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RETHINKING THE PARAMETERS OF THE HEIDEGGERIAN HERMENEUTICS Heidegger on Poetry and Thinking

It is no great secret that Heidegger's engagement with poetry and, especially, the effect of this encounter on the configuration and bearings of his thought remain largely unexplored. Even though there have been books and essays on Heidegger's conception of language and his reading of poetry, notably Hölderlin's, they have, for the most part, elaborated the question of Heidegger's influence on literary study rather than exact the stakes and the implications of this concern with poetry for Heidegger's own work. Recent studies by Véronique Fóti and by John Llewelyn begin to remedy this situation,¹ insisting on the importance of Heidegger's reading of the poets for understanding, in particular, the direction and the possible ethical import of his questioning of otherness. The opening of such a new perspective on what I have provisionally called the Heideggerian "hermeneutics" of otherness, of letting the other be, is obviously contingent upon a shift in the way we read Heidegger. To put it differently, this change of optics requires asking the question about the importance of reading both Heidegger's proximity to poetry and Heidegger *in* proximity to poetry. In other words, what does it mean to read Heidegger not through *Being and Time*, or through his war lectures on Nietzsche and Parmenides, or even, more recently, through *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, but rather through his late essays on poetry and language? Such inquiry has no intention of discovering a third or a fourth Heidegger through an arbitrary periodization of his work but, on the contrary, examines the consequences of Heidegger's continuous requestioning of Being and difference for his late thought. To that effect, it contends, through a circumspect reading of the "poetic" Heidegger, that his thought offers us a novel, radical, or, to refer to the title of this book, an *inflected* perspective on otherness and difference.

Refocusing the Heidegger debate through the prism of his encounter with the poets underscores, above all, the indispensability of poetry in recognizing the radicality of his questioning. This claim is not simply a matter of taking into account the thematic variety of his texts but instead of clarifying how a lack of understanding about the way in which Heidegger's preoccupation with poetry weighs upon his thought impedes the recognition of the problematic of nearness and its ethico-ontological import. Foregrounding the poetic in Heidegger's work also manifests the extent to which his conception of language is absolutely central to recognizing the stakes and the claims of his thought. Though language plays an important role in Heidegger already in *Being and Time*, the most significant observations about language come in the texts on the pre-Socratic thinkers and on poetry,² elaborated in the context of what he calls the neighborhood of poetry and thinking. As I will argue, the specificity of Heidegger's understanding of language as a translation or a way of the saying (*Sage*) of manifestation into words can in fact be articulated only through the relation, the neighboring, of poetry and thinking.

It is precisely in the essays expounding the idea of the neighborhood of poetry and thinking that Heidegger develops his understanding of language as always shaped by the "relation" or, to be more exact, the nearing between thinking and Being. To that extent, reading the proximity of poetry and thinking becomes indispensable to discerning the distinctiveness of this non-relational bind (*entbindende Band*)³ between thinking and the retreat of Being, an insight pivotal, as this book maintains, to any claims about understanding Heidegger's ideas on otherness and difference. This chapter explains this characteristic proximity of thinking to Being in Heidegger as the "in-fold," where thinking, itself a mode of being-human, gets underway by folding into Being. The in-fold works in a way that lets Being envelop language and at the same time withdraw itself from words and remain other. This sense of otherness becomes critical for Heidegger's notion of language, as it "grounds" it without ever providing a basis and makes room for the signifying matrix that lets meaning emerge.

The term *in-fold* is used here precisely to foreground the fact that this otherness should not be described in terms of difference. In other words, it diagnoses and explores a certain hesitation or resistance on the part of Heidegger in explaining the proximity of thinking and Being through difference. Basing my remarks on the pivotal essays from *On the Way to Language*, I detect in Heidegger's questioning of difference and identity a certain "limitation" of dif-

ference with respect to articulating ontological and proto-ethical stakes of language. The infold not only marks this limit but also inflects difference in order to communicate the ethico-ontological significance of language beyond, or rather otherwise than, the signification produced in and by difference. To that effect, it is the notion of the infold, as it comes to the fore in the interchange between poetry and thinking in Heidegger's work, that directs and guides the inquiry into Heidegger's inflection of difference.

Exploring this mechanics of infolding, I will show how the poetic leads Heidegger to a conception of thinking and language based on nearness rather than difference. For it is the poetic "influence" in Heidegger that steers his thinking from the ontological difference to the interplay of difference and identity and then difference as such and, finally, to the notion of nearness. In *On the Way to Language*, among other late texts, it becomes clear that, in spite of Heidegger's incessant return to the problematic of difference, the differential or unitary terms of his discussion fail to account for the notion of *Zusammengehören*, of belonging together of thinking and Being. Instead, thinking and Being trace a figure of proximity, a nearness, which not only does not explain itself as the very difference of identity and difference but, in fact, inflects it with an "always already" phenomenal and ethical significance. As a result, this inflection, revealed here as the operation of the infold, troubles and dislocates Heidegger's own inquiry into difference; it ultimately angles and rewrites his rhetoric of identity and difference. I propose to explain the "logic" of this flection, and to amplify it beyond the degree of discernment afforded by Heidegger's texts, by examining the neighborhood of poetry and thinking, with a view specifically to how Heidegger means the poetic and, by extension, thinking in this context.

Dichten-Denken: *Beyond a Philosophy of Poetry*

The German words introducing this section are used here to emphasize from the start Heidegger's idiosyncratic use of both terms, which, much too often, have been taken at their face value in the Heidegger scholarship. To put it briefly and simply, what Heidegger designates as *Dichtung* is not poetry in its usual sense, just as *Denken* is not thinking, and certainly not metaphysical thought. These claims can be substantiated by following Heidegger's use of the word *dichten* and the way in which his texts on art and poetry precipitate the revision of the initial project of fundamental ontology and the thought of Being into poetic thinking. I

will examine, therefore, Heidegger's statements about *Dichtung* and poetic language in order to outline the view of the poetic that regulates his texts, even when it is not expressly acknowledged or extensively described there. The understanding of the poetic will in turn provide an insight into how the proximity of thinking to poetry modifies the parameters in which thinking has come to think of itself and define its own specificity—both itself as the thought of difference and its difference from other discourses.

Heidegger's singular interest in poetic language manifests itself already in *Sein und Zeit*, in particular in the chapters dealing with language, understanding (*Verstehen*), and interpretation (*Auslegung*).⁴ Although in *Being and Time* language is discussed within the analytic of *Dasein* and its essence referred to as *Rede* (discourse), Heidegger already specifies "*dichtende*" *Rede* as one of the modes of *Dasein's* Being-in. The quotation marks in which *dichtende* appears in Heidegger's text prefigure the special status poetry will attain in later writings. In particular, they seem to suggest that poetry (*Dichtung*) is already demarcated from the usual meaning it carries in philosophy or literary criticism. In the context of the procedure Heidegger adapts with respect to other metaphysical concepts, for example, language, interpretation, mood, etc., one can assume that poetry as well must be reinterpreted within the perspective of Being, and that *dichtende* will mark the "esse-ntial" dimension of language.

In subsequent writings, poetry and the poetic (*Dichtung, dichterisch*) become increasingly significant, to the point that the essence of language, in the active sense with which Heidegger invests *Wesen*, can be disclosed only through and as the poetic. Although this position is explained in the essays from *On the Way to Language*, it already informs "The Origin of the Work of Art," where Heidegger defines art in terms of the poetic: "All art, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of what is, is, as such, essentially poetry" ("*Alle Kunst' ist als Geschehenlassen der Ankunft der Wahrheit des Seienden als eines solchen 'im Wesen Dichtung'*").⁵ This remark makes clear that Heidegger intends poetry (*Dichtung*) in a broad sense, as a kind of "poeticity" or "poetizing" that lies at the bottom of art.⁶ To translate *Dichtung* as "poetry" in this context is therefore both correct and misleading, as the "field" of *Dichtung*, though at certain points overlapping with that of poetry, is fundamentally different. All the more so since Heidegger raises some doubts as to "whether art, in all its modes from architecture to poesy [poetry in the narrow sense, German *Poesie*], exhausts the nature of poetry" as *Dichtung* (*H*, 60/OWL, 74). Heidegger claims

that poetry, understood in the narrow sense, only at certain moments—for example, ancient Greek literature, Hölderlin's late poetry—participates in *Dichtung*. As the same is true of other arts, it is obvious that for Heidegger only a small portion of artistic production finds its place within the scope of *Dichtung*, and even then, at best, only as pointers or traces of what *Dichtung* is essentially (*im Wesen*).

It is rather surprising that this distinction, upon which "The Origin of the Work of Art" pivots and which informs and structures Heidegger's subsequent texts on poetry, has not gained much currency in Heidegger scholarship, especially since the difference between *Dichtung* and *Poesie* underlies Heidegger's conception of language and the articulation of the tenets of the new or the other thinking (*das andere Denken*). Most important, this division comes to indicate, without erasing their differences, a degree of proximity between the poetic and the philosophical that, of their own accord, perhaps neither philosophy nor poetry would willingly admit. Within this specific context, it becomes clear that, to understand both what *Dichtung* originally means and how it shows itself through, and showing differs itself from, *Poesie*, it is necessary to think of *Dichtung* as always belonging together with thinking (*Denken*). This view is confirmed by another work from the same period as "The Origin of the Work of Art," namely, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, where Heidegger traces the intimacy between poetry and thinking back to the Pre-Socratics, in particular to the fragments of Heraclitus and Parmenides. *Introduction to Metaphysics* describes the Heraclitean and Parmenidean sayings precisely as *denkerisch-dichterisch*, because, to Heidegger, they are both poetry and thinking,⁷ or, to be more exact, because the philosophical and the poetic have not as yet been sharply demarcated in them. Heidegger claims, therefore, that the discourse of Parmenides and Heraclitus moves in the plane of the originary bonding of poetic and philosophical thinking.

To see the critical impact of this relation between poetry and philosophy on Heidegger's understanding of language and, subsequently, of difference and otherness, it is necessary to maintain distinctions between the two modes of *Dichtung*: the originary *Dichtung*, which happens always in the interrelation with *Denken*, and *Dichtung* that is revealed or traced through poetry—the essential poeticity of art. For the sake of the clarity of this presentation, the German term will be used to indicate the first mode; *poetry* will be reserved for that art, in particular poetry in the narrow sense, to which Heidegger sometimes refers as *Dichtung*, in order to indicate

that *Dichtung* happens through it. A similar distinction has to be introduced with respect to the notion of thinking. Consequently, the German term, *Denken*, will refer to the originary mode of thinking in its proximity to *Dichtung*, while the English *thinking* will indicate these philosophical writings in which *Denken* in its originary sense can be traced.

Yet how is it possible to claim that *Dichten-Denken* is more primordial than poetry and thinking as the happening of truth? Is there in Heidegger's thought something "prior" to language *as poetry and/or thinking*? One can begin answering this question in the context of "The Origin of the Work of Art," and, more specifically, by looking at how *Dichtung* traces the peculiarly dislocated temporality of its "origin" (*Ur-sprung*) in the work of art. Describing the relation between work and truth, Heidegger maintains that art gathers its value from the intimacy between the most universal and the most particular, from truth happening always in a unique, thus also temporal, manner. For the universal truth to happen in a particular way, truth must come to stand in an image, a figure (*Gestalt*) (*H*, 50/*PLT*, 64). Thus art owes its particularity to its *Gestalt*, while its universality comes from truth, which in its originary way happens as poetizing, *Dichtung*. Yet *Dichtung* precedes art; it poetizes prior to the casting into the figure, since, as Heidegger remarks, *Dichtung* indicates an "illuminating projection (*lichtender Entwurf*), [which] unfolds of unconcealedness and projects ahead into the design of the figure" (*H*, 58/*PLT*, 72). *Dichtung*, therefore, is a saying, "a projecting of the clearing," a de-signing projection into art. The abstract terminology that Heidegger uses here serves the purpose of indicating what may be very inexactly called the "structuring" prior to the emergence of art.

In this particular context, *Dichtung* names that which, concealing itself in art, makes "place" for art: it "projects" and "outlines" (*entwerfen*) in such a way that it keeps itself from emerging and, in this peculiar withdrawal, opens art. In other words, *Dichtung* marks the *Ur-sprung*, the "origin" that remains unnamed, unexpressed, since, as the originary leap, it is never present (in the sense in which artistic creations are), that is, it has always already, namely, beyond any traceable past, taken place. It is a leap that does not span or bridge, whose "from where" can be indicated only as absenting itself from the work of art, though not as mere absence. The hyphen in *Ur-sprung*, besides tracing the etymology of the word, separates otherwise than the temporal distance between the past and the present. What remains in the work of art is the sign, the trace of this interrupted, severing leap. It seems, therefore, legitimate to claim

that *Dichtung* is "more" primordial than art, for, as it describes the leap (*Ur-sprung*) into *Gestalt*, *Dichtung* becomes the design of the opening for art. This opening can never be outlined and projected "totally" into the *Gestalt* but instead withdraws itself and remains as a trace in what has been projected into the art work.

It is clear that the relation between what I have termed *Denken* and thinking shares a similar dynamics. When, for example, in *What Is Called Thinking?*, Heidegger describes the workings of language as a "grid" of junctures, it is apparent that this grid-like structure is *Denken* in its originary mode, in which *Denken* says the twofold: Being/beings—*Eon*. Characterizing the way the twofold calls for *Denken*, Heidegger says:

Eon speaks of what speaks in every word of the language, and not just in every word, but before all else in every conjunction of words, and thus particularly in those junctures of the language which are not specifically put in words.⁸

Thus *Denken* is not so much words themselves as the "junctures" of language, which most often do not come to words. It is the opening "between," that which by differing holds words together and makes intelligibility and language possible. The primordially of this linguistic opening characterizes *Denken* in a manner similar to that in which *Entwurf* brings to light the nature of *Dichtung*, and as such it draws our attention to the originary binding between poetry and thinking and to the specifics of the Heideggerian reading of it. The term *junctures of language* also provides a hint about the direction in which *Dichten-Denken* should be thought if it is to reveal its primordially. From Heidegger's remarks about the conjunctions of words, it becomes evident that *Dichten-Denken* comes into actual words very rarely, and that always in a sense as a repetition, an after-saying: it retreats from speech and writing, from thinking and poetry. Readers of Heidegger are quite familiar with the mechanics of such retreat, which traces by means of erasing and retracting and which works, in Derrida's term, as a re-trait. However, in the context of poetry and thinking, the significance of this figure of withdrawal lies not so much in its structure as in the fact that the self-veiling and "othering" character of *Dichten-Denken* leads Heidegger to an idiosyncratic conception of language. To illustrate this connection, one has to examine the way in which Heidegger's understanding of the proximity between *Dichten* and *Denken* informs his notion of the saying and its defining influence in the elaboration of otherness and difference in *Ereignis*.

In order to work our way toward understanding how the specificity of the poetic determines the place of otherness in Heidegger's view of language, it is important to note that the withdrawal of *Dichten-Denken* from words is the result not of some deficiency or inadequacy of the human cognitive powers but rather of the very elusiveness and otherness of the poetic. In the Hölderlin essays, Heidegger often claims, echoing Nietzsche's statement about the origin of poetry from *The Birth of Tragedy*, that the essence of language is shrouded in mystery, that, making humans its speakers, it refuses itself to them.⁹ This paradigm of refusal, withdrawal, and othering, far from harboring mystic tendencies, in fact continues and inflects Heidegger's initial elaboration of otherness in terms of the ontico-ontological difference. Already in the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger states that the difference between Being and beings is so radical that it is no longer perceptible as difference (*SZ*, 9/*BT*, 29). As *Introduction to Metaphysics* repeatedly suggests, difference can open itself only upon a plane of belonging-together: two differends can be differentiated only with respect to that which bonds them, which makes the opposition possible in the first place and does not let the opposites flow in chaotic indifference (*IM*, 144). Yet, because of the otherness of Being, the "difference" between Being and beings is so abysmal that there is no common plane that would structure and hold the opposition, since it is Being itself that is the opening of the plane upon which differing can happen. Therefore, the "difference" immediately becomes "undifference": Being covers itself with beings, and in its retreat it becomes indistinguishable from beings, almost a being itself. This retreat is visible in the "language of Being," which continually missays and unsays Being, unable to escape describing it in the same syntactical and grammatical terms as entities. In the end, this mutation of Being corroborates the refusal of the ontological "undifference" to language or at least to words.

It is evident from Heidegger's work on poetry that a similar paradigm of otherness as denial and withdrawal is at work in the neighborhood of poetry and thinking, with that difference, though, that the complex *Dichten-Denken* has to be thought directly within the notion of language (*Sprache*) as it arises in and as a response to Being. The implication of this parallel is that *Dichten-Denken* differs from words in such an abysmal way as to make that difference in the end no difference at all but instead something other or otherwise than difference. If *Dichten-Denken* is indeed this "other" opening for words, for language as speech and writing, how are we then to conceive the relation between Being,

Dichten-Denken, and language as speech/writing? Can they be maintained as the different elements of the "same" differential relation, or is there a new paradigm emerging here, one no longer thinkable as either relation or difference? To answer these questions and to see how their effects implicitly inform and disturb Heidegger's investigations of the "way to language," I propose to examine how this inquiry into language leads Heidegger to the fundamental difference, if one can use this "ontic" term with respect to Being, that marks itself within Being: the difference, or rather the fold, between modes of Being that appears with the irruption of *Dasein* into Being. As Christopher Fynsk convincingly argues, though the term *Dasein* appears very rarely in Heidegger's late writings, the conception of language presented in them is always implicitly correlated with *Dasein's* characteristic mode of Being.¹⁰ In fact, it is because of the difference in Being, of the "apartness" of *Dasein*, that the thematization of Being can take place, that Being can be led into its self-refusing saying through the response of thinking to Being's call.

What has remained unexplored, however, is the effect that this questioning of the relation of thinking to Being against the backdrop of poetry has on Heidegger's view of difference itself, an effect so radical that one is tempted to call it, punning on Heidegger's own idiom, *nearly* untraced or untraceable. In order to reclaim the claim this inflection of difference has on Heidegger's texts, we have to think the inscription of otherness in the relation between thinking and Being according to the graphic of *Dichten-Denken*. In other words, we need to examine how the fold of thinking into Being "originates," in the sense of *Ur-sprung*, or initiates language in Heidegger's most important texts on language: "The Nature of Language" and "The Way to Language."¹¹ These essays make clear that the complexity of the irruption in Being of the thinking of Being can be discussed only in the context of what Heidegger calls the "neighborhood of poetry and thinking," the originary closeness of the poetic and the philosophical.

Defining "neighborhood" as "dwelling in nearness" (*UZS*, 199/*OWL*, 93), Heidegger remarks that poetry and thinking dwell in nearness because they are both modes of the saying, that is, of presencing as the showing saying. It has to be stressed from the outset that for Heidegger the saying does not mean speech or simply linguistic expression: "Saying is in no way the linguistic expression added to the phenomena after they have appeared—rather, all radiant appearance and all fading away is grounded in the showing Saying (*in der zeigenden Sage*)" (*UZS*, 257/*OWL*, 126). Thus Heidegger

understands saying as the very process of appearing (in an eminently verbal sense), in which beings, as they come to be, are also "said." To put it differently, the saying refers to the placing or positioning of a being in a nexus of "relations" (*Bezüge*) to other beings, which lets that being be; it describes an interlacing (*Geflecht*) that underwrites signification and itself interlaces, nears, brings into proximity the linguistic and the phenomenal. There is no doubt in this context that for Heidegger *Ereignis*, the event of manifestation, the phenomenon par excellence, must be of a proto-linguistic nature—it is itself a form, or better, a design (*Riss*) of the saying.

Such understanding of the saying becomes possible only in the aftermath of Heidegger's consideration of the double meaning of poetry and thinking, that is, of their specific function of letting beings be. In fact, Heidegger's repeated engagement with poetry and its resultant articulation of language in *On the Way to Language* in terms of a mistranslation or an interrupted translation of the saying into words must be seen as an attempt to clarify the distance between, respectively, poetry and *Dichtung*, and thinking and *Denken*. To put it briefly, trying to understand how art is "essentially," *im Wesen*, *Dichtung*, Heidegger is faced with the problem of conceiving the relation of thinking to Being in a way that could account for the inscription and erasure of the saying of manifestation in words. Rephrasing the question in terms proposed by this study, can one still think here the tie between thinking and Being in terms of difference as such and maintain the specificity of Heidegger's view of language, especially its ontological stakes? It is precisely for that reason that, in "The Way to Language," Heidegger devotes considerable space to the discussion of the human mode of Being and its "appropriateness" for the saying (of Being). Explicating the tracing of the saying in words, he claims that humans, by virtue of their specific mode of Being, are always already made "appropriate" for the task of the "speakers" of Being: they are listeners made "appropriate," that is, responsive to and responsible for the saying (*UZS*, 260/*OWL*, 129). Since the way they encounter the saying constitutes also their answer, their role as speakers lies in answering, saying after, "countersaying," or "listening saying"—*nachsagen* or *entsprechen*. Because Heidegger understands the showing saying as "soundless word," humans are the ones who endow language with voice, who "voice" the saying in the sense that what is "said" through phenomenal self-showing is resaid in actual words through thinking or poetry.

What needs to be explained in the context of Heidegger's engagement with difference is precisely this "after" (*nach-*) or

“counter” (*ent-*), which implies an inner distance, an interval between the showing saying and the human “saying after.” Analyzing briefly this interval and its implications for the beginning of Heidegger’s enterprise as the “question” (of Being), Derrida, in a footnote to *De l’esprit: Heidegger et la question*,¹² explains that, in the context of this pause at the essence of language, it would appear that every act of language, even that of questioning itself, is already inscribed in this essential distance. Derrida underscores in this context the structure of *zusprechen* (to address, to impart by way of mouth) and the fact that before human beings question, language has already been addressed to them. *Zuspruch* then has a double meaning: the very address is also that which addresses itself. It is because of the twofoldness of the address that human beings are addressed and claimed by language in such a way that their every linguistic act reflects this address, without ever bringing it into the open. In this perspective, even the very possibility of questioning (*Fragen*) would seem to presuppose human acquiescence, the welcoming of Being and language.¹³ Although Derrida does not explore the possibility that such an articulation of the mechanics of language could in the end spell a shift, an inflection, in Heidegger’s treatment of otherness, I would argue that it is precisely the understanding of this interval that harbors the possibility of a Heideggerian “hermeneutics” of nearness.

In order to pursue such a project, one needs to explicate carefully the link between the “re-trait” of the saying in words and the fold of thinking into Being. It is important, therefore, to note that for Heidegger the interval of the address constitutes the “essential” way-making movement of language: “*Die Be-wägung bringt die Sprache (das Sprachwesen) als die Sprache (die Sage) zur Sprache (zum verlautenden Wort)*”/“This way-making puts language (the essence of language) as language (Saying) into language (into the sounded word)” (*UZS*, 261/*OWL*, 130).¹⁴ The quotation articulates the workings of language in terms of a tripartite “structuring movement” of language: the saying, the between, and the sounded word. Human beings come into this play, so to speak, “at the end” of the way, bringing with them the possibility of voice. Yet it does not mean that they come into the process of language as an addition, as merely its last step, for Heidegger leaves no doubt that without the incision that they make in Being, language would never get “under way.”

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to take the response (of thinking) to the saying as the “essence” (*Wesen*) of language. Even though language cannot be otherwise than through its speakers,

human beings are not the agency behind language. Since language is called forth by Being, with the presencing of beings regarded as its first saying, the most essential (*wesentlich*) in language is the unfolding of the link in the tripartite structuring of language—the interval, the way that language has always already made into words. The “way” has to be understood here in the active, verbal sense of the way-making of language, which does not refer simply to the fact that the saying has to reach the sounded word. Instead, as Heidegger remarks in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, the saying happens only to the extent that it has always already been apprehended (*IM*, 140–141). The most important aspect of this relating, however, is that the saying and the apprehending are not “coupled” once and for good. This belonging-together, in order to be a genuine passage from the saying to the apprehending, has to happen “anew” every moment. In other words, *der Weg* indicates not a way that is simply opened but rather a way-making that continuously opens itself as the path(s) of language.

As soon as we realize that this apprehension, or, as Heidegger later calls it, the (cor)responding (*Entsprechung*) to the saying, is never simple but instead enacts the difference between poetry and thinking, the statement about *Dichtung* from “The Origin of the Work of Art” becomes fraught with decisive implications for Heidegger’s entire thought. For it becomes evident that what allows Heidegger to articulate the specificity of the phenomenal saying and its self-veiling way into words, into the human language, is expressly the idea of the withdrawal of *Dichten-Denken* from poetry and thought. As John Llewelyn explains, Heidegger’s use of *Sagen* to describe the proto-linguistic nature of manifestation, the showing saying in Heidegger’s idiom, derives from his elaboration of the proximity of thinking to poetry: “*Sagan* (or *Sagen* in this sense) is the common root of *Dichten* and *Denken*, the previously mentioned *dictare*.”¹⁵ It is precisely in the intersection of the phrases *Denken heisst Dichten* and *Dichten heisst Denken* that the conception of a phenomenal proto-language has its ancestry. For, considered in the context of the neighborhood of poetry and thinking, the way-making of language as the positioning or interlacing of beings in the nexus of relations is what we have called here *Dichten-Denken*. Although one could perhaps claim that language as such should be thought more broadly, in most of Heidegger’s writings *Dichten-Denken* implicitly becomes the *Wesen* of language, and the other modes of “saying Being,” for example, statesmanship, drop out of the picture.¹⁶ *Denken* and *Dichten* function thus as the primal differends of language, which clear the space for different

modes of actual saying—poetry and thinking. The interval of language, even though at this point it is only on the verge of coming through human beings into words, is already marked by a rift, which prepares the way for the two distinct modes of discourse.

To return to our initial question, the view of language as the way of language (the saying) into words from *On the Way to Language* can be seen as Heidegger's rearticulation and broadening of the idea of the twofold nature of poetry and thought. Enacting this rifted proximity in his texts on language, Heidegger eventually reinscribes this entire problematic into the question of how to think the re-traiting and dislocating bind between thinking and Being. To the extent, then, that Heidegger consistently makes his project pivot on this relation, we have to understand language, and, consequently, its troping of otherness, expressly within this tear or fold of thinking. Can, however, what Heidegger more often than not refers to as the "same" (*das Selbe*) of thinking and Being be figured as the play of difference, or, inversely, has that play already and always been inflected by thought's nearness to the event of manifestation?

Heidegger's Language: From Difference to the Infold

Although there is plenty of evidence, especially in early Heidegger and his concern for the ontological difference, to support the former reading, an argument in favor of the latter can be made from the intersection of Heidegger's rewriting of Heraclitus and Parmenides. Bringing together Heidegger's reading of the Heraclitean *logos* and the Parmenidean proximity between *noein* and *einai* will illustrate the manner in which Heidegger's version of this closeness deflects and dislocates its own attempts to read itself as difference. It will show that this repeated engagement with the Pre-Socratics and, in particular, with their explanations of thought's position with respect to *phusis*, variously understood as *logos* by Heraclitus and as *einai* by Parmenides, prepares the way for the most precise articulation of the problematic of difference in Heidegger's late writings on poetry, as well as in *On the Way to Language* and "Time and Being." To that extent, there is a very close link not only between Heidegger's reading of *homologeîn* in Heraclitus and the Parmenidean *noein* but, most important, between the recasting of the Greek thought, and thus the tradition of Western philosophy, in pre-Socratic terms and the conception of language from "The Nature of Language" and "The Way of Language." In other words, Heidegger's attempt to redefine the nature of thinking in his texts

on the Pre-Socratics works together with his encounter with the poets and its resulting conception of language. Both reading tracks produce, at their intersection, a revision of the way in which thought's relations to otherness has been conceived.

We need to turn our attention first to the implicit stakes of Heidegger's "recommencement" of thinking in the vicinity of the Pre-Socratics, of what he calls "an other beginning" (*der andere Anfang*),¹⁷ unrepeatable and displaced beyond any sense of recuperation afforded by the notions of origin, cause, ground, memory, consciousness, or interiorization. More specifically, this course involves reading *legein* in proximity to *noein* in order to open a new perspective on Heidegger's definition of *sprechen*, of the "speaking" of language, in *On the Way to Language*.

In "Logos," Heidegger makes clear that the incision of thinking into Being, called forth by Being itself, and the saying resulting from it are arranged by and according to the *logos*. To avoid collapsing this claim into one more pronouncement of logo- or phono-centrism, *logos* must be thought in conformity with the way Heidegger continuously redefines and retranslates it, keeping it clearly apart from the reading of *logos* that forms the basis of the logocentric tradition.¹⁸ He begins this project already in *Being and Time*, where *logos* no longer designates "reason," "judgment," "definition," "concept," "ground," or "relationship," but "discourse" (*Rede*), which Heidegger understands as the determination of the "essence" of language. This notion of discourse cannot be here misunderstood as empirical discourse, as either speech or writing. Since the *logos* lets something be seen "phenomenally," that is, as it shows itself in itself and from itself, it means therefore "letting-see" (*Sehenlassen*), and as such it is always on the way to "vocal proclamation in words" (*SZ*, 32/*BT*, 57). In German, *stimmliche Verlautbarung* brings in another important connotation: this voicing is also a tuning (*stimmen*).¹⁹ It is in this twofold connotation of *stimmliche* that the *logos* displays its characteristic function in Heidegger's texts: since the human response to the address of language results in the "voicing" of this address into speech and writing, it is the *logos* that regulates, tunes, and "appropriates" the voicing for the address. This understanding of *logos* makes clear why Heidegger associates the saying with showing, why the saying (*Sage*) is always a showing saying. When beings show themselves and let themselves be seen (that is, thought, in the sense of *Denken* and *Dichten*) by human beings, they also "say" themselves: *Sehenlassen* indicates thought's response to the primordial *sagen*. Becoming aware of Being means thinking it as the originary saying, where

thought turns into a response, a resaying and voicing of the saying. In "Logos," Heidegger stresses the fact that *logos* refers to both saying and speaking but only when it is understood in the context of the interval of the address taken as the "essencing" of language: "The saying and talking of mortals comes to pass from early on as *legein*, laying."²⁰

Heidegger understands *legein* in its ordinary sense of the overall gathering—the gathering manner in which beings are laid open and let be seen (*sehenlassen*). Defining *legein* as the gathering laying, Heidegger remarks that the most significant moment of this laying is the between of hearing and speaking. He shows that Heraclitus speaks in his fragments not about empirical hearing but hearing in the fundamental sense (EGT, 67), where proper hearing means the hearing that goes towards the *logos*, the hearing that happens within *legein* as *legein* itself. It is because the human response, its *Denken* and *Dichtung*, despite its difference from *legein*, or rather despite the fact that it happens against *legein*, occurs still essentially as *legein* that language in its essence can be the self-withdrawing, unwordable, "other" saying of Being: "[p]roper hearing occurs essentially in *legein* as *homologein*" (EGT, 66) "*Im 'legein' als dem 'homologein' west das eigentliche Hören*";²¹; and "[t]he original [emphasis mine] *legein*, laying, unfolds itself early and in a manner ruling everything unconcealed as saying and talking" (EGT, 63) ("*Das ursprüngliche 'legein', das Legen, entfaltet sich früh und in einer alles Unverborgene durchwaltenden Weise als das Sagen und Reden*" [VA, 212]).

It is, then, in *legein* that the "essence" of language displays its verbality, its characteristic "on-the-way." Moreover, the saying and speaking that Heidegger writes about have to be sharply differentiated from vocalized (or written) language. *Legein* is not only not determined by vocalization and/or the play of signification but instead understood as itself opening the way for signification, vocalization, and writing. This is why *legein* is described through terms such as *gathering* and *laying*, which suggest that *legein* pre-structures (in a verbal sense) the interval of the address and, as the very principle of gathering, lays open the "invisible" mesh (*Geflecht*) of relations (*Bezüge*), differences, oppositions, etc. The word "mesh" is insufficient here and may be used only when one realizes that at stake is the meshing that makes possible relations and differences, the interlacing that "underprints" itself, and thus is neither present nor absent in the empirical manifestations of language. What is particularly important in these quotations is the primordially with which Heidegger understands *legein*, which

points simultaneously to the primordial meaning inherent in poetry and thinking, the *logos* regulating unconcealment as the saying, and the fact that hearing happens *as*, though also *against*, *legein*. One cannot overemphasize the significance of this proximity at work in Heidegger's conception of language, for it is because *Dasein*, the human mode of Being, though as listening speaking it demarcates itself in a radical manner from all other modes of Being, is still in all its singularity a mode of Being that Being can be "said."

To that effect, language, understood as the self-erasing saying of Being, is possible, for Heidegger, precisely because of the fold inscribed in the "sameness" of the differential unfolding of *legein*: *noein*, thinking and poetry, happens in a gathering manner (cor)responding to *legein*. In his reading in *Identity and Difference* of the Parmenidean saying "for thinking and Being are the same," Heidegger explicates the character of this corresponding in terms of belonging, and the title of this text leads one to expect that what transpires between thought and Being, and as such describes the dictate of *Ereignis*, should be explained in differential terms. Yet, when Heidegger reads Parmenides' saying about the nature of the relation between thinking (*noein*) and Being (*einai*) through *Zusammengehörigkeit* (etymologically, "belonging-together"), he implies the need to trace the notion of *Ereignis* back to what still remains hidden in the Parmenidean saying. In the context of how Heidegger's texts register a certain hesitation about the sufficiency of the notion of difference as such, I am inclined to read that which remains covered in the Parmenidean fragment as antedating—or better, in order to avoid the trappings of causality and origin, as inflecting—the unfolding of difference.

According to Heidegger's translation, the maxim reads: "*Das Selbe nämlich ist Vernehmen (Denken) sowohl als auch Sein*" (For the Same are thinking as well as Being).²² For Heidegger, the pivotal word in this saying is the *same*, the term that names the way in which thinking belongs to Being, and in which thinking, in the sense of primordial *Denken*, and Being belong "to each other" prior to any representational thinking, reflection, consciousness, or knowledge. Heidegger refers to this belonging as *Übereignung*, which Gianni Vattimo aptly translates as "transappropriation."²³ Such transappropriation names the process of nearing of thought and Being, the nearing that constitutes also the opening of language. The "trans-" marks in this case the mutuality of this appropriation, in which human beings are already determined by their mode of Being: they always "are," and Being "is," that is, it "is

said," only to the extent that human beings respond to it and resay it. Finally, and most important, there is no doubt that this appropriation is determined by the "in" indicative of the fact that thinking is always already "immersed" and dwells in Being.

It is perhaps this immersion in the phenomenality of *Ereignis*, the "in" or "to" of thought's proximity to what the Pre-Socratics rendered as *einai*, that registers that which remains hidden in the Parmenidean maxim. This "between" of *legein* and *noein*, taken here as the "essencing" of language, is obviously not a dialectical movement of the sublation of difference under sameness; but is it, on the other hand, sufficient to say that the hidden, the unsaid, is difference as such, the very occurrence of differing that unfolds (into) differences? In other words, can what transpires in *Ereignis* be measured by difference, and can such an appraisal give its due to the residue of the saying of manifestation, which characterizes language for Heidegger? Or does this residue mark, perhaps, a hardly acknowledged inflection of difference?

To trope the possibility of this inflection I will read the "relation" between *legein* and *noein* as an "infolding." In other words, *noein* will be seen here as the apprehending thinking, which infolds into *legein* in such a way that, happening still according to *legein*, it can respond and resay *legein*. On this reading, language, in its very "essence," is an infold, an opening that happens as infolding. Heidegger needs to articulate this moment as an infold in order to show how language almost "touches" Being, since the infold describes the way human presencing infolds into presencing qua presencing, into Being. Reading here Heidegger's various figures for the proximity of Being and thought as the infold allows us to see how this event makes room, an abode or a dwelling, for human beings to think the nexus of references between beings, its linguistic interlace (*Geflecht*)—the world.

This rather lengthy and detailed explanation of the positioning of *noein* against *legein* allows us to forestall charges of Heidegger's complicity with logocentrism, prompted by his reference to *logos* as regulating the unfolding of language. Though in Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus *logos* indeed "arranges" language so that it can produce meaning, its regulative propensity does not have a unitary structure but instead occurs as an infold. It not only does not guarantee unity but, conversely, and to the extent that *logos* gathers and holds in a relation, it makes all differences, relations, otherness, and their meaning possible. This characteristic, non-logocentric reading of the *logos* prompts us to speak therefore about an inflection of the origin of meaning imprinting itself on

Heidegger's work. When in *Being and Time* Heidegger defines *logos* as discourse—"[d]iscourse is the Articulation of intelligibility" (SZ, 161/BT, 203–204)—he indicates that *legein* is precisely the way Being comes to mean as Being, that is, as its withdrawal from words and signification, as the dissignification of its never proper sense. This formula suggests, then, that it is in the infold of *legein* (as the apprehending gathering of thinking) into *legein* (as the overall gathering and positioning of beings) that Being means. Since in the same section of *Being and Time* Heidegger declares that meaning is articulated primordially in *Rede*, the occurring of presencing is also the primordially of meaning: to mean in the fundamental way is "to be," that is, to be let into and positioned in the nexus of *Bezüge*. As Jean-Luc Marion observes in "L'étant et le phénomène," when Heidegger discusses the "meaning of Being" (*der Sinn des Seins*), it is not simply the meaning of the word "Being" that is at stake. Instead, the double genitive marks the "essence" of language—*der Sinn des Seins* describes "Being as meaning, meaning as Being."²⁴ Hence Being can be very cautiously called the interrupted and erased "origin" of meaning, the origin in quotation marks since as such it always conceals itself, for it itself cannot be interpreted "meaningfully."

It has become clear by now that the Heideggerian notion of "origin," *Ur-sprung*, must also be read as a version of the infold, its hyphen inescapably recalling the hyphenation of *dichten* and *denken* and the mark of the fold, its non-internal "in." This approach is evidenced especially in Heidegger's analysis of the manner in which language occurs—of its "speaking." Heidegger's essay "Language" will serve as an example here, illustrating the working of the infold in the way-making of language. In this essay, Heidegger defines his conception of language through the polysemic play of the derivations of the verb *sprechen*—*ansprechen* and *entsprechen*, to claim and to (cor)respond, to answer, to "counter-say." In this way, the German word for language, *Sprache*, like *logos*, far from reasserting the old dominion of logocentric speech, describes the field within which all the claims, calls, and responses with which Heidegger describes language, both its writing and its speaking, find their originary place.

What strikes one in this conception is the fact that all the circuits of calling and claiming that Being directs toward *Dasein* are already built of linguistic materials. If Being can claim thought's attentiveness (*Achtsamkeit*), it is because its claim occurs in a linguistic fashion; it comes to pass as *ansprechen*, a "speaking" that by nature of being a saying, a language, finds itself in proximity to

thought and its language. To put it differently, the language of Being, the manner in which Being shows itself, happens (*er-eignen*) in such a way that it (ap)propriates (*an-eignen*) human beings for language. "Appropriation" here does not mean an erasure of difference and an impending univocity of speaking but rather delineates an extreme proximity in which difference as such becomes discernible. As the mark of this proximity, *an-eignen*, sounding the *an* of *Anspruch*, indicates that the initial human attitude is that of listening: "Mortals speak insofar as they listen. . . . Their listening draws from the command of the difference what it brings out as sounding word. This speaking that listens and accepts is responding (*Entsprechung*)" (*PLT*, 209). This response belongs and listens (*gehören*) to difference, already rewritten and hyphenated by Heidegger, the *Unter-Schied*, which evades not only the Greco-Latin cognates in which the English and French translations slip but also displaces the old writing of difference, its insufficient articulation as the anti-, the opposition, the limit, the (same's) other, etc. Notwithstanding the references to Derrida's reading of Heidegger, I am less interested in tracing here perhaps an antecedent to Derrida's *différance* or in measuring the change in stakes and procedures between the Heideggerian hyphen and the Derridean silent rewriting of *e* into *a* than in discerning how and by what procedures the call of difference can matter at all, how it can have any meaning and thus produce meaning itself, how, in other words, it can be heard and brought into words.

Heidegger makes clear that the thought's response draws from difference, that whatever it can bring into words comes from the spatio-temporal play of difference. However, the very drawing from difference, the writing or sounding into words, occurs because of the nature of the response, of the *Ent-sprechung*. To the extent that this word encodes the Heideggerian "hermeneutics" of otherness, not as interpretation but rather as letting-be, a listening response escaping the polarity of the passive and the active into the modality of the middle voice, it also indicates an inflection of difference. Even though Heidegger's text puts the stress expressly on the play of difference, elaborating on its work in the scission between world and things, what allows for such distribution of emphases and, at the same time, inclines, tilts, or inflects them is the infold of thought into Being—*Dasein's* listening response figured here as the *Entsprechung*.

The modality of this inflection is barely discernible as the play of the prefix *ent-*, its oscillation between the meaning of "un," on the one hand, and "opposite," "toward," "in the face of," on

the other. *Ent-* indicates that the attentive response of thinking, which takes the form of language, unfolds out of the speaking or, better, of the saying, of language as such, in other words, from the saying of the differential event of manifestation. Such unfolding, however, folds in a way that gathers itself toward that from which it has been unfolding, and does so in a manner of a response, a resaying or after-saying (Heidegger employs in this context the verb *nachsagen*). This linguistic response can bring words only to the extent that it already infolds into the claim of the saying. This infolding of *entsprechen* into *ansprechen* outlines the way that language has already traversed, in the manner of an *Ur-sprung*, into words. From the correlation of the words that Heidegger uses to define language, it becomes clear that humans belong to language (*gehören*) in a way that makes this belonging equivalent to hearing (*hören*) the saying that addresses itself to them and claims their attention. The inscription of hearing into the human response, which belongs to language by virtue of its function as an after-saying, cannot be treated in terms of an inside-outside opposition, for it itself makes this paradigm possible. To put it briefly, *ge-hören*, another way in which the infold underwrites Heidegger's thought, defines the way something can belong (inside) or not belong (outside). To that extent, the folding analyzed here retraces and redresses Heidegger's earlier description of the bearing of *noein* toward the *legein* of the *logos*.

In this perspective, Heidegger's most controversial and best known formula for language: "*Das Wesen der Sprache: Die Sprache des Wesens*" (The being of language: the language of being), provides another instance of the infold's operation in his work.²⁵ Here the inflection, which deregularizes and deflects Heidegger's writing on difference, marks itself in the reversal of positions between *Sprache* and *Wesen* "prescribed" by the colon. The colon erases and displaces the word *is* and thus the metaphysical connotations lingering in the term *Being*. Heidegger's work intimates, then, that what lets language onto its way to words can be "sensed," though only according to a semiosis discrete from the play of signification, as an inflection, an incline, never positively or negatively registered by the laws regulating the production of meaning.

Even if the infold does not displace the center of gravity of the Heideggerian text from the hyphen opening difference, it nevertheless inflects its mechanics, the way in which difference produces meaning. This inflection, the bearing that it has on the differential operations themselves, can be perhaps explained in terms of giving sense and discernibility. In other words, what I am suggesting is that