Martin Heidegger

Die Fremde… | The fremdness… [i]

Die Fremde
die Dir selber fremd,
sie ist:
Gebirg der Wonne,
Meer des Leids,
die Wüste des Verlangens,
Frühlicht einer Ankunft.
Fremde: Heimat jenes einen Blicks,
der Welt beginnt.
Beginn ist Opfer.
Opfer ist der Herd der Treue,
die noch aller Brände
Asche überglimmt und –
zündet:
Glut der Milde
Schein der Stille,
Fremdlingin der Fremde, Du –
Wohne im Beginn.

The fremdness[ii]
itself fremd to You (fremd to Your-self too)[iii],
it is:
I-bergh[iv] of the wynn[v],
sea of the lode[vi],
the desert of want,
early light of an advent.
Fremdness: Homeland of that one look,
which begins world.
Beginning is offering[vii].
Offering is the hearth of trouthe[viii],
which still overglows and ignites
the ash of all fires and – <trouthe is as such also>
igniting:
Glow of the mild
Shine of the still,
fremdess[ix] of the fremdness, You –
wone[x] in the beginning.

[i] This poem was written by Martin Heidegger in 1950 after unexpectedly meeting again with Hannah Arendt. It was retrieved from: https://musenblaetter.de/artikel.php?aid=764 [13.12.2025]. This attempt of translation has been conducted by Daniel Zaruba, Thomas O'Halloran Jr. and Jack Krasuski; we also thank Ivo De Gennaro for his suggestions for the final version of this translation.

[ii] The Old English adjective *fremd* and the corresponding noun *fremdness* indicate strangeness, unfamiliarness, unknownness, and translate the German *fremd* and *die Fremde*. *Fremdness* does not refer to any being that has the quality of being strange or unfamiliar, but to fremdness *as such*, to fremdness-qua-be3ng.

[iii] We thank Ivo De Gennaro for further elucidating and clarifying the crucial relation between the fremdness and the You: Even though You yourself are fremd, are the one whose regard is, to me, the regard of fremdness; even though Your regard means the regard of fremdness, fremdness itself is fremd to You too, as fremdness is the between which ignites, and comes through, Your regard.

[iv] The German noun *Gebirg* can refer to a mountain range, but also to the phenomenon of the gathering ("Ge-") of sconcing ("-birg"), which indicates an important trait of be3ng. We wish to translate this word with the coinage *i-bergh*. In Old English, the prefix *i-* (also *y-*, *a-*) is used as an intensifier for verbs and indicates gatheredness, completeness or perfection, while *bergh* is an Old English noun with the meanings "protection, shelter", but also "hill, mound, barrow, mountain".

[v] The Old English noun *wynn* ("joy, bliss, delight") translates the German *Wonne*, which names another trait of be3ng. Interestingly, *wynn* is also the name of the runic letter "ƿ [w]". Whether and how this word and this rune could be recovered for the sake of thought in the English language remains to be seen. In order to indicate the likely scope that *wynn* may open, we shall quote the Anglo-Saxon runic poem, which describes the rune as follows:

ᚹ *Penne brūceþ, þe can pēana lȳt*
sāres and sorge and him sȳlfa hæf
blǣd and blȳsse and eac bȳrga geniht.
[Who uses it knows no pain,
sorrow nor anxiety, and he himself has
prosperity and bliss, and also enough shelter.] See also: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wynn [13.12.2025].

[vi] *Lode* is our attempted translation of the German noun *Leid*. *Leid* is cognate with the English *loath* and very similar to the originally unrelated verb *leiden* ("to go, traverse; to suffer"). If we accept that *Leid* speaks within the dimension of be3ng, we ought to hear in it the traits of both "bearing, suffering" as well as "going, journeying". An exploration of the complex around *leiden* (together with the grammatical passive, the *Leideform*) can be found in Ivo De Gennaro, 'Das Gerundivum', *Eudia* 9, 2015, 1–9.

[vii] The German noun *Opfer* does not carry any ontical meanings here, but must be understood as another word of be3ng, as another name of enowning [*Ereignis*]. Note that in the German *Opfer* and the English *offering* the Latin *offere* ["ob-ferre"; also "ob-latio", literally the "bringing, carrying, bearing against"] speaks.

[viii] The uncountable Middle English noun *trouthe* (compare also the adjective *trewe*) is, from our perspective, uniquely suited for the translation of the German *Treue*, which indicates the steadfast surrender of the human being to the want or stress of be3ng. *Trouthe* is related to the English words *truth* and *troth* ("pledge, oath, contract") and carries the following meanings: "loyalty; honesty, honor; goodness, integrity; truth, reality (esp. absolute); religion; righteousness, justness".

[ix] The German noun *Fremdlingin* indicates a female indweller of the element of the fremd. We wish to translate it with the coinage *fremdess*. Like, for example, the determination of the human being as *homo humanus*, it is one of the many names Heidegger has attempted to give the human being which is capable of insisting in the element of the fremd-quabe3ng. In the context of this poem, it is also used to address Hannah Arendt.

[x] An old English word which may be able to translate the German verb *wohnen* (also the noun *Wohne*, an old German word meaning "abode, dwelling place"), which is usually translated with "dwelling", "abiding" or "living", may be the Old English "to wone". Note that both the German *wohnen* and the English *to wone* are related to the PIE $^{*}wenh_1$- ("to wish, love"), as well as to *wynn* and *Wonne* (see endnote v); it thus points to the accomplished abiding of the human being in harmony with all things, our true home.