

Introduction

Poetizing and Thinking

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The very gesture of thinking, Plato tells us in *Theatetus*, finds its origin in the experience of wondering (θαυμάζειν).¹ But to wonder at or about something is to experience its strangeness, its irregularity, or its difference. It is with the other that philosophy begins. What confronts us as other brings us to a perplexity that opens us to the experience of questioning as the very movement and dynamic of thinking itself. Pondering such strangeness, interrogating its anomalous disparity, we see how thinking not only begins in wonder at the other, but its every turn toward questioning is borne by such wondering as what makes it at all possible. In his 1955 Cerisy lecture “What Is That—Philosophy?” Heidegger put forward the claim that “the pathos of wonder, does not simply stand at the beginning of philosophy. . . . Wonder bears and thoroughly governs philosophy.”² But if otherness belongs to such wonder, then we might also say that otherness—in the sense of ineradicable alterity—likewise bears and thoroughly governs whatever philosophy might undertake. What is other belongs to philosophy as its ἀρχή and ruling origin, one that it does not, however, leave behind as it makes its way within the world. Rather, in recognizing what is other as intimately belonging to its origin, philosophy confronts otherness as having an essential relation to whatever constitutes its own and proper task. In this sense, philosophy not only requires its other in order to be itself, but it is precisely this relation to its other that allows philosophical questioning to attend to the questionability of all that is.

In this same Cerisy lecture about the sense and origin of philosophical thinking—and not by accident—Heidegger takes up the question about the relationship between thinking (*Denken*) and its other—poetizing (*Dichten*). He writes:

But since poetizing, when compared with thinking, stands in the service of language in a wholly other and exemplary way, our conversation, which thoughtfully pursues philosophy, is necessarily led to discuss the relation of thinking and poetizing. Between both, thinking and poetizing, there prevails a hidden affinity since in the service of language both use and squander language. At the same time, however, between both thinking and poetizing there subsists a chasm—for both “dwell on mountains farthest apart.”³

To think the chasm “between” thinking and poetizing means that we attune ourselves to the disparateness that attends this separation. Here, poetizing confronts thinking as its other. And yet in coming to experience the separation between them, we cannot help but encounter a certain affinity between thinking and poetizing as well, an affinity that emerges in and through the chasm that divides them. As Heidegger expresses it, “[W]hat is said in poetizing and what is said in thinking are never identical; but they are at times the same—namely, when the chasm between poetizing, and thinking gapes purely and decisively.”⁴ Both poetizing and thinking open a pathway into being, letting the unconcealment of being happen precisely in and as a concealment and a withdrawal. Moreover, both poetizing and thinking open us to language in an originary way, whereby we come to experience language less as a tool or as an instrument for communication than as “the clearing-concealing advent of being itself.”⁵ Yet here we also come to see that poetizing makes communication ever more difficult, since its very manner of presenting words undermines their clarity and stability and renders them ever more obscure. In this way, we can perhaps find an echo of the original sense of the German term *dichten* (poetizing) with its roots in the adjective *dicht*. Poetry “thickens” language, making it “dense” and difficult to penetrate (*dicht machen*), sometimes closing off its meaning in dense clusters that become almost watertight (*dichthalten*).

Yet at the same time poetry beckons us to tarry awhile amid its dense, impenetrable word clusters, offering its hospitality to those readers/listeners who are patient enough to attend to its playful commerce with

language. We might even say that in the experience of its thick, dense, or close-grained (*dicht*) dictions, we begin to let go of our ordinary relationship to language in its instrumental properties and prepare ourselves for a more fundamental experience with the essence of language. To be able to enter into this experience, however, signifies that we refrain from collapsing language into “meaning” so that we might begin to hear the soundings of its rhythms, modulations, resonances, tones, and timbres. Responding to these soundings, entering into the sheer strangeness of their inflections, we resist the impulse to flatten out the difference enunciated in poetic speech and instead begin to attend to what Heidegger calls “the thrust into the extraordinary” (*Un-geheure*).⁶ It is in this space of difference cleaved out by the soundings of poetic speech that we begin to hear “the speaking of language” (*das Sprechen der Sprache*). But again, to hear such speaking in its proper and authentic sense means to liberate language from mere grammar, logic, and communicative expression. Such an experience with language, attuned to both its poetic and thinkerly resonances, likewise means that we grasp Heidegger’s insight that “it is not we who have language; rather, language has us, in a certain sense.”⁷ When we attempt to think poetizing as mere poesy and reduce it to a literary genre or a historical style, we miss the full force of language’s originary power. But it is precisely poetry’s relation to the origin that thinking brings into question. Heidegger holds that “language is the supreme event of human existence” and it is in the poem that language properly occurs (*ereignet sich*).⁸ He goes on to relate: “Poetizing is the saying of the un-concealment of beings.”⁹ In thus making manifest the hidden realm of being’s appearance in the world, poetizing opens us to the “world-forming power” of the word. For Heidegger, “originary language is the language of poetry.”¹⁰ In its essence, language is poetry and poetry in its essence is the fundamental happening of language.¹¹ In a word, “poetizing is the origin of language.”¹²

In his very first lecture course on Hölderlin from WS 1934/35, Heidegger finds a “clue” to the meaning of poetizing as a “making manifest.” Going back to the semantic field of the Old High German term *tithon*, which he traces back to the Latin word *dicere*, Heidegger maintains that *dichten* shares “the same root as the Greek *deiknymi*. It means to show, to make something visible, to make it manifest—not just in general, but by way of a specific pointing.”¹³ Only later does *dichten* get narrowed down to mean “writerly composition” or “versifying according to poetic conventions.” But what does *dichten* come to mean philosophically? And how might reflecting on its essential meaning help to open philosophy’s own relation

to language? Within the German philosophical tradition since Kant there emerges a profound and compelling dialogue about the meaning of poetic language for philosophy. In the work of Hölderlin, Schiller, Fichte, Hegel, Nietzsche, Kommerell, Gadamer, and Celan, we come to encounter many different pathways into the question of poetry's significance for philosophical thinking. In their different ways these philosophers keep alive the differences that separate poetry and philosophy, even as they try to preserve these differences as the site for a more originary consideration of their sameness. Following Heidegger, we could even go so far as to say that it is precisely the chasm between poetry and philosophy that opens us to the need for a thoughtful dialogue about their relation. Any attempt to define each—either apart from or in harmony with the other—would prove fruitless, since it is the impossible con- and dis-junction of this pair that commands our attention. Any attempts to explain “poetry” or “philosophy,” “as if they were fixed domains in themselves,” shatter against the sheer questionability and enduring mystery of their relation.¹⁴ In Heidegger's words, “[T]here is to be sure, something ambiguous and obscure concerning the inner, essential relation between poetizing, and thinking.”¹⁵ We could then say perhaps that there can be no external measure by which to gauge the proper relation between poetizing and thinking. On the contrary, it is by attending to the chasm, *Kluft*, cleft, or *Spalte* that separates them, that we come to reflect upon the enigma of what Hölderlin terms their “harmonious contrariety” (*Harmoniscentgegensetzung*).¹⁶

If there could be something like a poetic measure for thinking, then perhaps we might situate it in an abyssal separation that would allow for a disjunctive unity that might abide between thinking and poetizing. Such a measure would attend to what remains unsaid—perhaps even what remains unspeakable—in the language spoken by poetry. In his ode “Rousseau,” Hölderlin comes to understand poetizing as the beckoning intimations (*Winke*) of the gods.¹⁷ Following the trace of Hölderlin's insights, Heidegger imagines “poetizing as the beckoning shrouded in the word.”¹⁸ Here, we might warrant that it is in poetic language that the gods beckon us to heed what remains unsaid in that which comes to be said poetically. Poetic language brings us into the sphere of mystery, ambiguity, and enigma—but not as a mere gesture of obstruction or oblivion concerning what always remains obscure. In Heraclitus Fragment B 93, we find a hinting intimation of such mysterious beckoning, one that belongs preeminently to the gods themselves:

ὁ ἄναξ οὐδὲ τὸ μαντεῖόν ἐστι τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς οὔτε λέγει οὔτε κρύπτει ἀλλὰ σημαίνει

(The Lord, whose oracle is at Delphi [the god Apollo], neither says, nor does he conceal, but rather intimates in beckoning [*winkt*]).¹⁹

As Heidegger understands it, “originary saying neither renders things immediately manifest nor does it simply conceal them altogether. Rather, this saying is both together in one, and as this one is a beckoning where . . . the conflictual sways to the harmony, which it is, and the harmony to the conflict within which it alone sways.”²⁰

When we here try to offer some modest thoughts on the relation of poetry and philosophy in terms of poetizing and thinking, then it can only be understood against this Heraclitean insight about the unity-in-conflict that echoes in each. We do not take poetry or philosophy as different expressions of language with their own regional domains, but rather as manifestations or ways of revealing the very event of language (*Ereignis*) that appropriates us (*uns an-eignet*) to how being occurs (*sich ereignet*). Here language neither describes this event, nor prepares it; neither does it speak to the event itself. Rather, poetic language speaks out of the event (*vom Ereignis*), from it, and of it as being’s proper (*eigene*) way of essencing. As such, language is not a human invention, but a way of “saying” or “showing” how and that being is. Human language constitutes a response to being’s originary saying, but one that belongs to such saying as what is granted or addressed to humans (*Zuspruch*) by language (*Sprache*).²¹ But humans of course fail to respond to this address in a correspondingly originary way, instead grasping at language as a mere “medium” of communication in contrived systems of signs, codes, words, and expressions. What we find in poetry is the unfolding of the very momentum of language as an originary opening up and emergence that does not fit neatly into the metaphysical encasements of presence and representation. Poetry’s dense and thickened (*dicht*) kind of saying prevents humans from any smooth and effortless appropriation of its language. Instead, poetizing enacts a form of saying that allows us to linger in its density and, in this way, provokes a corresponding possibility of thinking that might attune us to another experience with language than one of signification and representation.

Against the propositional language of statements, poetic language invites us to heed the pauses, the interruptions, and the caesurae that call us to

attend to what is not said or can never be said in language. It brings our attention to the fissures of speech that break open a path into the abyssal ground or, rather, non-ground of being. Perhaps no modern poet is as attuned to this intense concentration of language as an abyssal trace as Paul Celan. In his “Meridian” speech, Celan speaks of the abyss that opens onto “the frightful falling silent” of the poem.²² Nietzsche too speaks of the silent force of language as that which harbors in itself the power of what cannot be said. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* he relays the story of Zarathustra’s confrontation with the empty speechifying of the marketplace (especially in Zarathustra’s own attempts to “say” the truth of the death of God, the transhuman, and of remaining true to the earth). As the story unfolds, Zarathustra becomes more disenchanted with the language of doctrines, teachings, (*Lehre*) and proclamations—and abandons his role as “teacher” (*Lehrer*). In the aftermath of his turn away from the language of the marketplace, he then begins to convalesce from the metaphysics of philosophical assertion and retreats to the silence of a “voiceless” sanctuary where he can listen to the stillness of “the stillest hour.” The German term that Nietzsche employs here—*Stille*—needs to be heard as “silent stillness,” but also as that which has something secretive attached to it. The language of eternal return—which cannot be “said”—belongs to the language of *Stille*. Hence, in a work that undermines spoken language through the idiom of the written and purports to offer “speeches” of its protagonist, Nietzsche turns to the language of silence for a way to “communicate” the thought of eternal return. It is in this way that the voice of silence “speaks” to Zarathustra at the end of Part Two:

It is the stillest words that bring the storm. Thoughts that come on dove’s feet steer the world.²³

Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* is part of a long tradition in German thinking going back to Meister Eckhart that privileges silence as the very heart of language. In one of his sermons, Eckhart speaks of the soul’s receptivity toward “the word of God,” which requires of us a letting go of images, likenesses, words, and things. In this stance of detachment, Eckhart relates, there “in the midst of silence was in-stilled within me a concealed word.”²⁴ In his poem “You be like you” (1967), Celan takes up Eckhart’s words concerning silence and stillness and juxtaposes them with texts from the biblical prophet Isaiah and from the Kabbala—precisely in 1967 against the political realities of the Six Day War that shaped his “Andenken” of Jerusalem.²⁵ In the labyrinthine allusions that proliferate throughout this poem, we find a reference to the

first two words from Isaiah 60:1: “kumi ori” (Hebrew), which Eckhart had translated into Latin as “surge illuminare” (Rise up, shine).²⁶ In his private notebooks Celan offered this link: “kumi ori: it makes itself plain in what is most reticent.”²⁷ For Celan, poetry emerges from the dialogue between language and silence, and in the otherness that binds them together in an impossible separation. So much of Celan’s poetry attempts to bring to language the silence that can never be spoken, which remains unsaid—and yet precisely on that account demands that it be said, if only despairingly, in an idiom of silence, withdrawal, voicelessness, and reticence. Hölderlin would express it this way: “This is a law of fate/ . . . That when the silence returns, there shall also be a language.”²⁸

Heidegger too was attuned to the poetics of silence. In his lectures on Hölderlin, Heidegger points to poetry’s power “to leave the unsayable unsaid, and to do so in and through its saying.”²⁹ He goes on to add: “If the essence of truth is to be sought in the revelation of beings, then concealment and veiling prove to be a particular way of manifesting that is proper to revelation.” We could also say that this same revelatory power of concealment belongs to thinking as well. Heidegger underlines this tension in his essay “Recollection in Metaphysics” (1941), where he writes: “The thinker can never say what is most proper to him. It must remain unsaid, because the sayable word receives its determination from what is unsayable. What is most proper to a thinker is not, however, something that he possesses; rather, it is the property of being.”³⁰ To situate language in silence, as Heidegger does here, means to reflect on language’s proper site. But how would we be properly able to situate it in relation to this site? And what might this situating call for in terms of our comportment and openness to the claim that such a site makes upon us? Were we to address these questions in a measured way, we would need to trace them through the absences of silence alluded to in Eckhart, Hölderlin, and Celan. It is in the language of the poets, in their dialogue with the thinkers, that this situating emerges. Again, we find a hint for thinking this relation in Heidegger’s encounter with Hölderlin. In “. . . poetically dwells the human being,” Heidegger proposes that we conceive of poetizing as a measure-taking, and indeed one “by which the human being first receives the measure for the expanse of its being.”³¹ Only the measure-taking of the poet “can gauge the essence of the human,” Heidegger tells us. But the measure-taking of what the poet can bring to language is never to be reduced to what can be said. Poetic measure, like language itself, “is grounded in silence. Silence is the most concealed form of holding-the-measure.”³² In its attunement to the silence

of language and the absence of any ready-made measure that might guide our actions, “poetizing lets us dwell properly.”³³ Moreover, “poetizing finds the essence of dwelling. . . . Poetizing and dwelling belong together.”³⁴ It is as poetizing that language grants us a site for dwelling, since poetizing in its essence is nothing other than *ethos*. In his Heraclitus lectures of SS 1944, Heidegger acknowledges: “*Ethos* means dwelling, sojourn (*Aufenthalt*). We say: it is the dwelling of the human being, its sojourn in the midst of beings as a whole.”³⁵

To think of poetry as *ethos* involves rethinking language as something other than a human possession, which entails understanding it as the site of a dwelling where we come to habituate ourselves to the enigma of what human life means. Poetry so understood would then be something other than metrical verse or the soundings of tercets in cadence and rhyme. Here, poetry would enact a certain kind of attunement that would be attentive to the unique, singular, nonrepeatable event of language that opens itself to us as that which claims us and to which we are bidden to respond. In its responsiveness to this event, poetry opens the human being to a responsibility that is not grounded in rules, directives, laws, or precepts but, rather, entails what Celan calls “a waiting for the appeal (*Zuspruch*) of language (*Sprache*).”³⁶ Drawing on Heidegger’s claim that “correspondence (*Entsprechung*) to the being of beings always remains our abode (*Aufenthalt*),”³⁷ Celan writes: “Language, above all, in the poem, is *ethos*—*ethos* as fateful projection of truth.” The language of the poem offers a site for the dwelling of the human; in this way it helps humans to respond to the depredations of speech that pervade so much of modern communication. Celan writes to Werner Weber in 1960 about what he sees as the assault upon poetic language in the burgeoning complex of technical life:

We already have a cybernetic form of lyric poetry. Soon we will also have—long live “logical consistency”!—a lyrical cybernetics.

No more language, no more conversation—no, only Informatics, word systems with exact specifications of the wave-lengths for “reception.”³⁸

In his own time, Hölderlin (like Celan) concerned himself with the fate of language and the inability of humans to hear its word. Reflecting on the being-historical significance of this plight, Heidegger comes to think this whole relation to language through Hölderlin’s notion of “homecoming,”

and “poetic dwelling”—what Celan under a quite different set of concerns would call “ethos.” As Heidegger put it, “Hölderlin’s poetizing abides in its care for ‘Homecoming.’ It is the care for founding the site for the poetic dwelling of humans, the patient waiting for rescue in this earthly sojourn (*Aufenthalt*).”³⁹

In *Philosophers and Their Poets*, we have sought to bring together a wide range of essays that address the diverse concerns of several German philosophers from Fichte to Gadamer concerning the relation of poetic language to philosophy. In gathering these essays we have sought to explore different possibilities of an ethical relation to language opened up by poets, one that challenges any notion of ethics as residing in subjective volition or the behavior of an autonomous agent. Rather, by pursuing the strange and uncanny conversation between philosophers and their poets, we have attempted to raise the question of the ethicality of language itself. In Celan’s understanding of language as *ethos*, in Hölderlin’s poetizing of homecoming as a way of safeguarding the mystery, in Heidegger’s thinking of *ethos* as poetic dwelling, and in Gadamer’s grasp of poetry and hermeneutic philosophy as “both pursuing an interpretation (*Deut*) that points (*deutet*) into the open,” we find ways of opening toward the silent, concealed force of language that challenges us to rethink our sense of the ethical.⁴⁰

Yet there is an inevitable tension in the way poetic verse speaks to and from the *ethos* of language and its ethicality. Like an ancient oracle, the poet’s riddling, enigmatic inflections come to us as a call and a provocation. Sometimes the call is direct. One thinks here of Rilke’s bold, unequivocal entreaty from “Archaic Torso of Apollo” where, from out of its gleaming marble surface, the headless stone

bursts forth through its confines
like a star . . .

and announces: “You must change your life.”⁴¹ At other times, however, the poetic call itself becomes oracular—sent like a “message in a bottle” (*Flaschenpost*) to a future, nameless addressee “in the—not always greatly hopeful—belief that somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land.”⁴² Theodor Adorno famously proclaimed: “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.”⁴³ But he also proposed an ethical response to such a condition:

A new categorical imperative has been imposed by Hitler on unfree humankind: to arrange their thoughts and actions so

that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen.⁴⁴

Yet Celan confronted Adorno's challenge by writing poetry ever mindful of the very barbarism that sought to silence it. And he did so through his understanding of language as the *ethos* from which any possible response could be made. In the face of the banality of "ethical" language during the Third Reich and against its tragic inadequacy to address the enormity of its failure, Celan proffered his own verse as a poetic *ethos* of language. He called for a "Breathturn" that would put into question the tradition of aesthetics that he believed had transmogrified poetic language by detaching it from ethical life. Nonetheless, Celan refrained from offering any ethical pronouncements of his own, given how devastatingly inadequate the "ethical" blatherings of postwar German *mea culpas* had proved to be. And yet his poetry speaks deeply to a hope that might emerge on the other side of history—in what Heidegger called "an other beginning." Such a beginning could only emerge, Celan seems to tell us, if we come to cast our hopes for what is to come in nets that are weighted down by the burden of a remembrance. Only in this way, attuned to the pain of those whose suffering can never be *aufgehoben* in the unfolding of history, can we ever begin to imagine what the future might hold. Addressing this hope in the ethicality of a language tinged with the sense of the uncanniness/*Unheimlichkeit* of speech, Celan sends out his "message in a bottle" that offers its own poetic measure for what cannot be said in the language of the concept:

Into rivers north of the future
I cast out the net, which you
hesitantly weight
with stone-engraved
shadows.⁴⁵

The essays in this volume all address the power of poetic language in its conversation with German philosophy.

The collection begins with a focus on contributions made by German philosophers from the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Perhaps appropriately, Chapter 1 presents a late-eighteenth-century contribution to what, in Plato's time, was already considered an old "quarrel between philosophy and poetry."⁴⁶ In her "On the Poetical Nature of Philosophical Writings: A Controversy over Style between Schiller and Fichte," Maria

del Rosario Acosta López takes up a debate between Friedrich Schiller and Johann Gottlieb Fichte about the character, relation, and difference of poetical and philosophical writing that arose in correspondence between the two when Schiller rejected a piece by Fichte for Schiller's journal, *die Horen*. Fichte, according to Acosta, believed that Schiller's rationale for rejection was simply a matter of the style (*Manier*) of his exposition. While Schiller's criticism of Fichte did, indeed, pertain to style, for Schiller this is no superficial matter. Quite to the contrary, Schiller's criticism turns on a disagreement with Fichte about nothing less than the vocation of the human being (*Mensch*). Whereas Fichte believes that the vocation of the human being culminates in a moral autonomy of reason free of the sensible, Schiller, by contrast, argues that the vocation of the human being, while moral, culminates in the reciprocal action of reason and sensibility. "To Schiller," Acosta explains, "true moral freedom is aesthetic freedom, that is, one in which a reciprocal action between both aspects of human nature has been achieved and secured."⁴⁷ Schiller's criticism is, moreover, closely related to the matter of *philosophical* style. For Schiller, as Acosta argues, the vocation of philosophy is not achieved by abstract conceptuality that is purified of all sensible images—work that may be performed by what Schiller calls the "*Brotgelehrte*," academics in it for the pay and, by implication, more so than for the advancement of knowledge. Rather, philosophy is achieved in what he calls *presentative (darstellende) writing*, a form of writing in which concept and image are in reciprocal relation that achieves an organic whole and, thus, is able to address the reader as a whole person.

This volume includes, as a companion to Acosta's contribution, chapter 2, an original translation by Christopher Turner of the very correspondence between Fichte and Schiller at issue. The remarkable correspondence begins with a letter from Fichte to Schiller that enclosed the piece he intended to contribute to Schiller's journal, *die Horen*, from June 21, 1795. The first lines of Schiller's letter to Fichte in response from June 24, 1795, are the ones that set the exchange in motion:

As much as the sight of your manuscript pleased me, dear friend, and as loathe as am I to do without a contribution that was already entirely and confidently counted on for the next installment of *die Horen*, I nevertheless find myself compelled to send it back.

Fichte, as one might imagine, was not entirely pleased.

Chapter 3 focuses on Hegel's contributions to the relation of poetic language to philosophy. In his "Hegel, Romantic Art, and the Unfinished Task of the Poetic Word," Theodore George challenges the common view of Hegel's so-called end of art thesis. On this common view, Hegel holds that although both art and philosophy share in the speculative vocation to present truth, philosophy supersedes art in European modernity, so that the forms of art achieved in European modernity (Hegel refers to them collectively as "Romantic" art) are left with no real speculative significance. George argues that this common view of Hegel's "end of art" thesis fails to appreciate the nuance and richness of Hegel's approach to Romantic art. Hegel believes that Romantic art comes to present truth in a novel manner, thanks, in particular, to the role played by language in Romantic art. For Hegel, all art, regardless of form, is constituted as a "work of language." Whereas Hegel believes classical art to have been a work of language that founds (*stiftet*) ancient society, Romantic art, by contrast, is a work that provides only a supplement to any possible foundation. As such a supplement, Romantic art presents truth always only incompletely, in deferral. Yet, as George understands Hegel, this limitation is not a deficiency, but, on the contrary, precisely brings into focus the relevance of Romantic art, and, with this, important ethical dimensions of this relevance. George writes that Romantic art, "allows us to examine the possibilities for our inner lives and the dehiscence we experience in this interiority within modern society."⁴⁸

The next two chapters of the volume concern important but still too little understood aspects of Nietzsche's considerations of poetic language and its relation to philosophy. In chapter 4, Babette Babich turns to Nietzsche's treatment of the ancient Greek lyric poet Archilochus. In this chapter, entitled "Who Is Nietzsche's Archilochus? Rhythm and the Problem of the Subject," Babich observes that Nietzsche has often been associated with poetry but that Nietzsche's relation to the tradition of lyric poetry is complex. While Nietzsche has been taken up in reference to poets as diverse as Pindar, Schiller, and Emerson, his considerations of Archilochus has received less attention. In this chapter, Babich focuses on Nietzsche's approach to Archilochus in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Her examination brings into focus the theme of the lyric subject, and, importantly, the relation of word and music as Nietzsche treats it under the auspices of what he calls quantifying rhythm.

In chapter 5, "Untimely Meditations on Nietzsche's Poet-Heroes," Kalliopi Nikolopoulou examines the role played in Nietzsche's philosophy by a poetic motif, which she refers to as a Homeric heroic ideal.⁴⁹ Nikolopoulou recognizes that her treatment of Nietzsche's stress on this poetic

motif is what Nietzsche himself might have referred to as “untimely.” While much of the reception of Nietzsche in postmodernity has been laudatory, his stress on the ideal of heroism has been widely questioned, criticized, and disavowed. Yet, as Nikolopoulou argues, Nietzsche’s invocation of this heroic ideal comprises a decisive feature of Nietzsche’s efforts to make an untimely intervention against what he perceived as the nihilism of his times. Nikolopoulou begins with an overview of the aesthetics of heroism in Homer and the legacy of this aesthetics in Plato and Aristotle. Here, heroism is a matter of beautiful death, which, as Nikolopoulou argues, may be grasped as an experience of untimeliness. Turning to Nietzsche, Nikolopoulou traces Nietzsche’s debts to this Homeric aesthetics of heroism in *The Birth of Tragedy* in his characterization of Apollo (and the art impulse he names for the Greek God). She argues, in turn, that the Homeric aesthetics of heroism also plays a role in Nietzsche’s association of poets, such as Aeschylus, Archilochus, and Pindar, with a sense of vocation that joins them to something greater than themselves. Nikolopoulou concludes her considerations of the role played by an aesthetics of heroism in *The Birth of Tragedy* in reference to Nietzsche’s portrait of Euripides as an ambivalent figure, and, indeed, one whose ambivalence may be reflected in Nietzsche’s own relation to ancient Greek tragedy.

These essays on late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century German philosophers are followed by three chapters on Heidegger’s pathbreaking contributions to questions about the relation of poetic language and philosophy. In chapter 6, “Heidegger’s *Ister Lectures*: Ethical Dwelling in the (Foreign) Homeland,” Charles Bambach explores the relationship between language and ethics in Heidegger by offering a reading of the SS 1942 lecture course “Hölderlin’s Hymn ‘The Ister.’” Drawing on Hölderlin’s Böhlendorff letter from 1801 and its telling distinction between the native/foreign, Heidegger explores the Hölderlinian *topos* of homecoming as “the future of the historical essence of the German *Volk*.” For Heidegger, “poetry is the fundamental event of being as such”; it opens human beings to the possibility of a historical homecoming. Bambach explores this Heideggerian *topos* of homecoming by situating it against the work of two poets whom Heidegger privileges above all others—Sophocles and Hölderlin. What Heidegger takes up in the *Ister* lectures is the question concerning the possibility of authentic poetic dwelling, a question he addresses by examining the tragic tension within Sophocles’s *Antigone*. In the uncanny fate of Antigone, Heidegger finds the poetic grammar for embracing the paradox that marks the human sojourn upon the earth. As Bambach argues, in Antigone’s decision to expose herself

knowingly to the uncanny strangeness at the heart of existence, she risks losing her sense of home. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely this risk of losing the home that enables a more authentic form of poetic homecoming, one that connects her to hearth and earth. In risking her home in this way, Antigone offers a model for Hölderlin's own sense of poetic homecoming. On Heidegger's reading, it is this opening up to the uncanny/unhomely that offers a possible pathway for a futural German homecoming. Hence, for Heidegger, in her character as that singular figure who becomes homely in becoming unhomely, Antigone poetizes the very possibility of poetry, which decides on "the potential of human beings for being homely" (HHI: 121/GA 53:151). In exploring the tension between these oppositional forces in Greek tragedy—precisely by way of an interpretation of Hölderlin—Bambach's essay situates such thinking in terms of the foreign/native dyad as one that both shapes and haunts Heidegger's notion of ethical dwelling.

In chapter 7, "Remains: Heidegger and Hölderlin amid the Ruins of Time," William McNeill examines the significance of Heidegger's celebrated encounter with Hölderlin for Heidegger's elucidation of the relation of language and time. McNeill takes his point of departure from the observation that, for Hölderlin, the essence of time is that it tears: time tears us from the present, opening up a relation both to what exceeds the mortal and to a properly mortal relation to the dead in remembrance. Focused first on Heidegger's 1936 "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry," McNeill argues that on Heidegger's elucidation of Hölderlin, poetizing is an event of commemorative remembrance that names what remains in the tears of time. Here, however, poetizing does not name something that is already present but, instead, comprises the event that first institutes or founds the world it commemorates. As McNeill argues, Heidegger's engagement with Hölderlin thus points to a shift in his earlier view of the relation of language and time. In the earlier *Being and Time*, Heidegger holds that *Dasein* is the disclosedness, on the basis of which language is possible. Now, with his engagement with Hölderlin, Heidegger suggests that language, as poetizing, is what allows for disclosedness in the first place. McNeill takes up Heidegger's 1941–42 interpretative engagement with Hölderlin's hymn "Remembrance" to argue, in turn, that for Heidegger remembrance is futural. For Heidegger, remembrance is a greeting, a thoughtful turn to what is greeted, that allows it to appear in its own being as what it is. When remembrance accomplishes such a greeting, however, what is greeted is no longer simply something worn out or finished, but comes into focus as a "buried treasure" indexed to the future.⁵⁰

Chapter 8, “The Poietic Momentum of Thought: Heidegger and Poetry,” by Krzysztof Ziarek, shifts focus from Heidegger’s intensive encounter with Hölderlin’s poetry to the significance of Heidegger’s encounters with poetic texts and artworks taken on the whole. Ziarek argues that Heidegger’s interpretive engagements with poetic texts and artworks are to be grasped as so many attempts to enact a certain experience of language—a more original, nonmetaphysical language of what Heidegger calls “thinking,” rather than as readings or interpretations. Ziarek, following Heidegger, argues that this experience of language may be grasped as a matter of the poietic (or, as this translates Heidegger’s German, *dichterisch*) word. With this, the word is to be taken not as a sign that refers to or signifies something, but, more originally, as a momentum, a movement of the openness, which first grants being to what the word names, and which thus allows what the word names to appear as what it is. While Heidegger believes this poietic possibility to belong to language as such, he holds that this possibility is epitomized by both poetizing and thinking. Whereas, in poetry, the poietic momentum of language remains bound to an image, however, in thinking this momentum is released without bounds onto the openness that first grants being to what is named. Based on this, as Ziarek argues, the task of thinking requires that we extend beyond the norms of philosophy that focus on calculative rationality—propositions, arguments, proofs—turning our focus, instead, to a textuality of language that opens onto what cannot be conceived in advance. Ziarek recommends, finally, that such thinking is also precisely what is called for in our encounters with Heidegger.

The final three essays of the volume draw attention to important further twentieth-century contributions to questions of the relation of poetic language and philosophy. In chapter 9, “Learning from Poetry: On Philosophy, Poetry, and T. S. Eliot’s *Burnt Norton*,” Günter Figal returns to the “old quarrel between philosophy and poetry” that opens the volume in reference to a close reading of the first poem in T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* mentioned in Figal’s title. Figal reminds us that, beginning with Plato, philosophers in the Western tradition have held that only philosophers, and not poets, seek to learn how things truly are. If this pretense has been brought into doubt since Nietzsche, Figal argues that philosophers such as Heidegger and Gadamer uphold (in different ways) the validity of the philosophical claim to truth but concede that the pursuit of this claim must be “delegated to poetry.”⁵¹ Figal, for his part, proposes to inquire whether poetry is true,⁵² not through a conceptual elucidation of truth, but, instead, through an attentive reading of a specific poem, *Burnt Norton*, to

see whether and, if so, how truth is thereby disclosed. Figal contends that although Eliot's poem appears to refer to something (a manor house in Southwest England), the poem rather seeks to give voice to a world—Eliot calls it a “first world”—that is present through the “grace of sense” alone, freed from our practical interests. Figal argues that the poem allows the world to appear as it would if the tension between past and future that animates practical life were suspended. From this, Figal concludes that the poem is not deceiving, as Plato claims, but is nevertheless beyond truth—if truth is taken, either theoretically or practically, to refer to a factual or possible world as it were outside the poem. Instead, the poem stands as an “objectification” of sense itself, one whose order is discernable but always indeterminate, always allowing (and requiring) further interpretation to be brought, each time only partially, into focus.

In chapter 10, “An ‘Almost Imperceptible Breathturn’: Gadamer on Celan,” Gert-Jan van der Heiden takes up Hans-Georg Gadamer's celebrated (and also sometimes criticized) interpretive engagement with the poet Paul Celan. Van der Heiden maintains that Gadamer's encounter with Celan may be grasped as a “dialogue between philosophy and poetry,” in which our understanding of basic tenets of philosophical hermeneutics is brought into question and even transformed by Celan. As van der Heiden argues, the lines of this transformation may be drawn in reference to three keywords of Gadamer's approach to Celan: moment, reserve, and hope. Van der Heiden observes that Gadamer, in his philosophical hermeneutics, introduces the keyword *moment* to describe the completion of the enactment of an interpretation, the moment as the moment when our efforts allow the text to speak to us as a “you.” Yet, Celan suggests that his poetry remains marked by a radical incapacity that brings Gadamer's conception into question: for Celan, the possibility that interpretation will lead a poem to speak as a “you” is not a given; it remains possible that such a possibility is not possible after all. Accordingly, as van der Heiden argues, the aim of Celan's poetry is not to illuminate such a “you” in the light of the public sphere, but, instead, to hold back in reserve, to speak with discretion so that this other remains in secret, retains privacy and the possibility of intimacy. And, in turn, Celan's poetry is oriented not so much by the trust that an interpretation will or even can allow this other to become familiar, but, much more tentatively, by the mere hope that the other can take place there at all. For Celan, as van der Heiden concludes, poetry is thus a breathturn, grasped as an inspiration that breaths into this other and, at the same time, depends on this other for its breath.

Chapter 11, the final chapter of volume, is comprised of an original translation of Max Kommerell, “Hölderlin’s Empedocles Poems,” by Margot Wieglus and Christopher Merwin. Perhaps more widely recognized in German scholarly quarters than in the Anglophone context, Max Kommerell (1902–1944) was a German poet, essayist, and critic. The reception of Kommerell is made complicated, first, by his participation in the circle of Stefan George in the 1920s, with which he broke in 1930; and, second, by dubious political commitments during the National Socialist period. Yet, Kommerell is an influential figure of the interwar period, known not only for his early association with the George circle, but also in connection with Walter Benjamin’s critique of his *Der Dichter als Führer in der deutschen Klassik* [*The Poet as Leader in the German Classical Age*] and, later, Celan’s interest in Benjamin’s critique of this work. Finally, Kommerell is also remembered for his opposition to Heidegger’s approach to Hölderlin. Presented here is Kommerell’s important essay on Hölderlin’s fragments of a drama, *The Death of Empedocles*, published as the final chapter in Kommerell’s *Geist und Buschstabe der Dichtung* [The Spirit and Letter of Poetry] (1939).

Notes

1. Plato, *Theatetus*, 155D.
2. Heidegger, GA, 11:22.
3. Heidegger, GA, 11:25–26. This phrase—to “dwell on mountains farthest apart”—comes from Hölderlin’s hymn “Patmos,” vv. 11–2.
4. Heidegger, GA, 8:21–22.
5. Heidegger, PM: 249/GA, 9:326.
6. Heidegger, GA, 5:56.
7. Heidegger, HGR: 24/GA 39:23.
8. Heidegger, EHP: 58/GA 4:40.
9. Heidegger, BW: 198/GA 5:61.
10. Heidegger, GA, 38:170.
11. Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Heideggers Philosophie der Kunst* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994), 334.
12. Heidegger, HGR: 69/GA 39:76.
13. Heidegger, HGR: 29/GA 39:29.
14. Heidegger, E: 285/GA 71:328.
15. Heidegger, GA, 52:5.
16. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters* trans. Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth (London: Penguin, 2009), 290–93/*Sämtliche Werke*, II, ed. Jochen Schmidt (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994), 543–45.

17. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (London: Penguin, 1998), 49–50.
18. Heidegger, HGR: 31/GA 39:32.
19. Heidegger, HGR: 114/GA 39:127.
20. Heidegger, HGR: 114/GA 39:127–28.
21. On the language of event, as *Ereignis*, see Krzysztof Ziarek, *Language after Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), esp. ch. 1.
22. Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke*, III (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), 195, 197.
23. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (London: Penguin, 1969), 168/*Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1930), 162.
24. Meister Eckhart, *Deutsche Predigten und Traktate*, ed. Josef Quint (Munich: Hanser, 1985), 416.
25. Paul Celan, *Selected Poems and Prose*, trans. John Felsteiner (New York: Norton, 2001), 322–23. In the condensed language of this poem we find allusions to Hölderlin's *Andenken* via Eckhart's Middle High German word *Gebugnis* (v.7), which denotes "memory."
26. Meister Eckhart, *Werke*, I (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2008), 165.
27. Paul Celan, *Mikrolithen sinds, Steinchen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005), 125.
28. Hölderlin, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, 212–13.
29. Heidegger, HGR: 108/GA 39:119.
30. Heidegger, GA, 6.2:442–43.
31. Heidegger, PLT: 222–23/GA 7: 200–202.
32. Heidegger, CP: 401/GA 65:510.
33. Heidegger, PLT: 215/GA 7:193.
34. Heidegger, PLT: 227/GA 7:206.
35. Heidegger, GA, 55:214.
36. Paul Celan, "Brief an Werner Weber," in "*Fremde Nähe*": *Celan als Übersetzer*, ed. Axel Gellhaus (Marbach: Schillergesellschaft, 1997), 398.
37. Heidegger, GA 11:20.
38. Celan, "*Fremde Nähe*," 398–99.
39. Heidegger, GA, 13:219.
40. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 72/*Gesammelte Werke* 8 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), 23–24.
41. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems*, trans. Susan Ranson and Marielle Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 82–83.
42. Paul Celan, *Selected Poems and Prose*, 396/*Gesammelte Werke* III, 186.
43. Theodor Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 34/*Gesammelte Schriften* 20 volumes (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), vol. 10 (1), 30.
44. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 365/*Gesammelte Schriften* 20 volumes (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), vol. 6, 358.

45. Paul Celan, *A Voice . . .*, trans. Muska Nagel (Orono, ME: Puckerbush Press, 1998), 82–83.
46. Plato, *Republic*, 607b.
47. Bambach and George, eds., *Philosophers and their Poets*, 27.
48. *Ibid.*, 80.
49. *Ibid.*, 116.
50. *Ibid.*, 177.
51. *Ibid.*, 203.
52. *Ibid.*, 204.

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