

April 2022

Reading and Understanding: A Defense of Heideggerian Hermeneutics and Philology

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Reading And Understanding: A Defense Of Heideggerian Hermeneutics And Philology

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Philosophy

by
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B.A., Miami University, 2020
May 2022

**The limits of my language are the limits of my world.
-Ludwig Wittgenstein**

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
I. The Case for Philology.....	5
II. Destruktion Outside the Ontological Hermeneutic.....	15
III. Poetry and Meaning.....	24
Heidegger and the Poets.....	34
IV. The Poet as Speaker: Responding to Foreseeable Critic.....	46
V. Conclusion.....	55
Works Cited.....	57
Vita.....	59

Abstract

This paper addresses methodologies espoused by the hermeneutic tradition begun under Martin Heidegger. I argue for the methodologies of Philology, Destruktion and the use of poetic language in order to understand and communicate fundamental truths about Dasein. I demonstrate that these methods provide us, hermeneutically, with a closer and more precise understanding than simple communication in common speech.

Introduction

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is a momentous name tied to the very core of continental philosophy. His work, spanning the entirety of the mid-twentieth century, would have an unspeakably large and prolific influence on the era of contemporary philosophy. Inseparable from even our ultramodern work in the discipline, Heidegger sits as a ghost overlooking the very essence of the current discipline of continental philosophy. His unique ideas would garner him praise across many different disciplines within and outside philosophy and his works would contribute to the very foundation of many prominent philosophical schools ranging from Object-Oriented Ontology to Post-Structuralism.

Heidegger was monumental in the bringing-forward– or to Heidegger, bringing-back– of the very question of *Being*. His focus, at least in his early writings, on ontology would propel him and his opus *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time) to a prime position before the eyes of the academy. Despite Heidegger's reputation in ontology, however, Heidegger was not excluded from the rising popularity of the interpretation and study of language that was occurring during the early to middle twentieth century. Trained in the discipline of philology, Heidegger never turns a blind eye to the relationship between language and thought nor does he abandon the importance of communication and interlocution in his theory of knowledge. What Heidegger leaves us with, throughout his career, is never a focus on language in itself, but instead a trove of works where he discusses his philosophy of language and leaves to the reader the artfulness of piecing them together.

Unfortunately for Heidegger, his lack of focus on the philosophy of language itself would be concurrent with one of the most important events in the history of the study of language: the rise of Structuralism. Structuralism would rise as the dominant linguistic paradigm during Heidegger's career, becoming a monolithic study seated at the heart of many of Europe's universities. Its influence would ride a wave that had begun with the "Linguistic Turn" attributed to Gottlob Frege and would soon ingrain itself into the episteme of western thought. Opponents across the English Channel—mostly students and scholars of Ludwig Wittgenstein, another philosopher associated with sharing the moniker of "most influential of the twentieth century" with Heidegger— would create Ordinary Language Philosophy, which would thrive and revolutionize the study of Pragmatics. On the continent, the French would receive both Heidegger and Structuralism, taking their own given affinities of many different schools and blending them into the grouping of ideas often called Post-Structuralism. Finally, in the United States, influenced greatly by Structuralism himself, Noam Chomsky and his Universal Grammar would become a longstanding and oft-viewed as insurmountable paradigm in the study of linguistics. Due to this, the philosophy of language espoused by Martin Heidegger falls into the shadows behind three famed schools.

This sidelining is by no fault Heidegger's own. Heidegger provided us with the first major innovations in hermeneutics since Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Schleiermacher as well as a corpus of texts on the use and meaning of non-literal and poetic language; aspects of speech and reading that are inescapable in our everyday lives, but yet often excluded from the realm of linguistic analysis within the

aforementioned schools. For this reason, I write this work.

In this work, I have one central goal: I will defend the hermeneutic method of the Heideggerian tradition by demonstrating that it provides us with its own unique, yet fundamental and imperative conclusions. Before we can begin to engage in contemporary debates such of semantic interpretation (For example, the debate between Truth-Conditional and Inferential-Role semantics), and before we can investigate the nature or compositionality and before we can even begin to stress the relationship of non-textual evidence in interpretation, we must answer one fundamental issue: Can language help us understand and communicate fundamental aspects of *Being*. In order for us to engage in these discussions, or even just to gauge the valence of a proposition, we must demonstrate that we can, with any certainty, learn from the act of reading. If that is possible, how is it, then, that we participate in that learning? I will demonstrate in this work that the hermeneutic tradition that Heidegger sets forth is capable of doing just that: allowing us to understand and communicate truths about *Being*.

In order to achieve this goal, I will provide four sections. The first section will discuss the first of two “tools” that Heidegger shows to us that are usable. The first tool is Philology as a method of interpretation. There I will demonstrate that the act of participating in Philology has the potentiality to show us changes in *Being*, thus allowing us to discuss *Being* in a way in which we would not previously be able to discuss. Next, I will provide our second “tool,” *Destruktion*. The most cryptic of the Heideggerian neologisms, I will investigate what *Destruktion* means as a method in a hermeneutic utilization. Third, I will discuss “die Poetisch.” I will demonstrate that poetic—that is

metaphorical— language holds a special place for Heidegger, and that not only does Heidegger demonstrate to us two “tools” that we have at our disposal for attempting to understand *Being*, we are also guided toward a method of helping us communicate those truths. Finally, I will entertain a reasonable objection to the contents of part III in part IV before concluding this work.

Before we begin, I would like to note that Heidegger has a complex and unique lexicon. He uses the term “understanding” [Verstehen] very sparingly. Instead, he favors a model of “unveiling,” “uncovering” or “exposing.” There will be a degree of asynchronicity caused by this, especially as we develop my exegesis and that of Heidegger’s closest student in his hermeneutic tradition. Hans-Georg Gadamer. Do not be alarmed, as we will make certain to reconcile any issues that arise.

I. The Case for Philology

**“The historian is a prophet looking backwards.”
-Friedrich Schlegel**

As we begin to investigate the fundamental questions of *Being*, in particular as we attempt to reach them through language in this work, we are confronted with a multitude of issues. Primarily, a fundamental lack of communication between the thinkers of *Being* and each individual Dasein that is naturally created from the confinement of each Dasein to their epoch by simple mortality. This obvious but yet unescapable issue is perhaps even more damaging to our investigation of the fundamental nature of *Being* than the centuries of philosophers sidelining the question of *Being* itself. Heidegger comments upon this issue in *Being and Time*, stating “Consequently, despite all its historiological interests and all its zeal for an Interpretation which is philologically 'objective' ["sachliche"], Dasein no longer understands the most elementary conditions which would alone enable it to go back to the past in a positive manner and make it productively its own" (Heidegger 24),

How is it then that we are not completely removed from access to a thinker whose life has ended millenia ago? Despite what seems like a nihilistic view towards what Dasein can achieve through a historical-linguistic lens, Heidegger was, himself, a philologist. It is no surprise that philological methods were used in his writings. However, what Heidegger unveils from his philological searching is far from the machinistic and predictable transliterations that arise from simply tracking the etiology of linguistic change from a proto-language to every-day language in an attempt to achieve the so-called “philologically objective.” Through his usage of philology, Heidegger seemingly

evades his own criticism, and as I will demonstrate, provides some extremely illuminating observations derived from the study of language.

Heidegger understands that certain changes reflect alterations in normativity. The Wittgenstinian maxim that “Language is use” is, of course, no stranger to Heidegger, however, Heidegger elucidates that if language alters over the course of its language-lifetime, particularly every-day language, then perhaps it may reflect changes in Being; that is, changes in language may reflect changes in the lives of the speakers of the language. In a collected work, titled *Early Greek Thinking* in English, Heidegger’s writings on the Greek language, mostly from lectures and *Festschriften*, are brought together in a way that allows the reader to glimpse into Heidegger’s process. Here, I will decipher how Heidegger unveils through his philological work, then provide a proof of my own, which should demonstrate that we can use Heidegger’s philological methodology in order to unveil.

In *Logos* from *Early Greek Thinking*, Heidegger begins with a very simple question: How does λέγειν, an everyday Greek word for saying or speaking, come to have that meaning? Especially in regard to the denotation of λέγειν, which is simply “to lay.” Its Latin transliteration is “Legere.” In German, we arrive at two common words from this Greek and Latin cognate pair: “Lesen” and “Legen” respectively. So the natural question that Heidegger investigates is how λέγειν, a word for gathering, comes to mean “to read.”

Heidegger begins in a very typical and unremarkable way. He examines λέγειν through its morphological permutations. He begins with the middle voice, which is λέγεσθαι, meaning to “lay oneself down in the gathering of rest.” Heidegger provides

one more permutation, λέχος, which is the locus in which one rests. Here, Heidegger notes a seemingly unremarkable word in the definition of λέγεσθαι, “gathering.” This word will be Heidegger’s key to this philological puzzle. He begins by stating “ To lay is to bring to lie. Thus, to lay is at the same time to place one thing besides another.” (Heidegger 61). To “lay” then, as in bringing things together. Immediately, Heidegger connects this gathering to a connotation of one of our German cognates that is found in his Alemanic dialect. “To lay is to gather [lesen]. The lesen better known to us, namely, the reading of something written, remains but one sort of gathering” (Heidegger 61). The “lesen” that Heidegger references aside from “reading” is the Alemanic term for “gathering the vintage.” That is, collecting the vintage and bringing it together to make wine.

We will return to “lesen” later in our discussion. Heidegger brings us now into our first major philosophical realization. “Λέγειν is to lay. Laying is the letting-lie-before-which-is-gathered-into-itself-- of that which comes together into presence” (Heidegger 63). There is much to analyze here. Anyone familiar with Heidegger will immediately be drawn to the use of the word “presence.” The use here is congruent with its use in Heidegger’s *Metaphysics of Presence*. Heidegger confirms this by stating “Saying and talking occur essentially as the letting-lie-together-before of everything which, laid in unconcealment, comes to presence. The original λέγειν, laying, unfolds itself early in a manner ruling everything unconcealed as saying and talking” (Heidegger 63). Here, we can see that λέγειν, that is now in its more modern sense, is speaking and saying-- is an act of presencing the concealed. By having the ability to presence the concealed through λέγειν and saying, we now have completed an

important step in unveiling what is concealed. We can confirm that we indeed have access to what is concealed, at least in its form of being concealed insofar as we can confirm that there is something concealed in which to unconceal.

This “letting-lie-before” that presences is fundamental to Heidegger and gives our first example of how philology can allow us to grasp at the fundamental questions of *Being*. Heidegger gives us

“[L]ike the letting-lie-before that gathers, saying receives its essential form from the unconcealment of that which lies together before us. But the unconcealing of the concealed into unconcealment is the very presencing of what is present. We call this the Being of beings” (Heidegger 64).

Right away, we are struck by the phrase “Being of beings.” In a search for tools that allow us to address fundamental questions of *Being*, how then, could one discount a tool that has brought us into the precipice of the Being of beings? The Being of beings is inherently tied to the realm of language. Without language, we do not have the ability to unconceal, that is to unveil, what is concealed or bring about what has the potentiality to become presenced as an event. Unconcealing is thus bound to the very nature of λέγειν. Λέγειν, having the definition of talking or speaking, then inherently binds the nature of understanding--that is unconcealing-- to the nature of language. Unconcealing what is concealed can only be done through the use of speaking, and speaking can only be used as gathering.

The gathering of thoughts to speak is one fundamental gathering as you let-lie-before your interlocutor the collection of thoughts that one has. In fact, Heidegger reinforces this by stating “ Saying is a letting-lie-together-before which gathers and is

gathered” (Heidegger 64). This creates a fundamental shift then, in the interpretation of λέγειν. Λέγειν no longer has a singular capacity, that is λέγειν can not fulfill the entirety of its definition alone. The unveiling that comes from the act of λέγειν exists not within the capacity of Dasein, but instead with Mitdasein. This predication of Mitdasein is extremely pivotal in our understanding of unconcealing, as it necessitates then that unveiling of the concealed can only truly be completed within the realm of Gemeinschaft, that is there must be a multitude of interlocutors in order to unconceal. This means then, for example, that Hermeneutic Circle is not an internal cycle, it requires multiple interlocutors to work.

So then, naturally, one would want to know what Mitdasein, λέγειν and the Hermeneutic circle have to do with speaking, if the Hermeneutic Circle is primarily for understanding a written text. We can now return to our other modern German cognate, “Lesen.” Lesen, as rooted in λέγειν, has a gathering and letting-lie-before. That is, you are gathering what was let-lie-before by the author of the work you are reading. You are gathering the words that were let-lie-before you by the gathering of the Author. This is, in a sense, an interlocution between Author and Reader. A gathering though, that is not guaranteed a perfect harvest of the vintage, as it is not always initially understood. This is not, however, a speaking, but instead a speaking-through that occurs. This speaking-through allows Dasein to, in a sense, overcome the epochal difference between Dasein and the Author. I will visit this topic later in the work, as Gadamer comments largely on this and his insertion would be inappropriate here.

The question still remains then, what speaking has to do with the Hermeneutic Circle. That answers lies within a piece of knowledge that is likely shared in every

Introduction to Philology course, a piece of knowledge that Heidegger was certainly aware of: The concept of reading, that is one where a reader gathers words from a text into the mind silently, is a far more contemporary invention than realized. The Greek that Heidegger is engaging with, that is of Heraclitus, was never read in this way. To the Ancient Greeks, reading was a communal activity with interlocution. A group of readers would come together and read a manuscript aloud--speaking and saying. The gathering of what-was-laid-before the Reader by the Author is gathered by *Gemeinschaft*; *Mitdasein*. The gathering was often interrupted by questions speckled by debate on interpretation. Each member is actively participating in the gathering instead of being a solitary member reacting to the gathering. The very interpretation of text is necessitated on interlocution in *Gemeinschaft*, therefore the unconcealing of what is concealed and the presencing of what is present can only be brought about through the prefix "mit" in *Mitdasein*.

This necessitation of togetherness is in itself a gathering. A gathering of *Dasein* into *Mitdasein* allows the gathering of what-was-let-lie-before to unveil itself and presence what is present. Gathering then, it would seem to Heidegger, would naturally have to take an extremely high degree of import if one is concerned with *Dasein* unconcealing what is concealed. The $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\varsigma$ of this gathering is the locus of the interlocution and becomes the very locus of presencing and unveiling. There is another fundamental issue of interlocution that we have yet to discuss. We have traveled through *Dasein*, the Reader and the Speaker, but not the other fundamental piece of interlocution: The Listener.

The original, but seemingly pedantic question that we must ask is: what is it that

makes one a Listener? Heidegger answers that it is indeed hearing, but not just the passive act of hearing. "Hearing is actually the gathering of oneself which composes itself on hearing the pronouncement and its claim. Hearing is primarily gathered Harkening*" (Heidegger 65).¹ The Listener participates in the gathering of what one Harks, that is, what one hears. One is the Listener when they gather the pronouncement of their interlocutor, who is letting-lie-before the Listener what they have gathered, and the Listener then gathers what was let-lie-before them via hearing. An active process is occurring, this is not a passive harkening, as one is gathering what they have heard. Heidegger uses a very clever double-entendre in order to elaborate more on what exactly is occurring in the harkening. He uses two identical german words, "Gehört," being the past-participle of the verb "to hear," *Gehören* and "Gehört," a word that when used in conjunction with dative pronouns indicates ownership or possession. For clarification, here are two examples:

"Ich hab' das schon gehört" Meaning literally "I already heard that."

"Das gehört (zu) Mir" Meaning literally "That belongs to me."

This double-entendre is important in further understanding proper hearing, that is, that which allows us to gather. When one hears something, *gehört*, that experience, phenomenologically, belongs (*gehört*) to the Listener. The Listener can then collect those experiences and let-lie-before what does lie before us, in the *λέχος*, This process is *ὁμολογείν*. To Heidegger, *ὁμολογείν* is the key. Heidegger states

¹ I have replaced translator Krell's original translation of "Hearkening" with "Harkening." The former is an antiquated form of the latter. Harkening is still largely antiquated, but still survives in common English use via hymns.

“Proper hearing occurs essentially in λέγειν as ὁμολογεῖν. This is consequently a λέγειν which lets lie before us whatever already lies together before us; which indeed lies there by virtue of a laying which concerns everything that lies together before us of itself. This exceptional laying is the λέγειν that comes to pass as λόγος” (Heidegger 66).

We see here now, when the Listener listens properly, we have a superlative λέγειν that can even allow us to begin to unveil what is concealed in regard to λόγος, that is, the highest form of natural law, which certainly governs its constituents that include *Being*. The use of interlocution allows an unprecedented amount of unveiling that is inaccessible without Mitdasein. Interlocution is clearly a primary way for presencing and unveiling what is present and thus bringing us closer to understanding.

We can see now, tracing the etymology of just a singular word used by a writer of *Being*, that we have opened an anthology of new and fundamental learnings about the nature of *Being*, as well as presencing and unconcealing. This, once again, was brought about by the investigation of a single word. From it, we have understanding now of the prerequisites of unveiling that we did not have before. All of this from attempting to understand how a simple Greek word for “to speak” arrives at its German meaning. As this is just a singular word, it would not be good practice to simply point to a single example of one individual philologist and say that a methodology necessarily leads to fundamental truth. Therefore I will now briefly demonstrate--in a similar way-- an original proof. To show that this method is not limited to Greek, I will instead take the reins of Germanic Philology instead of Heidegger’s Classical Philology.

As this work is titled “Reading and Understanding,” perhaps we should investigate exactly what “Understanding” means. In English, the common word for comprehension of something is “Understand.” If you examine the other Germanic languages, you will notice a striking similarity between them: their cognates all remain identical, that is they are all the past-tense of the verb “To stand” with the inclusion of a prefix, such as German “Verstehen” and Danish “Forstå.” The question then, would be, what is the relationship between the act of being upright on one’s two feet and comprehension?

The etymology is fairly simple, but begins in the primordial age of the language, with Proto-Indo-European. *Steh, in Proto-Indo-European is a reconstruction associated with “being valid” or “being good.” The question then becomes, how does the meaning transition from being valid or good to standing atop one’s own two feet? Quite simply, the change arises in Proto-Germanic, particularly under the Roman Era. During the Roman Era, especially in the tribes of southern Germania, many tribes were brought into the Roman jurisdiction, where the concept of “Able-bodied” arises. The fighting men, that is, those that are valid and good to fight, would necessarily have to be able to run, which is predicated on walking, which is predicated on standing. The “Stand” that is the root of our word “Understand” is a statement of capability. It is predicated on ability, that is able-bodiedness. The very existence of the word “Understand” then necessitates that one has the capability to comprehend; the able-trait of comprehension. The very nature of comprehension is that nature of able-ness. I will leave any discourse on the actual dimensions of this to the philosophers of disability. However, it is key to note that the concept of comprehension is tied to able-ness. One

coming-into-understanding of something is a coming-into-ability just like any other physical task.

In Fact, in Old Norse, another proto-language very closely tied to our examples above, there is a shocking outlier. Their word for “understand” does not contain any version of “stand.” $\text{N}\ddot{\text{N}}\ddot{\text{U}}\ddot{\text{N}}$, which is the ancestor of words such as “wissen.” in German, has no affixes at all. But there is an important history to note with this word: it is derived from the proto-germanic *weyd, which means “to see.” This further shows that the very act of understanding is inherently tied to able-bodiedness and thus coming-into-understanding is one able-becoming of comprehension, and is thus tied to the becoming of *Being*.

As I have shown, Philology is a tool that we can use to begin to unveil fundamental questions about *Being*. That being our goal, I have demonstrated QED that if we are within the Heideggerian framework, Philology is an unabandonable tool that provides us with listless insights that we would be incapable of reaching without it. We have also begun to pinpoint the Listener as part of our vocabulary, as we will discuss the Listener’s relationship to other aspects of Heidegger’s study of language later in the work. For now, we can keep the Philological realm in our minds as we move forward.

II. Destruktion: Outside the Ontological Hermeneutic

**A text is not a text unless it hides from the first
comer, from the first glance, the law of its
composition and the rules of its game. A text
remains, moreover, forever imperceptible. Its laws
and rules are not, however, harbored in the
inaccessibility of a secret; it is simply that they can
never be booked, in the present, into anything that
could rigorously be called a perception
-Jacques Derrida**

**Ha! You will never return?
What have I said?
Ha! What has he said?
Never to return to me!
What am I to think?
Now understand it?
My beloved leave me forever?
-Richard Wagner (Translated)**

Our second tool in our search of methods of unveiling in language is first brought to our attention in section six of *Being and Time*. This term, as no surprise to anyone familiar with Heidegger, is *Destruktion*. There is, however, one fundamental challenge that we face as we attempt to interpret Heidegger's neologism: Just as quickly as it enters Heidegger's thought, the term itself disappears. Gone, but far from forgotten, we are left with the task of disseminating and attempting to understand a seeming methodology that is put into use far more than mentioned. Though rarely mentioned, *Destruktion* has found its way into the philosophical writing and thought of prominent names in Continental Philosophy's theories of language. Hans-Georg Gadamer would develop *Destruktion* with his own linguistic-hermeneutic emphasis, peeling away slightly from the intentions of his former mentor. Meanwhile, Jacques Derrida would co-opt Heidegger's

writings into his own unique theory of *Deconstruction*, which would find itself immense popularity in its own right.

In this chapter, we will discuss the usage of *Destruktion* as a tool in our hermeneutic pursuit of unveiling. We will start by drawing as much as we can from *Being and Time*, allowing us to evaluate Heidegger's own writing on the subject of *Destruktion*. Then, we will pull some elucidations from Gadamer and Derrida's correspondence on the subject, providing us with an insight from those most intimately familiar with the concept of *Destruktion*. We will have then demonstrated what *Destruktion*—effectively, in a hermeneutic context— is as well as how it can assist us outside of the ontological-hermeneutic.

Heidegger discusses *Destruktion*, as previously mentioned, primarily in section six of *Being and Time*. Heidegger explains to us that “ *Dasein* always is how and ‘what’ it already was...*Dasein* ‘is’ its past...” (Heidegger 19). So then, if *Dasein*— dare I say, we— always is its past, then that would indicate that *Being* in itself would have a component within *Dasein* that is, at the least, influenced by the past, or as Heidegger calls it: Historicity. *Destruktion*, then, as I will show, will be our tool that will allow us to evaluate aspects of *Dasein*'s *Being*. So, what then, is the issue with Historicity that conceals us? Heidegger writes

“When tradition thus becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial 'sources' from which the

categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have had such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand” (Heidegger 43).

Now, before we begin to evaluate this, I want to note that section six is titled *The Task of a Destruktion of the History of Ontology*, translated from the original German. Though Heidegger uses *Destruktion* primarily as a means of furthering his discussion of *Dasein* and the overall history of ontology, we are not primarily concerned the the ontic and ontological aspects of his argumentation here insofar as we are concerned primarily the the philosophical, that is the linguistic and phenomenological, hermeneutic. As Heidegger says “ *Dasein* has seized upon its inherent possibility not only of making its existence transparent, but also of inquiring into the meaning of existentiality itself, that is to say, of provisionally inquiring into the meaning of being in general” (Heidegger 20). Therefore, we can begin to inquire into the meaning of *Being*, as there is linguistic meaning that can be derived behind the very notion of there being meaning.

With that behind us, we can begin to show what Heidegger sees as problematic. Tradition, or as I would say, dogma, is a fundamental issue in the very core of *Dasein*. If *Dasein* is thus ultimately predicated on tradition as brought by the concept of Historicity, then we must inquire into this tradition that “becomes master.” This dogma conceals and “blocks our access” to fundamental aspects of *Dasein* that remain unveiled. Dogma, tradition, and like terms are identified as *Vorverstehen* (Gadademer uses the term *Vorverstehen* to mean the same concept). These terms translate in English to

“preconception” or “prejudgement.” Common language interpretations could be prejudice, or again just dogmatic belief. With this translation then, could we convey in a simpler way what Heidegger’s goal is?

Destruktion, then, becomes an observance and an attempted unveiling of the dogmatic. Since *Dasein* is shaped by tradition, as Heidegger mentions, it seems, as it is always “how and what it was before,” the very concept of understanding *Vorurteil* would seem to be a reasonable pursuit if we are trying to understand anything about *Dasein*. *Dasein* is— as many translators translate— entangled into this tradition, and the very untangling would be what we are seeking. However, Heidegger’s discussion of this topic quickly fades away into a critique of major philosophical schools, primarily Cartesianism, Kantianism, Aristotelianism and a brief but devastating insult towards Hegelianism. But *Destruktion* can not be merely a critique of philosophical schools. To find the answers we seek, we must look elsewhere.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, as I have mentioned previously, was a direct student of Heidegger and is associated with continuing Heidegger’s studies into hermeneutics. As someone intimately familiar with both Heidegger and the subject at hand, Gadamer provides us with several elucidations in our understanding of *Destruktion*. In *Destruktion and Deconstruction*, Gadamer, very ironically, shows us his perception of *Destruktion* as a dialectical method.

In his magnum opus *Wahrheit und Methode* (Truth and Method), Gadamer exposes us to his term for the aforementioned traditions that we are attempting to dissolve. He terms it *Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*. This roughly translated to historically-effected consciousness. *Dasein*— which I will mention to Gadamer *is* a

subject– is, as with Heidegger, affected by tradition. Now that we have defined that difference in lexicon, we can move on without pursuit: Gadamer’s dialectical contribution to *Destruktion* is called *Horizontvorsmeltzung* or *Fusion of Horizons*. He writes

“Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of ‘horizon.’ The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. ... A person who has no horizon is a man who does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, "to have an horizon" means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it. ...” (Gadamer 313)

These “situations” map to the Locus from our previous chapter. They are the point of experience. The horizon, then, becomes what what can unconceal or what we can understand outside of tradition’s forcing of *Vorurteil*. One can be completely subsumed into tradition, as to have no horizon. This over-valuing of what is nearest is a common and observable occurrence of one clinging to dogma. One relationship to tradition, be it philosophical text as Gadamer describes, religion, values, etc. is the nearest and monolithic preconception that one can have, There is a coziness in what remains to one to be unchallengeable; the opposite of the very term *Destruktion*, which Heidegger specifically must indicate is not necessarily destroying or negative. This is being so heavily devolved into one’s historically informed consciousness that they are outside the realm of horizon. They are horizonless and natural; they are in a position in which is counterintuitive for our investigation.

Instead, Gadamer suggests that we can investigate. He writes “In the sphere of historical understanding...we speak of horizons, especially when referring to the claim of historical consciousness to see the past in its own terms, not in terms of our contemporary prejudices but with its own historical horizon” (Gadamer 313). From here, we see that the critical evaluation of what is being evaluated within the historical-framework of its creation is a paramount concern. This search for the historically-informed horizon is, however, not a simple matter. As we attempt to envision the historical horizon, we are met with resistance, as the search for the historical horizon in itself necessitates an impossible possibility of breaking free from the bounds of one’s own consciousness. This suspension of consciousness is in itself, not possible in any complete or ordinary state (I remind the reader of Thomas Nagel’s famous Bat Essay). There is no speculative realism that allows us to simply transcend ourselves into an epoch in which we never belong. At face value, it would seem this pursuit would be difficult if not impossible.

The historical horizon, then, becomes something that is not “philologically objective” nor can it be a complete true, but this does not bar us from using this method to uncover what lies in the historically-informed consciousness of a text. As I mentioned, this is not simply a matter of horizons, but instead a *Fusion of Horizons*. It is a dialectical process. Gadamer provides “When our historical consciousness transposes itself into historical horizons, this does not entail a passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with our own, instead...they together constitute the one great horizon” (Gadamer 315). One can not and must not step completely into the horizon of another, instead the *Fusion of Horizons* becomes a methodology in which we combine our own horizon and

the knowledge that we ascertain from it with the horizon of which we know of the epoch in which we are investigating. The forming of a horizon is by its own means an investigation seeking to transcend particularity between horizons. "To acquire a horizon means that one learns to look beyond what is close at hand." (Gadamer 316). The very investigation of traditions becomes the staging ground for us to begin to understand the world around us hermeneutically.

The process of this method is a series of foregrounding (abheben). Gadamer explains

"[Foregrounding] is always reciprocal. Whatever is being foregrounded must be foregrounded from something else, which, in turn, must be foregrounded from it....We have described this...as the way prejudices are brought into play. We started by saying that a hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us. They constitute, then, the horizon of a particular present, for they represent that beyond which is impossible to see" (Gadamer 316).

The investigation of tradition and historically-informed consciousness is an active process of bringing forth (foregrounding) of prejudice or preconception and evaluating it within the context of the situation in which we are evaluating. This presenting of what we wish to foreground then, is our applicative step in searching for what we can ascertain from the *Fusion of Horizons*. Here, we can begin to muster our troops for battle between the dogmatic and the reasonable, once again creating a dialectical step in our search for the utilization of *Destruktion* in our attempt to understand.

There remains then, in our application, one fundamental dialectical step that we must complete. Recall that we are not alone at the Locus, that there is indeed an

element of *Mitsein*. The nature of understanding in the *Fusion of Horizons* is, like the other methods in this work, interlocutory. Understanding is not predicated on our individual ability to examine tradition in our historically-effected-consciousness and then destructure it. We would then be missing the objective of Gadamer's descriptions. He writes "Language is conversation. One must look for the word that can reach the other person. And it is possible even to learn the language of the other in order to reach the other...For not only do conversational partners speaking different languages experience this, but also partners speaking the same native language. Making mutual adjustments as they talk. It is only the answer, actual or potential, that transforms a word into a word" (Gadamer 106). The very act of learning, unveiling and understanding is not in itself self-contained within the *Fusion of Horizons*, instead it brought through interlocution. We discover the very horizon of the other with which we wish to fuse by understanding and conducting ourselves in a way to be understood by the other. Adopting and understanding the means of language or even simply idiolect allows us to come into understanding of the horizon of the interlocutor. This is ultimately the framework in which each individual structures their lives, within the realm of their own language. The attempt to be understood and be understandable is within itself a *Fusion of Horizons* that necessarily espouses the horizon brought about by the influence of language on the horizon of the individual. The attempting to be understood and understand of the realm of the tradition must first come about from an attempt to understand the language of the other and be understood by the other, which allows us to begin to foreground the very nature of the historically-effected consciousness. The enculturated and habituated use of linguistic mannerisms is a starting point in attempting to understand the

historically-effected consciousness of the other. As you encounter a New Yorker in your travels, you observe their mannerisms and you foreground your prejudices, but the mere opening of a phatic nicety in itself begins this process automatically; your prejudices may indeed begin to unravel.

I wish to leave this chapter with a quote from Virgil that Gadamer appreciates.. “*Tantae molis erat se ipsam cognoscere mentem*” – Such is the cost in heavy labor of coming to know one’s own mind.

III: Poetry and Meaning

“After all, poets shouldn’t be their own interpreters and shouldn’t carefully dissect their poem into everyday prose; that would mean the end of being poets. Poets send their creations into the world, it is up to the reader, the aesthetician, and the critic to determine what they wanted to say with their creations”.
-Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

In this chapter, I shall continue investigating the hermeneutics of the Heideggerian tradition. Moving forward with the process of “unveiling,” (which in this case of philosophical and not ontological hermeneutics, means coming-into-understanding) as I have previously been using as a procedure in Heidegger’s metaphysics of presence. I have encountered, perhaps, a window into a type of unveiling that I have not previously discussed: that of what Heidegger calls “die poetisch.” In a radio interview, Martin Heidegger makes a series of direct statements about the very nature of poetry and language-in-use, he states:

“We have to state that language in everyday [Alltag] life appears as a vehicle for understanding and will be used as such a vehicle. But, there are other relations to language than the common[Gewöhnlich] ones. Goethe calls these other relations the deeper [tieferende] ones and says of language: ‘In normal life we make language work in a provisional way, because we are signifying just superficial [oberflächlich] relations. As soon as we speak of deeper relations, there comes up suddenly another language, that of the poetical.’”

Poetry, as it appears to be exposed by Heidegger, occupies a special privilege: that is, it allows us to come-into-understanding of language that is not superficial, or as I will often call it, phatic or trivial. This trivial language would be, in the heideggerian terminology, the language of *Das Man*. If our goal is the sincere and rightful interpretation of language and the unveiling of what exists underneath, then we must seriously consider the usefulness of the dissection of poetry as a means of coming-into-understanding of a particular language occurrence in a non-trivial(that is, non-phatic) way. The dissolution of the non-phatic eliminates a barrier between us and “deeper” meaning; we can thus begin to understand what is veiled behind the word-signifiers. The goal of this chapter is simple: We will investigate and determine that within the Heideggerian tradition, poetry leads us to a better hermeneutic understanding than plain-speech.

The first meaningful consideration one should have after positing a more unveiling hermeneutic that is derived from poetry is that it is, in every way, against the the precedents of interpretation that are developing around Heidegger at the time: The Wittgenstinians and Anglo-Americans upholding the maxim that “What can be said can be said clearly.” The structuralists, who are contemporaneously rising to prominence in France, Scandinavia and the Soviet Union, would equally shudder at the thought of having meaning concealed behind the diachrony of poetic language. Heidegger, as we have demonstrated, has no issue with diachrony. As a student himself of Philology, Heidegger--in some aspects unlike his contemporaries--is not unwilling to investigate language beyond what appears in a synchronic vacuum or the realm of the phatic. Instead, he lends himself to the one mode of language that exists entirely within the realm of diachrony: the poetic.

The Poem

Heidegger is willing to go beyond the “appearance” of understanding that is often presented, as he mentions, when we use language only as a means of transportation for meaning. The superficiality of the phatic consumes our ability to express what is veiled behind language in normal life. But what is it, exactly, that is being kept veiled from us?

In *The Thinker As Poet*, Heidegger gives us, in verse, “Singing and Thinking are the stems neighbor to Poetry. They grow out of *Being* and reach into its truth” (Heidegger 13). Here, we can see that to Heidegger, truth into *Being*, that is truth, is predicated on Singing, Thinking and Poetry. For the sake of this work, let us exclude Singing and focus on Poetry and Thinking. Truth then, following the scheme that Heidegger presents us, is contingent on Poetry and/or Thinking. Without Poetry or Thinking, we can not arrive at truth, we can not unveil truth. But what is the purpose of Poetry, if there is an equipollent possibility for one to arrive at truth through Thinking? In the same work, Heidegger may also give us the answer to that:

“Thinking’s saying would be stilled in its being only by becoming unable to say
that which must remain unspoken...”(Heidegger 11).

Here, we locate precisely both the issue and the distinction between Thinking and Poetry. Let us assume that one arrives at truth via Thinking. That truth is, for all intents and purposes, confined entirely to the individual. The communication of this Thinking, that is truth, becomes impossible, “stilled in its being.” When the thinker becomes the speaker, any truth that has arisen from thought is veiled within speech. Speaking alone, in everyday language, conceals. It provides us no tools to communicate the truths that

we wish to convey. Common language [Alltagssprache] does not allow us to instill our words with the “deeper connections” that Heidegger, paraphrasing Goethe, ascribes to poetic language. We can, however, recover one deduction: If Thinking’s saying does not allow us to communicate non-trivial language, and poetic allows us to speak of deeper (non-trivial) relations or aspects of language, then we can conclude that poetic language does something that Thinking and speaking do not: it allows us to communicate non-trivial meaning. Armed with this conclusion, we can begin to investigate exactly how poetic language allows us to communicate meaningfully, and how it differentiates itself from trivial, phatic language.

Hans-Georg Gadamer, Heidegger’s pupil and his direct heir in the realm of philosophical hermeneutics, helps elucidate what exactly allows the poetic language to transcend the inarticulable. In his essay *Semantics and Hermeneutics*, he gives us the following:

“[T]he poetic use of words might be mentioned in this regard [semantic analysis], and within it individualization becomes more pronounced as one proceeds from the epic use of words to the dramatic, to the lyric, and to the ultimate poetic creation, the poem itself.

The point here is made evident by the fact that lyric poetry is for the most part
untranslatable” (Gadamer 83).

Now, this passage allows us to start to discern something important: we can begin to map exactly what in the quiddity of the poetic differentiates the poetic from the phatic. As Gadamer states, poetry is, for the most part, untranslatable. This member of the set of attributes contained in poetic language is exclusive. How can we determine this does not extend to the trivial? By very definition, the phatic is impersonal. It is meant to have

no semantic value and to exist only in the realm of pleasantries. Those familiar with mannerisms in the United States are acutely aware of how expressions of “how are you?” and “how is it going?” are not genuine prying into one’s feelings or emotions, but instead a substitution for a greeting of “hello.” These expressions--as would be necessarily true in any language with greetings-- are translatable, non-unique and non-individual Q.E.D. The poetic, in contrast, undergoes a process of “individuation,” as Gadamer notes. As one moves to the Poem, he allows us to see, the words become more and more individuated and ascribed by the personal, that is the Poet as a subject. The subject then has the ability to inscribe their words in a way that is entirely individual and personal, as well as untranslatable.

The contrarian, here, would not be remiss to ask if the untranslatable means necessarily the non-understandable or the incomprehensible. A charge of an indeterminacy of translation--or perhaps even obscurantism-- applying to meanings that are individualized and personal would be a natural point of contest. This, however, to Gadamer reveals a clear distinction in word choice: To Gadamer, “untranslatable” is used literally. We ascertain this from an example he gives. Gadamer names a verse written by poet Karl Immerman “Die Zähre rinnt.” A native German speaker--as he, a native German speaker himself describes-- would immediately be made aware of an irregularity. “Zähre,” an archaic but nonetheless valid word for a crying tear, replaces the traditional “Träne” in the use of the poem. The substitution here does not change the meaning of the poem, at least not at face value. It does not change the valence of a proposition or the tense in which it is being used; it is a change of individuation. The very use of the archaic above the regular, as Gadamer states, “quietly changed [the]

meaning brought out...in contrast to everyday crying” (Gadamer 84). Despite this distinction being non-existent in a translation to English, it provides a striking point of interpretation to the native German speaker. Ergo, when we assert that the poetic is untranslatable, we do not mean that it is incomprehensible, we mean that it is literally not able to be transfigured into another language. Importantly, though, we have a very important prime: there are situations where the poetic can be understood.

Now, we can say that there are certain members in the set of exclusive attributes of poetic language. We know that it is personal, individual and untranslatable. It also has the attribute of being understandable. Does this mean, then, that we can understand the personal?

What then could be included in the personal? Answering what is personal, or individual, is very similar to the question of what differentiates the trivial and common language from the poetic. To answer this, we must evaluate what is exclusive to the quiddity of the personal; what is it that we personally experience that is unique? The answer is quite simple: the phenomenological, the subject, and what is unique to the subject. What is not unique to the subject is translatable, that is, the feeling of hunger is common to all those that do not eat, for example. What does not fall under this same category is the subjective. The passions, which, at least in the Cartesian sense, are individual. The very concept of experience, being from the perspective of the subject and the subject alone, are individual. They are subjective and unique to the subject. What this means is monumental: This demonstrates that what poetry allows us to do is peer into the window of the individualized, which is non-trivial. It is “deeper” than the phatic. As Immelman conveys a sense of crying that is not just the standard-conception

of crying, he allows us to peer deeper into his meaning than the trivial, much like Goethe describes. We begin to see the nuance that is necessary in individualization; what makes something unique and not just a standard word-sign.

We have spoken now about the Poem and poetic language, and I have made the statement that poetry can lead us to a better understanding of the individual, however I have not quite indicated how the individual goes about interpreting a poem in order to access the subjective, non-trivial language. Gadamer helps guide us by making a distinction between what he calls the “Semantic” and the “Hermeneutic.” Gadamer gives us the following definition of the semantic:

“The great value of semantic analysis rests in no small part in the fact that it breaks through the appearance of self-sameness that an isolated word-sign has about it. As a matter of fact, it does this in different ways: first by making us aware of its synonyms and second...by demonstrating that an individual word-expression is in no way translatable into other terms nor interchangeable with another expression” (Gadamer 83).

Initially, we are drawn to the vocabulary that we have previously used. We see that the study of semantics does, to a degree, allow us to differentiate synonyms and disseminate the sameness of words. Do not let the prose here mislead you: this distinction of the role of semantics is pedantic. This definition is simply saying the following: semantics allows us to determine which words are alike and which are not interchangeable. While not dismissing semantics as unhelpful (It is by all means an important study), we see that semantics is only providing us with something that defies our goal of understanding words in individuation. Gadamer writes “In doing [semantic

analysis], one will find a conflict between the continuing tendency towards individualization in language and that tendency which is just as essential to language, namely, to establish meanings by convention” (Gadamer 85). The goal of semantic analysis is now quite clear, to provide us with meaning based on convention. As we seek to examine language that is, by definition, not interchangeable, this methodology is largely useless to us as we study poetic language, where we are trying to dissect what the meaning of a word means to the subject. We must then look elsewhere in order to study how meaning is derived from the subject.

We have now examined the concept of semantic analysis, perhaps now the hermeneutic analysis from Gadamer’s aforementioned dichotomy may be of use. Before Gadamer defines hermeneutic analysis properly, he assigns predicates to these forms of analysis. Gadamer assigns “external” to semantic analysis, then assigns “personal” to hermeneutic analysis. This immediately orients us towards a demarcation that hermeneutic analysis may be exactly what we are looking for as we begin to examine language marked by individualization, as individualization is by definition personal. Despite this predicate, one of his several but similar definitions goes as follows: “Hermeneutics is primarily of use where making clear to others and making clear to oneself has become blocked. The two powerful forms of concealment through language to which hermeneutical reflection must apply itself above all and that I wish to discuss in what follows concern precisely this kind of concealment through language that determines one’s whole relationship to the world. One that is an unstated reliance on prejudices” (Gadamer 93).

Those familiar with sections V and VI of Heidegger’s opus *Sein & Zeit* will recognize the

step in which one must, within the ontological hermeneutic, destroy the preconceptions underlying western metaphysics in order to properly address the question of Being. These preconceptions are concealing the true understanding of that fundamental question, and in the same way preconceptions of language are concealing the meaning of words in the personal. When engaged with poetic language, hermeneutics will offer us several resources in which we can address understanding the personal. First, in order to do so, we have to do away with the preconceptions we have that govern our relationship to the world, as mentioned in the citation. This is of fundamental importance when one attempts to interpret poetic language, that is, the personal, the subjective. One's own personal and subjective will only conceal meaning when interpreting poetic language, as presupposition does not lead to understanding.

This in itself does not explain the relationship between hermeneutic analysis and understanding the personal, it simply shows how we are alienated from it. There is a remaining aspect of hermeneutic analysis, which Gadamer calls hermeneutic reflection. Gadamer calls for the hermeneuticist to understand not just their preconceptions, but also to launch an expansive investigation into understanding their very *Being*. Through the understanding of *Being*, we begin to understand the subject and the subjective. The hermeneuticist must understand what of their *Being* is not translatable, but is communicable and understandable. Within this self-relation and self-evaluation will the hermeneuticist develop an understanding of the person that is essential to understanding the poetic. Only then, will we be able to begin to unveil what hides beneath the veiling of language. The understanding of the poetic is not barred from us; it is possible. For Heidegger and Gadamer, however, the philosophical hermeneutic is

tied to the ontological hermeneutic, and we must address the concept of *Being* as well when we are interpreting the poetic. As Heidegger said, and quoted above, truth from this method grows out of *Being*. It is all connected to Heidegger's original thesis from *Sein & Zeit*. The ability to understand and unveil what is concealed in the ontological hermeneutic will open to us a door of reflection that allows the philosophical hermeneutic to be possible. From there, we now can evaluate the non-trivial language and finally come-into-understanding of the position of the subject. This is a remarkable step away from semantic-nihilism and an optimistic goal of bringing-together [lesen] the subjects into mutual understanding.

To conclude, before we go on to the next section on the role of the poet, we have elaborated: Thinking and Poetry, as in poetic language, both allow us to understand and unveil. Thinking, however, is not communicable. Poetry, in contrast, does not have that exact limitation. Poetry and poetic language allows us to express non-trivial meaning within language. Despite having this ability, it is not free from concealment. We must understand that the nature of poetic language is tied inseparably to the concept of the individual and the subject. Only through disarming our preconceptions and reflecting upon the question of *Being* and the subject, and not through semantic analysis, can we begin to understand the poetic. The poetic allows us to see what is unique and individual to the poet, and nevertheless gives us a looking-glass with which we can attempt to peer into the understanding of the subject that is the poet.

Heidegger and the Poets

“What is a poet? An unhappy man who hides deep anguish in his heart, but whose lips are so formed that when the sigh and cry pass through them, it sounds like lovely music”- Søren Kierkegaard

The question is, then, a rather simple one. As we are here to study the relationship of poetry to understanding, and Heidegger holds these poets in such high regard to their skill with a quill, what is it that makes this set of poets better communicators than any other set of individuals? In this chapter, we will analyze Heidegger’s relationship to several poets: Friedrich Hölderlin and Johann Peter Hebel Georg Trakl with an unspoken underlining for both Heidegger and this set of poets from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. There, we can begin to piece together an insight into why Heidegger favors these poets as having extraordinary interlocutory skills in regard to the conveying of Being.

In this chapter, I will discuss Heidegger’s relationship to these poets, as well as the elucidations Heidegger himself draws from their writing. First, I will demonstrate his understanding of Hölderlin and how Hölderlin insights guide Heidegger to a hermeneutic of potential *Ἀλήθεια*—Heidegger’s greek term for the unveiling— as well as introduce several new keys but congruent terms such as the Thinker. I will do this with the help of commentary from Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. Next, I will evaluate Heidegger’s discoveries in Hebel from Heidegger’s published short essay on the poet. There I will evaluate the nature and usefulness of the Poetic’s breaking from normativity and the importance of that breaking-away to our search. This chapter will guide the reader through Heidegger’s understanding of the Poetic via Heidegger’s own influences from the realm of Poetry and demonstrate unique aspects of their utilization of the

Poetic to bring forth for examination.

Hölderlin, Poetics of Being

**“Man has learned much since morning,
For we are a conversation, and we can
listen
To one another. Soon we'll be song.
-Friedrich Hölderlin (Translation)**

Those familiar with Heidegger should be at no surprise that the discussion of Friedrich Hölderlin arises when we concern ourselves with Heidegger's interpretation of the poetic. Heidegger devoted many pages of his published work to Hölderlin's poetry and even devoted an entire lecture series to *Der Ister*. Heidegger himself even remarks “Hölderlin is one of our greatest, that is, most impending thinkers because he is our greatest poet” (Reinhardt 213). So then, in our pursuit to unveil and communicate truths about *Being*, what then can the great poet help us elucidate?

Heidegger continues the quotation from the previous paragraph “The poetic approach [Zuwendung] to poetry is only possible as a *thinking* confrontation with the *revelation of Being* [Offenbarung des Seyns] won in this poetry” (Gosetti-Ferencei 63). Here, we see something fundamental for our pursuit of unveiling and communicating meaning: the poetic leads us to a confrontation with the very unveiling of meaning. The poetic, it seems to Heidegger, allows us to amass our troops at the border of unveiling and set ourselves to attempt to strike at our very goal. However, we need to better understand the conflict that arises if we wish to see how it benefits us in this manner.

Heidegger develops this conflict in “...Poetically Man Dwells...” a short essay in regard to a late Hölderlin poem of the same name. I draw a passage

(1) "...[T]hat is not to say, ever, that in a word-meaning picked up at will language supplies us, straight away and definitely, with the transparent nature of the matter as if it were an object ready for use. But the responding in which man authentically listens to the appeal of language is that which speaks in the element of poetry. The more poetic a poet is— the freer...his saying— the greater the purity with which he submits what he says to an ever more painstaking listening" (Heidegger 214)"

There is much to unpack here. When we mention that the poetic and, that we use as a tool, is not providing us with the *zuhandenheit* of a hammer and nail. We have nothing-in-itself that is ready-at-hand for us to utilize. The objective interpretation of language—as we discounted in our previous discussion of philology— is going to remain permanently concealed from our understanding. This is no surprise, however, that language for us in the way that we are evaluating is not an object-ready-for-use, but instead an element on the metaphysics of presence; something that takes part in the act of concealing and unconcealing. This is not a dismissal of the poetic by any means. Instead, the language of the poetic succeeds in accomplishing several important factors.

First, the concept of authenticity—which is of course important to Heidegger—arises. Recall from earlier in this work that we are not concerned with the phatic, that is, the language of *Das Man*. The realm of the phatic is superficial and avoids the deeper [tieferende] relations of *Being*. Also recall our quotation from earlier where Heidegger discusses Goethe. This superficial and phatic language runs counter to that of the poetic. When *Dasein*, as the Poet, produces the poetic, the Listener at the *λέχος* of

gathering the spoken is then subject to a authentic listening. What exactly is this *listening* that creates an authentic experience? How does this differ from the lived-experience of any *Dasein*?

Jennefier Anna Gosetti-Ferencei provides an extensive discussion of Heidegger's poetic listening in her work *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language*. She states

(2) "The poeticized is the essential poetic word that is not invented by but overcomes the poet—as Heidegger writes 'überdichtet den Dichter.' It is the Thinker who is granted access to that 'poeticized' in the poem; for the "poeticized" is not merely the 'content' of a poem...The poeticized is rather that to which the 'Listener' (*Hörender*) poet responds, what calls to that what is called (*das Angerufene*) in the poem" (Gosetti-Ferencei 65).

In this work, we have encountered the discussion of the Poet as the Thinker, and the Poet as the Speaker. Recall also that we have discussed *Mitsein* and the importance of interlocution at the λέχος, however we have not yet demarcated the Listener. It appears here that we have engaged this new relationship. The very act of poetization in itself creates an interlocution that engages the Listener, both as the Poet and as the other—that is the one that is not the Poet but still an interlocutor. This very creating by the nature of the poetic creates a necessary step in our hermeneutic model of unconcealing. We can see that within the poetic, we contain the very elements needed for understanding. Our final piece before we can big to analyze these two passages in depth, shows us exactly what the poetic allows us to do:

(3) "[T]he language of philosophy has nevertheless tended to obscure the question of Being. Poetic language is, however, suited to the disclosure of Being because what it

makes present is not grasped in an all-illuminating clarity; poetic language reveals something of the world without failing to indicate that it is a partial revelation. This is the relation of poetic language to a phenomenological account of truth as ἀλήθεια” (Gosetti-Ferencei 64).

The first claim here comes at no surprise, as we see in the very nature of Heidegger’s attempt to bring the question of *Being* back to the forefront of philosophy. That statement of Being being not just concealed, but in itself obscured by plain language aligns well with both Heidegger’s admission in the first citation that “language does not supply us with the transparent nature of the matter” as well as our discussion of *Destruktion* and its tangential exposition in paragraph six of *Being and Time*. We understand again and without question that that language conceals, however we see one startling—but recurring in this work— heideggerian term: ἀλήθεια. Ἀλήθεια, again, meaning for Heidegger “unconcealing” or “revealing” and sometimes as “truth” to the ancient greeks.

Here, we begin to catch a glimpse of the τέλος for this work; finding the hermeneutic aspects of Heidegger’s Ἀλήθεια. From (2) we see that an overcoming. This overcoming is not solely an overcoming of the phatic; it is an overcoming of inauthentic language as a whole. The poeticizing overcomes the poet, that is the poeticization is the essential process of the poetic overcoming the binding of the Poet to the phatic. This is demonstrated by the emergence of authenticity in (1). The very introduction of the authentic, by its very nature, runs counter to the notion of the phatic, which is the language of *das Man*. This casting away of the inauthentic to create an interlocutory

act that perpetuates the first necessary condition of our unveiling: *Mitsein*.

Now, we have created our necessary dichotomy between the Poet and the Listener. The Listener is now exposed to the authentic use of language, where the Listener—depending on the skill of the poet it seems—experiences the Poetic with a degree of *purity*. What then, is this *purity*? The answer lies within understanding the goal that we have deduced for the poetic: Ἀλήθεια. The purity can not be authenticity, as this is already enumerated. So perhaps it lies in our pursuit of Ἀλήθεια directly. The purity that the Listener experiences, then, becomes rooted in the very nature of Being. The Poetic is well suited for “the disclosure of Being.” This is of course, not a complete disclosure, but it is a disclosure insofar as it is an unconcealing of what is concealing. The Poetic then provides us, it seems, with a tool to set up an interlocution. This interlocution sets up the Listener, who is also the Thinker. The Thinker is brought into conflict, possibly a “painstaking listening” derived from the Poet’s poeticizing of the revelation of the Poet’s Being. The Poet’s authentic unveiling of the nature of their Being creates with us—though potentially partially, as it does not fail to withhold that the revelation is only partial—the authentic communication of Being to the best of the Poet’s ability.

This glimpse into Ἀλήθεια before the unconcealed conceals itself again demonstrates the very essence of the use of the Poetic: the Poet has the opportunity to use the Poetic to communicate, if even briefly and partially, truths about the very nature of the Poet’s *Being*. This is what we are searching for throughout this work: To Heidegger, the question of Being is naturally paramount. But to us, it must remain insufficient to foreground the question of *Being* in contemporary philosophy. We

unfortunately are in need of more than just that, we must have a method of not just understanding the question of Being communicated to us, but to also have a method of communicating. Thus, it falls on us to attempt to understand the Poetic, to be the Poet, if we wish to continue engaging in the very question of the essence of Being. Hölderlin, through Heidegger's eyes, provides us with the inkling of our very own ability to begin to communicate these elements. However, our demarcation of the nature of the Poetic and Heidegger's relationships to Poets still must continue if we wish to truly understand this undertaking in which we partake.

Hebel and the Breaking-Free

**Von dem guten rapperschwil,
das man that die zeitung senden, dass es is
der zürcher händen sprach ich ei wol, das ist vil**

-Johann Peter Hebel (Untranslatable)

Though Heidegger addresses Hölderlin as one of Germany's greatest writers, it would be foolish to label him as Heidegger's only influence in the realm of the Poetic. Hölderlin has provided us with the sprouting of an ability to use the Poetic to discuss fundamental aspects of Being, however there is still more to digest as we evaluate the models of the Poetic that Heidegger seems to view as exemplars of utilizing the Poetic. Johann Peter Hebel, as I will show, demonstrates to us a certain aspect of language that we have yet to discuss: I would be remiss to ignore the influence of grammar on language; language which flows through all of us. The weak-version of the Sapir-whorf hypothesis—which is widely held to have some degree of validity among

psycholinguists— suggests that humans are influenced by the syntactic structure of their mothertongue. This echoes a philological Nietzsche who once exclaimed “I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.” Within Heidegger’s lifetime, he saw the evolution of *Hochdeutsch*, a standard German to be taught through the entirety of the German State. With this Hochdeutsch, and even to this day, the requirement of a standardized German language has led to and actively leads a purging of the dialectical for a “proper” prestige language. As the youth assimilate the concept of a standardized language-system with a prestige language, the very existence of dialect comes into question.

Why then, do I seem to bring this example into view from nowhere? This is an underlying change in Heidegger’s lifetime that of which he is keenly aware. Heidegger’s own dialect was influential in his selection of “*Seyn*” as a distinguishing term and, as we saw previously together, gave Heidegger the key to understanding the concept of gathering. We learned in our discussion of philology that changes in language can demonstrate changes in Being, just as I recently mentioned that we are influenced by language structure. The understanding of dialect, as I will show, is fundamental to Heidegger’s understanding of the Poetic.

In his essay *Hebel- Friend of the House*, Martin Heidegger discusses Hebel’s work *Alemannic Poems*. Hebel opens the work by briefly discussing why he chose to write this work in his native alemannic dialect. While some steeped in the bustle of cosmopolitanism may believe—incorrectly, as least in a linguistic and sociological text—that those speaking landed dialects may speak of narrow, peasant matters, Heidegger quickly leaps to the defense of the dialect. He states:

“Whatever is contained in the spirit of a language flows out of us from the dialect. What is contained in the spirit of a genuine language? It preserves itself inconspicuous but basic connects with God, with the world, with humans and their works, with their actions and inactions. Contained in the spirit is that loftiness, that all-pervasiveness from which each thing has its provenance in such a way that it has a recognized value and bears fruit. This loftiness and validity comes to life in language” (Heidegger 90).

Heidegger continues “It is moreover widely held that a dialect is a misused and misshapen version of the standard spoken and written language. But this is wrong. Dialect is the mysterious wellspring of every mature language. Whatever is contained in the spirit of a language flows to us from the dialect” (Heidegger 90). We can only interpret this to mean that the very essence of the language that we speak finds a special home within something that each and every one of us participates in as an interlocutor: Dialect and idiolect. I speak of each and every one of us by the demonstrandum that no human could reasonably defend that they do not have an accent, a regional lexicon or some other trait that is not a member of the set of all traits shared by every speaker of that language. Plainly, we are all aged, placed and classed by our very use of language.

Yet, it seems to Heidegger, that this difference between Dasein, that difference between each interlocutor is fundamental in the very spirit of language. Heidegger goes even as far as to introduce the very concept of God into the sanctity of the spirit behind dialects. We observe, as Heidegger defends the use of dialects vigorously, why I bring the concept of prescriptive language-structure into the foreground. The Poet, who exists

of course in the realm of language, must contend with the psychological aspect that structure enforces upon them. But comically, despite Heidegger assigning the sanctity of God to that of dialects, Nietzsche's anti-theistic comment from the previous page is exactly what shows us the relationship between the Poetic and the dialect.

Structure at its very core in language is—for better or for worse—under siege to both the Speaker of dialect and the Poet. And predictably both are not mutually exclusive. I invite anyone largely competent in the German language to read the excerpt from Hebel that I have placed at the beginning of this section. Within the Allemanic dialect, the German speaker with no exposure will likely be unable to understand or even parse those sentences. They violate the standard conventions of grammar, lexicality and morphology associated with the standard German that students in the german-speaking countries and abroad are educated, rendering it untranslatable, even to the native german speaker. This harkens back to previously in this chapter where Gadamer discusses the very untranslatability of the Poetic.

These deviations from standard-prescriptive language are not unique to just dialects. They occur in another fundamental aspect of language that we are examining in this work: Once again, the Poetic. Even when the Poetic is filtered through standard-prescriptive language, we get occurrences like this excerpt from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*.

VENUS

(mit ruhiger Verwunderung)
Ha! Was vernehm' ich? Welch' tör'ge Klagen!
Bist du so bald der holden Wunder müde,
die meine Liebe dir bereitet?
Oder wie? könnt' ein Gott zu sein so sehr dich reu'n?
Hast du so bald vergessen, wie du einst

gelitten, während jetzt du dich erfreust?

The German speaker will be immediately drawn to the concessions that must be made from the prescription of Hochdeutsch in order to create this poem. Contractions, consonant deletions and non-standard vowel stress are just a few examples as to how the Poet exercises a control over the language that *Das Man* does not. In the phatic realm, we can all imitate, but not create. The very act of utilizing the Poetic, in its very nature, is a disruption; a breaking of the very standard of normativity to communicate what can only be understood outside of the realm of normativity. This very breaking-free that underlies the dialect, that underlies the Poetic, is a fundamental aspect of what the Poet does that allows them to transcend the language of the phatic.

To conclude *Hebel- Friend of the House*, Heidegger chooses to reiterate in writing a version of the Goethe citation with which I began this chapter. Translators Folz and Heim provide it as such:

“In ordinary life, we make do with impoverished language because we only signify superficial relationships. As soon as the talk is of deeper relations, another language enters— the [P]oetic” (Heidegger 100)

This “impoverished language,” again that of the phatic; *Das Man* can only be seen then as the impoverishment done by standard-prescriptive language and its war against dialectology. The very siege of the native, of the local, acts to combat the very essence of what makes the language of the Poetic what it is; what it is capable of doing by allowing us to communicate aspects of Being. The breaking-free of the chains that hold language while still maintaining intelligibility and parsability are then a testament to the

ingenuity required of the Poet and the very special state which the Poetic holds as an interlocutionary method.

IV. The Poet As Speaker: Responding to a Foreseeable Critic

**“No Poem is intended for the reader. No picture for the beholder. No symphony for the listener. In appreciation for a work of art or art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful”
-Walter Benjamin**

As we stood to evaluate the nature of Poetry and the Poetic Language, we mused that indeed *die Poetisch* has the ability to convey meaning beyond the trivial and phatic, and can provide us some knowledge closer to the knowledge of being, that is *Dasein*. However, we have discussed Poetry leading us closer to knowledge of *Dasein*, but we have not discussed--in regard to the poetic-- the role that *Dasein* itself plays; that is we have refrained from discussing our fundamental interlocutor, *Dasein*: The Poet.

As I have demonstrated before in this extended work, there is a necessity of interlocution in the process of unveiling within the Heideggerian tradition. To summarize, *Mitsein*, that is here *Gemeinschaft*, is necessary in creating the locus in which *Mitsein* gathers to collect what has been let-lie-before. The interlocution between Speaker and Listener has been made aware and paramount in our discussion of Philology as a tool for the investigation of the fundamental questions of *Being*. Furthermore, as we investigated the role of the Poem and poetic language in our ability to unconceal, we must naturally address the Poet as an interlocutor. A fundamental issue then arises from the realm of the literary critics, who wish to treat the poem then as an individual piece of art: How then do we address the issue of intentionalism in the Poem? I will give a Heideggerian objection to this issue and determine that the Intentional Fallacy is

irrelevant to our pursuit.

Before we can begin to assess the validity of any charge of the Intentionalist Fallacy, we have to first give a charitable representation of it. In order to do that, we must present, again charitably, what the originators of the supposed issue conceive as intent. For the sake of brevity, I will be taking on the words of literary critics W.K. Wimsatt, Jr. and M.C. Beardsley, who have published both a paper titled “The Intentional Fallacy” and have provided a definition of the term in the *Dictionary of Literary Criticism* “[Wimsatt and Beardsley] argue that the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard of judging the success of a work.” Wimsatt and Beardsley, interestingly, begin their discussion of the Intentional Fallacy by listing a series of what they call “axioms.” I will lead the refutation of a title like this for another time, as I am interested primarily in their actual derivations from the term “intention” and a maxim that they have following it. They define “intention” as “[what] correspond to *what he intended*” (Wimsatt and Beardsley 468). They define their term early and simply, as prescribed to those wishing to write clearly, however they accompany it with the maxim “In order to judge the poet’s performance, we must know *what he intended*. Intention is design or plan in the author’s mind.” From this, they derive their several axioms. I will be selecting and trimming three of them, as they will be relevant to our discussion of poetic intention:

A1².) A poem does not come into existence by accident...The words of a poem...come out of a head, not a hat.

² I have altered their axioms by adding an “A” before each of their numbers to help clarify the distinction or premises as I use them.

A2.) One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention. How is he to find out what the poet tried to do?

A3.) Judging a poem is like judging a pudding or a machine. One demands that it work. It is only because an artifact works that we infer the intention of an artificer. "A poem should not mean but be." A poem can be only through its meaning-- since its medium is words--yet it simply is, in the sense that we have no excuse for inquiring what part is intended or meant.

A4.) The meaning of a poem may certainly be a personal one, in the sense that a poem expresses a personality or state of soul rather than a physical object like an apple. But even a short lyric poem is dramatic, as a response of a speaker...to a situation.

Here then, we have defined our terms and set our axioms. Now we can move on directly to the complaint associated with the fallacy. Wimsatt and Beardsley make a distinction between internal and external meaning for a poem, which brings us to a danger of confusing personal and poetic studies. They deem three "paradoxical" premises which would, if meaningful paradoxes, necessarily lead to fallacy. I will take the relevant two of them.

1.) What is internal is also public: it is discovered through the semantics and syntax of a poem, through our habitual knowledge of the language, through grammars and

dictionary and their sources.

2.) External is private or idiosyncratic; not a part of the work of a linguistic fact, it consists of revelations from understanding the Author.

We can now hear an important reversal on the relationship between language and meaning from our previous discussion of Gadamer. Recall briefly, to Gadamer the semantic realm is the external, and that the semantic realm is the trivial aspect, that is the denotative, of language and interlocution. The hermeneutic, however, is inherently concerned with the personal, that is the phenomenological. Take A4.). To Gadamer, phenomenology is what governs one's relationship to the world. I argue that the "personality or state of a soul rather than a physical object, or a response to a situation" is synonymous with phenomenology. This grounds a common and important distinction: The critics, as well as myself and the Heideggerians, are working within the realm of phenomenology and that is our domain of discourse.

Now that we have established our complaints, axioms and domains of discourse. Let us now focus on (1): What is external is also public. Now, let us say a poem is trying to communicate the internal, that of course is the phenomenological, there is a necessary appeal to the Gadamerian semantic. (1) seems cheekily reminiscent of the call for universal normativity espoused in the Nietzschean maxim "I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar." That is, we have a certain confinement in the use of language as understandable insofar as we are complicit --I must say broadly, as there is far less of a commitment to syntax and morphosyntax in poetry, see for example the lyricism of German Opera as mentioned previously in this

work-- in a grammatical account of our language that somehow governs the nature of phenomenological experience. I will not refute that there is influence that grammar has on human experience, however the claim that the very nature of grammar being normative brings phenomenological experience between any two *Dasein* to any significant degree closer is a begrudgement of behaviorism, which I disagree with, but will not pursue at it is not within our domain of discourse for this work.

This paradoxical claim is in itself incoherent and non-problem for our discussion of the Poem as the phenomenology of empathy is not tied inherently to the notion of grammar, that it, is it predicated on *Gemeinschaft* and the concept of in-grouping that I have discussed in the previous chapters. Though grammar-syntax is inherently a fraction of in-grouping, the semantic normativity of groups alone is not the driving force between the understanding of a Poem as attempting to communicate a phenomenological experience, via (A4) The meaning of a poem may certainly be a personal one, in the sense that a poem expresses a personality or state of soul rather than a physical object like an apple. Instead --again alluding to Gadamer-- it is instead the *Horizontverschmelzung* (Fusion of Horizons) in *Gemeinschaft* that occurs within the participation of *Dasein* in *Mitsein* in the attempting of the unveiling of an event at $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\varsigma$. The sharing of the $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\varsigma$ in *Mitsein* is inherently not public, especially not via grammar, and the only unveiling that can occur between *Dasein* at a given $\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\varsigma$ is via the hermeneutic circle that occurs via interlocution and interlocution alone. That interlocution, which may occur via the Poem and while breaking fundamental aspects of syntax. As we are refuting Wimsatt and Beardsley's primary concern about intent, it is easy to see why intent, then, is important when gauging the success of an attempt at

interlocuting a phenomenological experience: communicating the λέχος, which is the the event in which the *Mitsein* experiences, is an expression of intent insofar as it orients *Mitsein* together. This fusion of horizons, then, is the elusive answer to (A2). One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention.

With the answering of (A2), we can begin to address how (2) is a non-paradox ,at least insofar as it is inconsequential to the hermeneuticist. By the very nature of (2), I find exactly no issue in our system with the making-external of the idiosyncratic; that is indeed, the very nature of what the hermeneuticist does. Starting even with romantic hermeneutics, their goal was to carefully discover and assign predicates of emotion, reason and personhood to their attributive passages to guide the reader into the understanding of a text via the author's position. Within (A2), and asking how one is to discover what an author has tried to do, in this work I have provided several tools, namely Philology and Deconstruction, as well as the other aforementioned hermeneutic methods in this work and the preceding paragraph, that allow us to begin to conceptualize the Poet's intent. Per (A1), no Poem comes from nothing, as that would be etiologically incoherent. Instead there is necessarily intentionality that arises from *Dasein* as a poet. As the machinist, per (A3) is asked what is the purpose of a machine, there is a degree of self-evidence: a watermill serves a fundamental purpose, as does a clock or a stove. The purpose then, of the Poem is over course then to do something that cannot be done: communicate the realms of the wondrous and the phenomenological. A fundamental issue that I can not fault Wimsatt and Beardsley for is that they are working naturally within the aesthetic realm, whereas I am working in the realm of interlocution. In the realm of interlocution, then, their dismissal of the

usefulness of intent is counterintuitive to our telos.

Finally, Heidegger himself provides insight on our relationship and subsequent reliance upon the interpretation of the Poet as the author of the Poem. He states,

“The Thinking of a thinker is a thinking back [Nachdenken]--he thinks back over what the poet poetizes in advance. But the creative decision in the thinking that thinks back consists in finding the poet and in grasping the one who is found such that he appears as the who must be thought back to. The thinking back is not a mere conceptualizing of what was previously presented poetically--as a thinking back, it must follow the indicated path, i.e. must first pave and ground this path and at the same time place the poet and his work back into their incomparability.” (Heidegger 284)

The very act of thinking on the Poem, that is reflecting, is predicated on the search of the Thinker and the Thinker’s ability to reflect upon the Poet. The Thinker must grasp on to the Poet, that is the Poet as an interlocutor and a participant in phenomenological experience. If one is grasping on to these aspects of the Poet, the Thinker must be then at least considering the nature of intent if they are searching to reflect on the Poem. If the reflection alone on the Poem was sufficient, and not the intent, then what value is it then to consider the Poet? Indeed, the conceptualization of the Poem in-itself, as Heidegger states, is wholly insufficient. Instead, we must follow the path of intention that we gain from the observation and reflection on the Poet. From there we “place the poet and his work back into their incomparability.”

First, I would like to note that the Poet and the Poem are inseparably together,

via a logical “and.” We must treat both the Poet and the Poem together as one, and consider then the incomparability of the fusion between the Poem and the Poet’s intention, that is the attempt to communicate something entirely unique, the phenomenological. The phenomenological then, is the incomparable, but at no point is it remarked as the ununderstandable.

A final point that I want to refute from Wimsatt and Beardsley is the following “The poem is not the critic’s own and not the author’s” (Wimsatt and Beardsley 470) Heidegger, in his journals, actually anticipated this exact sort of confrontation. He writes that he is afraid of how his discussions of poetry “[may] be taken as the long-awaited demonstration of how [his] philosophy is to be applied to literary theory and in general to the human sciences and to aesthetics” (Heidegger 284). Indeed, Heidegger, in *Being and Time* explicitly provides an essential refutation to this foreseen issue arising from Wimsatt and Beardsley. He States

“*Mitsein* remains existentially constitutive for in-der-welt-sein, it must be interpreted, as must also circumspect dealings with the innerworldly things at hand which we characterized by way of anticipation as taking care [Besorgen], in terms of the phenomenon of care [Sorge] which we used to designate the being of Dasein in general” (Heidegger 118).

I have spoken on the relationship of *Mitsein* to unveiling, so I will refrain rearticulating that relationship. “Sorge” has a double meaning to Heidegger, being associated also with “Intent,” particularly the intent of *Dasein* towards *Dasein*. The intentionality of *Dasein* towards *Dasein*, outside of an ethical standpoint, is according to Heidegger inseparable from the very nature of *Dasein*. *Dasein* then, has an unbreakable

connection in which intention is part of the fundamental Being of beings. If intent is fundamentally tied to the nature of Being, then in an investigation of the very nature of Being would be naturally foolish to dismiss intent for its aesthetic concerns.

I have now provided a refutation on Wimsatt and Beardsley's fallacy of intentionalism in regard to poetic interpretation in the Heideggerian position. The paradoxes that lead to the very claim of fallacy are in turn irrelevant to our pursuit, and the dismissal of the relationships between intent and Poem is counterintuitive to our conception of the use of the Poem to help unconceal fundamental information on the nature of Being.

Conclusion

As we have seen within this work, Martin Heidegger, as well as his student and close pursuer of his tradition Hans-Georg Gadamer, are far from excludable from the corpus of works that demonstrate linguistic understanding. Heidegger's far distance from linguistic discourse is not a sufficient cause to discount his writing on the nature of language, as we would be remiss to dismiss the great philosopher. The very act of bringing-again-forth the question of *Being* should be, in itself, sufficient to highlight that it is, first, a question and thus a linguistic entity, and second, that before any discussion of the nature of truth and meaning outside of the most fundamental is discussed, we can not speak of any aspect of truth. Heidegger's famed cabin was built on a solid ground, and not a spread of silt and sand; our philosophical pursuits into language should, under no circumstances, be based on shaky assumptions.

My final piece that I wish to disclose to the reader is one that may come as a surprise: None of the processes that I have elucidated from the pen of Heidegger, none of these tools, methods or derivations are descriptive, at least I do not intend them to be. They are not descriptions, moreso instructions and prescriptions. Heidegger opens *Was Heisst Denken*, with "We learn what thinking is by thinking" (Heidegger 1). He repeats, for one of the many times throughout his corpus, Aristotle's famous metaphor of the blacksmith. A blacksmith will never learn his trade solely through reading, observing or listening, but only by doing. Specifically, to Aristotle, not just doing, but embracing doing the goal correctly until the very doing of it becomes second nature. This is what I prescribe to the reader. Remember, to Heidegger, "Language speaks." It

does the predicate of “speaks.” meaning we learn about language through language. And just as we learn about thinking by thinking, and learn about language through participating in language, only through practicing these hermeneutic methods can we begin to develop and habituate a method of interpretation that is closer to showing us the nature of *Being*. This not just philologically, through the epochs, as Heidegger terms them, but also to those around us. As I quoted from Kierkegaard, the poet will be in despair but utter a poem that brings joy, but those understanding the poetry at only the phatic level will find themselves perplexed that the poet holds within their heart a deep suffering. The practice of the hermeneutic method can only allow us to begin to understand the commonalities that plague all of us in our human existence: our despair, our angst and our common Being-towards death. With a better understanding, we can only use that as a tool to create a better world.

I have shown by now that understanding in this Heideggerian model is not reached through some individual utilization or the Hermeneutic Circle, instead, the unveiling that Heidegger espouses is instead reached through *Mitsein*—togetherness. Starting in *Being and Time* and expanding throughout his life, we can see a consistent call for *Gemeinschaft*. For us, this togetherness brings us interlocution, which is the true key to the understanding of language. Language does not exist as a solitary animal, alone inside the minds of one individual, instead it paints not only our world, but contributes to the world of everyone around us.

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Vita

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