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Repeat The Experience of Poetic Language

At the end we say: *Being is the most said*. For it is said in every word of language, and nevertheless discourse and writing talk for the most part only about beings. This comes to articulation. Even where we actually say the “is” and thus name being, we say the “is” only to assert a being about a being. *Beings are said. Being is kept silent about*. But not by us and on purpose. For we are unable to discover any trace of an intention not to say being. Hence, the keeping silent must indeed come from being itself. Hence, being is a keeping silent about itself, and this is certainly the ground of the possibility of keeping silent and the origin of silence. In this realm of silence, the word first arises each time.

—Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 1941

On the last day of his final seminar at Zähringen in September 1973, in the closing minutes after reading and discussing a paper on Parmenides, Heidegger made the following announcement: “I name the thinking here in question tautological thinking. It is the original meaning of phenomenology. Further, this kind of thinking is before any possible distinction between theory and praxis” (S: 399/80). To understand this extraordinary statement we need to return to the very beginning of Heidegger’s thinking; as he indicates himself, here at the end of his career, our task is as always to go back and start again. The obscurity and even eccentricity of a “tautological thinking” is only to be made sense of if we can perceive its relation to phenomenology, and this is what I shall proceed with here, for in tautology we find the deepest roots of Heidegger’s poetic thinking.

Heidegger's first investigations of phenomenology centered on the attempt to find a language that could respond to the dual problems of intuition and expression; how are we able to access the world without reducing it and how can we bring it to language without objectifying it? These questions had originally been raised by Paul Natorp in response to Husserl's phenomenology and as Husserl's assistant, Heidegger devoted much energy in his first courses after the war to trying to answer them (ZBP: 99–109/83–92). In these courses Heidegger developed his own form of phenomenology by grounding it in an inquiry into the nature of logic that had first arisen in his habilitation of 1915. Here, his study of the relation between the categories and the meanings of being in medieval scholasticism was conducted by way of his readings of the neo-Kantian Lask.¹ The influence of Lask on Heidegger's early work is considerable for Lask interpreted Husserl's work on categorial intuition—by which we are prereflectively absorbed in a world of categories—to mean that this intuition would itself give rise to its own reflexive categories, thus implying that our factual experience was not formless but already meaningful and thereby pregnant with its own logic as a *primal surplus*, in the form of its “formal indication.” Lask's response was thus to advocate a dedication (*Hingabe*) to this factual experience, from which a generalized reflexive category of “there being something experienced” arises within language as a simple “there is” (*es gibt*) of presence.

Logic, as the relation between the factual and the reflexive, has thus been grounded in experience rather than in value, but an experience that gives rise to form by way of its material categories. Within his first post-war course in the spring of 1919, “The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview,” Heidegger moves on from the theoretical position of this earlier reading by addressing the implications of this factual dedication, for if we are immersed in the experience of a “world” rather than of data, then this is a world whose logic already expresses itself by way of our intentional engagements, such that experience is already a prereflective interpretation (ZBP: 70–76/59–64). The language of philosophy needs to come out of this factual logic *of* phenomena, and to do so this phenomenology needs to be revealed by way of a hermeneutics of facticity, that is, an interpretation that is a repetition of the interpretation already present in the formal indications of what is. This interpretation, which is thus a logic *of* logic, is only proposed here and still needs to be worked out, but already Heidegger has, by his elaboration of the implications of factual dedication, shown how this reveals an *event* of “worlding,” and one in

which the coming about of the meaning of presence—its appearance as a world—occurs by concealing its ground (ZBP: 115–17/97–99). Thus the logic of worlding primarily comes to language as a sheer *es gibt*, in which the presencing of presence is, as Theodore Kisiel observes, both a tautology and a heterology in that it simply repeats itself, “*es*” “*gibt*,” and in doing so becomes different, *es gibt*, which thus places pressure on the language through which we come to this experience, as it is both the medium and the meaning of worlding.²

Heidegger works over the next few years to develop these initial insights by way of further readings and criticisms of Husserl, Lask, Natorp, Dilthey, and Jaspers, as well as inquiries into the phenomenology of religious experience. A key change that occurs in these years is the awareness that the “dedication” to experience that he had earlier pursued is insufficient, insofar as it is not distinguished from the immersion into everydayness that characterizes the experience of the masses. Already in the last hour of the first 1919 course he had noted that the “immanent historicity of life as such constitutes hermeneutical intuition,” but over the next few years this unfolding would become sharpened by his encounter with Jaspers’s work on “limit-situations,” and by his examination of the religious experience of the “moment” (*kairos*) (ZBP: 219/187). According to Jaspers’s work in *Psychology of Worldviews*, our awareness of existence only arises out of certain limit-situations, like death, struggle, guilt, or chance, where we encounter our own finitude. Heidegger’s lengthy review of this work indicates how much he appreciated this idea, but also how he felt that it needed to be translated into an ontological problematic. Within this context Heidegger first mentions the role of the “conscience” (*Gewissen*), as that which brings about an experience of the self through an encounter with one’s own historicity in a moment of union of past, present, and future.³

The significance of these developments is manifold, for the ontological understanding of finitude means that the hermeneutics of existence is first characterized by a distress or insecurity that carries a formal indication of the essence of our being. That is, there is a *logos* here that is uncanny and that needs interpreting, and in doing so it indicates the duplicity of our being as that which is both immersed in historicity and facticity (*da*), and exterior to that immersion, indicating the *logos* of our being (*sein*).⁴ The pressure of this duplicity is not only ontological, but also affects our attempts to interpret and articulate, our ontic hermeneutics, as well. This means that Heidegger is in need of refashioning his way

of thinking to bring it into accord with this need; thus the unsettling conscience of our existence needs to be translated into a “destructuring” (*Destruktion*) of the philosophical tradition itself by a thinking that is now required to put our own being at the heart of its inquiries. This hermeneutic folding of the ontic and the ontological also implicates Heidegger’s thinking into an interrogation of the relations between history and language, and the nature of the language of thinking; if we are to bring to language an understanding of the *logos* of being, then how are we to do so? And what does this entail for our thinking relation with such a language?

Thus it is that, in the summer of 1921, he turns to a reading of Aristotle that will continue unbroken until the winter of 1924.⁵ Within this period Heidegger will not only begin work on *Being and Time*, but also will start and then drop book-length projects on Aristotle and Dilthey. These works will give him the opportunity to develop his thinking in private and extend his coursework in more radical directions. In doing so, he will lay the grounds for the work included in *Being and Time*, and also possibilities that will have to be put aside until that project is over. The discoveries of his Aristotle readings not only include the understanding of *alētheia* as unconcealment but also that this unconcealment “is said in many ways,” which leads to the interrelated concerns of this speaking or *logos* of *alētheia* as *pathos*, *praxis*, and *phronēsis*. The significance of these developments lies not only in the relation of logic to the movement of *alētheia* as unconcealment, and thus as a finite *kinēsis*, but also, and thereby, to an understanding of the nature of truth as grounded in a temporal moment (*kairos*) of unconcealment and as thus marked by a unique historical unfolding. Thus a logic of the categorial structures of phenomena reveals them to be modes of *alētheuein*, “being-true,” that is, “modes in which factual life temporalizes itself, unfolds itself, and *speaks* with itself.”⁶ The problem of our relation to language is thus given its full ramifications, for as the logic of phenomena it is not only the logic of being, but also *our* logic; the language and the temporality of our own existence.

This understanding is part of Heidegger’s move to recover the ontological possibilities of Aristotle’s thought, for he finds in book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that the manifold meaning of being transpires through different modes of *alētheuein*, some of which (*epistemē* and *technē*) refer to the world, while others (*sophia* and *phronēsis*) refer to one’s own being. Within this separation there is also a further distinction between those modes that deal with that which is permanent (*epistemē* and *sophia*) and those that deal with that which can be otherwise (*technē* and

phronēsis). As modes of truth these latter modes are thus liable to ambiguity, for they can either take things as they are or in ways that differ from how they are (*pseudos*); there is thus a “taking-as” (*legein*) in *alētheuein*, such that what is appears as (*apophansis*) it is or as it is not. These modes of *alētheuein* parallel the later distinctions Heidegger makes between the world and one’s own being, and the inauthentic and authentic; hence *epistemē* and *technē* govern the worldly spheres of *theoria* and *poiēsis* as those modes that deal with the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand. With *sophia* and *phronēsis* the latter becomes more important for Heidegger as it is grounded in the finite dealings of *praxis*, that is, with the singular facticity of existence, rather than with the completed and pure understanding (*sophia*) of the *archē*. *Phronēsis* thus has a distinctive relation to time in that it is directed toward the future by virtue of its consideration of how to act well, not in terms of any particular future outcome, but rather to a preservation of the moment of acting well; it is thus both a temporalization of our being as “care” (*Sorge*) and the “doubling” or repetition of this temporalization as “resolution” (*Entschlossenheit*).⁷

Here lies the origin of the dimensions of Heidegger’s inquiries into the meaning of being, as it is distinguished from the meaning of our everyday lives, which indicate that in our ontological position we experience the *logos* of *alētheuein* as both *pathos* and *phronēsis*, that is, as that which both affects us in our being by determining our state or disposition and also calls us to care for our being by drawing us into the moment of its ownmost possibility. Thus the meaning of our being is not primarily experienced as *theoria* or *poiēsis*, but as *praxis*; it is not something that we “view” or “make,” but live, insofar as it is that which constitutes what we “do” and “how” we are, and that becomes apparent when it is taken to its limits (*peras*), which is the basis for Aristotle’s understanding of the definition (*horismos*) of meaning.⁸ It is thus from here that in the course of the 1925 summer semester Heidegger can announce that the “uncoveredness (*Entdecktheit*) of Dasein, in particular the disposition (*Befindlichkeit*) of Dasein, can be made manifest by means of words in such a way that certain new possibilities of Dasein’s being are set free. Thus discourse (*Rede*), especially *poetry*, can even bring about the release of new possibilities of the being of Dasein. In this way, discourse proves itself positively as a *mode of temporalization* (*Zeitigung*) of Dasein itself.”⁹

This would seem to be the first significant mention of poetry as a constitutive part of Heidegger’s thinking of the meaning of being, and as such it reappears in very similar forms over the next few years until 1934.¹⁰

Although its reappearance at this time seems more understandable now that its relations to logic, language, and temporalization have been sketched out, it is more difficult to explain its absence from Heidegger's development until this time. Partly, this is simply due to the variety of concerns that Heidegger is pursuing up until this point, but just as his work throughout is engaged with examining the language of philosophy, so too, especially in the 1920s, is Heidegger interested in the "scientific" status of phenomenology as fundamental ontology. It is only when he abandons this attempt that he begins to open up to a more poetic language, mediated first by an intensive investigation in the early 1930s into the essence of truth and the nature of the work of art.

Central to this change is Heidegger's awareness of finitude, which since his earliest readings of Lask has been present as that inevitable concealment that is equiprimordial with revealing. But the finitude of existence occurs not only as the horizons of our temporality, but also as the hiddenness of the *logos* itself. As we will shortly see, the finitude of the *logos* is initially pursued by Heidegger through a phenomenological hermeneutics, in which the position and status of a phenomenological language develop by way of an analysis of the structure of "explication" (*Auslegung*), by which the initial problems of intuition and expression come together in the hermeneutic circle of existence. That this is not truly a circle, but is rather *elliptical*, is a result of the extreme finitude of explication, as the logic thereby expressed is born from the anticipation (*Vorlaufen*) that enables explication, which not only falls far short of ever finding its way back to the *logos* that it seeks, but also rends itself from the hiddenness it leaves behind. Whether Heidegger's studies of the nature of language and poetry and their relations to thinking find a response to this finitude is the question that motivates this inquiry.

. . . THE TURNING OF *LOGOS* . . .

The development of Heidegger's understanding of *logos* has thus come up against an internal tension, for although the logic of phenomena is that which allows it to appear as it is, there is also, within the facticity of this appearance, a repetition in which this logic brings its own temporalization, leading to a doubling and finitude of appearance. The *logos apophantikos* leads, as the Aristotelian understanding of *alētheuein* has shown, into a *logos* of *hermeneia* as well, of interpretation as well as appearance.

However, the position of this *logos* within Aristotle is secondary to the apophantic *logos*, which is the primary locus of the constant presence of *ousia*. It is from this latter sense of *logos* that logic as assertion and judgment has originated, with its understanding of truth as fixed and propositional, that is, as a property of being, rather than as part of its event. In his course on logic in the winter of 1925–26 Heidegger explored this need to move to an understanding of logic grounded in temporality rather than in presence, and in doing so proposed a “phenomenological chronology” as a way of bringing the horizons of temporality to language, to find a logic of time, but this faltered and was never followed through.¹¹ Instead, he perceived the possibility for a “destructuring of Greek ontology and logic” by drawing on the logic of rhetoric and poetics, which because it operated within the singular historicity of a *praxis*, the hermeneutic “as” rather than the fixed apophantic “as” of simple appearance, could find the logic of its own finite temporality.¹²

This aporetic relation of logic to temporality and finitude is a major reason why Heidegger dropped the project begun in *Being and Time*, which found its language becoming inappropriate when it sought to bring the ecstatic nature of temporalization within the terms of a horizontal schematization. Alongside this difficulty is the concomitant problem of the ontological difference, of the relation between being and beings, which is actualized in the temporal ecstases of being. Within the model of a horizontal schematization being is seen as the ground against which our existence becomes temporalized, but this brings too much of a sense of an originary separation of being and beings that does not make possible an understanding of how this differentiation takes place. Instead, the explication of *logos* as *praxis* and *phronēsis* means that the event of temporalization occurs out of a moment of finitude (*Augenblick*) that renders its temporalization singular and factual. Being is thus not a given, not a ground or horizon upon which beings appear by virtue of a logic that is still apophantic, but an occurrence of finitude that exposes our own existence. The language within which the thinking of this event of differentiation (*Ereignis*) can occur must therefore respond to the recurrence of this event, which leaves it endlessly singular and finite, by attempting to speak from out of its opening (*Auslegung*). But in responding to this temporalization language brings its own historical unfolding, so we have to ask whether it is by way of this explication of *logos* that we are exposed to our own temporalization. But if this is the case then how can we speak of this unfolding, if it is always already occurring as our language?

Part of this doubling comes to be taken up by Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology, which by virtue of its parts, *phainō* and *logos*, involves a sense of repetition in which each comes to reflect the other, such that a phenomeno-logy means: "to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself" (SZ: 34/58). Furthermore, this phenomenological hermeneutics parallels the doubling of our factual hermeneutics as *zōon logon echon*, the "life that has speech," thus implicating phenomenology itself as part of the *alētheuein* of existence, such that Dasein *in its being* is both the appearance and the explication of facticity, the *praxis* of its own *logos*. While the problems of intuition and expression have thus become ontological inquiries in that they explicate our very being, they have also become inquiries bounded by the finite hermeneutics of our practical, historical existence, something that differs from the Aristotelian *logos* of constant presence. In this way we can see the beginnings of how Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology can become transformed into a tautological thinking that is prior to and that thereby grounds both *theoria* and *praxis* through the repetition of its *logos*, which renders it both creative and finite and finds its logic through this event.

It is thus significant that Heidegger's only real reference to poetry in *Being and Time* occurs in a discussion of the way in which language expresses itself (*Sichausprechens*) through Dasein, such that Dasein is thereby ex-pressed through language in its "being-outside," and in doing so poetry is marked (uniquely) as a form of this disclosure of existence, the only example of the disclosive nature of language (SZ: 162/205). The situation of this point belies its apparent casualness, for it comes amid a discussion of language in which its essential dimension is revealed not to be communication or mediation, but hearing. The mention of poetry then occurs just before a description of hearing as the constitutive mode of being open to one's ownmost potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*), which appears like "the voice of the friend whom every Dasein carries with it," a remark that anticipates what will be discussed later as "the call of conscience," which also, if we can open ourselves to hearing it, discloses us to our own existence. Thus language is that which we always find ourselves in a position of responding to, but that we first need to learn to hear.

However, this paragraph also follows Heidegger's examination of explication as an anticipatory mode of understanding, insofar as it projects it into the modes of forehaving (*Vorhabe*), foresight (*Vorsicht*), and foreconception (*Vorgriff*) (SZ: 150/191). For Heidegger this projection

itself becomes the ground from which assertions are derived such that, reversing Aristotle, the apophantic *logos* is then grounded in the explication of the hermeneutic *logos*, and understanding is thus possible only on the fragile basis of its projected anticipation (SZ: 152/194). By virtue of this hermeneutic “circle” understanding thereby anticipates itself in the mode of explication, which is precisely how Dasein gains the capacity to hear the call of conscience. This anticipatory doubling would seem to find the *logos* operating in a manner akin to the voice of the friend or the word of poetry: “as one which calls us back in calling us forth,” disrupting our everyday existence and exposing us to the ground of our finitude, not by signifying, asserting, or indicating anything, but by way of its silence and emptiness (SZ: 280/326, 273/318).

At this point Heidegger’s attempt to find the being of *logos* has uncovered the ground from which logic as we ordinarily understand it is derived, but in so doing has exposed a complexity that is deeply unsettling. The call of conscience repeats itself throughout Heidegger’s work, for its voiceless, wordless call indicates the alterity and finitude of our existence by indicating the sheer facticity that grounds it; that which was earlier uncovered as the presencing of the world that simply presents itself as that which is. As such, the factual nature of the call presents us with a limit that can never be appropriated, hence its finitude and alterity, but that also indicates that our existence is always already grounded in this facticity and is thus thrown into the world in its finitude and projected beyond it in an endless alterity. So, while the call of conscience is that which brings about an event of appropriation in which we come to be in this situation, it is also the claim of language and temporality that marks our existence as that which persists *by way of* its repetition in time and language, for it is through these dimensions that we respond to its claim.

Thus, if Dasein is a *phronēsis meta logon*, that is, a “care through speech,” as Aristotle insists that all the modes of *alētheuein* are, then the logic of its *praxis* is a tautology, insofar as it calls from itself to itself, and a heterology insofar as this self is never identical (SZ: 275/320). For, as Heidegger remarks, we can no longer refer to this self-explication as hermeneutics in the traditional sense, nor in any manner that understands it as a hermeneutic “circle,” for such things derive only partly from the existential structure of meaning-anticipation, which does not in any way return to itself within a circle of substance (SZ: 153/195).¹³ It is as such that he then turns to the self-announcing exposure of poetic discourse and to the voice of the friend, thereby explicating the radically noncircular and

yet repetitive structure of the call of conscience. Does the *logos* of poetry thereby suggest that it is not a *poiēsis* but a *praxis* arising out of such a *phronēsis*, which Heidegger had felt was the best Aristotelian translation of conscience?¹⁴ Does this also suggest that such an annunciative event in arising “out of” the *phronēsis* of language, is an indicator of the *pathos* of poetry, which radically displaces the poet, rendering him, like the rhapsode in Plato’s *Ion*, he who is *ekphron*?

To summarize: Heidegger’s path of thinking in these early years is stated concisely by two comments from *Being and Time*, the first is from the end of the introduction, which he finishes with an apology: “With regard to the awkwardness and ‘inelegance’ of expression in the following analyses, we may remark that it is one thing to report narratively about *beings*, but another to grasp beings in their *being*. For the latter task we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar’” (SZ: 38–39/63). Later on, when discussing the nature of language, Heidegger returns to this point to give it its historical and ontological necessity as the “task of *liberating* grammar from logic,” insofar as the “logic” with which we come to language is “based upon the ontology of the present-at-hand” in which what takes place in language is understood as a discourse of assertion (SZ: 165/209). Twenty years later, at the beginning of his programmatic letter to Jean Beaufret, this task is restated quite significantly, when, after remarking on the fact that the terms “subject” and “object” are “inappropriate” for thinking as they have “seized control of the interpretation of language” in the form of “logic” and “grammar,” he proceeds to claim that the “liberation of language from grammar into a more original essential framework is reserved for thought and poeticizing” (W: 145–46/240).

From logic to grammar to language, it is now possible to see how in 1934 Heidegger could pass from a course on logic to lectures on Hölderlin, for as he later recalls, the title of this course on logic “conceals” the real matter of the course, which is “the conversion of logic into the question of the *essence* of language” (WHD: 100/154). Recalling the same course again two years later he remarks that “it was a meditation on the *logos*” (US: 89/8). While it is not surprising to find Heidegger lecturing on the relation between logic, language, and *logos*, as the course develops the question of logic turns into a questioning of the essence of language, of man, and of history. Then on the very last page we find that these concerns converge into the issue of “poetry as the original language,” and it is as such that Heidegger is able to move on in the following course to discuss Hölderlin.¹⁵

As we can see though, this meditation on the *logos* concerns two further questions: the conversion of logic and the essence of language, which although clearly related have distinct places in Heidegger's thought. On the one hand, the examination of the nature of logic is what concerns Heidegger's early work, insofar as he is inquiring into the ontological basis of logic, the logic of logic, which governs his own attempts to ground phenomenology in the facticity of being. But understanding the being of logic, of the *logos*, not only requires understanding how it exists, but also how we are to gain access to it and bring it to language, and this means moving away from a theoretical approach to one that is the practical explication of the logic of being. Here we begin to see how the two aspects of the *logos* fold into each other, as the being of logic gives way to the logic of being, something explicitly repeated in the later Heidegger's examination of the relation between the essence of language and the language of essence. Thus, there is not only a need for a phenomenological hermeneutics of facticity, but also for a new logic of explication.

If we now turn to Heidegger's reading of poetry by way of this earlier understanding of *logos*, its position within his thought seems to be in no way arbitrary, but is instead the return of an inquiry that has been, as he later remarks, necessarily held in the "background" of his thinking from his student days (US: 88/7). As such, if by poetry we are directed to the original essencing of language, then we should understand the Aristotelian dimensions of the *logos* of poetry as aspects that relate to both *pathos* and *phronēsis*, and thus to the practical temporalizing of its *alētheuein*; its factual, historical, truthing of language, by which it indicates that it is a logic of being.

To do this we have to understand how Heidegger's engagement with poetic language is not limited to his studies of Hölderlin, Rilke, Trakl, Hebel, or George, but extends into the language he adopts to conduct these studies. This approach resulted from the perceived failing of *Being and Time* to develop a language adequate to its concerns, which thus gave rise to the need for an alternative mode of philosophical articulation that could address what had been missed. This in turn led to an examination of the nature of linguistic articulation itself, as it is found in rhetoric, in such a way that during the 1930s Heidegger begins to make explicit use of devices such as tautology, oxymoron, chiasmus, parataxis, and paronomasia, in order to understand how language operates in these modes. As a result, the way in which Heidegger begins to write becomes as important, if not more so, than what he writes; as he remarks himself: "it is advisable

to pay attention to the path of thought rather than to its content” (SI: 85/23). Thus it is essential to follow the language of his essays carefully, and of particular interest to this project is the way in which Heidegger uses these rhetorical figures to explore the nature of poetry. That these figures are part of a poem will be obvious, but what complicates this is how Heidegger uses poetic figures to indicate this.

To use poetic figures to explain the work of a poem appears circular but this is by no means an accident, for Heidegger is seeking to approach that which always turns aside; thus circularity is a necessary part of his method, for if this turning cannot be avoided then it must be made explicit, that is, repeated by figures that can explicate it further. It is for this reason that in chapter 2, I will begin with “The Origin of the Work of Art,” as this essay more than any other of the period signals the advent of the later Heidegger insofar as its language attempts to render its own turnings and differentiations visible. Part of this new approach comes from Heidegger’s renewed analysis of *logos*, taken up this time by stepping back from Aristotle into the works of the Presocratics, principally Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus, as a means of recapturing the possibility of a *logos* not grounded in presence but that is, as Heraclitus particularly showed, the word for both being and saying. At this point in the development of philosophical language the propositional structuring of presence has not taken priority over its rhetorical expression, and thus there is the possibility of bringing this *logos* to language by taking up its figuring as tautology, the saying of the same as the *logos* of the saying of being, which is the repetition of being by way of language.

In order to read this essay we have to understand first how such figuring *works*; what does it mean for something to “work”? And what kind of “work” does this make it? The ambivalence of “work,” as a word that is both verbal and nominal, needs an approach that is double-sided and this leads Heidegger to the use of paronomasia. This is a rhetorical device used to designate the play on words that have a phonetic, graphic, or etymological similarity, and although Heidegger does take advantage of these structures on many occasions, as a method it involves all forms of iteration.¹⁶ Thus, by the repetition of certain words like *alētheia*, *phusis*, *Ereignis*, or *Kehre*, Heidegger is able to develop a multidimensional approach in which the use of one word implies others that are not present. If, when we hear *alētheia*, for example, we also come to hear *phusis* as well, then saying that truth “is” *alētheia* is no longer a simple statement, for the “is” in this statement is no longer the transparent and one-dimensional relation used

by predicate logic, but something else entirely. By taking up this method, Heidegger is taking advantage of the facility that paronomasia brings of being able to speak in a way that is not limited to the figures in use, but that also indicates what is obscured by those figures.

What must be recognized is that Heidegger is deliberately putting certain rhetorical figures into play in order to draw attention to them *as* figures and thus to make us aware of the figuration at work in all poetry and philosophy, but even more significantly, to make us aware of the presence of figuration in general. It is the figuration of language that con-figures language and world: it holds them together by saying in a very concrete and particular way how they *are*, that is, *that* they are *as* they are together. Thus, to understand a poem it is first necessary to understand the relation it has to the world, and although this can be done in a number of ways (and much of Heidegger's work of this period is engaged in negotiating the "aesthetic" ideas of Plato, Kant, Schelling, Hegel, and Nietzsche), all are at a risk of reducing that relation to something else. Heidegger's use of rhetorical figures seeks to avoid this trap by using what might be termed a method of indirection where his writing, by configuring itself in such a way as to draw attention to its own figuring, indirectly indicates the figuring of the poem. The demands of this method are very high, as it runs the risk of becoming persuaded by its own configurations and thereby not exposing, but overpowering the poem by its own figuring.

Thus, inherent to Heidegger's need to find a means of approaching the complexity and ambivalence of our relation to being is a realization that philosophy itself may be part of the problem, and that other ways of thinking might be more appropriate. Consequently, what is of interest here is the way of thinking that develops in Heidegger's later works, in which it is not as important to know the precise meaning of *Ereignis*, *phusis*, or *alētheia*, and so forth, or even how these terms relate to each other, as it is to understand the reasons and implications for this way of thinking. To understand why *Ereignis* and *phusis*, for example, say the same thing, at the same time as they say different things, that is, to be both tautological and heterological, is to come closer to that unthought element in Heidegger that remains always out of reach. This is to come closer to what he was driving at, what his thought was on the way to. But if this method is taken up in order to find a way of talking about being, the question then is; what is it about being that leads to such a change in Heidegger's style? Why does he feel that it needs to be approached in this way?

. . . SAYING THE SAME . . .

To understand the reasons for Heidegger's changed approach to language we must look at his understanding of truth. In his early works the essence of truth is understood via the Greek word *alētheia*, which he translates as *Entdecktheit* (uncoveredness), *Erschlossenheit* (disclosedness), or *Unverborghenheit* (unconcealment). In each of these terms Heidegger is focusing on a duplicity that would occupy him from then on, for discovering or disclosing refer both to the action of emerging and to that from which it has emerged. This concealment is hidden in the word itself as the *lēthē* (concealment, forgottenness) in *alētheia*, which Heidegger highlights by writing it *a-lētheia* and this, he suggests, was what the ancient Greeks heard when using this word. That is, they were hearing both the active and privative senses of the word, as the revealing and un-concealing that make up the essence of truth, rather than our more common understanding of truth as correctness or adequation, which stems from the Latin translation of *alētheia* as *adequatio*. In support of this, Heidegger cites Heraclitus' fragment 1 that speaks of the hiddenness of the *logos* as that which needs to be actively attended to in order to draw out its essence (SZ: 219/262). *Alētheia* is thus an effort, and one akin to theft in that it needs to be appropriated carefully and surreptitiously from its more basic concealment, toward which it always naturally tends (SZ: 222/265).

There are several immediate problems with this: firstly, the nature of etymological translation is not so straightforward that this rephrasing of *alētheia* as unconcealment can be accepted uncritically; translation is never pure or simple and etymology is itself an historical science with its own perspective on the nature of linguistic change; *etymos*, after all, means "real" or "true," which would mean that it is only the "original" meanings of words that are "true." Secondly, the suggestion that this was the original hidden meaning of *alētheia* that the ancient Greeks heard but did not know is not only speculative but also suggests a certain hidden original "truth" to *alētheia*, which is ascribed to it in terms of its apparent "meaning" as unconcealment. Thirdly, the need for this new translation is espoused on the basis of it not being adequate to the original Greek experience, but this is to use a sense of adequation that we are told is derivative and thus not true to the original. Fourthly, "unconcealment" itself is an arbitrary translation that imposes its own parsed structure of privileged and unexamined meaning: what is "hidden" here and why can it only be understood negatively?¹⁷ Fifthly, what are we to make of an attempt to

ground philosophy in the hidden original meaning of a long forgotten word that is only now being shown to us in its true form; isn't this the oldest and most suspect mechanism of metaphysical thinking?

The point to remember with these issues is that Heidegger is not offering "unconcealment" as a new "translation" of *alētheia*, but is instead using it quite deliberately to unsettle our traditional understanding of "truth" and also to set in motion a whole sequence of movements, as the questions I have just raised demonstrate, which seek to unsettle what we might understand as the meaning of any particular word.¹⁸ While Heidegger did come to realize the limitations of "unconcealment" as a translation of *alētheia*, in that it had, contrary to his earlier thoughts, no basis in Greek experience, what was retained from this translation was the openness it unleashed. This was an openness given to thought by language, language rethought in translation *as relation*, which thus provided the possibility for a rethinking. By way of this rethinking, the relation of thought and word is brought into focus through the vicissitudes of translation, and the groundlessness of this relation is revealed as the basis for a radical openness and responsibility. It is not that the use of rhetorical or poetic figures provides an allegorical description of the world, but that the figuring of language in such modes reveals the relation of language and world as open and ungrounded. This lack of ground does not simply mean the freedom of arbitrary meaning, as it carries with it an endless demand; even if *alētheia* calls for thinking it will never be given, for it is always to come.

At this point we come across one of Heidegger's most troubling formulations, that of the oblivion of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), by which he refers to the forgetting of the forgetting of being, the withdrawal of its withdrawal, such that even the traces of being's concealment have over time become lost and thus its question has become forgotten. On the surface this seems to be an inevitable consequence of his thinking of *alētheia*, but if this forgetting or withdrawal—and we must emphasize both insofar as each are translations of *lēthē*—is itself forgotten or withdrawn, then this doesn't mean that it has simply vanished, for this would be to misread what takes place in forgetting. What is forgotten may not be available to be recalled but this lack *punctuates* thought and thus leaves a mark of forgetting which itself cannot be forgotten, even if it cannot be recalled. As this inapparence, forgetting occurs in a manifold of ways and so the oblivion of being, which for Heidegger is our modernity, is anything but a simple double occlusion. While he came to realize in the early 1960s that

there had been no decay of truth in which its withdrawal had also withdrawn, and thus no epochal movement into oblivion, there is still a hint of simplicity in the manner in which the formulation of “the forgetting of forgetting” is deployed. Although it may be the case that the *alētheuein* of being means that it takes place in a manifold of ways, this can, indeed must, also be the case for the withdrawal and forgetting of being as well, for it is this concealment that lets unconcealment occur. It is to this abyssal retreat that the repetition of language directs us and that this work will attempt to sketch out, as the manifold of inapparence brings an entirely different imbrication of concealment and unconcealment to Heidegger’s thinking, one that deflects his understanding of the relation of time and language into an other relation, an *inordinate* relation.

This moment is marked quite distinctively in “The Origin of the Work of Art” at precisely the point where Heidegger first has to negotiate the relation of “work” and “truth.” As he does so, it becomes apparent that the truth of a work relates to its essence, but that its essence relates to its truth: “A curious entanglement shows itself here. Is it only a curiosity or even the empty hair-splitting of a conceptual game, or is it—an abyss?” (H: 37/28). At this time Heidegger steps back from the abyss but, as I will show, his later works persistently return to its depths, for its groundlessness indicates that if there is no basis upon which we can determine words like truth or essence, then there is only the endless, fragmentary echoing of their depths, which we know as the unanswerable demand of language. So, even though Heidegger reads *alētheia* not as a word or concept, but as a way of thinking *through* language that forces a rethinking of the relation between thought, being, and word, the risk is ever present that this understanding will start to treat this ungrounding of words as being itself a ground. Thus this ungrounding requires an inversion of the traditional method of phenomenology, for it is not the appearance of things that is of concern here, but what is not apparent. But, as we have seen, this relation of appearance and nonappearance is at the heart of Heidegger’s understanding of the tautological logic of phenomena, something that is finally given explicit form in his remarks at the very end of his last seminar in September 1973, which pertain to exactly this necessity of finding “a phenomenology of the inapparent” or “nonappearing” (*Unscheinbaren*, also, “inconspicuous” or “insignificant”) (S: 399/80).

In this seminar Heidegger returned to the main problem of his early thinking, the relation between phenomenology and *alētheia*, to re-examine it from the position he had reached at the end of his career. This ret-

respective attitude had always been present in Heidegger's thinking but had been explicitly addressed a decade earlier when he had insisted that to understand *alētheia* as "truth," as he had done in *Being and Time*, was "inadequate" and "misleading." Rather, he suggested, we should focus on concealment, or *lēthē*, "as the heart of *alētheia*," which indicates that *alētheia* is not engaged in truth as much as "the clearing of presence concealing itself" (ZSD: 77–79/70–71). However, this dynamic revision of being as "clearing and presence" did not go far enough and in the 1973 seminar he returned to consider this point again. On the last day of the seminar Heidegger read out a brief paper he had written the previous winter entitled "*Aletheies eukukleos atremes etor*" (The well-rounded untrembling heart of truth), named after fragment 1.29 of Parmenides' poem on truth, but before doing so he stated that the understanding of *lēthē* as the heart of *alētheia* does not follow from what is said in Parmenides' poem (S: 395/78).¹⁹

Thus, in his paper, Heidegger begins by retranslating this fragment on truth, such that "well-rounded" becomes "fitting encircling" (*schicklich umkreisend*), which by *not* referring to any movement of unconcealment indicates that the "untrembling heart" of *alētheia* must refer to something other than concealment. As Heidegger goes on to explain, what Parmenides is referring to is answered in fragment 8.1–2, where, in passing along the way of *alētheia*, "there still remains one saying of the way, which leads forth to there . . . (that shows): *os estin* 'that it is'" (*monos d' eti mythos hodoio / leipetai os estin*). If *alētheia* shows "that it is," this leads us to the question of what "is," and Heidegger finds Parmenides' response in fragment 6.1, "(it) is: namely being" (*esti gar einai*). Rather than reading this as saying that it is *something* that "is," that is, *a* being, Heidegger proposes to think *einai* "in a Greek manner" as *anwesen* (presencing or emerging), leading to a rereading of the entire phrase as saying that what "is," "presences, as presencing" (*anwest nämlich anwesen*) (S: 404–5/95). If we ask *how* presencing presences, *then* the answer, Heidegger claims, is "in unconcealment," but this can only be the case if we now understand presencing (*eon*) as "the heart" of *alētheia*. But this leads to the baffling conclusion that *alētheia* itself should then be understood as "presencing: presencing itself" (*anwesend: anwesen selbst*), that is to say, the presencing of presencing (S: 405–6/96).

This would appear to be a tautology, but instead of shying away from this Heidegger insists that tautology is a thinking of the sameness of appearance (what appears is what appears), which is the meaning of

Parmenides' thinking of *alētheia*: "We stand before an obvious tautology. Certainly, and before a genuine one too. It does not count the identical twice. Rather it names the same, and it itself, once" (S: 405/95). It is only by way of its repetition that tautology can say the same for the first time, but in doing so the hiddenness of *lēthē* disappears and is replaced by the sameness of presencing, presencing itself. In disappearing from being hidden *lēthē* is essentially obscured, but this is not a loss; it is the way it should be, the way most proper to it. This inapparence is marked in the statement by the hiatus or interval of the colon that allows the repetition of presencing to appear as repetition, and that separates it from itself. This absence cannot be brought to the light of thought as it is that which never appears, since it is the very event of appearing. The displacement of *alētheia* away from unconcealment into presencing is partly due, as Heidegger admits, to the impossibility of maintaining the idea that the nature of *alētheia* has changed: Nowhere did the ancient Greeks ever experience *alētheia* as unconcealment; it was always already understood as adequation, which means that there was no decay of truth into oblivion, no forgetting (ZSD: 78/70).²⁰ What is hidden was always so; the origin of presencing is forever concealed.

But even if concealment itself was never experienced, it is evident that the presencing of presencing involves a thinking of ambiguity that although unmarked, has now been *re-marked* by Heidegger in his rereading. This remarking (*Bemerkung*) is necessary as it is perhaps the only possibility for thinking tautology, and thereby presencing, from out of itself (S: 407/97). For there remains an ever-present danger of simplifying *alētheia* by thinking of presencing as a dialectical movement of concealing and revealing. This arises from the Heraclitean thinking of *polemos* and *phusis* that Heidegger originally used to understand *alētheia*, but, as he remarks in response to a question from Beaufret, "if one is able to read Heraclitus on the basis of the Parmenidean tautology, he himself then appears in the closest vicinity to that same tautology," for "tautology is the only possibility for thinking what dialectic can only veil" (S: 400/81). This enables Heidegger to make the radical pronouncement, half a century after his first investigations into the language of phenomenology, that such "tautological thinking" would be "a phenomenology of the inapparent." Such thinking would be neither theory nor praxis but would open up the path from which the two would emerge, for tautology, understood as the re-marking, or saying of the same, *to autos logos*, is that which speaks of presencing in its pres-

encing, and this, Heidegger concludes, “is the original meaning of phenomenology” (S: 399/80). But this is to say that it both speaks out of presencing and as presencing, and can thus also be read as an autology, or saying from the same, out of itself.

While this use of tautology recalls the rhetorical formulations of Heidegger’s essays on language, which will be discussed in chapter 5, it also introduces something entirely new by elevating this rhetoric to the position of an ur-phenomenology. This is not just an admission of the centrality of language to a thinking of being, and particularly the poetic language that uses these rhetorical modes, but also a suggestion that in such a language being is given as it is, *in its presencing*. But if this is the case, then there is seemingly no room for difference in this saying of the same, insofar as there is no ontological difference as there is no being of beings; now there is only presencing.²¹ The appearance of things in themselves has, through tautology, become the appearance of things as repetition, the same in its differentiation of itself, which, as we will see, is grounded in the event of *mimēsis*, understood as neither imitation nor production but as a sheer dissembling, which is itself to be understood only by way of the finitude of language.

As Heidegger stated in 1962, such a thinking of being in itself, outside of beings or the difference between being and beings, is the only way “to think being without regard to metaphysics,” and this is necessary if we are to have any possibility of “bringing into view the being of what *is* today” (ZSD: 25/24, 2/2). This abandonment of difference entails a change in our understanding of the same, and of the relation between being, language, and thinking. For if language does not refer to the difference of being and beings, then it must partake of a sameness that we have not reckoned, a sameness that is not equivalent or identical but is that of an infinite proximity or intimacy. This rethinking of the same arises from Heidegger’s reading of fragment 3 of Parmenides’ poem; “thinking and being are the same,” which he reads as meaning “belonging together,” rather than as implying any sense of identity (SI: 90/27–28). It is only later, in metaphysical thinking, that the notion of identity emerges and as it does it obscures that which preceded it by drawing out only part of the essence of the same: the “together” of “belonging together” (SI: 92/30). But as “*belonging* together,” a thinking of the same of being yields the possibility of saying thinking and being together in such a way that their belonging together is not articulated in any way, but is a simple *belonging* together, that is, thinking: being.

If this is an example of tautological thinking, then each is the same as the other in a way that does not determine how that sameness is to be, but simply reiterates that sameness *as* difference. In coming to this point, Heidegger has moved away from the use of poetic figures as a means of reading appearance as unconcealment, toward a tautology that reveals what is *by way of* its iteration, its saying again. In doing so, tautology lets the inapparent appear as inapparent, as that which does not appear, for this inapparence cannot be brought to language as it is the inappareance *of* language itself, since that which brings to language cannot itself ever be brought to language. All we can say is that there is presencing, never presence, and so while there is no difference in the sense that there is no being of beings, in another sense there is nothing but difference, in that presencing is simply differentiation. This is the abyss that Heidegger had noticed in the relation of essence and truth in the work of art (the essence of truth: the truth of essence), which indicates that tautology is not just the ground of language as relation, but also its ungrounding.

. . . THE LIMIT OF WRITING . . .

To discover how Heidegger was able to reach this radical dislocation of language we must return to his encounter with poetry, and to enable us to situate this encounter I will first examine Hölderlin's hymn, "As when on a holiday . . ." Before doing so I will make a detour into Blanchot's reading of Heidegger's encounter with Hölderlin, for in this reading Blanchot makes clear the conditions of the encounter of philosophy with poetry. We can never approach "poetry" or "philosophy" directly, let alone the field of their encounter, for this is a field that we are already entirely implicated within. The history and the language of this encounter is the history and the language within which we think and write, and thus seeking to approach this encounter (again) we must take account of the demands that it already places upon us, even before we begin. The depth of this implication already claims the language we use to explicate it and so before we even read Heidegger or Hölderlin we are already involved in a negotiation, not with, but of language. So we need to enter this encounter by way of language; to become aware of how language intervenes in our negotiation with poetry or philosophy and thereby becomes the condition of that encounter's possibility and impossibility.