of falling is exposed. From the metaphysics of language, we fall back into the physics of dice. Before we can continue on our way, a way that will lead further along the active verbs chained to their nominative subjects, and the renewed analysis of this relation by Heidegger, we will have to catch a glimpse of the physical “according to” of case. We will do this through an inspection of the first, nominative, direct, straight case, because

the direct [case] is placed before the genitive and the other [cases], not only because through it we make the appellations \( \ο\̲νομα\̲σι\̲ας \), but it also properly — in an upright \( \o\̲ρθω\̲ς \) — way signifies the being-present of the action.

Another reason is that in the description of the names of the nominative case there seems to be the highest level of explanatory urgency. Everywhere in the scholia, the moment the nominative case is mentioned the scholars hurry themselves to justify its names. A closer look at the names of the nominative, so precisely summarized in the \( \text{Ars Grammatica} \), might allow us to discover more of the inner dynamics of the subject’s case.

53 Σ 546, 8–14; cf. Schneider & Uhlig 1910, 65, 30–8: \( \text{ἐστι γάρ γενικὸν ὄνομα τὸ περιέχον πᾶσαν λέξιν ὀνόματος, ἃς ἠπέρ καὶ ὁ γενικὸς ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ γενικοῦ ὀνόματος ἔπεσεν εἰς ἐμέ, εἰς σέ, εἰς ἕκαστον πρᾶγμα· καθὸ ὑπέσεν ἀπὸ τοῦ γενικοῦ ὀνόματος, κατὰ τὸν πτώσιν, καθὸ ἰθῶς ἔπεσεν, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν κύβων ὀρθῶς πιπτόντων, κατὰ τὸν πτῶσιν ὑπέσεται <ὁρθὴ καὶ οὐθεῖα>· ὀρθῶς γὰρ σημαίνει τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ πράγματος, καὶ συντάσσεται τοῖς ὀρθοῖς ῥήμασι.\)

54 Σ ο 383, 28–31; cf. Schneider & Uhlig 1910, 64, 32–65, 2: \( \text{ἡ δὲ οὐθεία προτέτακται τῆς γενικῆς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων οὐ μόνον ὅτι δὲ αὐτῆς ποιοῦμεθα τὰς ὀνομασίας, ἀλλὰ ὅτι καὶ ὀρθῶς σημαίνει τὴν οὐσίαν τοῦ πράγματος.} \)
What I gather from the Stoic position is that the nominative, the direct case, the straight fall, is intimately related to the verticality of the subject, a theme that we already discovered in the first lines of *De Interpretatione*. If we would follow Derrida's line of deconstruction, this verticality will later end up in a chain of signs including masculinity, activity, heterosexuality, and so on. But for now, we will now pass two stations, two analoga, which each in themselves reconnect us with the traces the development of the concept of πτῶσις has left: wrestling and the falling stylus. The dice will have to wait, as it will be only through a reading of Heidegger's *Being and Time* that we will be able to grasp all aspects of its potential as example and paradigm for case.

§17 The example of wrestling

Of the two explanatory analoga — or even, prehistoric sources — that we will review here, the metaphor of wrestling gives us some clues about the relation between what is translated with “active” and "straight," and which, as we have just noticed, stand in close relation with their counterparts in the nominal system. According to the scholia on the *Ars Grammatica*, “the active verbs are called drastic, they are also called straight; those entering into affect are called passive or reverse, from the metaphor of what the athletes call straight or reverse.”

Active verbs, verbs that are energetic, verbs bringing on the action, verbs that are “at-work” (ἐν-εργητικά) are also the verbs that are drastic (δραστικά), drastic in the sense of being active, efficient, or efficacious. Plato speaks of “active postures of offence [δραστικὰ σχήματα]” when he describes (military) wrestling in Book vii of the *Laws*. This is the moment that a grammatical discourse coincides with the discourse of war, where the sentence becomes a battlefield. Verbs take on offensive postures, nouns are dropped from generic bombers high up in the atmosphere. For what is a generic name other than a B-2 stealth bomber, invisible yet hitting target after target in the battlefield of the sentence? And on the ground, where things get dirty, “such wrestling is of all motions (κινήσεων) by far the most familiar to military fighting (τῇ πολεμικῇ μάχῃ).” The verbs and nouns indeed enter

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55 Σ 548, 34–7: τὰ ἐνεργητικά ῥήματα καλοῦνται δραστικά, καλοῦνται καὶ ὀρθά, προ[σ]ερχόμενα δὲ εἰς πάθη καλοῦνται παθητικά καὶ ύπτια, ἀπὸ μεταφοράς τῶν ἀθλητῶν τῶν ὀρθῶν <ἢ> ύπτιῶν καλούμένων; the specific athletics intended here are wrestling.

56 Through a semantic chain the drastic verb also inscribes itself into the realm of the efficacy of the pharmakon and excrementality. For what is drastic, energetic, can also be said of a drug, remedy, medicine (φάρμακον): the Roman physician Oribasius reports that the Greek Xenocrates of Aphrodisias talked about “medicinal” (φαρμακώδεις) ingredients that were more “drastic” (δραστικαὶ) in excrement than in urine, cf. Raeder 1928, ii 58, 51: αἱ δὲ μὴ ἐν πέτραις δριμεῖαι καὶ φαρμακώδεις, δραστικαὶ κοιλίας πλέον, ἐλάττω δὲ τῶν οὖρων.

57 *Laws* 815a.

58 *Laws* 814d: τῇ πολεμικῇ μάχῃ πασῶν κινήσεων ὄντως ἔστι συγγενῆς πολὺ μάλισθ’ ἡμῖν ἡ τοιαύτη πάλη.
a war zone, the war zone of the discourse. The polemical nature of the λόγος reveals itself again in the twentieth century, as Heidegger parenthetically reconnects war (Auseinandersetzung, πόλεμος) through Heraclitus with the λόγος: “Confrontation does not divide unity, much less destroy it. It builds unity; it is the gathering (λόγος). Πόλεμος and λόγος are the same.”59 This straightness and activeness of the verb, thus recalling the semantics of war, is indeed intimately related to the discourse of the athlete. In other scholia this is elaborated.

The active [ἐνεργητική] is a disposition [διάθεσις], according to which something appears to come-into-action [ἐνεργών], [and] which is called by the philosophers drastic [δραστική] and straight [ὀρθή]. Drastic comes from doing [δρᾶν], and straight comes from the metaphor of the athletes; for it turns out that the victors stand straight up [ὀρθῶς].60

Active verbs take objects in oblique cases, like the genitive or the causative-accusative. The other possible disposition for verbs is called passive.61 “The passive, according to which something appears to undergo [πάσχων], which is called by the philosophers reverse [ὑπτία], and that is from the metaphor of the athletes; for it turns out that the losers are on their backs [ὑπτίους].”62 The passive disposition derives from the active and is accompanied by a preposition “by/under” (ὑπό), just like in English. The grammarians were well aware that the straight case with the active verb, transformed into the part after “by” when active verb was turned on its back, became passive: “Socrates hits Plato” versus “Plato is hit by Socrates.” The first sentence is active, the second one passive.

Thus, in the grammatical elaboration of the concept of noun and verb, we end up with a categorization of different dispositions, different ways of falling, that remind us of the place where these concepts were offered for the first place: the gym. Theodorus reports that “just now in the outer course he [sc. Theaetetus] and those friends of his were anointing themselves, and now they seem to come

60 Στρατική, καθ’ ἣν ἐνεργών τις γαίνεται, ἢτις παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις δραστική καὶ ὀρθή καλείται· δραστική μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ δρᾶν, ὀρθή δὲ ἀπὸ μεταφοράς τῶν ἀθλητῶν· συμβαίνει γὰρ τοὺς ὀκῶντας ὀρθῶς ἱστασθαι.
61 The category of passive verbs does not completely coincide with our contemporary concept of the passive. In Stoic grammar, the passive encompasses the medium verb forms, while what the scholia call medium (μέση) incorporates an amalgam of passive aorist and perfective verb forms.
62 Στρατικὴ, καθ’ ἣν πάσχων τις γαίνεται, ἢτις παρὰ τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ὑπτία καλείται, καὶ αὕτη ἀπὸ μεταφοράς τῶν ἀθλητῶν· συμβαίνει γὰρ τοὺς ἢττωμένοθς ὑπτίους εἶναι.
63 Note also the properly paronymous relation between “by/under” (ὑπό) and “on the back/reverse” (ὑπτία).
here, having finished anointing themselves.”

Oiled up and ready for battle, Theaetetus arrives at the scene of the λόγος to join the Stranger in his patricidal struggle against Parmenides.

As the above citation tells us, in the arena of the sentence verbs can be either straight (ὀρθά) or reverse (ὕπτια). Both terms are also athletic terms — and elsewhere, with Mishima Yukio, we might want to develop the athlete (ἄθλη-τής) metastatically into the bodily bearer of truth as unconcealedness (ἀλήθ-εια). But not here. The active postures of offense are always shown when everything is running correctly (εὐθὺν-φερές), when the body is straight, and the limbs are extended straight (ὁρθῶν).

Also the physician Galen reconnects the Stoic grammatical terminology with the practice of wrestling. He compares the man who “shamelessly goes on using circumlocutions” and never admits his defeat, is “like the amateur wrestlers” (τοῖς ἰδιῶταις τῶν παλαιστῶν), the idiots of wrestling, who have been overthrown by the real men, and “lie with their backs on the ground” (κατὰ τῆς γῆς ὕπτιοι κείμενοι) still ignoring their fall and pretending to have won the match. The relation between active verbs and the nominative, straight case, and passive verbs in the “reverse” construction (object becomes subject) and oblique, queer cases, bottoming for the victor with their backs in the sand of the arena, is established as analogon and therefore also establishes at this early stage the development of grammar proper. We will come back to the nature of these queer cases at the end of this chapter.

§18 The example of the falling stylus

The second station we pass along the sight-seeing tour aiming to spot the cases in other environments than the grammatical one, is the station of the metaphor of the falling stylus, the preferred writing tool of Ancient Greece. Ammonius formulates this metaphor as follows:

[The direct case ‘Socrates’] has itself fallen from thought into the soul; for we have the thought of Socrates, and wanting to reveal it, we bring forth the noun Socrates; so as if [καθάπερ] the stylus, released from above [ἄνωθεν ἀφεθὲν] and vertically fixed [ὁρθῶν παγέν], has fallen and it is called to have had a straight fall [πτῶσιν ὀρθὴν], we claim, it having fallen in its own direction [τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον] and in a direct [εὐθεῖαν] [fall] from the mind, the straight [ὁρθήν] [case] to be the archetype of the utterance according to the expression.

64 Theaet. 144c: ἄρτι γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἔξω δρόμῳ ἠλείφοντο ἑταῖροί τέ τινες οὗτοι καὶ αὐτός, νῦν δέ μοι δοκοῦσιν ἀλειψάμενοι δεῦρο ἰέναι.
65 cf. Laws 815b: εὐθυφερές ὡς τὸ πολύ τῶν τοῦ σώματος μελῶν γιγνόμενον, ὁρθῶν μὲν τὸ τοιούτον
67 Amm. in Ar. Di Comm. 43, 9–15: ἀπὸ τοῦ νοήματος τοῦ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ αὕτη πέπτωκεν· ὁ γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
In this precise summary of the Stoic position, several tropes come together in the Greek term straight (ὀρθός). Relating to the grammatical concept of case, the straight case, as we have encountered it before in other semantic chains brought into play by the Stoics. The thought of Socrates, in the form of a generic name (γενικὸν ὄνομα), falls into the soul, into specificity. This generic name is incorporeal, and as Ioannes Stobaeus commented, these types of ideas roam in our thoughts, non-existent, until they fall: “The Stoic philosophers say that these [sc. ἰδέας, concepts] are non-existent [ἀν-ὑπάρκτος] and that we share them as in-thoughts [ἐν-νοημάτων], but that they hit upon the cases[.]”

The generic name as a concept, containing all the possible cases of a word is non-existent in the sense that it is not yet existing, it begins as soon as it hits upon the cases, when it falls into a case.

The generic name, the concept, falls like a stylus straight onto a horizontal surface. And this fall, the straight fall, is falling in its own direction, attracted by the gravity of the earth without being hampered. Once it hits the earth it remains fixed, vertically, in its upright position. This vertical fall stands perpendicular (ὀρθός) to the horizontal surface of presence and speech. In this way, the Stoics are able to claim, against the Peripatetics, that the nominative is on the one hand a case, but as case of a noun does not add anything that would make the noun in fact inclined. The direct, nominative case falls the straightest fall possible. As Lallot explains in his commentary on this fragment, that

the idea seems to be here that of a vertical “fall” (ὀρθός especially mains “straight”), perpendicular (another meaning of ὀρθός) onto two “planes” of the essences and names that signify them.

This argument has survived right into medieval philosophy, and the Stoic approach to case is still the generally accepted one in contemporary linguistics. Thomas Aquinas formulates the argument as follows:

The Stoics […] said that the nominative was also a case, and the grammarians follow them because it falls or stems from an inner mental conception, and it is called upright because a

έχουμεν τὸ Σωκράτους νόημα δηλῶσαι βουλόμενοι, τὸ Σωκράτης ὄνομα προφέρομεθα· καθάπερ οὖν τὸ ἀνωθεν ἀφεθὲν γραφεῖον καὶ ὀρθὸν παγὲν πεπτωκέναι τε λέγεται καὶ τὴν πτῶσιν ὀρθὴν ἐσχηκέναι, τὸν αὐτὸ τρόπον καὶ τὴν εὐθεῖαν πεπτώκεναι μὲν αξιοῦμεν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐννοίας, ὀρθὴν δὲ εἶναι διὰ ἀρχέτυπον τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἐκφώνησιν προφορᾶς. The precise meaning of ἐκφώνησις is unclear; I have settled here for “expression,” but “exclamation” might also be possible. See for discussion Delamarre 1980, 343–4.

Wachsmuth 1958, 137, 3–6: Ταύτας δὲ οἱ Στωικοὶ φιλόσοφοι φασίν ἀνυπάρκτους εἶναι καὶ τῶν μὲν ἐννοημάτων μετέχειν ἡμᾶς, τῶν δὲ πτώσεων [...] τιγχάνειν.

Stoic philosophy was in itself an elaboration of Aristotle’s project, in spite of the many discontinuities. Nevertheless, we can still read the language of Aristotle in the different examples that are given by the Stoics. For example, in *De Interpretatione* Aristotle addresses the dramatic moment when a speaker speaks a time-word (verb) on its own, as a noun-word (noun): “The speaker halts (ἰστησι) his thought-process (διά-νοιαν).” His thought-process, going through (διά) his thought, assembling concepts and making them ready to be launched onto the surface of the soul comes to a full stop, halts, straight-up (ἰστησι). Aristotle describes the present, the now, the moment a concept is uttered in all its bareness — a verb as a noun, without any attributes. It still signifies yet it stands straight. There it stands, the “calling form,” vertically fixed just before the moment it hits the horizontal surface of the speaker’s soul. Ἱστησι is the straight, immediate now before the having-fallen (πεπτωκέναι) of case. With every word a speaker speaks his thoughts stand still as the incorporeal generic name materializes in its fall.

That the Stoics have developed the terminology for the cases, does in no way mean that the paradigmatic nature of case, formulated by Aristotle as “according to” has been forced to the background. Even though we have already seen that for Dionysius Thrax, nouns fall according to the direct case, possessive case, and so on, and not forms according to other, similar forms, this analogy is still operating on the level of the fall itself. As can be read in the above citation by Ammonius, the name “Socrates” is expressed, in its nominative, direct, straight case, as if (καθάπερ) a stylus having fallen straight. Καθάπερ, from καθ’ ἅ with the emphatic περ, literally means “emphatically according to those things.” And even though for the Stoics the nominative case is a case like all others, the straight sentence “Philo is healthy” consisting of a straight case and a straight verb is still — and this again confirms the paradigmatic nature of case — an “archetype” (ἀρχέτυπον). This is just how a sentence goes.

The straight, nominative case combines with a straight, active verb. But nevertheless, the active verb as theorized in our contemporary linguistics is intrinsically bound to the nominative case of the *subject*. In the scholia we also find the formulation which directly links the direct case to the subject, and which completes the semantic links forged by the Alexandrian grammarians.

And the straight [case] is called nominative and direct, because it completes a straight and

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71 *DI* 16b20: Ἰστησι γὰρ ὁ λέγων τὴν διάνοιαν
most forthright discourse. The nominative is called the straight and direct [case], […] for through it the subject, either living or lifeless, is named by.\textsuperscript{72}

We have come a long way from Aristotle’s interpretation of case as external to the declarative sentence, which, although consisting of terms that we mostly translate with nouns and verbs, has very little to do with the incorporeal elements from Stoic philosophy falling into the soul and exiting the mouth. And with the slow establishment of grammar as a distinct discipline, first separated from philosophy, then from logic and rhetoric, and finally from philology — a separation that will only be completed at the end of the nineteenth century —, case has become intertwined with a whole new set of concepts that will claim a main role both in the philosophical and linguistic research to come: the active verb, the straight subject.

The Stoic concepts pertaining to what will become the *Ars Grammatica* by the time Dionysius Thrax writes it down are thus still very much anchored in a philosophical context, a commentary on and an elaboration of Aristotle’s project. We owe it to the Stoics that we have been able to develop the terminology for cases and tenses, but, as Ildefonse argues in her book on Ancient Greek grammar, these terms, developed within a philosophical context, were reappropriated by grammarians, and reinserted in a logical context.\textsuperscript{73} This recontextualization that occurs during and after the Alexandrian school definitively alienates the linguistic science from its philosophical foundations — it makes Aristotelian grammatical terminology untranslatable and inaccessible, as we have gathered from medieval interpreters. Nevertheless, we have tried and will keep on trying to read the contemporary cases of philosophy and linguistics in the light of the history that still haunts their vocabulary. It is a reading of the history and finally pre-history of the concept of case that aims to situate them as present. Not as a perceived origin or source that lies behind us, but as a reactivation, a recasting of what is presently the case.

\textsuperscript{72} Σ\textsuperscript{9} 383, 27–31: καὶ λέγεται μὲν ὁρθὴ ὀνομαστικὴ καὶ εὐθεία, διὰ ὀρθῶν καὶ εὐθύτατων λόγων ἀποτελεῖ. ὀνομαστικὴ λέγεται ἡ ὁρθὴ καὶ εὐθεία, […] δι’ αὐτῆς γὰρ ὀνομάζεται τὸ ὑποκείμενον, εἴτε ἐμψυχον εἴτε ἄψυχον εἴη τὸ ὑποκείμενον.

\textsuperscript{73} Ildefonse 1997, 29: J’ai cherché à montrer comment les catégories grammaticales fondamentales, dont l’émergence de la grammaire suit la fixation progressive, ont pu être issues d’une réappropriation, par les grammariens, de certains éléments du lieu logique stoïcien, isolé de son contexte systématique. À rebours de l’interprétation nietzschéenne, c’est la fixation grammaticale qui se trouvait alors devenir tributaire d’un héritage logique libéré de son ancrage philosophique.
§19 Creating space for ontological difference

At the end of this second chapter, we would like to offer a very preliminary analysis of the “oblique” (πλάγιαι) or as Apollonius Dyscolus says, “silly” (ληρῶδες) cases, namely the cases other than the straight, direct, nominative case. In other words, we move from the vertical, perpendicular fall to the horizontal, “horistic” surface of the subject and its potential inclination, to an actually inclined plane, a diagonal. Whereas the next chapter intends to deal with this inclination of in the case of the subject, this section deals with objects (in the syntactical sense of the word: direct, indirect, or prepositional) that are diagonal by nature, already inclined. To employ a metaphor from the realm of art: we are moving from the realm of Piet Mondrian to the realm of Theo van Doesburg, and as we know from their many discussions, it is the diagonal that introduces space and perspective. The queer cases literally introduce space in language, they organize movement to and fro, possession and exchange, direction and motivation.

It is however impossible to deal with all the implications that the introduction of the concept of queer cases has had on both linguistics as philosophy. I will therefore suspend the linguistic and typological question of what has been termed “ergativity” and the closely related appearance of so-called “quirky subjects.”

The elaboration of a theory of queer cases as undertaken by the Alexandrian school of grammarians coincides, as we have shown, with the inclusion of the nominative, the calling form of the noun, in the line-up of the different cases. Whereas the nominative is straight, “the subsequent cases [are called] oblique because the form of the nominative inclines from straightness.” The queer cases, in other words, differ from the nominative in form. This seems to be a logical conclusion for the Greek-oriented grammarians, as the nominative is in certain declinations radically distinct from the other non-nominative cases. Compare for example the nominative φύλαξ (guard), with the genitive φύλαξ.
The last letter of the nominative (ξ) differs from the last letter of the what was believed to come before the case ending (κ). There was therefore a morphological reason for the Alexandrians, and the Stoics before them, to separate the two, and place the nominative higher in the hierarchy; it is both “simpler” in form and it is the only case that falls directly.

This distinction, and the direction of derivation, however, is not as clear cut as it seems. In the first place, there seems to be an order within the oblique cases in which the genitive claims prominence, sometimes even as much as the nominative.

The genitive [case] is called possessive [κτητική] or paternal [πατρική], because it is the origin of the other cases and the mother of the remaining queer [cases].

The genitive mother gives birth to the other oblique, queer cases and stands at their origin. However, at the same time it seems to father the nominative case and govern patronymic derivations. So whereas the oblique cases are, on superficial inspection, subservient to the nominative case, it seems to be the case that the position of their “origin,” the genitive, generative case forces us to reconsider this statement. The scholia list three arguments.

So with good reason the genitive [case] has the order of the direct [case]; because the genitive [cases] often leads into the direct [cases], “the guard” [ὁ φύλαξ], “of the guard” [τοῦ φύλακος], “of the guard” [ὁ φύλακος]; and also because the direct [case] often resolves in the genitive, as with patronyms; for if I say Priamides [Πριαμίδης], that refers to the son of Priamos [Πριάμου].

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78 Σ 551, 4-5; cf. Schneider & Uhlig 1910, 66, 36-39: λέγεται δὲ ἡ γενικὴ κτητικὴ καὶ πατρικὴ, ὅτι γένεσις ἐστὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις πτώσεωι καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν πλαγίων μήτηρ.

79 The genitive case can thus be considered as “the mother of the queers”: γένεσις ἐστὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις πτώσεωι καὶ τῶν πλαγίων μήτηρ ἡ γενικὴ· γενικὴ δὲ ὡνόμαται, ὅτι γένος αὐτῶν, ώς πατήρ, ἄλλως τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πτώσεων μήτηρ (Σm 384, 5–7; cf. Schneider & Uhlig 1910, 67, 3–5) “The genitive is the origin of the other cases and mother of the queers; the genitive has named, because the gender of them, like a father, in another way and mother of the other cases.” In the same line we should perhaps consider Apollonius Dyscolus’ repeated proclamation that the queer cases are “silly” (ληρῶδες) (Apollonius Dyscolus 1997, 260 [§164]; 268 [§187]). At least we could propose that these passages could also be read as the birth of the phenomenon of “fag hag.”

80 Σ 549, 2–5: εὐλόγως οὖν ἡ γενικὴ τῆς εὐθείας ἔχει τὴν τάξιν· καὶ ὅτι πολλακίς αἱ γενικαὶ μετάγοντα εἰς εὐθείας, ὁ φύλας τοῦ φύλακος ὁ φύλακος· καὶ ὅτι πολλακὶς ἡ εὐθεία ἀναλύεται εἰς γενικὴν, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν πατρωνυμικῶν· ἐάν γὰρ εἶπον Πριαμίδης, δείκνυται ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Πριάμου· Ηιλγαρδ ἐπιπολάτσει εὐλόγως οὖν ἡ γενικὴ <δευτέραν> τῆς εὐθείας..., for which I see no immediate necessity, and which even seems to contradict the sense of the following sentence.
The first argument is definitely a difficult one and fully based on a morphological analysis of the nouns of the so-called third declension. The third declension comprises Ancient Greek nouns ending in the “s”-sound (sigma), usually without preceding vowel, like “guard” (φύλαξ). This declension, other than the first and second, can be highly irregular in its formation of non-nominative-singular nominal forms. The argument about the relation of the nominative and genitive is stated as an analogy: ὁ φύλαξ τοῦ φύλακος ὁ φύλακος. If we compare the nominative φύλαξ (phylax) with the genitive φύλακος (phylak-os), what appears is that the genitive has led into the nominative. This is signified by the nominative article ὁ in front of the genitive noun φύλακος, hence the argument suggests the morphological development phylakos > phylaks.

The second argument which argues in favor of the genitive ranking in a certain sense above the nominative is provided by the patronyms, which are often also considered to be related to cases of nouns. Patronyms, because they are proper names, are mostly quoted in the nominative, yet they seem to derive from the genitive, both semantically (“the son of…”) and morphologically: “Every genitive makes the patronym from -ος or -ους into -ιδης, as a change of the end.”

The third argument that is mentioned in the scholia in favor of an equal relation between the genitive and the nominative is the construction of the so-called passive voice, which we already briefly discussed above. Whereas in an active sentence the subject is marked by the nominative case, in a passive sentence the genitive marks the subject of a passive verb. This subject of the passive verb is preceded by the preposition ὑπό, which in English is usually translated by the preposition “by.” This argument implies that, at least, in the time when the scholia on the Ars Grammatica were written, there must have been a rudimentary sense of what Noam Chomsky will later term “syntactic transformation.”

The theory of syntactic transformation holds that sentences with similar “deep structures” can be transformed into each other by means of a system of syntactic transformation.

81 Συλλ. 221, 24–5: πάσα γενικὴ εἰς ος ἢ εἰς ους εἰς ιδης ποιεὶ τὸ πατρωνυμικὸν, ἀμοιβῇ τοῦ τέλους; cf. Συλ. 548, 34–549, 5: ἡ δὲ γενικὴ προτάσσεται τῶν άλλων […] ὅτι πολλάκις ἡ εὐθεία ἀναλύθεται εἰς γενικήν, ὡς ἐπὶ πατρωνυμικών. “The genitive is placed in front of the others, because often the direct is resolved in the genitive, as with patronyms”; cf. also Συλ. 220, 17–19: πατρωνυμικὸν μὲν οὖν ἐστι φύσει τὸ κυρίως ἀπὸ πατρὸς σχηματιζόμενον καὶ δηλοῦν μετὰ τοῦ πρωτοτύπου ὄνοματος καὶ τῶν παιδιά, οἶον Πηλείδης ὁ τοῦ Πηλέως παῖς. “Thus a patronym is for nature the correct formation from the father, also disclosing the child with the name of the prototype, like Peleides [=Achilles], the child of Pêleus.”

82 As discussed previously, the Greek grammatical tradition does not differentiate between active, medium, and passive. Medium verb forms are often treated as passives. We must be aware that any type of morphological analysis, the relations of different morphemes is not included in the art of grammar. Also, there is still no differentiation between the modern concept of “agens” and “subject.” According to modern linguistics, the subject in a passive sentence (although the patient of the action), is still marked with the nominative.

83 Chomsky 2002.
rules that is universal. There is thus a similarity in the role of the nominative in an active sentence, and the genitive in a passive sentence, and one can lead into the other.

The active [verbs] coming forward into passive [verbs] combine with the preposition of “by” [ὑπό]: “I hit” [τὐπτω], “I am hit by you” [τὐπτομαι υπὸ σοῦ]; so with good reason the genitive has the order of the direct [case].

That the nominative can transform into the genitive thus argues for their equal statues. Related to this is the important fact that the genitive, in one of its meanings, as genitivus subjectivus, operates as the subject of a noun phrase: “Socrates hits the student” versus “Socrates' hitting of the student.”

As soon as the former phrase is “substantivized,” the nominative “Socrates” becomes the genitive “Socrates.”

So even though the scholia establish a hierarchy between the straight case and the queer cases, this order is simultaneously undermined by the symmetric relation between genitive (the mother of all queer cases and patronyms) and the nominative. The three arguments listed above — morphology, patronyms, and passive subjects — thus dissolve the privileged position of the nominative which, whether as noun-word or as case of noun, had been so painstakingly established by Aristotle and Stoics. We move towards a system in which case itself does not imply any hierarchy, but becomes a system of differentiation for terms as they appear in the sentence, or in Stoic terminology: the different ways in which something incorporeal falls into a body, the sentence. And it is this theme of differentiation that we would like to inspect, both here and the Excursus following this chapter.

In his article *Se: Hegel's Absolute and Heidegger's Ereignis, Agamben resumes this theme and relates this to a linguistic approach to Heidegger's concept of ontological differentiation in an article by Johannes Lohmann, M. Heidegger's ‘Ontological Difference’ and Language. This article seems, like we intend to do in our thesis, to approach a properly philosophical issue — the differentiation of Being [Sein] in to being [seiendes] — from a linguistic viewpoint, and proposes a radical interpretation of occidental metaphysics in the light of the structure of Indo-European languages, contrasting this with various examples from Chinese, Bantu, and Georgian. Lohmann's central thesis is the following:

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84 Σ 548, 37–549, 3: τά δὲ εἰς παθητικά προερχόμενα ἐνεργητικά γενικῇ συντάσσονται μετὰ τῆς υπὸ προθέσεως, τὐπτω, τὐπτομαι υπὸ σοῦ· εὐλόγων οὖν ἡ γενικὴ τῆς εὐθείας ἔχει τὴν τάξιν. Again Hilgard proposes to interpolate <δευτέρα>… τάξιν, to which I object.(cf. n. 2?).

85 For a similar argument in African languages see Meinhof 1936, 85. The similarity in role of nominative and genitive seems to be a cross-linguistic phenomenon, it for example also appears in Japanese, were the "genitive" post-position no can replace “nominative” ga in relative clauses: both Jon ga tabeta sutēki and Jon no tabeta sutēki mean “The steak that John (ga/no) ate” (Seiichi and Michio 1989, 378).
the problem of ontological differentiation that haunts western metaphysical thought is intricately linked with the fact that the Indo-European case system itself cannot be analyzed other than as a system of pure differentiation.

In the older Indo-European languages this continuous “ontological differentiation” is expressed in the grammatical form of the word: *nomen* as well as *verbum*, according to their elementary morphological structures, are composed of “stem” and “ending,” the stem (for instance, the Latin *equ* [“horse”] or *alb* [“white”]) as “conceptual expression” and the ending (in this case the “case endings” -*us, -ī, -ō, -um, -e, -ōrum, -īs, -ās, -a, ae, -am, -ā, -ārum, -ās) as expressions of the relation of the concept in regard to an “object” which is given in the context of the sentence. Each ancient Indo-European nominal or verbal form as such therefore contains an expression of the relation of a “Being” (the “Being horse” or the “Being white”) to a “being” (a determinate “horse” or “white thing,” or determinate “horses” or “white things”). Indo-European speech thus, *from the beginning, moves exclusively within the realm of the “absolute ontological difference.”*

Lohmann argues that the nominal and verbal system of stem and endings is a properly Indo-European system and that the prominent place of ontological differentiation, that is, everything relating from Aristotle’s arguments against the improper, sophistic use of case in and Stoic system of incorporeal ideas falling into bodies, to Heidegger’s differentiation of Being [*Sein*] and being [*seiendes*] is therefore proper to Indo-European languages too. However, when Lohmann speaks of “from the beginning,” we must recall that the morphological apparatus that he employs to distinguish the “Being-” from “being-” element of the cased noun or verb is fully absent from the Ancient Greek grammar, and even in Alexandrian grammar and medieval scholasticism this apparatus remains largely undeveloped.

We must thus keep in mind that Lohmann’s radical argument only holds insofar as we accept that ontological difference is 1) morphologically expressed, that is, within language per se, and 2) morphological expression as such can be retroactively applied as a foundation of all Greek metaphysics and ontology. His argument basically proposes a reduction of metaphysics to language, which we are not entirely convinced of. Nevertheless, the same intricate relation between language and metaphysics will be proposed by Martin Heidegger, and as it is our intention to follow this line of thought from Aristotle down to him, we will accept Lohmann’s thesis as converging on this thematic. His article

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86 Lohmann 1972, 309–10; my emphasis.
also elucidates another point, namely the intimate relation between case and the medieval concept of "habit," which we will return to, in intensified form, in Chapter 3.

§20 The subject and his habits
In his article, Lohmann introduces terminology based on Scholastic supposition theory to describe the materialization of ontological difference in Indo-European languages, what we call our inflectional system. He calls this "activity" of the Indo-European inflection system *suppositio in habitu*, after the term coined by William of Sherwood.

William of Sherwood introduces this concept in his treatise *Introduction to Logic*, which elaborates Aristotle's logic of terms as put forth in the *Organon*. Terms, the parts of a sentence or proposition, are supposed to have four different properties: signification, supposition, copulation, and appellatio.\(^{87}\) We will focus here on the concept of supposition. *Suppositio in habitu* (as opposed to the *suppositio in actu*, which he does not develop further\(^{88}\)) is the way in which a name, noun, or pronoun is implemented in a sentence. Sherwood formulates its definition as follows.

> With respect to what they [i.e., supposition and copulation] are in capacity [*in habitu*], however, supposition is called a signification of something as subsisting [*significatio alicuius us subsistentis*] (for what is of that sort is naturally suited to be ordered under something else).\(^{89}\) […] From these [definitions] it is clear that there is signification in every word or part of speech, whereas there is supposition only in a substantive name, or a pronoun, or a substantive word.\(^{90}\)

What is important to notice is that in this definition, the realm of supposition is the same of the realm of case as delimited by the Alexandrian grammarians, namely the realm of the noun. Peter of Spain, a student of Sherwood, makes two important improvements to the latter's definition. In the first place, he drops any explicit reference to the qualification *in habitu*. Because Sherwood never develops the *suppositio in actu*, any *suppositio* is by definition *in habitu*. Second, he gives a clear definition

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87 William of Sherwood 1975, 105 [1937, 74.14-16]; Et sunt hee proprietates significatio, suppositio, copulatio et appellatio.
89 William of Sherwood 1975, 105 [1937, 74.22-24]: Secundum autem quod sunt in habitu dicitur suppositio significatio alicuius us subsistentis. Quod enim tale est, natum est ordinari sub alio.
90 William of Sherwood 1975, 106 [1937, 74.29-31]: Ex hiis patet, quod significatio non est in omni parte seu dictione orationis, suppositio autem in nominem substantivo tantum vel pronominem vel dictione substantiva.
of the difference between signification and supposition, which reminds us slightly of the difference between “falling according to the appellation of the noun” and “falling according to the case of the noun,” as developed by Aristotle and the Stoics.

Supposition truly is the acceptance of a substantive term for something. However, supposition and signification differ, because signification works through the imposition of a sound to a thing that signifies, and supposition truly is the acceptance of the term itself already signifying a thing for something. As when it is said “a man runs,” that term “man” supposes for Sors or for Plato, and so on. Thence signification is prior to supposition. Neither are they alike, because signifying is of a sound, supposing truly is of a term as if composed of a sound and a signification. Therefore supposition is not signification [...].

Thus, supposition is more than just signification. There is the addition of a sound, the sound of case, as we already found in the scholia. What is supposed into a sentence is therefore a term that is already composed of a sound and signification; the supposition adds what is necessary to have it operate in the context of a sentence: the right case. Lohmann concludes from these statements that “In the supposition *in habitu* the ‘ontological difference’ becomes explicit in the grammatical form of the language; that is onto-logy explicitly ‘comes to pass.’” What however has to be remarked is that this is only the case when we would take a grammatical point of view, because for William of Sherwood, the noun(-word) is, following Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione*, always direct. Only, as he states, if we choose to separate logic from grammar, we can talk about a *suppositio in habitu* of all, straight and oblique, nominal parts speech of the sentence. Sherwood formulates this as follows:

A noun however is a sound signifying as it pleases without time: straight, definite [nouns] of which no separate part means something [...] Straight [nouns] are differentiatied from an oblique noun, which is not a noun with respect to *logic*, because from itself and a verb one cannot make an enunciation. Nonetheless it is a noun with respect to *grammar.*

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91 Peter of Spain 1972, 80.8-16; our emphasis: Suppositio vero est acceptio termini substantivi pro aliquo. Differunt autem suppositio et significatio, quia significatio est per impositionem vocis ad rem significandam, suppositio vero est acceptio ipsius termini iam significantis rem pro aliquo. Ut cum dictu ‘homo currit’, iste terminus ‘homo’ supponit pro Sorte vel pro Platone, et sic de aliis. Quare significatio prior est suppositione. Neque sunt eiusdem, quia significare est vocis, supponere vero est termini quasi compositio ex voce et significacione. Ergo suppositio non est significatio [...] .

92 Lohmann 1972, 311.

93 William of Sherwood 1975, 23 [1937, 31.21-34]; our emphasis: Est autem nomen vox significativa ad placitum sine tempore, cuius nulla pars separata aliquid significat finita recta. [...] Recta ponitur ad differentiam nominis
In other words, the relation between ontological difference and nominal inflection in Indo-European languages can only be posited through the laceration of the bond, forged since Plato, of logic and grammar. And here we can discern the first traces of Heidegger's project of "liberating grammar from logic," that well extends to Badiou's claim that "Its [i.e., the subject's] mark is certainly not to be found in pronouns — the 'I' or 'we' of first persons." In other words, the split introduced by Peter of Spain between a logical and a grammatical conception of the subject is symptomatic for the distance introduced between logic and language in subsequent centuries: the logical category of the subject has nothing to do with grammatical categories like pronouns.

The developments of Plato and Aristotle, the disagreements between the Stoics and the Peripatetics and the compromises formulated by the Alexandrian grammarians constantly pointed us toward a struggle between the logical will to formulate and determine definite, well-formed sentences, and the need for grammar to deal with any type of sentence construction found in natural language. William of Sherwood's formulation about the nature of the cased noun, a noun in grammar, but not a noun in logic, makes us once again aware of the fact that paronymy, derivation, inflection, and so on forms the zone of indifference (and therefore of struggle) between the projects of grammar and logic.

We are faced with these contradictions because no other language group in the world appears to have such an opaque and unstable derivational system, which formulates a case ending as an “unanalyzable unity,” and ends up collating stems and endings into monstrously irregular couples like the English (phonetically) *mæ:n* — *men*, *ˈwan* — *ˈwomn* (man — men, woman — women) or in French *ˈlom* — *leˈzm*, *laˈf̩m* — *leˈf̩m* (*l'homme* — *les hommes*, *la femme* — *les femmes*). And it is this break between the idea and its linguistic expression through a paronymous system of inflections, semi-regular derivations (just think about the (in)consistency of Latin loans in English) and archaic, unproductive types of word formation that abound in any Indo-European language, that decisively signals ontological difference, or perhaps we should say: ontological confusion. Lohmann concludes:

The dissolution of the phonetic materialization of the category [i.e., number, gender, case, tense, etc.] as such, which was characteristic of the Indo-European type from the very start,
therefore encroaches here also on the logico-ontological fundament of the type, of the materialization of the “ontological difference” itself.  

Thus, Lohmann suggests that the linguistic typology of Indo-European, and therefore the expression of all of Western philosophy, is determined by the instable properties of its languages. The whole dialectic of being and appearance is contingent on the opacity of Indo-European grammar.

This claim obviously has far-reaching consequences. Imagine that the discussion from Plato’s *Sophist* on Being (ὄν) versus Nothingness (μὴ ὄν) can be explained by the fact that Indo-European languages lack a positive, simple term stating a lack, like for example Chinese: being (有) versus non-being (無). But even though Lohmann’s observation may be right from a typological point of view, this is not the level at which we are pursuing our current inquiry. We are interested in the development of the term that exactly makes possible Lohmann’s linguistic analysis of Western metaphysics. That is, the idea of πτῶσις as inflection, case that for Lohmann, and as we will see, for Heidegger himself, becomes at once the fundament and expression of this ontological difference. This is the reason that we cannot remain within linguistics, but have to confront ourselves with philosophical implications of this break, which, in the end, resists being reduced to a linguistico-typological phenomenon. As Agamben formulates this,

only because there is at the origin not plenitude but deferral (whether this is taken to mean the opposition of being an appearance, the harmony of opposites, or the ontological difference between being (Sein) and an entity (seiendes), is there the need to philosophize.

Agamben even goes so far as to relate this movement of the noun through its different cases to the movement of the Absolute. He quotes Hegel from the introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, when he speaks of “God” as a “meaningless sound, a mere name,” that only acquires its meaning as soon as it enters into a proposition. According to Agamben, the inflection of the meaningless sound “God” into the sentence would be what gives it its proper meaning as, in Hegelian terms, “Subject” and “Absolute.” For him, “Hegel thus conceives of declension itself as the movement of the Absolute.”

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97 Lohmann 1972, 320–1.
98 Lohmann 1972, 341.
101 Hegel 1977, 12.
102 Agamben 1999, 122.
At this point we will have to be a bit more precise than Agamben. For why would Hegel say that “God” is a meaningless sound? Exactly because it is a “mere name,” a proper name. And as we have noted before, the proper name is a problematic category in terms of signification; it is always particular, in fact, unique in its referentiality. Therefore, when Agamben describes declension itself as “the movement of the Absolute,” we will have to be careful not to generalize this movement to the declension of any type of noun, which Agamben in fact does by proposing the Latin word *rosa* as a model for declension: *rosa, rosae, rosam, rosa*, and so on. The only proper word he could have chosen to substantiate his far-reaching claim is the word *Gott* (God) itself.

To state it in terms of our discussion above, the moment that Hegel claims that “God” is a “meaningless sound,” he enacts a full separation between *significatio* and *suppositio*. “God” has no signification, but once it is supposed in a sentence by means of its inflection, it acquires meaning through the predicate: “it is only the predicate that says what God is, gives Him content and meaning.” Therefore we should correct Agamben: only the declension of “God” is the movement of the Absolute.

But, as we will see in the next chapter, it is not the habit of subject to move just on its own. For it is Heidegger’s claim that *Dasein* itself is the effect of a being-thrown, of a fallenness that not “his own.” Instead, *Dasein’s* habits will prove not only to fall into language, but to be addicted to the world.

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103 Similarly, he chooses in his schema of the circular movement of case to centralize the nominative case *rosa*. If there is no beginning, can there be such a center? All our material gathered thus far suggests the contrary.

104 Hegel 1977, 12.
§21 Sexual and ontological difference

In order to interrupt our discourse on case, but nevertheless continue the line of inquiry about ontological difference, we would like to address several works from the oeuvre of the American artist Matthew Barney. We will propose a reading of his work which will supplement the Stoic metaphors of wrestling and the falling stylus. We will try to merge the two and introduce the relation between ontological difference as regulated by case and sexual difference. This relation will become fully relevant in the third and last chapter, as we will analyze the movement of Heidegger’s *Dasein* from the perspective of πτῶσις. In a way, this excursus is intended to prepare the reader for our careful approach.
Barney’s oeuvre can be read through his obsession with vertical — and to a lesser extent, horizontal — movements. This is already apparent from his early works like *facility of incline* and *facility of decline* (both 1991), in which he combines athletic drills with a narrative of gender and gender transformation. The most famous series of works dealing with these types of movements in a delirium of metaphors is the *Cremaster* cycle, a series of five feature length movies (“sculptures”) establishing a contemporary “American mythology.” Besides the movies, elements, and themes from the *Cremaster* cycle have led to dozens of sculptures, installations, and vitrines which can be considered to most extensive absorption of Joseph Beuys’s work and language within the context of contemporary American art.

The title of the cycle refers to the cremaster muscle, whose function it is to raise and lower the testicles, thus regulating their temperature and level of sperm production. As curator Nancy Spector states in her introduction to the *Cremaster* cycle catalogue,

> Barney started the project with this map [of filming locations], knowing only the particular sites and degrees of “ascension” and “descension” they would individually express. […] Taking the cremaster muscle as its conceptual departure point, the project circulates around anatomical allusions to the height of the gonads during the embryonic process of sexual differentiation: *Cremaster* 1 represents the most “ascended” state, *Cremaster* 5 the most “descended.”

Barney, who significantly enough was a trained athlete and fully conscious on the athletic metaphors of training, falling, constraints, and so on, thus links the cremaster muscle to sexual differentiation. It is a muscle to differentiate between the male and female gender; it only fully develops in males. It is therefore at the same time, as regards its movement, paradigmatic for ontological differentiation: the declension of nouns and the ontological differentiation that is the result of this moves according to the incline and decline of the testicles regulating sexual differentiation.

This relation between sexual and ontological differentiation, such as it appears in Barney’s oeuvre, is the topic of a short text written by Derrida on Heidegger, entitled *Geschlecht I: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference*. In this text, Derrida investigates the role of sexuality in Heidegger’s definition of *Dasein*, and in general his silence on the topics of sex and gender. Apropos Heidegger’s silence on the relation between the two, Derrida remarks:

> It is as if […] sexual difference did not rise to the height [*hauteur*] of ontological difference.

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1 Spector 2002, 30.
But insofar as it is open to the question of Being, insofar as it has a relation to Being, in that very reference, Dasein would not be sexiferous [sexifère].

This issue is relevant for several reasons. First of all because what is at stake is the very term, the “name of Dasein,” that introduces for Derrida the question of sexual difference. For this supposedly “neutral” name was chosen by Heidegger exactly because of its neutrality. At this point Derrida quotes from Heidegger’s lecture course at the University of Marburg: “The term ‘man’ [Mensch] was not used for that being which is the theme of the analysis. Instead the neutral term Dasein was chosen.” In the same lecture, Heidegger moreover stresses the “sexlessness” (Geschlechtslosigkeit) of Dasein.

But as we understand from the work of Barney, it is exactly this potential gender neutrality that is internally split into ascending and descending movements and the production site of sexual differentiation. Derrida continues:

If Dasein as such belongs to neither of the two sexes, that does not mean it is deprived of sex. On the contrary: here one must think of a pre-differential, or rather a pre-dual, sexuality — which as we will see later, does not necessarily mean unitary, homogenous, and undifferentiated.

It is this pre-differential space, which is nonetheless not “unitary, homogenous, and undifferentiated,” that is developed in several of Barney’s early works leading up to the Drawing Restraint and Cremaster cycles.

For Barney, the pre-differential body is hermetically closed, head-in-ass, an ourobouros. The video performance Field Dressing (orifill) (1989) aims to expose this narcissistic image as impossible the moment movement, and therefore an axis of movement, a direction is introduced. We can relate this moment of introduction to the moment in Aristotle’s Analytica Priora where case acquires a definite direction. In Field Dressing (orifill), Barney is suspended from the ceiling, lowering himself above the so-called “Field Emblem” made from refrigerated petroleum jelly, a recurring sculptural
element in his work. Scooping up the solid jelly and filling all his orifices (nose, mouth, ear, penis, anus), Barney hoists himself up again into the heated zone underneath the ceiling, after which the jelly liquefies and the process starts all over again. Spector observes that

Here the performing body transmutes into its “part object” — human being to testicle, gestalt to sex organ — in a chain of signification that reveals the permeability of meaning itself.9

We should, in our reading of Derrida commenting on Dasein’s sexuality, make an important modification here. It is precisely not the “human being” (Mensch) that transmutes into a testicle, but rather Dasein falling, lowering itself according to the testicle.

As Barney shows in his performance, “Every body is sexed, and there is no Dasein without bodiliness.”10 The movement of Dasein itself produces sexual difference. And, as Derrida will argue, it is precisely this bodiliness that is the condition of Dasein’s sexual differentiation, its dispersion, dissemination into the world: “it is bodiliness itself, the flesh, the Leiblichkeit, that originally draws Dasein into dispersion and thus into sexual difference.”11 He continues: “The ‘transcendental dispersion,’ as Heidegger calls it, thus belongs to the essence of Dasein in its neutrality.”12 It regulates the ways in which Dasein falls into the world, is dispersed, both ontologically and sexually. It is these ways of falling into the world that will interest in the next chapter.

Transcendental dispersion relates to the second issue relevant for our general analysis of case. Derrida states that the question about the sexuality of Dasein implies the concept of “chance.”13 This is not the chance of sexual differentiation between one or the other, male or female, but a chance as dispersal, Zerstreuung itself that opens an idea of a multiplicity of sexualities: “As we have already observed, what the lectures neutralized was less sexuality itself than the ‘generic’ mark of sexual difference, belonging to one of the two sexes.”14 Derrida develops this line of thought elsewhere, namely in his essay My Chances / Mes chances: A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies, to which we hope to return in the next chapter, as it is not immediately pertinent to our case study of Barney’s work.

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§22 From differentiation to thrownness

In his one of his more recent performances, Drawing Restraint 10 (fig. 4), Barney is making marks on an elevated horizontal glass surface, jumping upward from an inclined trampoline. In earlier versions of Drawing Restraint such as Drawing Restraint 2 (1988), Barney still moved from a horizontal surface, jumping off the diagonal to draw onto a vertical surface (a wall). It seems as if after Drawing Restraint 8 (2003) and the monumental filmic sculpture Drawing Restraint 9 (2005), in which repeatedly the horizontal inhibition, the dividing plane of the “Field Emblem” is removed, he has reasserted himself not as vanishing mediator between horizontality and verticality, but immediately as vertical between the always falling inclined surface and a subjective horizontality that is never definitively reached. Barney states about the removal of the horizontal bar in Drawing Restraint 8 that

The field [of the Field Emblem] represents a self-imposed resistance placed upon an organic body. The Drawing Restraint project proposes resistance as a prerequisite for development and a vehicle for creativity. Drawing Restraint 8 was an inversion of the proposal, where the metaphorical bar was removed temporarily from the body allowing for an eroticism that the system hadn’t granted itself before.15

This eroticism of the unrestrained body is subsequently explored in an extensive sequence in Drawing Restraint 9, where two lovers consume each other as they consummate their love. Drawing Restraint 10 is nothing but the most formalized articulation of the removal of the horizontal inhibition, blocking the passage to unrestrained, spatial, and therefore diagonal, energy. This allows him to draw the narrative structure of Drawing Restraint 9, constantly changing his inclination without any horizontal or vertical support is a metaphor for the disseminated, spread out structure of Dasein’s thrownness, attempting to leave a number of marks, signs in the world without falling into it.

We could read a passage from Heidegger in relation to this process of verticalization that is enacted by Barney, stating that

While surpassing being in projecting its world [weltentwerfenden Überstieg des Seienden], Dasein must surpass [übersteigen] itself in order, from this height [Erhöhung], to be able to understand itself as abyss [Abgrund].16

15 Barney 2010, 66.
And Virilio adds that “yet again, [...] it is impossible to talk about art without talking about flight, ascent — from Beuys to Turrell via a whole host of other artists.”\(^{17}\) We should definitely include Barney in this list as the most “faithful” to Beuys, who started his career in the air as a Luftwaffe pilot. Barney on the other started on the ground as an athlete. What we learn from Barney’s oeuvre, is that this ascent or surpassing is always immediately linked to a backdrop, a fall, a return to renewed and rearticulated conditions of artistic production. Derrida goes on to link this dispersion, dissemination — which in itself is a sexually loaded term — of Dasein into sexual differentiation to Heidegger’s concept of Geworfenheit (thrownness). We will quote the passage in full because of its pertinence to our own project.

Dasein is geworfen: this means that it is thrown before any project on its part, but this being-thrown is not yet submitted to the alternative of activity or passivity, this alternative being still too much in solidarity with the couple subject-object and hence with their opposition, one could even say with their objection. To interpret thrownness as passivity could re-inscribe it within the later problematic of subjectivitity (active and passive). What does “to throw” mean before any of these syntaxes? And being-thrown even before the image of the fall, be it Platonic or Christian? There is a thrownness of Dasein even “before” there appears — or befalls it, there — any thought of throwing that would amount to an operation, activity, or initiative. And the thrownness of Dasein is not a thrownness in space, in the already-there of a spatial element. The primordial spatiality of Dasein depends on thrownness.\(^{18}\)

We can interpret Derrida’s question “What does ‘to throw’ mean before any of these syntaxes?” as an invitation to consider the nature of case before the roles of subject and object become clear on the level of the sentence, and without, as we already stated in the Opening, invoking Christian or Platonic overtones. In other words, we will try to inscribe Aristotle’s πτῶσις into Heidegger’s dynamics of fallenness. It will be our task in the following chapter to provide a provisional sketch of this primordial spatiality which we will find intimately linked with both case as ontological differentiation and chance itself.

\(^{17}\) Virilio 2007, 82.

§23 The time that remains

Aristotle claimed that a noun-word (ὄνομα) is a meaningful sound without time (ἄνευ χρόνου),¹ and that a time-word (ῥῆμα) is a meaningful sound that adds time to its meaning. Without time, it is just an ordinary noun-word.² By the time we reach Dionysius Thrax, these definitions of noun-word (noun) and time-word (verb) have fundamentally changed from “time-oriented” to “case-oriented.”

For example, the Stoic philosopher Diogenes of Babylon, a student of Chrysippus, is reported to have claimed that the “verb is an element [στοιχεῖον] of discourse without case [ἀπτωτον].”³ Remember that in Aristotle, the noun-word was “without time.”⁴ In Chrysippus’ definition, the negativity of Aristotle’s timelessness of the noun-word has therefore been shifted to the caselessness of the verb. An intermediate phase can be distinguished in the Poetica, where the realm of the ῥῆμα is already considered larger than the realm of the ὄνομα. This shift signals that it is now the noun that has a supplementary structure (noun plus case) instead of the verb (noun-word plus time). The verb has become, perhaps owing to its lack of case, the main focus of the Stoic predicate, determining active and passive, straightness or obliqueness.

This predominance of the verbal structure over the nominal structure is still one of the main features of contemporary linguistics, but certainly a late invention in the development of grammar. That is, a development that co-occurs with the abandonment of time as a distinguishing factor between nouns and verbs. In this respect, the prominent reintroduction of the concept of time in Heidegger’s Being and Time, which we will discuss in this chapter, constitutes a reversal of this movement which at the same time aims to reinstitute “falling” as central category of the λόγος. That is, not only as a mere distinguishing factor between nouns and verbs, but also as a symptom of Heidegger’s movement back to Aristotle.

What, however, remains present of time in the verb — not as a “tense,” but as a residue, a trace of its temporal additive — is Diogenes’ qualification of the verb as “element” (στοιχεῖον). This may be puzzling at first. Whereas we have encountered this word before in Aristotle’s Poetica as denoting the structure of a letter, the smallest part of the λέξις, for Diogenes it refers to the structure of the

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¹ cf. DI 16a20.
² cf. DI 16b6–9.
³ Vit. Phil. vii, 58: ῥῆμα δὲ ἔστι […] στοιχεῖον λόγου ἀπτωτον.
⁴ DI 16a20.
verb. We can interpret this as follows. The στοιχεῖον is also the shadow thrown onto the sundial by the pointer, witness, and interpreter (γνώμων) of the sun. The pointy, wedge-shape shadow of the στοιχεῖον thus traces the passing of time. Thus, the verb no longer carries time on its back, but casts the shadow of time on the surface of the sentence. The track of the sun on the sundial as a concatenation of στοιχεῖα is present as a trace of time in Diogenes’ definition, but only as a trace. For this definition of the verb as the tracking device of time also opens up the possibility of reading the structure of case as a concatenation of shots at twenty-four images per second as is for example done in the work of Dick Raaijmakers.5

In the Topica, Aristotle refers to words that are in a paronymous relation, words that derive from each other, literally as “together-elements” (σύστοιχα). And because, as we have seen, case is a particular instance of paronymy, words falling according to each other into different cases are therefore also σύστοιχα. They share the same phonic elements, like “what is just” (δίκαια), “just-man” (δίκαιος), “justly” (δικαίως), and “justice” (δικαιοσύνη) all share δικαι-.6 They keep the same range of meaning, they share the same shadow in their relation to other words. And by extension, if we venture to recast Aristotle through the lens of Stoic logic, cases are gatherings of time-elements, as they move downward they gather and accept the distinct moments — presents — of time.

So let us listen to Diogenes’ definition of the verb once again. “The verb is an element of discourse without case.” Even though its definition of “lacking case” supplants the Aristotelian “addition of time,” the residue of time is present in the word element (στοιχεῖον). What has been taken away from the verb is case as a gathering, a coming together (συ[ν]-) of frozen moments in time, that together present the illusion of movement, the movement of case. Instead, the verbs present only one such trace: they are elements of time. Instead of the Aristotelian idea of the realm of words, some of which hang on to the ongoing flow of time, the Stoics think as if the words themselves float in a potentially infinite gathering of different presents. Since derivation can therefore never be stopped or halted, the model for derivation is precisely the free fall, the fall of the stylus. For the Stoics, verbs pinpoint, in their caselessness, one element of the gathering of elements that are the nouns: a specific moment in time.

This last thread that links the verb to time will be forgotten by the time we arrive in Alexandria. For Dionysius Thrax, as we read the opening citation, the “verb is an expression [λέξις] without case,

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6 cf. Top. 114a26–b5. We can also read this as follows: Aristotle is desperately trying to constrain πτῶσις to “business as usual” when it comes to the logic in the Topica. It is not supposed to disturb any of the logical constructions presented. One gets the impression that Aristotle considers derivation to be a potentially perverting force, that has to be reckoned with at every step of his argument; cf. also Top. 106b29–107a2; 118a34–9; 124a10–14; 125a5–13; 136b5–32; 148a10–13; 151b28–152a4; 153b25–35; and Rhet. 136b34–9; 139a20–2.
capable of containing tenses, persons, and numbers, bringing forward action or passion.” The verb itself has become an expression (λέξις), and not even in the Aristotelian sense of the word. Instead of Diogenes’ element of discourse (στοιχεῖον λόγου). Here verbal time becomes the technical concept of tense, organized side by side with and on the same level as person and number. Thus the inclusion of time as just one of several aspects of a verb runs parallel to the inclusion of case as one of the aspects of a noun as we have seen in §xx. But the latter has at the same time risen as the distinguishing mark of a noun, while the former is suppressed as the distinguishing mark of the verb. The verb is nevertheless still opposed to the noun, which now has become “a cased part of discourse.”

Because of this shift away from time, the Aristotelian definition of nouns and verbs as regards time becomes inaccessible to later scholars, who have to gather the remains of Greek philosophy from the Arab interpreters and translators who had kept and nourished these foundations of western thought during the early Dark Ages. The medieval interpreter of Aristotle and the first to integrate him with Christian thought, Albertus Magnus, comments that for the nouns

the addition “without time” seems to be a fault because “without time” is a privation founded on negation, but definitions must not be formulated by privation and negation because the definition means the esse, whereas privation and negation take the esse from its object.

Albertus Magnus ignores the fact that also in later definitions of nouns and verbs privation has always remained a common way of determining them, be it either through the qualification “without time” for nouns or “without case” for verbs. His comment however seems not to concern so much the issue of privation as such, but specifically the privation of time. As Albertus Magnus’ pupil Thomas Aquinas similarly comments, the qualification of a noun with “sine tempore,” in which it differs from the verb […] seems to be wrong because the nouns ‘day’ or ‘year’ signify time.” This interpretation is of course not at all the one invited by Aristotle. So by the time we have arrived at Aquinas the conception of time in relation to discourse has changed to such an extent that a definition in Aristotle’s sense has become literally unthinkable.

Similarly, twentieth century linguists will privilege case over time, like the Danish linguist Hjelmslev, who writes in La catégorie des cas: “If the phenomenon of case constitutes an essential trait of the λόγος [discourse], case is also useful as the category to distinguish between the principal

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7 AG 638b4–5: ῥῆμα ἐστὶ λέξις ἄπτωτον, ἐπιδεκτικὴ χρόνων τε καὶ προσώπων καὶ ἀριθμῶν, ἐνέργειαν ἢ πάθος παριστάσα.
8 AG 634b11: ὄνομα ἐστὶ μέρος λόγου πτωτικῶν.
9 Arens 1984, 359.
10 Arens 1984, 413.
μέρη τοῦ λόγου [parts of the discourse].”¹¹ In fact, any real thought about the role of time in language is absent from the whole contemporary linguistics.

All of this is the background against which Heidegger agitates, traveling back to Aristotle, and arriving at very different conclusions about time and falling. Perhaps we could say that exactly by going back to Aristotle, and not proceeding through the Stoic school and the Alexandrian grammarians and scholars, Heidegger has been able to capture the moment that the subject is still on the ground, in a horizontal position, just before the relation between subject, calling, nominative, and straight fall will have been elaborated by the Stoics. And by doing so, he has been able to grasp a quality of the subject that had become unavailable.

§24 The movement of caring

In the autumn of 1922, Martin Heidegger compiled a paper entitled *Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation*, to be included with his application for a position at the universities of Marburg and Göttingen. It is also known as the “report for Naport,” after the professor who would be retiring shortly from his position in Marburg and which Heidegger intended to succeed.

The *Phenomenological Interpretations* are an introduction to a distillation of Heidegger’s readings of Aristotle, and the first indication of something publishable after his *Habilitationsschrift* on Duns Scotus in 1916.¹² As such, the *Phenomenological Interpretations* are a program containing the seeds of his major work from 1927, *Being and Time*, because in it, he develops the first ideas of Sorgen and its inclination toward the world that will develop into Sorge and Verfallenheit. As these concepts are developed within close proximity, we will closely inspect their gradual development and definition in those works.

In the *Phenomenological Interpretations*, Heidegger introduces the concept of “movement of caring” (*Sorgensbewegtheit*).¹³ This *Bewegtheit* is not only a “movement” as is translated, but also, and perhaps even more so, a being-moved, a “movedness,” a vitality of caring (*Sorgen*) as the fundamental meaning: “The basic sense of the movement of factual life [*Lebensbewegtheit*] is caring (*curare*).”¹⁴

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¹¹ Hjelmslev 1935, 2.
¹² For a complete account of the history of the typescript, cf. GA62, 438ff.
¹⁴ Heidegger 2002, 115 [GA62, 352]. Factual life is a concept that will be reworked into the more familiar Heideggerian term Dasein in *Being and Time*. Note also that Heidegger’s *Sorge* is a German translation of the Latin *curare*, from which we both owe the word for “cure” as well as the poison “curare.” In this formal sense, Heidegger’s *Sorge* should be inscribed in the same chain as Plato’s *φάρμακον*.  

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Then, in a typical Aristotelian move, this movement of factual life as caring, itself moves according to the movement of caring:

What lives within the movement of caring [Sorgensbewegtheit] is its inclination [Geneigtheit] toward the world, and it takes the form of an addiction [Hang] toward becoming absorbed in the world and letting itself be taken along by the world. The anxious concern of life is the expression of a basic factual tendency in life to falling away [Abfallen] from itself and, as included in this, falling into [Verfallen] the world and itself falling into ruin [Zerfall]. Terminologically, we can describe this basic characteristic of the movement of caring as "the inclination of factual life toward falling [Verfallensgeneigtheit]" (or in abbreviated form, simply as "falling into…" [Verfallen an]).

Again, we have two movements, movednesses that are in sync, the Sorgensbewegtheit and Lebensbewegtheit moving according to each other. The movement of factual life as care moves according to the movement of caring itself. At the same time, this “movement of caring” is moving in a vital, “lively way” (lebendig) in an “inclination” (Geneigtheit) toward the world.16 This coincidence of movement and inclination as being-inclined immediately shifts our attention to the inclination (Neigung) that Heidegger spoke of in the Introduction to Metaphysics, which we first addressed in the Premable, and to which we will for a moment return.

In the Introduction to Metaphysics, Heidegger dealt with some aspects of the now familiar concept of πτῶσις and its verbal “counterpart” ἔγκλισις. And as we had noticed, these words were translated with the German Abwandlung, Abweichung, Neigung, or Fall, which in their turn are rendered in English by words such as “deviation,” “inclination,” “inflection,” or simply “fall.” Although the concept of Geneigtheit as “inclination” that Heidegger coins in the Phenomenological Interpretations temporally precedes this chain, we should already be attentive to its elaboration within the text as a rereading of the Greek concept of πτῶσις.

Heidegger’s circumscription of the inclination of the movedness of caring follows a pattern which we could read as retracing the steps of the development of case from its purely grammatical application in the Alexandrian school, through the fall of the Stoic generic name, back to the nature of case as a part of the expression, next to the λόγος, ὄνομα, and ῥῆμα in Aristotle’s Poetica. We will

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16 In the lecture series on Aristotle preceding the condensed formulation of the Phenomenological Interpretations, much of the following can be found in statu nascendi. Concerning Neigung, cf. GA61, 100ff.
use the above quote from the *Phenomenological Interpretations* as a matrix allowing us to following him along.

First, Heidegger carefully neutralizes all casual aspects of caring (Sorgen), which is — just like Being (Sein) in the *Introduction to Metaphysics* — both a noun and a verb in all its infinitude. By casual aspects I mean here all the functional categories that were elaborated by the Stoics and Alexandrians, such as tense, mood, voice, and so on. By carefully choosing an infinitive and undoing it from all this grammatical debris, he raises up the concept of caring as if it has not yet fallen. He brings it into a linguistic universe in which case and tense have nothing to do with morphologically expressed categories. And therefore he simultaneously offers an interpretation of inclination, of case, as if it were once again part of the expression from Aristotle’s *Poetica*. For the “inclination […] toward falling” (Verfallensgeneigtheit) itself may not be determined by its cases alone, but have a movement of its own outside its practical, grammatical application to nouns and verbs. Recall that in the *Poetica* case was not an accidental feature of nouns or verbs, but occupied a pivotal role in the organization of the expression of discourse, of the logos. Just like Heidegger’s Verfallensgeneigtheit, Aristotle’s πτῶσις is an inclination depending on the intention of the speaker, or perhaps even the inclination of factual life itself.

Second, Heidegger defines the inclination of caring as the “addiction [Hang] toward becoming absorbed [Aufgehen]” in it, and also toward “letting itself be taken along by the world.”

Therefore, the inclination as addiction is both active and passive. On the one hand it aims to rise into, come onto, “becoming absorbed” (Aufgehen) in the world, on the other hand it intends to “let itself be taken along” (Sichmitnehmenlassen) by the world. Heidegger thus removes any predetermined space, room, or position (παράστασις) that action or passion might occupy. Caring does not care about active or passive voices.

And third, the inclination of caring is at the same time the addiction of an “anxious concern” (Besorgnis). Unfortunately, the English translation leaves nothing of the derivational relation between Sorgen and Be-sorgnis as it presents itself in the German text. Heidegger takes away the third possible case, a predetermined trajectory that might always already lead the movedness of caring into a certain predetermined direction. The be- makes the intransitive caring transitive and opens the whole semantic space of delivery and message. Moreover, be- also occurs in contexts where the direction of the verb is changed. Caring does not care about transitivity or intransitivity.

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19 cf. AG 638b5.
21 e.g. "Wasser sprengen" (to spray water) vs. “den Acker be-sprengen” (to spray the field).
Therefore, there is no specific object, not even a specific presence or absence of an object in the inclination, and as such it is the “expression of a basic factual tendency in life toward falling away [Abfallen] from itself.” The inclination of the movedness of caring, the addiction of the anxious concern, is the expression of the fundamental tendency of life itself to fall away from itself, and not so much “falling into [Verfallen an] the world,” but rather falling at, collapsing against, ceding to the world. And in doing so, life itself is “falling into ruin [Zerfall],” falling into multiple pieces, disseminating into different cases, into different determinations of life as a certain life, a life of such and such.

Heidegger concludes: “Terminologically, this basic characteristic of the movement of caring is fixed as the inclination of factual life toward falling [Verfallensgeneigtheit] (or in abbreviated form, simply as falling into [Verfallen an]…).” The inclination toward falling of the movedness of caring as the fundamental structure of factual life can be summarized as a “falling into” (Verfallen an). And, Heidegger adds, this also provides “an indication of the directional sense and the intentional toward-which of the tendency of caring [Sorgenstendenz].” A directional sense that is incorporated into this falling into, that is, a direction “‘from above down toward’ something.” In other words, the direction that we encountered many times before, the direction of the Aristotle’s κατά. “Inclination,” “falling away,” “falling into,” “falling into ruin,” “inclination to fall,” all of these words circumscribing the fundamental movement of the “according to” are emphasized in the German original, and each of them inscribes itself in the fall, the Aristotelian πτῶσις: “because the character of the being of human beings is factically defined by a falling [Fallen], i.e., by its worldly addiction [welthaften Hang].”

All of this elaborate definition of the fundamental character of the movement of the infinite caring being neither noun nor verb, the absence of action or passion, the absence of a specific direction or target except for the inclination itself, will become the concept of fallenness (Verfallenheit) in Being and Time. It is here that Heidegger will determine the relation between Verfallenheit, πτῶσις, and Dasein.

§25 Addiction as the case of care

In the introduction to Being and Time, falling makes its back-door entrance through a quote from Thomas Aquinas: “Illud quod primo cadit sub apprehensione est ens….” A footnote to the English edition of Being and Time translates this citation more or less literally: “For that which, before aught else, falls under apprehension, is being….” The falling in “falling under apprehension” is present in

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22 Heidegger 1992a, 23 [GA26, 29]: “von oben herab auf etwas zu.”
24 Heidegger 1962, 22 [SZ, 3]; my emphasis.
25 Heidegger 1962, 22n1; my emphasis. The same sentence can has also been translated as “That which first ap-
the Latin text as *cadit*, from the verb “to fall” (*cadère*). Its resonance can still be heard in words like case, cadence, occasional, coincidence, and so on. Before being, there is the fall: *Illud quod primo cadit*. Heidegger paraphrases this quote from Thomas Aquinas with “An understanding of being is already included…."

This citation introduces the concept of falling in the heart of the enterprise of *Being and Time*. It will enter into a relation with the above discussed concept of *Sorgen* in its determination of *Dasein*. In Heidegger’s exposition of *Dasein* the inclusion that stands for the “falling under apprehension” immediately becomes the inclusion of the fall itself as an existential of *Dasein*.

Our preparatory Interpretation of the fundamental structures of *Dasein* with regard to the average kind of Being which is closest to it (a kind of Being in which it is therefore proximally historical as well), will make manifest, however, not only that *Dasein* is inclined [*Geneigtheit*] to fall back [*verfallen*] upon its world (the world in which it is) and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light, but also that *Dasein* simultaneously falls prey [*verfällt*] to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold.26

In this quote we encounter relations similar to the ones articulated earlier in the *Phenomenological Interpretations*. The “falling” (*Fallen*) of “falling into/back/at” (*Verfallen*) is to be understood as a “movement [*Bewegtheit*] which is existentially its own,”27 or, more literally, which is showing “an existentially proper way of movement.” Again, we should read this proper way of movement, as we intend to show, in line with case (*πτῶσις*) and its way of being developed from its privileged position toward the λόγος in Aristotle’s *Poetica* and onward.

In §38 of *Being and Time*, entitled “Falling and Thrownness,” Heidegger elaborates and sharpens the initial definition of *Verfallen* as given in the *Phenomenological Interpretations*. The falling (*Verfallen*) of *Dasein* is characterized as a “basic kind of Being which belongs to everydayness.”28 And this everydayness as “being-lost in the publicness [*Öffentlichkeit*] of the they [*das Man*],”29 is *Dasein*’s risk of Being-in-the-world as such, and therefore proves its being-there: “In falling, nothing other than our potentiality-for-Being-in-the-world is the issue. […] Falling reveals an essential ontological

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26 Heidegger 1962, 42 [SZ 21].
27 Heidegger 1962, 172 [SZ 34].
28 Heidegger 1962, 219 [SZ 175].
29 Heidegger 1962, 220 [SZ 175].
structure of Dasein itself.”³⁰ In short: “An existential mode of Being-in-the-world is documented in the phenomenon of fallen.”³¹

Heidegger stresses the words “existential mode” (existenzialer modus) because in falling as an existential of Being-in-the-world, it is exactly a mode in the sense that Heidegger has employed in his Introduction to Metaphysics — “What the Roman grammarians designate with the bland expression modus the Greeks call ἔγκλισις, an inclining to the side.”³² Thus, we are back where we came from, namely Heidegger’s initial discussion of πτῶσις. The circumscription of fallenness as inclination, propensity, and so on, finds its way back to grammar in its definition as existential mode, as an existential inclination of the Being-in-the-world of Dasein itself. The existential mode of Being-in-the-world is precisely a mode as inclination insofar as the inclination toward the world is fallenness itself.

The mode of falling into the world can be characterized by a phenomenon that is already discussed in the Phenomenological Interpretations, when Heidegger describes the movedness of caring as the inclination for life itself as a temptation.

It tempts life [ist für das Leben versucherisch] insofar as it spreads out before it and puts in its way possibilities (drawn from the world) of making things easy for itself in an idealistic manner and thereby missing itself[.]³³

And in this temptation of falling, the addiction as inclination of the movement of caring “is the most profound fate [Verhängnis] that life factically has to endure within itself.”³⁴ Together with “tranquilizing, alienation and self-entangling (entanglement),” temptation characterizes “the specific kind of being which belongs to falling. This ‘movement’ of Dasein in its own Being, we call its downward plunge [Abstürz]”³⁵ into the inauthenticity of das Man. And in order properly to analyze the nature of this falling, this Verfallenheit, we will first have to inspect this complex of temptation and addiction.

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³⁰ Heidegger 1962, 224 [SZ 179].
³¹ Heidegger 1962, 221 [SZ 176].
³² Heidegger 2000, 62 [GA 40, 63].
³³ Heidegger 2002, 121 [GA 62, 356–7].
³⁵ Heidegger 1962, 223 [SZ, 178]. There is a fascinating parallel between Heidegger’s description of the “downward plunge” as the movement of Dasein, and the description of Dutch artist Dick Raaijmakers of technology as “free fall.” Compare for example Heidegger: “But this plunge remains hidden from Dasein by way things have been publicly interpreted, so much so, indeed, that it gets interpreted as a way of ‘ascending’ and ‘living concretely,’” and Raaijmakers: “For it is the case that every time when technique comes into play and ideal concepts in their turn are turned into solid, concrete constructions, a chain reaction is initiated that we euphemistically tend to call ‘progress.’ But this is in fact nothing else but a free fall downwards, even if the many cyclic processes in the world of technique would want to
In the *Phenomenological Interpretations*, Heidegger connects the movedness of caring as falling with a temptation that is at the same time addiction (*Hang*) and fate (*Verhängnis*). Although the latter term does not prominently reappear in *Being and Time*, the fate of *Dasein* as falling into everydayness has been sealed. And even though Heidegger aims, at several points, to make this fate not as fatalistic as it may sound, his techniques of repression will show to be scarcely sufficient.

The concept of *Hang* returns in §41 of *Being and Time* as one of the four drives of care, even though “care is ontologically ‘earlier’ than [those] phenomena.”\(^36\) But whereas in the *Phenomenological Interpretations*, Heidegger spoke of “caring” (*Sorgen*), in *Being and Time* he has arrived at a the substantive “care” (*Sorge*), moving from the indefiniteness of the infinitive into the safe perimeter of the noun. This nominalization of care is directly correlative with a certain repression that becomes operative in *Being and Time*, namely the repression and limitation of the *Hang* of care itself. It is as if the inclination of caring as addiction from the *Phenomenological Interpretations* is repressed exactly by substantivizing *Sorgen* into *Sorge*. The operation that Heidegger executes on *Sorgen* signals the limiting of its transgressive potential, but also at the same time the full inscription of the inclination of falling into care itself. For contrary to the infinitive “caring,” the noun “care” is fully within the safe range of nominal case. Let us therefore inspect a bit closer the relation between *Hang, Sorge*, and *Verfallenheit*.

We owe the first analysis of *Hang* as addiction in *Being and Time* to Avital Ronell who provides us with an entry point into this reading in her book *Crack Wars*. The English translators of *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, translate *Hang* with “addiction,” but skimming the pages of Joan Stambaugh’s recent translation gives us the sedated translation “predilection.” And in the previously cited translation of the *Phenomenological Interpretations* by John van Buren we find “propensity,” though I have taken the liberty of amending the above citations from his work. However, as soon as we inspect the structure of this *Hang*, we cannot but conclude that neither “propensity” nor “predilection” covers the excesses that are attributed to *Hang*. The fact that Stambaugh has to compensate by translating the related *Nachhängen*, just like Macquarrie and Robinson, with the emphatically cathetic “hankering”\(^37\) shows the difficulties of paying due tribute to the German idiom, which, as stated above is also closely bound to “fate” (*Verhängnis*).

In the *Phenomenological Interpretations*, Heidegger spoke of the movement or movedness of caring, which was structured like an inclination, a “falling into” (*Verfallen*), “propensity” or “addic-

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\(^36\) Heidegger 1962, 238 [SZ 194].

tion” (Hang). However, falling was not as such immediately connected to factical life; only by proxy, through caring. Caring was a movement of factical life that only in its caring could incline, tend to fall. However, this movedness itself, in the environment in which it was situated by Heidegger, was already connected to the λόγος. In fact, it was already related to the “plurivocity [πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον]”38 of the word “life,” which is an “expression of the radical tendency to gain access to the meant objects themselves[.]”39 This tendency of plurivocity is then interpreted, both in the Phenomenological Interpretations and Being and Time as the many inclinations of factical life/Dasein to fall into Being-in-the-world. That in the Phenomenological Interpretations caring is infinitive can therefore be linked to the fact that factical life is not directly hooked on falling. Only in Being and Time, when caring (Sorgen) becomes care (Sorge) and falling an unmediated existential of Dasein, care has to be the substantivized constraining factor on addiction.

§26 Restructuring the λόγος

In Being and Time, fallenness becomes directly related to Dasein as its existential instead of being according to the movedness of caring. By effecting this subtle change in emphasis and structure compared to the Phenomenological Interpretations, Heidegger has at once become more precise — only the movement of falling is the movement of Dasein, and only indirectly related to care —, but also more repressive. For the immediate relation between addiction (Hang) and caring in which addiction is the movement of caring, has made place for addiction being only one of the four phenomena in which care is expressed: willing, wishing, addiction and urge. These phenomena are, as Ronell described, properly “parasitical”40 as they force Heidegger to state that care “is essentially something that cannot be torn asunder”41 by the excesses of these drives. Heidegger thus has to protect care from the gossipy drives that he let loose into Dasein’s λόγος the moment he opened it up to communication (Mitteilung).42 He will attempt to shield care from the communicative force of these drives by redefining the structure of the λόγος of Dasein.

38 Heidegger 2002, 115 [GA62, 352].
40 Ronell 2004, 40.
41 Heidegger 1962, 238 [SZ 193].
42 It is not surprising that the media as a concretization (Verhärtung) of Dasein’s modes of communication, is the execution ground for Aristotle’s declarative sentence, where willing, wishing, addiction, and urge are no longer on an ontological level regulated by care. Any communication is destructive for philosophical language as long it is not properly medicated.
First of all Heidegger defines the assertion (Aussage). The assertion serves to understand and interpret, it is the way in which “Dasein projects its being upon possibilities.” An assertion is structured by three phenomena: a “pointing out,” a “predication,” and a “communication” (Mitteilung) or “speaking forth.” The first two largely follow the structure of Greek thought about language, but the third, communication, introduces the necessary link between the λόγος and the Being-in-the-world of Dasein. It shows the assertion to be always already a necessary sharing (Teilung) of language, a commonality of language. And this is the point where he departs from Aristotle, and which also necessitates the welcoming back of wishes and orders as drives behind Dasein’s care.

Discoursing or talking [Reden] is the way in which we articulate “significantly” the intelligibility of Being-in-the-world. Being-with belongs to Being-in-the-world, which in every case maintains itself in some definite way of concernful [besorgenden] being-with-one-another.

In a repetition of Plato, who in the Sophist defined discourse as being always discourse of something, Heidegger states that “talking [Reden] is talk about something [Rede über]…,” but the “about” of this talking is not necessarily structured like an assertion! This does not only mean that Heidegger opens the door for “non-declarative” statements like prayers and wishes, but also that most of the statements that we make are most of the time far from any assertion. They serve to have Dasein being-in-the-world.

At this point in Being and Time Heidegger opens the door to the “command” in philosophical discourse, albeit hesitantly. The German typography leaves no possible doubt about this hesitation: “Auch ein Befehl ist ergänzung über —; der Wunsch hat sein Worüber.” What is this command [Befehl] about? In the English translation we find a “something,” but in the German a mere dash and semicolon. For wishes Heidegger shows no hesitation, each wish has an “about something” (Worüber). But a command?… Heidegger continues here: “Der Fürsprache fehlt nicht ihr Worüber”: the talking-for, the talking-instead-of, even ventriloquism has an about-what. We read again: “A command is given about —;” It is as if Heidegger typographically inserts the dialing tone of the telephone that plays such a crucial
in any discourse, it is the communicative part of discourse that is subsequently developed as one the ways in which Dasein falls into the world, a “gossip that everywhere incessantly dissimulates that which it should disclose and that maintains Dasein in equivocation.”

In the light of Heidegger’s thoughts on the relation between λόγος and Dasein, Aristotle’s idea that πτώσις co-exists with λόγος, amounts to saying that the falling into of Gerede as a “linguistic parasitism, the sly inflation of malicious rumor, gossip”\(^\text{50}\) is a necessary part of Dasein just like discourse (Rede), which is the way in which Dasein encounters his Being-in-the-world.

The definition of the four drives behind care as Dasein’s Being-in-the-world thus introduces several modifications for the structure of the λόγος that Heidegger inherits from the Greeks: the λόγος as the gathering of language, and therefore as the gathering of Being. We have seen how Aristotle tried to clean up the mess of non-declarative sentences from the Augean stables of early Greek philosophy. “Philo is healthy!” he proclaimed on a high as the first well-formed declarative sentence. But the exclusions that he enacted are reintroduced into Dasein because Heidegger explicitly links it to the λόγος.

Dasein means Being-in-the-world, Dasein as discursive Being-in, has already expressed itself. Dasein has language. […] Is it an accident [Zufall] that in both their pre-philosophical and their philosophical ways of interpreting Dasein, they [sc. the Greeks] defined the essence of man as ζῷον λόγον ἔχον? […] Man shows himself as the entity which talks.\(^\text{52}\)

And therefore the structure of the Being of Dasein as care forces a reinterpretation of Aristotle’s narrow definition of philosophically proper language. In order to arrive at the declarative sentence (λόγος ἀποφαντικός), Aristotle first had to define the noun-word (ὀνόμα) and the time-word (ῥῆμα). To do so successfully, he needed to cut out several possible ways in which man may speak — senseless ways, as they denote neither truth nor falsity. For example, indefinite noun-words and time-words like “not-man” and “not-is-healthy” were ruled out,\(^\text{53}\) as they resisted a clear demarcation of their borders. Cases of noun-words and time-words like “of-Philo” or “was-healthy” were excised as well;

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Agamben 1993, 5. Agamben refers here to the medieval notion of verbositas, which reverberates in Heidegger’s Gerede.

Ronell 2010, 67.

Heidegger 1962, 208 [SZ 165].

cf. DI 16a29–32; 16b11–14.
only a noun-word without case ("Philo") was allowed enter with a present indicative third person verb like “is-healthy.” Also wishes or prayer (εὐχή) were banished from meaningful philosophical language as they too denoted neither truth nor falsity.⁵⁴ All of these exiles are welcomed back by Heidegger into Dasein’s Being-in-the-world.

But the wish, even though it is reintroduced into Dasein’s realm after its expulsion by Aristotle, returns merely as a “tranquilized ‘willing’”: “In the wish Dasein projects its Being upon possibilities which not only have not been taken hold of in concern, but whose fulfillment has not even been pondered over and expected.”⁵⁵ In other words, even though the wish participates in the λόγος, it in the end serves as a mode of falling into “mere wishing,” into Gerefe: “I wish the sun would shine today….” Apart from welcoming back wishing into the realm of Being, Heidegger’s addicted Dasein “is inhabited by a compulsion that blindly bypasses finitude’s markers,”⁵⁶ that potentially blows up Aristotle’s Great Wall to keep all the indefinites, infinitudes (ἀόριστα) out.⁵⁷ And case as falling itself returns, just like in Aristotle’s Poetica, as an existential of Being, of λόγος.

The question remains why Heidegger had to open up the linguistic space of Dasein. It is perhaps because he discovered the fatal potential of addiction only when working on Being and Time. In the Phenomenological Interpretations, addiction (Hang) appears in a semantic chain together with inclination and falling into, of a movement of caring as such. In Being and Time, it enters into an immediate relation with Verfallen, which has become a proper existential of Dasein and not a mere movement of caring. That Verfallen is subsequently described as an downward plunge (Abstürz) into “groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness”⁵⁸ creates the necessity to shield it from the potential of Dasein to go along in the endless falling, it “has to be prevented from falling into empty repetition compulsion”⁵⁹ caused by addiction. Dasein is potentially a recidivist and should be prop-erly medicated.

The cocktail that Heidegger comes up with is as simple as it is lethal. Being both existentials of Dasein and as such equally constructive, Verfallen and Sorge will be balanced against one another. Heidegger restructures the declarative discourse of philosophy in such way that it — contra Aristotle’s De Interpretatione — hosts falling as both case and addiction and other excommunicated terms. The origin of this logic can already be found in the Phenomenological Interpretations, where Heidegger carefully strips off any imbalance from the infinitive Sorgen: neither verb nor noun, neither

⁵⁴ DI 17a4.
⁵⁵ Heidegger 1962, 239 [SZ 195].
⁵⁶ Ronell 2004, 44.
⁵⁷ cf. DI 16a32; 16b14.
⁵⁸ Heidegger 1962, 223 [SZ 178].
⁵⁹ Ronell 2004, 44.
active nor passive, neither transitive nor intransitive. On the one hand Dasein’s falling as a “Being-in-the-world, which tempts itself, [but] is at the same time tranquilizing [beruhigend]” and on the other hand Dasein’s care as “being-ahead-of-oneself — in-being-already-in…” Care as Dasein’s upper, and falling as Dasein’s downer.

Christopher Fynsk, in his reading of Being and Time in Heidegger. Thought and Historicity, encounters a similar circularity in a passage in which he analyzes Dasein’s throwness into the world. He asks the question “if throwness is an experience of a kind of radical passivity, where does Dasein get the impetus to assume this throwness in repetition? And how is Dasein to emerge from its capture or dizziness and project itself upon its thrown being in such a way as to become free for it?” In our words this would be the question of how Sorge can emerge from Verfallenheit in the first place. Fynsk gives us the answer immediately, because “the structure of Dasein’s being is the foundation of the hermeneutic circle.” In other words the circularity of hermeneutic reasoning as later expounded by Gadamer, in founded on the dynamics getting hooked and going cold turkey. This “research is itself a mode of existence.”

Heidegger’s first sentence “I say circle” therefore aptly describes Dasein’s being. Agamben, in his essay What is a Paradigm, refers to this “pre-understanding as Dasein’s anticipatory existential structure” in his comparison between the so-called hermeneutic circle and the paradigmatic circle. In case of the hermeneutic circle, which is grounded in Dasein’s being as exposed above, “the inquirer must be able to recognize in phenomena the signature of a pre-understanding that depends on their own existential structure.” This can only be accomplished on the basis that this hermeneutic circle is recognized as a paradigmatic one. In our terms, the moment that it is recognized as falling according to paradigmatic structure par excellence, case. The subject of Heidegger’s “I say circle” is therefore nothing other than Dasein articulating its own Verfallenheit.

§27 Time-traveling to Plato’s pharmacy

Does our analysis of the nature of Heidegger’s Verfallenheit rest solely on the basis of addiction, inclination, and the semantics of falling, that could have well developed completely independently from and indifferently to the Stoic troubles in defining the proper way of falling? Or is it possible to

60 Heidegger 1962, 222 [SZ 177].
61 Heidegger 1962, 241 [SZ 196].
62 Fynsk 1993, 39.
63 Fynsk 1993, 39n7.
64 cf. §7.
65 Agamben 2009, 27.
66 Agamben 2009, 27.
point to a link that is not necessarily based on an etymological, paronymous relation but much more founded in the *Stimmung* of addiction?

In the openings hits of *Crack Wars*, Ronell asks us: “What if ‘drugs’ named a special mode of addiction, however, or the structure that is philosophically and metaphysically at the basis of our culture?” If it would indeed be at the basis of our culture, we would expect to find traces of a subliminal addictive urge already in the language of the Greeks. Indeed, this seems to be the case. We have for example come across the attacks of logical hygiene that Aristotle made on philosophical language: “Philo is healthy!” This exclamation cannot be accidental. The sanity of Philo can only be sustained by regular shots into his λόγος, monitoring his pulse, and keeping him free from infections and parasites.

Let us begin again. As we already briefly discussed, in his essay *Plato’s Pharmacy*, Derrida inextricably links the λόγος, the discourse, the ratio, the sentence, the definition, the word, to writing as pharmakon, the medicine, the poison, the potion, drugs. The pharmakon is writing as repetition, as a potentially lethal supplement to memory and remembering that Plato is fighting in the *Phaedrus* dialogue. Repetition is embodied by the sophistic discourse, which, as we have read in the Preamble, is exactly the type of discourse that Plato is determined to annihilate. In order to do so, repetition itself is extradited from the dialogue and returns embodied as the multiply mirrored Socrates in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* dialogues.

That the constantly shape shifting concept of pharmakon therefore instructs the initial philosophi(sti)cal operations can be read on every single page of Derrida’s essay, and backwards into Plato’s dialogues. For the λόγος and the pharmakon are also both the presents of the Egyptian god Theuth, as is exposed in the *Phaedrus* dialogue. Yet beside writing, geometry, and drugs, Theuth is also the inventor of something else, and as this invention is not discussed in depth in Derrida’s essay, we would like to focus on it here. We are talking about the gambling games of dice and draughts.

I heard, then, that at Naucratis, in Egypt, was one of the ancient gods from there, of whom the sacred bird is called Ibis, and the name of the god himself was Theuth. And that it was he who invented numbers and arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, and also draughts (πεττείας and κυβείας), and above all letters.

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69 *Phaed.* 274c–d: ἤκουσα τοίνυν περὶ Ναύκρατιν τῆς Αἰγύπτου γενέσθαι τῶν ἐκεί παλαιῶν τινα θεῶν, οὗ καὶ τὸ ὄρνεον ἱερὸν ὅ δὲ καλοῦσιν Ἅβιν: αὐτὸν δὲ ὄνομα τῷ δαίμονι εἶναι Θεύθ. τοῦτον δὴ πρῶτον ἄριθμόν τε καὶ λογισμόν εὑρεῖν καὶ γεωμετρίαν καὶ ἀστρονομίαν, ἔτι δὲ πεττείας τε καὶ κυβείας, καὶ δὴ καὶ γράμματα.
Our exposition of the game of dice will work along two roads. First by imprinting the analogy of the dice game into the grammatical concept of case. And second by establishing the necessary link between on one side case relating to the birth of the modern subject, and on the other side Verfallenheit as recasting the subject. In Derrida’s listing of inventions that he links to the development of the occidental scene of writing and speech, he describes the game of dice as play (παιδία), but only to leave the subject for the remainder of the essay. Nevertheless, these two games, draughts (πεττεία) and dice (κυβεία) will provide us with a provisional link between Stoic case and Ronellian addiction that reaches back to the physical allegory that underlies and subverts both. In order to establish this connection, we will have to backtrack even further.

In Book x of the Republic, Plato famously presents his argument for banishing artists, poets, and other magicians and jugglers from the polis. He establishes two lines of reasoning that would lead to the conclusion that they would be unwanted — and unneeded. The first one is the accusation that they would be mere imitators of nature, and therefore farthest removed from the truth. In their imitation, repetition, and iteration artists and poets would contribute absolutely nothing to the construction of the polis. No one ever saw Homer tending to the wounded, inventing wise laws, or capturing enemy cities, yet he still wrote about all those things. Where does he think all that knowledge comes from? And if he would really know something about all of this, why would he waste his time writing poetry instead of acting up? We can recognize this argument as all too common in our (post-)modern times.

The second accusation that Plato raises against poets and artists is much harsher. They corrupt our mind. Tragic poets instill images in us of human despair, murder, and other irrational behavior. They weaken our spirits with their images of immoderation, adultery, rape. Comedians make us laugh and teach us bad jokes, not to mention all graphical depictions of sexual promiscuity that abound on Greek vases produced by perverted sculptors. In other words, these so-called artists show us what should not be shown, and what has been seen cannot be unseen.

While aiming for the facts, for a clear description of our behavior, the grammar of our being, Plato falls into the trap of the allegorical shift. This shift takes place at the moment that Socrates wants to explain Glaucon what exactly is the influence of tragic poets on the mind of the innocent audience. As soon as we are confronted with the display of children murdered and kings’ eyes gauged

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Which does not mean the physical metaphor is the original metaphor. Even though, as Ronell observes, Nietzsche shows an inclination to place physics close to religion as just another “unquestionably neurotic interpretation of the world” (Ronell 2008, 162), it should be exactly that status of physics in particular and science in general as the subcon-science of philosophy that should be investigated.
out, we lose control: “Our grieving checks the very thing we need to come to our aid as quickly as possible in such case.”71 “What do you mean?” Glacon asks. Socrates responds:

To deliberate [...] about what has happened to us, and, as it were in the fall of the dice [ἐν πτώσει κύβων], to determine the movements of our affairs with reference to the numbers that turn up, in the way that reason [λόγος] indicates would be the best, and, instead of stumbling [προσπταίσαντας] like children [παιδιάς], clapping one’s hands to the stricken spot and wasting the time in wailing, ever to accustom the soul to devote itself at once to curing [ἰᾶσθαι] and raising [ἐπανορθοῦν] up the disease and what has fallen [πεσόν], banishing threnody by therapy [ἰατρικῇ].72

In order to save the sanity of the citizens of the polis, Plato calls upon a distinction that paronymously dissolves itself on several levels. First, our fate can be modeled on the game (παιδιά) of dice, but let’s not stumble around like children (παιδιάς). Then, we should refer to the fall (πτώσει) of our fate, the way the dice turn up, but let’s not fall against (προσ-πταίσαντας), hitting random objects as we try to find a way out of our predicament. Thus Plato, as he struggles to rise out of a mere Being-in-the-world, out of fallenness and its inclination to addiction, calls upon the images that are exactly the ones that prevent him from doing so: a children’s game is to prevent us from behaving like children, the analysis of the fall of dice is to prevent us from stumbling around. In other words, the metaphor will set you free! As we have seen, the λόγος that we are supposed to find by analyzing the dice that have turned up is not exactly our “reason.” The only thing we will find there and which has been stressed several times is the supplementary and self-destructive structure of the λόγος itself.

Games and falls are on both sides of the border between rational and irrational behavior, and structure the whole field as such, leaving numerous gaps and traps while doing so. Plato calls upon a curing (ἰᾶσθαι), a bit of Sorgen, a medicine, some drugs for his fatal case. He is in need of some therapy (ἰατρικῇ), not the song of threnody to come to terms with his fate and set his record straight (ἐπανορθοῦν). This restoring, straightening up, this self-correction is clearly a serious business, as Plato emphatically employs the doubly prefixed ἐπ-αν-ορθοῦν: straightening (ὀρθοῦν), in a motion from the bottom upward (ἀνά) so that we end up on top (ἐπί) as if to make sure that we do not fall


Although by banishing the poet and the artist from the polis, Plato allowed his citizens to keep their mind in check without being bothered by poetic images of excess and despair, he still needs a dealer for them to provide them with their occasional hits. Knowing this beforehand, Plato had made sure that in Book III of the Republic, when selecting which modal scales and instruments to keep while throwing out most of the harmonic instruments, he keeps a “little piccolo” close at hand, just in case.

“That certainly,” Glaucon said, “would be the best way [ὀρθότατα] to face misfortune and deal with it.” The straightest way indeed.

Although by banishing the poet and the artist from the polis, Plato allowed his citizens to keep their mind in check without being bothered by poetic images of excess and despair, he still needs a dealer for them to provide them with their occasional hits. Knowing this beforehand, Plato had made sure that in Book III of the Republic, when selecting which modal scales and instruments to keep while throwing out most of the harmonic instruments, he keeps a “little piccolo” close at hand, just in case.

“Then,” said I [sc. Socrates], “we shall not need in our songs and airs instruments of many strings or whose compass includes all the harmonies.”

“Not in my opinion,” said he [sc. Glaucon].

“Then we shall not maintain makers of triangles and harps and all other many stringed and poly-harmonic instruments.”

“Apparently not.”

“Well, will you admit to the city flute-makers and flute-players? Or is not the flute the most ‘many-stringed’ of instruments and do not the pan-harmonics themselves imitate it?”

“Clearly,” he said.

“You have left,” said I, “the lyre and the zither. These are useful in the city, and in the fields the shepherds would have a little piccolo [σῦριγξ] to pipe on.”

In case the dapper citizens of the perfect polis will not be able to cure themselves now that all the temptations, all producers of insanity and surplus emotions have been thrown out, there will always be the tranquilizing doses of the Pessoan shepherd, cut off “from the world, in exile from reality, far from objective reality and the real life of the city and the community.” Thus safely outside the

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75 We will have to wait until the beginning of the twentieth century before the dealer himself becomes an addict and forces the metaphysicians of the polis to go cold turkey: Alberto Caeiro’s Keeper of Sheep.

76 Derrida 1995, 235. When in the same essay, The Rhetoric of Drugs, which predicts many themes in Ronell’s Crack Wars, Derrida states that “As with drug addiction, the concept of drugs supposes an instituted and an institu-
city walls yet comfortably within reach in case of an emergency. The shepherd, with his little piccolo (σῦριγξ), that is, his syringe, and a herd of shots to keep Philo and the rest of the polis healthy. And by means of the shepherd’s position outside the city walls, who is nevertheless necessary for the health of the citizens inside, he calls forth the structure of supplementarity that Derrida addresses vis-à-vis writing as pharmakon.

In Plato’s Pharmacy, Derrida describes Theuth’s presence in Plato’s philosophy as follows:

He would be the mediating movement of dialectics if he did not also mimic it, indefinitely preventing it, through this ironic doubling, from reaching some final fulfillment or eschatological reappropriation. [...] No being-there [Dasein] can properly be his own.77

It seems that this ironic doubling is indeed already at work within Socrates’ plea for the removal of the imitators and the sanitization of the citizens’ minds. Children, falls, and syringes pop up on both sides, all paronymously structured like the pharmakon: both poison and potion.

It is this realization that drives Heidegger, not only in his plea for poetry that he will develop in the years following Being and Time, but also in his acknowledgment of the existential Verfallenheit of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. He collapses the double irony in Plato’s Republic and intertwines the children’s games of backgammon and dice. He collapses the fall, its cure and its cause: an addiction, a wanting to cure, a need to supplement the so-called irrationality of surplus emotions as exactly that which inclines us to fall into the world and be in it, away from the radical contingency of death. Plato’s so-called rational method of analyzing one’s own feelings which fall upon us like a throw of dice is therefore always already a falling into Being-in-the-world. A Besorgen that is in the end caused by an existential Angst. The throw of the dice, the metaphor he employs, already includes in its fall all the feelings that Plato exactly wanted to ban from the polis. It presents nothing but a closed semantic circuit.

Heidegger emerges here as the philosopher attacking Plato from every angle, using the grammatical and logical weapons for which his student Aristotle provided the ammo. He turns Aristotle against his father, and as it were re-enacts the patricidal urges that had always lured in Plato’s discourse.

77 Derrida 2004, 97 [1972, 116].
§28 Defining the category of case

So what about these dice in their relation to language itself? In their falling they shape our fate, our chances. And in our thrownness we are looking to determine the λόγος in and of them, taking shots at reading them. As it turns out, it is already in our thrownness into Dasein and falling into Being-in-the-world that we are determined according to the falling of the dice. The metaphor that we desperately try to read already structures its own reading. It is therefore perhaps time to return to case as a grammatical concept, as a textual structure.

In 1935, the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev publishes his essay The Category of Case. The opening section entitled “Problem” immediately states the issue:

The cases constitute a grammatical category whose investigation imposes itself with a special force. No language seems to completely escape from it; there is no language in which the category of case is surely absent; there are only languages in which the existence of case is doubtful and a subject of discussion.78

Hjelmslev makes the strong claim that there is no language existent without case, even when its actual presence is debatable; it is inescapable. In other words, we might not see it, we might not hear it, but it is still there as an invisible mark.79 The modern variants of this invisible mark are the so-called “zero morphemes,” which, though carrying semantic properties (and sometimes phonological side-effects) are invisible on the surface of language. A precursor of this notion can definitely be traced in the Stoic theory that the case of the subject, which doesn’t show any sign of inflection, nonetheless has a case, albeit the “straightest.”80

Case reigns as a spectral presence over language.81 But at least in the languages that have appeared to us throughout this chapter, most prominently Greek, case seems in most cases to have surfaced phonologically, albeit still intangible to the Greeks themselves. The cases of the Greeks were also cases for the Greeks. We can recall that in Aristotle’s Poetica πτῶσις was the only part of the λέξις that was not neither meaning nor a sound, that case was effectively mute. As for the Germans,
they will have to do with the ruins of a Germanic case system that once must have equalled the Greek system\textsuperscript{82} in terms of variety of richness. Perhaps that because of the waning of its morphological expression, case itself has become more repressed, until Heidegger only allowed it to roam next to subconscious movements such as alienation, curiosity, and gossipy soliloquy as Dasein’s existentials.

But Hjelmslev is sure of himself. It is exactly here that we should start. “Grammatical analysis must start with an analysis of case.”\textsuperscript{83} In fact, Hjelmslev is probably the first after Aristotle to generalize case across all grammatical categories. In his essay \textit{La structure fondamentale du langage (The Fundamental Structure of Language)} he “recommends” to use the grammatical term “case” solely for “commutative elements.”\textsuperscript{84} A commutative element is a unit of paradigm that, once commuted on one level of language — for example, phonology — induces a commutation on another level — for example, semantics. In other words, the phonological commutation from “man” to “men” induces a commutation from “singular” to “plural.” And, according to Hjelmslev, therefore “man” and “men” are cases. And this commutation, which is essentially always a commutation between commutative elements, i.e. cases, is “at the base of the differences in structure between languages.”\textsuperscript{85}

To start with an analysis of case, Hjelmslev has to face the Greek case system, and although he has stated in the introduction that “there is perhaps no grammatical category whose immediate aspects are as clear, coherent, symmetrical, and easily approachable as the category of case,”\textsuperscript{86} he at the same time has to admit that “Ancient Greek is a language that lends itself badly for a first grammatical orientation.”\textsuperscript{87}

This is mainly because the Greek language is, through its Homeric tradition, scattered with forms from different dialects, petrified expressions, adverbs exhibiting the remains from cases long lost, and seemingly impenetrable phonological modifications and irregularities. Yet, such seems to the destiny of occidental grammar. Moreover, he states in his \textit{Prolégomènes à une théorie du langage (Prolegomena to a Theory of Language)} that

the classifications of inductive grammar, such as “genitive,” “perfect,” “subjunctive,” “passive,” etc. are striking examples [of the failure of realism]. None of these terms, as they are currently accepted, can be generally defined. Genitive, perfect, subjunctive, and passive, for

\textsuperscript{82} For example, as in the extinct Germanic language Gothic (cf. Wright 1910, 84ff).
\textsuperscript{83} Hjelmslev 1935, 1.
\textsuperscript{84} Hjelmslev 1968, 219.
\textsuperscript{85} Hjelmslev 1968, 218.
\textsuperscript{86} Hjelmslev 1935, 1.
\textsuperscript{87} Hjelmslev 1935, 2.
example, cover completely different phenomena for two languages like Latin and Greek.\textsuperscript{88}

In other words, not only is Greek problematic because of its highly irregular case system, knowing anything about it does not mean we may generalize to other languages. That is, unless we suspend any definition of the genitive, passive, and so on, and focus on the way that they form (local) structural units: paradigms, and the way in which these paradigms are structured.

Nevertheless, Hjelmslev is looking for a suitable definition for his category of case. It is clear to him that a morphological definition is out of the question, as the appearances of case are too divergent and heterogeneous. The Greeks themselves don’t get much further than the defective, apodeictic definitions of Dionysius Thrax: the nominative is straight and direct, the genitive is also called paternal or possessive, and so on. Also, his inclusion of the vocative\textsuperscript{89} into the Greek system makes a coherent syntactical analysis impossible, as it is a case that contrary to the other cases does not need any syntax. When can shout “Socrates!” and the work is done.\textsuperscript{90}

Hjelmslev observes that there are only two ways for the Greeks to get out of this mess, to his “embarrassment, there are two makeshifts, which are methodically reprehensible.”\textsuperscript{91} These two makeshifts (\textit{expédients}) — in Heideggerian terms, two \textit{Abwandlungen}, deviations, expeditions from the straight path — are either an \textit{extra-linguistic split}, or a \textit{metonymic shift}, both being heterogeneous to the linguistico-scientific discourse that Hjelmslev wants to be faithful to. An extra-linguistic split would involve cutting up grammar into different, completely unrelated realms, and a metonymic shift would introduce a level of reading that is strictly speaking beyond grammar as science. Ever since antiquity, these have been the “Scylla and Charybdis of linguistics. Whether one chooses one or the other, the first task of the scholar is neglected: respecting the facts.”\textsuperscript{92}

But have we not been respecting the facts? Have we not read about how metonymy is always already at work in the realm of the \textit{λόγος} from its inception onward? Have we not seen that all so-called “extra-linguistic” splits have always belonged to the realm that we can only with the hindsight from our contemporary position determine as linguistics? In other words, that linguistics, let alone its possible \textit{outside}, was never really there for the Greeks?

In any case, Hjelmslev is less successful than Ulysses in passing the test. After first condemning it, he indulges with clearly apparent pleasure in the metonymy that the Greeks performed to describe case. He thus decides to enlarge linguistics with poetics instead of excising any potential threat to the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} Hjelmslev 1968, 24.
\item \textsuperscript{89} cf. §xx.
\item \textsuperscript{90} cf. Blake 2001, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{91} Hjelmslev 1935, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Hjelmslev 1935, 6.
\end{itemize}
stable, scientific structure of linguistics. This metonymic displacement will be exactly the displacement that Theuth foreshadowed in all his “unstable ambivalence” as god of both rational science and games of dice. In Hjelmslev’s account of case we once again shift from language to dice, but this time from a different direction. Not departing from Heidegger’s addictive falling into Being-in-the-world, but departing from scientific, linguistic analysis. And neither of them seems to be fully able to support their own discourse.

The metaphor of the game of dice, or, more specifically, knucklebones, will be the trap that Hjelmslev falls into as he tries to “respect the facts.” Recall that we have previously encountered the metaphorical concepts of straight (ὀρθός) and reverse (ὑπτιός) — literally, on the backside — in the contexts of wrestling, gymnastics, and the falling stylus. Let us re-examine them briefly.

The metaphor of wrestling fit well into the schema of the different diatheses of the verb: active or passive, topping or bottoming, winner and loser. However, if we look at the Greek case system, we see more than just two options. Counting out the vocative, there are four cases, not just two. The falling stylus was indeed a practical model to think of a word falling from a generic name into a the nominative case, but as we know from experience, a pen can drop in many ways, and has 360 degrees of orientation at its disposal as soon as it is not straight. Whereas wrestling offers us too few options, the falling stylus offers us too many.

But the allegory of the falling dice provides a middle way, less than the infinite number of possible angles, and more than the two positions of the wrestler. As Hjelmslev sharply observes, “it is evident that, at the risk of jeopardizing the allegory, the number of cases (πτώσεις) should be restricted and finite.” And even though he despises the allegory as a non-scientific trope he has to fall back on, it may not be jeopardized. Thus, we can now return to Apollonius Dyscolus whom we had left so abruptly in §??.

For there is a generic name having-around all expression of that name, such as the generic man, and from that generic name it falls into me, into you, into every action; and in so far as it fell from the generic name, [there is] a case according to it, in so far as it fell straight [καθ’ ὀρθῶς ἐπεσεν], like when falling straight on the dice [ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν κύβων ὀρθῶς πιπτόντων], it is called according to that straight and direct[.]
There we have it. The straight case is called straight because it falls according to the straight fall of the dice. And in this sense the straight position is not opposed to reverse positions, but rather to cases that are commonly referred to as oblique (πλάγιαι). The nominative is straight, whereas the genitive, dative, and accusative are oblique, and because we are dealing with dice, our options are finite.

Ernst Sittig, who wrote the philological survey of the metaphor of dice or knucklebones in relation to case that Hjelmslev refers to, makes an important correction to this translation. In ancient Greek “oblique” (πλάγιος) means in fact something like “queer” or “sideways.” The terms refers more to a position than to a level of inclination. Hjelmslev however does not seem to care much about the details of the allegory, the specific origins of the terms “straight” and “queer.”

His reasoning is basically as follows. The main rift in the Greek case system and all its Latin incarnations is based on the opposition between the nominative (straight, direct) and the other cases (oblique, queer). He therefore ignores the complications in the order of genitive and nominative that were signaled in the scholia on the Ars Grammatica. Because this opposition is modeled on the general game of dice, there is naturally a finite number of cases, i.e. between one and six. However, we have to recall that the Greek case system has at most five cases, of which the fifth one, the vocative, has a questionable status to say the least. Not only does the vocative fit into neither a Stoic nor Peripatetic theory of the syntax of the different cases, it is even rarely mentioned in the scholia in the neighborhood of the other four.

But Hjelmslev nevertheless states that “it is true that the number of modes known by the ancient Greeks is five, and that from that point of view, it was not inconvenient to compare the modes with the falling of dice.” This is “not inconvenient” indeed, but since when was convenience a category of “proper” scientific research respecting the scientific facts? The mere convenience of the allegory of the game of dice should not be an argument for Hjelmslev to elaborately discuss it. It does not even fully respect the facts by its excess of at least on side of the die. But Hjelmslev cannot resist, as it is the same allegory to which the Greek theorists of language had fallen prey.

96 Hjelmslev and Sittig are not the only ones who have proposed the allegory of the game of dice for the different case. For example Lallot who parenthetically notes in relation to the “straight case” that “they [sc. the Greek grammarians] possibly speak about the game of dice” (Lallot 1998, 53n19); cf. also Ildefonse 1997, 162–3.
97 cf. Sittig 1931, 5. Πλάγιος is related through Latin with words like and “plagiarism” and “complaint,” and through a Germanic lineage with “flank.”
98 Hjelmslev himself gives another argument against the status as a proper case of the vocative. As can only be distinguished in a minority of the Greek nominal declensions from the nominative, it should be considered absent from these declensions.
99 Hjelmslev 1935, 7.
In the development of his own case theory, the so-called localist theory, Hjelmslev relies heavily on the “unscientific” yet “convenient” allegory of the game of dice. Although he judges the ancient case theory based on this allegory “insufficient,” he proposes to find a remedy for the insufficiencies in the doctrine by “in principle remaining on the terrain of the doctrine as it is established, and aiming to grasp the definitions more tightly.” In other words, since the Greeks had already fallen in the trap of the allegory and elaborated a pretty functional system, why not stay in it and see whether we can get it a bit more in focus?

§29 Casting the knucklebones
As it turns out, the article by Sittig on the age and origin of the concept of case, summarily quoted by Hjelmslev for his own purposes, is very precise in determining the source of not only the specific type of dice game, but also the terminology that relates to it and which Hjelmslev merely accepts as a given. The game in question that Theuth has given to mankind is called the dice game of knucklebones (ἀστράγαλοι). Sittig finds evidence for the relation between the terminology used in the game of knucklebones in a commentary on line 88 of book Ψ of Homer’s Ilias by a certain Eusthatius: “it [sc. the knucklebone] [has] four cases lying together on opposite sides in a way similar to a die.”

The game was usually played with the knucklebones of sheep, which had four possible sides on which the knucklebone could fall. In a dense discussion of a large number of citations from a wide variety of Greek sources, Sittig analyzes the terminology of this game, which we will attempt to summarize for our own purposes.

A knucklebone has four sides (see fig. 1 and 2), two broad sides and two narrow sides. Both pairs have a concave and convex side — just think of the bones fitting one into the other, the convex side into the concave side of the adjacent bone. The convex narrow side is counted six, the concave narrow side (its opposite) is counted one. The convex and concave broad sides are respectively counted four and three. The higher the value, the harder it is to throw the knucklebone such that the counting side is on top. As for the terminology of the casting of the knucklebones, there are several terms that consistently show up in the description of the game. One the one hand a fall (πτῶσις) that is straight (ὀρθός) as opposed to sideways, queer, or “on the flank” (πλάγιος). For example a fall that is straight as contrasting with “on the back” (ὑπτιος) and “on the belly” (πρανής), the latter two clearly distinguishing two opposite flank sides of a body.

103 cf. Sittig 1931, 4ff.
Again motivated by a large amount of source material, Sittig determines the relation between the numeric values of the different sides of the knucklebones, their proper names, and the terminology of the different dice throws to be the following. The values six, four, three, and one correspond respectively to the names κῶϊον, “belly” (πρανές), “back” (ὑπτιον), and χῖον. To throw a κῶϊον is obviously the most difficult and has the least chance of occurring. The χῖον throw, whose etymology is also uncertain, lies opposite to the κῶϊον. Sittig quotes the comedy Frogs by Aristophanes, in which a pun is played on the κῶϊον and χῖον throws.\(^{104}\) Dionysus is joking about a certain Theramenes and says: “Theramenes? A clever fellow, an all-round wonder; if he runs into trouble and happens to be close he’s thrown \([πέπτωκεν]\) clear of the trouble, no Chian \([Χῖος]\) but a Kian \([Κεῖος]\).”\(^{105}\) In other words, he does not throw the worst throw (Χῖον) but rather a Keios, which puns on Theramenes’ native island Keios and the κῶϊον, the best throw.

The belly and the back sides of the knucklebone therefore have the remaining values of four and three, as they are the most common throws. Sittig even tries to provide additional empirical evidence for his philological research by casting some knucklebones himself. “Out of 200 trials I got 14 times Κῶϊον, 20 times Χῖον, 70 times πρανές, and 96 times ὑπτιον.”\(^{106}\) According to Sittig a straight fall of a set knucklebones is related to the best throw, which is called after the goddess of love, Aphrodite. In this throw, the κῶϊον lies on top, and the knucklebone literally stands up straight, and not sideways, on its belly or back.

The allegory of the knucklebones, determining the turns of our fate, thus proves to both an account for the diverse terms that are used in relation to the Greek case system, and moreover relates these terms to the concrete shape of the knucklebone itself. Whereas the highest throw of the dice, e.g., a triple six, would only be metaphorically straight, the knucklebone indeed lies straight up.

We have thus arrived from our initial investigations into the poetical, philosophical, and logical definitions of case in Aristotle and the Stoics at an analysis of the Greek conception of case as an allegory of something properly physical. And it is indeed the case that, although Aristotle never formulates a terminology relating to paronymy and case other than the “according to,” it is according to his own Historia Animalium that we can now correlate all the aspects of dice and knucklebones, cases and fate in the bone of an animal. To throw ourselves back to Derrida’s opening remarks in Of Spirit on the spirit that haunts Heidegger’s Introduction to Metaphysics, we can thus affirmatively quote Hegel: “[t]he being of Spirit is a bone.”\(^{107}\)

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104 cf. Sittig 1931, 23.
105 Frogs 968–70, translated by Matthew Dillon.
106 Sittig 1931, 23.
107 Hegel 1977, 208.
A Case Study

All the animals that have a talus [ἀστραγάλους] have it in the hinder legs. They have also the bone placed straight [ὀρθὸν] up in the joint; the upper part [πρανές], outside; the lower part [ὕπτιον], inside; the sides called Coa [κῶια] turning within towards one another, the sides called Chia [χιὰ] outside, and horns [καραίας] on the top.\(^{108}\)

The anatomy of the allegory, of what will determine the rise and fall of the subject, could not have been more clearly described. When the talus (knucklebone) is placed correctly in the joint the upper part (πρανές) is turned to the outside of the leg, and the lower part (ὕπτιον) on the inside of the leg. For animals, contrary to humans, the ὕπτιον part is on the side of the belly. Sittig explains this by pointing to the etymological relation between ὕπτιον and the word for sleep (ὕπνος). The ὕπτιον is the part on which you sleep; for humans the back part, for animals (like dogs) the belly.\(^{109}\) The convex part turning inside another bone is called “Coa” (κῶια), and the side called “Chia” (χιὰ) has another bone turning in it. The whole bone kept in place by a set of little horn-like protrusions from the bone on the πρανές side. What has become clear from the various descriptions we have read of the falling of the knucklebones, the dice, all the terminology matches up. Straight falls, bellies and backs, queer cases; they all fit like bones in the skeleton of the λόγος.

Except for one side. The side without proper translation, without proper etymology even.\(^{110}\) Only a pun by Aristophanes has put any credit on it. The side that is called χῖον. Sittig makes some short off-the-hand comments about it: “In case of the πτώσις ὀρθή, the best throw in knucklebones, 1 is underlying [ὑποκείμενον] and 6 […] lies on top lying opposite [ἀντικείμενον] to 1.”\(^{111}\) And also: “The best throw Κῶιος = 6 has as its ὑποκείμενον 1.”\(^{112}\) Again we encounter the word subject (ὑποκείμενον), albeit this time in a more technical, mundane context. Would this provide us with the final clue to at least provisionally determine the relation between case and subject, and therefore Heidegger’s retro-Greek recasting of Dasein as a sort of subject that is neither strictly active nor passive, that is before those terms, a thrownness before any grammar?


\(^{109}\) cf. Sittig 1931, 15.

\(^{110}\) The etymology of the κῶιον throw is often related to the Greek word for dog.

\(^{111}\) Sittig 1931, 21.

\(^{112}\) Sittig 1931, 23.
§30  Recasting the subject

From the beginning, Heidegger makes it very clear that *Dasein* is not to be understood as another word for the metaphysical position of the subject, whose Cartesian incarnation he takes as a prime example. For Heidegger, this kind of subject, which would be determined by multiplicities of subject-object relations, the one thinking the *res extensa*, is nothing other than some “isolated subject-thing.” He raises the question whether the

“I” in the way we have mentioned discloses *Dasein* in its everydayness, if it discloses *Dasein* at all.… What if the aforementioned approach, starting with the givenness of the “I” to *Dasein* itself, and with a rather patent self-interpretation of *Dasein*, should lead the existential analytic, as it were, into a pitfall [in die Falle]?

Heidegger notices the trap but walks right into it, because moving the existential analytic of *Dasein* into this pitfall of the “I,” moving it along with the thrownness of *Dasein*, is the only way to retrieve any notion of the subject at all. From now on, Heidegger is hooked on the subject.

It is Heidegger’s project to radically remove all common notions — i.e., all the metaphysical debris attached to the Aristotelian subject ὑποκείμενον after its first, Greek formulation — from this “I” or the subject, to cleanse it.

One of our first tasks will be to prove that if we posit an “I” or subject as that which is proximally given, we shall completely miss the phenomenal content [Bestand] of *Dasein*. Ontologically, every idea of a “subject” — unless refined [geläutert] by a previous ontological determination of its basic character — still posits the subjectum (ὑποκείμενον) along with it[.]

Nevertheless, it is this subjectum that, cleansed or purified (geläutert), and “suspended” between the quotes that are the secret attributes of *Dasein*, because “the ‘subject’ (Dasein), if well understood ontologically, is spatial.” This “subject,” ontologically well-understood, drained from its metaphysical, onto-theological blood, is *Dasein*.

Heidegger stresses that this cleansing of the subject should not turn it into part of “the they” (das Man), understood as some sort of generalized “subject,” and if so, then only because “the Being of such ‘subjects’ is understood as having a character other than that of *Dasein* [nicht daseinsmä-

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113 Heidegger 1962, 233 [SZ 188]
114 Heidegger 1962, 151 [SZ 115–6]
115 Heidegger 1962, 72 [SZ 46]
116 Heidegger 1962, 146 [SZ 111]
Indeed, such “subjects” would be much closer to Cartesian “subject-things” that Heidegger complained about earlier. So the subject needs to be cleansed, but it can also not be cleansed to such an extent that it would appear as a regular present-at-hand. Heidegger is walking the thin line suspended between the pegs of the “subject.”

Even though we are far removed from concepts like generic names, the movement of the Stoic generic name and Heidegger’s *Dasein* are essentially the same. The generic name falls into *me*, whereas “*Dasein* has in each case mineness.” The difference is that for the Stoics, there were different falls into the λόγος, straight and oblique. For Heidegger’s subject as *Dasein* being-in-the-world there is only a collapse of all possible throws and falls in the movement of thrownness and falling into itself. And because this being thrown is as passive as the falling into is active in its *Absturz* into Being-in-the-world and potentially into the anonymity of *das Man*, in its fleeing into pure multiplicity, *Dasein* can no longer be determined as solely active. It oscillates on the middle ground between the energy and pathos, between effect and affect. Or following the analogy of knucklebones, whenever a straight throw comes up, whenever the nominative case has fallen, the subject lies at the bottom, and the other way round.

Therefore, Heidegger’s *Dasein* cannot be a subject in the Cartesian sense, nor in the Stoic sense. Not in the Stoic sense because it lacks a clear case with which it coincides, and not in the Cartesian sense because “the basic state of the ‘subject’, *Dasein*, [is] Being-in-the-world. *The Being-present-at-hand-together of the physical and psychical is completely different ontically and ontologically from the phenomenon of Being-in-the-world.*” The difference introduced by the Cartesian cogito between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, even in its reworking by Kant remains completely divergent from an always

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117 Heidegger 1962, 166 [SZ 128]. And not “according to Dasein” (*daseinasmäßig*) for example means to try to count them “Even to come across a number of ‘subjects’ [einer Anzahl von ‘Subjekten’] becomes possible only if the others without seriously ‘counting on them’ [‘auf sie zählt’], or without even want to have anything to do with them” (163 [125]).

118 Heidegger 1962, 68 [SZ 42].

119 Heidegger’s conception of the “passive” subject has in itself a history that we cannot fully explore. For example, there are clear antecedents to this idea such as the thesis of the seventeenth-century French philosopher Pierre Bayle that “man isn’t but a ‘passive subject’” (cf. Libera 2007, 122).

120 Another issue is of course whether the Cartesian concept of the active subject (which is however, not *Descartes’* concept of the subject, cf. Libera 2007, 119) is not already in itself produced by a exclusion of case from the domain of philosophy. To investigate this would mean to start at his grammar, just as we did with Aristotle. A first possible clue is given by his conversion from Latin to French. A conversion from a language with case, and without an obligatorily expressed subject, to two languages with explicit and mandatory subjects. A collapse of grammatical subject and philosophical subject thus becomes a real possibility, but ignores its fundamental movement.

121 Heidegger 1962, 248 [SZ 204].
already Being-in-the-world. Heidegger even proclaims it the “scandal of philosophy”\textsuperscript{122} that there is still a demand and a search for a proof for the existence of things outside of us.\textsuperscript{123}

Heidegger does not want to commit himself to any expression of the subject other than in its cathartic, cleansed form of Dasein. A personal pronoun, if used at all, is only an indication of the character of Dasein, “because Dasein has in each case mineness [Jemeinigkeit], one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: ‘I am,’ ‘you are.’”\textsuperscript{124} We can again recall here what the Stoics said about the generic name, which falls “into me, into you, into every action; and in so far as it fell from the generic name, [there is] a case according to it, in so far as it fell straight (καθὸ ὀρθῶς ἔπεσεν), like when dice are falling straight, it is called according to that straight and direct[.]”\textsuperscript{125} Heidegger continues: “The word ‘I’ is to be understood only in the sense of a non-committal formal indicator, indicating something which may perhaps reveal itself as its ‘opposite’ in some particular phenomenal context of Being.”\textsuperscript{126} And perhaps, as we have found out, this “particular phenomenal context of Being” may turn out to be exactly the context of fallenness, of the throw of the dice in which the subject (ὑποκείμενον) indeed lies opposite to the “right side.”

In other words, that the subject reveals itself as the opposite side, the ἀντικείμενον of the “I.” “In case of the πτῶσις ὀρθή, the best throw in knucklebones, 1 is underlying (ὑποκείμενον) and 6 […] lies on top lying opposite (ἀντικείμενον) to 1.”\textsuperscript{127} The subject (ὑποκείμενον), the χῖον, is the side without a proper translation, without a proper origin, without an etymology.\textsuperscript{128}

\section*{§31 The subject’s Being-in-the-world}

Recall that in Aristotle the relation between the noun-word without case (ὄνομα) and the subject (ὑποκείμενον) was only established haphazardly. Plato’s “something small,” that the λόγος is supposed to be about something is elaborated in Ariristotle’s concept of the subject, that has nothing to do with the active Cartesian position. Let us reread the fragment from the \textit{Categoriæ}.  

\bibitem{Heidegger1962.249} Heidegger 1962, 249 [SZ 205].
\bibitem{Heidegger1962.68} This “scandal,” however, continues to persist, for example in the work of Quentin Meillassoux, and for good reason.
\bibitem{Sigma546.10-13} Σ 546, 10–13.
\bibitem{Heidegger1962.151-2} Heidegger 1962, 151–2 [SZ 116].
\bibitem{Sittig1931.21} Sittig 1931, 21.
\bibitem{Libera2007.78} Again we must realize that this supposed “subject” is only a subject vis-à-vis case, because “\textit{L’histoire du sujet n’est pas que l’histoire de ‘sujet’. Les métamorphoses de l’ὑποκείμενον et du subiectum sont solidaires d’autres mutations, inventions ou déplacements: elles ne sont qu’une micrologie au sein d’une macrologie}” (Libera 2007, 78).
Of beings, what is called according to the being-subject \([καθ’ ύποκειμένου]\) of something, is in no being-subject, like man \([ἀνθρώπος]\) is called according to the being-subject of a certain man \([τοῦ τινὸς ἀνθρώπου]\), but is in no being-subject \([ἐν ύποκειμένῳ οὐδὲνι]\).\(^{129}\)

We took as an example the sentence “a certain man is a man.” In this case “(being a) man” is called according to the being-subject of something, i.e. “a certain man.” However, this “(being a) man” is not in the subject position itself. This subject as being-subject \(ψεκέιμένου\) of Aristotle, which in no way can put any claim on action, but only on a mere being-present, lives in a universe parallel to \(Dasein\). The Aristotelian subject, just like Heideggerian \(Dasein\) is this something small, thrown into the \(λόγου\), always already Being-in-the-world. Again, this Being-in-the-world has an immediate parallel in Aristotle’s early thought. And this Aristotelian subject, which is always a being-subject, is also a position that one could occupy, and not a title that one could wave like a flag. The subject is always “in being-subject,” it is always “in.” The “certain man” of Aristotle’s example isn’t just the subject, it is in the subject. And this being-in-the-subject is, as Aristotle explains, in no way similar to being part of a whole.

What is in being-subject, is called according to no being-subject, — [as for] “in being-subject” I do not say “in something” \([ἐν τινι]\) like a part of what is in it \([μέρος... τοῦ ἐν ὃ]\), incapable of being-present on its own[].\(^{130}\)

Whereas in the earlier citation Aristotle claims that “what is called according to the being-subject of something is in no being-subject,” he proposes here the symmetrical situation: “what is in being-subjects, is called according to no being-subject.” In Heideggerian terms, \(Dasein\)’s Being-in-the-world cannot be reduced to an “according to” that we know to be the fall itself. Falling into and Being-in-the-world are two different existentials of \(Dasein\). This “being-in” of the subject according to a being-subject is subsequently elaborated, as we have seen, in the concept of predication.

Whenever one thing \([ἑτέρον]\) is predicated \([κατηγορήται]\) according to something else \([καθ’ ἑτέρου]\), like according to a subject \([καθ’ ύποκειμένου]\), all things called according to the predicate \([κατὰ τοῦ κατηγορουμένου]\), will also be spoken \([ῥηθήσεται]\) according to the subject; like man is predicated to a certain man, and living-being according to man;

\(^{129}\) \(Cat. 1a20–2: τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν καθ’ ύποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται, ἐν ύποκειμένῳ δὲ οὐδὲνι ἐστιν, οἷον ἀνθρώπος καθ’ ύποκειμένου μὲν λέγεται τοῦ τινὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἐν ύποκειμένῳ δὲ οὐδὲνι ἐστιν.\)

\(^{130}\) \(Cat. 1a23–5: τὰ δὲ ἐν ύποκειμένῳ μὲν ἐστὶν, καθ’ ύποκειμένου δὲ οὐδενὸς λέγεται, — ἐν ύποκειμένῳ δὲ λέγω δ ἐν τινι μή ὡς μέρος ὑπάρχον ἀδύνατον χωρὶς εἶναι τοῦ ἐν ὃ ἐστὶν.\)
therefore living-being will also be predicated [κατηγορηθήσεται] according to a certain man; because both a certain man and man are a living-being.\textsuperscript{131}

Again we find the stock phrase “a certain man is a man.” Not only is “(being a) man” called according to the subject “a certain man,” it is also predicated according to it. And as it is predicated according to it, it also spoken according to it. This speaking as a preaching, a gathering of the λόγος in the agora, the center of the Greek polis, is nothing but Heidegger’s Dasein’s Being-in-the-world through Rede, λόγος, language. Reading just the first two paragraphs of Aristotle opening work of the Organon, without bothering about all the metaphysical layers that will be added to it in his — presumably later — oeuvre, it becomes clear that the immediate relation between Dasein as thrown and falling subject as Aristotelian ὑποκείμενον, and the fall as such is immediate. Both in Aristotle and in Heidegger.

Dasein’s Being is case. It comprises in itself facticity (thrownness), existence (projection), and falling [Verfallen]. As Being, Dasein is something that has been thrown; it has been brought into its “there,” but not of its own accord. [...] Thrownness, however, does not lie behind it as some event which has happened to Dasein, which has factually befallen [vorverfallenes] and fallen loose [losgefallenes] from Dasein again on the contrary, as long as Dasein is, Dasein, as care, is constantly [ständig] its “that-it-is” [“Daß”].\textsuperscript{132}

As we saw how Aristotle’s ὑποκείμενον slowly started to fall into the place of the nominative case, Heidegger tries to reground the subject in Dasein, not as existing separate or opposite to the world, but as a Being-in-the-world. In his reworking of the Cartesian subject as Dasein, Heidegger captures the Aristotelian insight that the subject “falls”: the falling-into (Verfallen) as existential of Dasein is expressed by the inclination, the addiction of care. And whereas Aristotle has never fully acknowledged the becoming-upright of the underlying (ὑποκείμενον) subject and only hinted at it in his discussion of the λόγος, this becoming-upright was brought to its full consequence by the Stoics. Heidegger, in an inverse movement, denies this being-upright of the Cartesian subject and tries to re-ground it, without, however moving it back into any kind of horizontality. For “Dasein, as care, is constantly [ständig] its ‘that-it-is.’” Dasein is still standing, still established, but without the pressure of any noun-word or other grammatical actors on top. Dasein is both “caller [Rutherland] and the one who

\textsuperscript{131} Cat. 1b10–15: ὅταν ἑτέρον καθ’ ἑτέρου κατηγορηται ὡς καθ’ ὑποκειμένου, ὅσα κατὰ τοῦ κατηγορουμένου λέγεται, πάντα καὶ κατὰ τοῦ ὑποκειμένου ῥηθήσεται· οἷον ἄνθρωπος κατὰ τοῦ τινὸς ἀνθρώπου κατηγορεῖται, τὸ δὲ ζῷον κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατηγορεῖται, τὸ δὲ ὕζῳν κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου κατηγορεῖται, τὸ δὲ ἕρων κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου- οὔκουν καὶ κατὰ τοῦ τινὸς ἀνθρώπου τὸ ὑζον κατηγορηθήσεται· ὁ γὰρ τὶς ἀνθρώπου καὶ ἁνθρώπου ἑστι καὶ ἥζων.

\textsuperscript{132} Heidegger 1962, 329–30 [SZ 284].
is called [Angerufene]."\textsuperscript{133} Or, as Derrida summarizes in his aptly titled essay \textit{My Chances}, "neither subjectum nor objectum, \textit{Dasein} is itself thrown, originally abandoned to fall and decline or, we could say, to chance (\textit{Verfallen}). \textit{Dasein}'s chances are first of all and also its falls.\textsuperscript{134}

By referring \textit{Dasein} back to its falling into the world, also the subject as \textit{ὑποκείμενον} returns to its phenomenological basis, as underlying the right fall (\textit{πτώσις ὀρθή}), and being straight, con-stantly (\textit{ständig}) upright in this fall. Therefore, the reintroduction of the fall into the philosophical discourse in the way that Heidegger proposes has as its necessary consequence the reversal of the Cartesian subject, back to where it came from in Aristotle. In other words, Heidegger's "subject" is a subject without subject, in the sense that it has nothing to do with all the activity, rationality, subject-object relations, that were projected on it after Aristotle.

The subject, even though for Aristotle caseless, always already \textit{has} case, is falling. Nothing, not even the subject, seems to escape case. In its invisible marking with case — through a tradition that is still present in our times — this “non-marked term is not opposed to the marked term as an absence is to a presence, but rather that non-presence is somehow equivalent to a zero degree of presence (that presence is \textit{lacking} in its absence).”\textsuperscript{135} This non-marked term is the case of the subject as the subject itself.

Thus we can conclude that Heidegger's project of defining \textit{Dasein} is at crucial points linked to the development of case in Aristotle and Stoic philosophy. First, the removal of all notions of time from \textit{Dasein} and its \textit{Sorge} mirrors the stripping the concept of time from both the verb and the noun in Stoic philosophy. Second, the structure of addiction (\textit{Hang}) as an existential of \textit{Dasein} is strictly related to the idea of the \textit{pharmakon} in Plato's theory of writing, which leads us to consider the relation between case as addiction and case in the game of dice and knucklebones as the physical allegory for case, as hinted at in the Stoic interpretation of Aristotelian \textit{πτῶσις}. And third, that once we have established these connections between \textit{πτῶσις} and the dynamics of \textit{Verfallenheit}, we are able to read the initial definition of the subject in relation to grammar, the grammaticalization of Plato's "something small" as following the same logic, though in an opposite direction, as Heidegger's “anti-definition” of \textit{Dasein} as subject.

\textsuperscript{133} Heidegger 1962, 322 [SZ 277]; translation amended.
\textsuperscript{134} Derrida 2007, 352.
\textsuperscript{135} Agamben 2009, 77.
In 1969, Belgian artist Marcel Broodthaers published an edition of Mallarmé’s *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’Abolira Le Hasard* in exactly the same size and layout, but with all sentences blacked out. The sentence literally became a track, a horizontal line drawn on paper. In these concluding remarks we intend reread several elements from the continuous line of thought from the preceding chapters in the realm of Broothaers’s work.

With *Un Coup de Dés…*, which predicts the conceptual and language oriented art in the second half of the twentieth century, Broodthaers returned to poetry, which he had abandoned in 1964, when he had verticalized the remainders of his poetic oeuvre in his first work of “plastic” art, *Pense-Bête*. Some time before, the painter René Margritte had given him, in a dismissive gesture, an edition of Mallarmé’s *Un Coup de Dés…*, and it cannot be excluded that this had led to Broodthaers’s aban-
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donment of his project to become a poet. His own _Un Coup de Dés_... should therefore be also read as a revenge on poetry itself.

Mallarmé’s _Un Coup de Dés_... opened the space of the page on which language is dispersed. His seminal poem introduced a non-linear type of reading, an approach to text that Mallarmé found in the readers of the many Parisian newspapers. For Mallarmé, _Un Coup de dés_... was no longer a text, it comprised “constellations” of words on the page. Hence the famous, often-quoted “sentence” from this work — which, in a way, is impossible to “quote” — “a dice throw never will abolish chance, except perhaps constellation.”¹ This sentence introduces two concepts, “chance” and “constellation” in relation to the throw of dice that we ended our previous chapter with. The first one relates to the way in which the dice fall, by chance, and as we already indicated, at several points in his oeuvre, Derrida related the concept of chance to case.² The second concept is that which might abolish chance, the constellation.

That a constellation is the abolition of chance, or rather, the organization of chance because clear when we refer once again to Hjelmslev. In his work _Prolégomènes à une théorie de langage_ (Prolegomena to a Theory of Language), he gives us a very precise definition of this word, constellation. “The constellation [is] a function between two variables”³ in which function is a “dependency defined through analysis”⁴ and variable is a “funtive, the presence of which is not the necessary condition of the presence of the functive with which it establishes a function.”⁵ The constellation is the basic structure of a function, without any immediate establishment of any hierarchical structure.

In other words, Hjelmslev’s definition of a constellation is precisely correlative to the definition given by Aristotle of the paradigm, as something that moves from particular to particular, from example to example. Therefore we might also interpret Mallarmé’s sentence as “a dice throw never abolishes chance, except for a paradigm.” In way, Broodthaers’s intervention into Mallarmé’s text is paradigmatic. It shows the formal relations between the sentences as elements cast on the page, without any attention to their meaning. The sentences form a paronymous constellation, precisely in the sense that Aristotle intended.

Broodthaers’s intervention tries actively to erase the consequences of this dice roll of words, by blacking them out, thus showing purely the rhythmic progression on the page. But at the same time he rereads Mallarmé’s text in a little commented upon preface to the edition, which shows exactly

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¹ Mallarmé 2006, 161–81.
³ Hjelmslev 1968, 55.
⁴ Hjelmslev 1968, 53.
⁵ Hjelmslev 1968, 55.
what is at stake in Mallarmé’s spatial arrangement of the text: namely the erasure of linear discourse in favor of a “constellation” of text.  

Now let us turn one final time to chance. This time from Broodthaers to Lacan and Aristotle. In the introduction written by Broodthaers for the exhibition of Un Coup de Dés… in the Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp, he quoted the last paragraph of Lacan’s Écrits, from the second appendix to the lecture Science and Truth, ominously titled “Metaphor of the Subject.”

The only absolute statement was made by the competent authority namely, that no roll of the dice in the signifier will ever abolish chance. This is so because chance exists only within a linguistic determination, no matter how we consider it, whether in combination with automatism or encounter.

In this citation, Lacan recalls the two “indefinite causes” (ἀόριστα…τὰ αἴτια), the two forms of chance from Aristotle’s Physics, automatism (αὐτόματον) and encounter (τύχη) in relation to chance. Notice again how indefiniteness makes its entrance in our discussion tangential to the concept of case. And again we will find that case operates precisely in the zone between definiteness and indefiniteness like in Aristotle’s De Interpretatione.

To give a short overview of Lacan’s argument in order to ground our interpretation of above citation in the context of Aristotle’s Physica, we would like to recall that Lacan’s lecture focuses on defining the structural invariants of psychoanalytic practice and the relation between psychoanalysis and the adjacent fields of religion, magic, and science. As a way of describing the “structural situation,” he relates Aristotle’s four main, “definite” causes as described in the Physica to the these four areas of knowledge and the way in which they structure the subject of truth as cause. “Magic involves the truth as cause in its guise as efficient cause.” In religion, “truth appears only as final cause” and “the impact of truth as cause in science must be recognized in its guise as formal cause,” whereas psychoanalysis itself “emphasizes its guise as material cause.” Thus, Lacan contends that only psycho-
analysis takes into account the most important feature of truth, its “material” aspect. “Lacan’s gloss on the truth as a material cause in psychoanalysis emphasized that all formations of the unconscious derive their existence from the material of language[.]”

In Book 11 of the *Physics*, after explaining the four main modes of causality, Aristotle addresses situations in which the action is directed towards a purpose which is different from the one it in fact accomplishes. In other words, actions in which knowledge plays no role whatsoever. The structure of Aristotle’s argument here is many ways reminiscent of his grammatical argument in *De Interpretatione*. There is a specific set of forms which are definite and correct, and some leftover forms that do not fit strict grammaticality, which are called “indefinite,” and it is exactly this same word that Aristotle deploys in this section on the causes that are not really any of the for “definite” ones.

Therefore cause according to itself is determined (ὡρισμένον), but [cause] according to incident is indeterminate (ἀόριστον); because indefinite things (ἄπειρα) may be thrown together in one.¹⁷

Just like in *De Interpretatione*, we encounter an opposition between definite and indefinite forms. Whereas the classical four causes work together to determine anything in a definite way, allowing the indefinite causes to participate would open a potentially infinite, unstructured chain of chaotic incidents. So in this precise sense, chance operates on the plane of causality according to case on the plane of grammar.

The two modes of chance that Lacan introduces at the end of his argument, “automatism” and “encounter,” are termed in Aristotle’s *Physics* αὐτόματον and τύχη, where the first includes the second.¹⁸ The first word has more or literally been transmitted to the English language, albeit in a nearly opposite meaning, and the second concept derive from the verb τυγχάνω, meaning “to hit (upon)” or “to encounter.” Aristotle etymologically defines the more general concept of αὐτόματον in the following way:

So then automaton (αὐτόματον) is also according to its name whenever something [in] itself (αὐτὸ) be without purpose (μάτην). For the stone didn’t fall down in order to knock someone out; in fact, the stone fell down in-itself-to-no-purpose (ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου), because it

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¹⁷ *Phys.* 197a27-9: τὸ μὲν οὖν καθ’ αὑτὸ αἴτιον ὡρισμένον, τὸ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἀόριστον ἀπειρα γὰρ ἄν τῷ ἐνι συμβεῖν.
¹⁸ *Phys.* 197a360-b1.
may have fallen due to someone and in order to knock someone out.\textsuperscript{19}

An automatic, fortuitous movement is a movement that in itself has no purpose. Aristotle illustrates this idea with the falling of stone. If a stone would fall down on my head and knock me out, this might have been caused by someone trying to hit me on the head. However, for the stone itself, the falling had no purpose of meaning. In this sense the fallenness of \textit{Dasein} is strictly without purpose, but at the same time only occurs strictly “within a linguistic determination.”

It is Lacan’s idea that the material aspect of this linguistic condition is the concern of psychoanalysis, but throughout this thesis our intentions have been of a different kind, namely to map the structure of this linguistic determination in which chance, case, exists. It is therefore not our intention — and beyond the reach of these concluding remarks — to map all relations between Lacan’s thought and our current subject,\textsuperscript{20} but what we should gather from above last sentence of his \textit{Écrits}, is that Broodthaers invoked, in relation to throw of dice written by Mallarmé, “the competent authority,” Aristotle’s concept of “indefinite cause.”

Chance, as indefinite cause, avoids an immediate reduction to any of the four finite causes, or — by extension — to Lacan’s proposed modes of knowledge. Thus we may conjecture a parallel between \textit{De Interpretatione} in which πτῶσις is an indefinite noun or verb, and the \textit{Physics}, in which αὐτόματον and τύχη are indefinite causes. And it is this indefiniteness that materializes in the metaphor of the dice, the paradigmatic effects of which are so clearly shown in Broothaer’s work. Lacan adds: “This means that the most serious reality, and even the sole serious reality for man, if one considers its role in sustaining the metonymy of his desire, can only be retained in metaphor.”\textsuperscript{21}

It is in the metaphor of the falling dice, that I have tried to channel the desires of our subject. As we have learned from our reading of Mallarmé, Aristotle, and Lacan, this fall will never be fully determinate but always already include something automatic, something indefinite. It is self-propelling, like an addiction in the Ronellian sense of the world, self-absorbing and ultimately self-destructive. Broodthaers’s abolished chance confronts us with the blacked-out desire to fall that is the subject. But at the same time, the metaphor of the falling dice is in no way intrinsically linked \textit{Dasein}’s being in the world, even though it might be “the most serious reality.” As Wallace Stevens

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Phys. 197b29–31: ὅτε δὲ τὸ αὐτόματον καὶ κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα ὅταν αὐτὸ μάτην γένηται· κατέπεσεν γὰρ οὐ τοῦ πατάξαι ἔνεκεν ὁ λίθος· ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου ἄρα κατέπεσεν ὁ λίθος, ὅτι πέσοι ἂν ὑπὸ τινὸς καὶ τοῦ πατάξαι ἔνεκα.}

\textsuperscript{20} For example in Seminar XIII “The Object of Psychoanalysis,” where on the session of December 15, 1965 Lacan refers to the object a is related “as fall […] to the subject as division,” which he later specifies as “that hole, that fall, that ptosis.” In this sense we could agree with Lacan on the fact that just like in Heidegger the fall precedes any subject-object division, but nonetheless introduces it as \textit{Dasein} falls into the world.

\textsuperscript{21} Lacan 2006, 758.
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noted, a true metaphor is fortuitous. In other words, the metaphor of the dice as chance and case is in itself fortuitous, accidental.

What we have been doing in this thesis is to move through a series of displacements from πτῶσις to Verfallenheit and determine this catalyzing movement to be structured like addiction. The condition for the possibility of doing so lies in the assumption of the relative stability of the dispositifs of translation and etymology. Even though we are very aware of their aporetic character, we decided to ignore this for the moment, and dug up evidence for our case while bracketing the many pitfalls that the relation of one word to the other entails.

As Aristotle explained, the relation of one word to other as a relation through form is a paronymous relation, and case structures a specific subset of these relations. Throughout our investigations, this subset might have become bigger or smaller, but it has remained a subset nonetheless. Etymology, and, by extension, a significant part of translation is founded in paronymy too, as it is the apparatus to track the form of words through and outside languages. Even though casus is a Latin translation of the Greek πτῶσις and its root is not related to the Greek one, the possibility of a felicitous translation from one to the other is based on an insight in the form of the word πτῶσις and its semantic field that can only be gained through paronymy. Only by being able to compare πτῶσις and the verb πίπτω, a reason other than an apodeictic one becomes available; for πίπτω : cadère :: πτῶσις : casus. Paronymy founds the possibility of comparing words qua form, and therefore etymology, aiming for the “true form” of words provides formal arguments for truth in translation. Unfortunately, etymology is at the same time constantly at risk of collapsing on itself. Hence translation — and the possibility of and for translation — is never guaranteed.

We asked ourselves whether our analysis Verfallenheit based on addiction, inclination, and the semantics of falling is merely a structural analogy to Stoic thought, or more deeply connected to the development of Greek grammar and its subject. Through an analysis of the allegory of the dice, and its biological analogy in animal anatomy we have been able to establish a relation between the subject and the throw of the dice, its fatal falling and its unavoidable trapping. This is a subject that is structural analogous to Aristotle’s definition of the subject in the wake of Plato’s discourse “of something.” So indeed, if would start out with a givenness of the “I” to Dasein, we walk into a pitfall [Falle], namely exactly the one that Heidegger has prepared for us. Thinking the I as a subject, returning to its formulation within Greek philosophy, cannot but lead us to the Heideggerian fall, there is no way around it. In this sense, Aristotle and Heidegger are strictly contemporaneous. Neither is at the origin of the other, they are to be read together.

Meanwhile Derrida closes Plato’s pharmacy.

Pharmakon means coup... “so that pharmakon will have meant: that which pertains to an attack of demoniac possession [un coup démoniaque] or is used as a curative against such an attack”... an armed enforcement of order [un coup de force]... a shot fired [un coup tiré]... a planned overthrow [un coup monté]... but to no avail [un coup pour rien]... like cutting through water [un coup dans l’eau]... ἐν ὕδατι γράψει... and a stroke of fate [un coup du sort]... Theuth who invented writing... the calender... dice... κυβεία... the dice throw [le coup de dés]...23

Are we through with our addiction to coups and cases, or have we not yet — and perhaps always not yet — found what we were looking for? We return to Aristotle's first definition of paronymy and see whether we can read it. “Paronymous are called those things, differing from something through case, that have an appellation according to [that] name [of this something], like grammarian from grammar and courageous-man from courageous.”24 No, we cannot read it — yet.

24 Cat. 1a12–15.
In frame known case argue meant couple charges did meet mastering reference have it unable how are too may firm interest collection reconsider considerable notions of collapse.

— Gertrude Stein, *How To Write*
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Abbreviations


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**Online Resources**
