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Blindness and Insight

Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism

Second Edition, Revised

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Introduction by Wlad Godzich

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Heidegger's exegeses of Hölderlin are sufficiently important to have elicited two studies of some size. Owing to the unusual influence of the commentator as much as to the exceptional difficulty of the poet commented upon, these readings give rise to several problems. One needs to ask what is Heidegger's contribution to the sum total of Hölderlin studies; one needs to ask as well what is the place of these exegeses in Heidegger's own philosophical work and to what extent have they influenced its development; finally, Heidegger's own exegetical method requires attention.

The three questions are related, but undeniable, the third one is the link between the first two. Heidegger's exegetical method flows directly from the premises of his philosophy; it is inseparable from it to the point that one cannot sense of the term, but rather to the poetic. The value of his will be determined by the validating, is an ontology and not of a necessary introduction, then, proceeds the capacity of a single

To understand the literary surely we must bear in mind the spe elucidation of Hölderlin's work, the nineteenth century (with so them), a renewal of interest occ playing a leading role. Once along for the extraordinary work mostly left unpublished, to be undertook the preparation of th plete after his death in 1906 by it has been authoritative, commentaries.

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HEIDEGGER'S EXEGESIS OF HÖLDERLIN

...to the point that one cannot speak here of "method" in the formal sense of the term, but rather of Heidegger's very thought in relation to the poetic. The value of his contribution to Hölderlin scholarship will be determined by the validity of this thought, which, strictly speaking, is an ontology and not of aesthetics. The study of the method is a necessary introduction, then, to the other questions; its scope exceeds the capacity of a single article.

To understand the literary scholars' reception of Heidegger's essays, we must bear in mind the special circumstances of the editing and elucidation of Hölderlin's works. Almost entirely forgotten throughout the nineteenth century (with some rare exceptions, Nietzsche among them), a renewal of interest occurred late in the century with Dilthey playing a leading role. Once attention was awakened, it did not take long for the extraordinary work conceived between 1800 and 1803 and mostly left unpublished, to be discovered. Norbert von Hellingrath undertook the preparation of the first critical edition, which was completed after his death in 1906 by Seebass and von Pigenot. For a long time it has been authoritative, and it is the one Heidegger uses in his commentaries.

The considerable influence exercised by Hölderlin following these discoveries, first in Germany, then in France and England, is well-known; today he is taken not only as the most important figure of German romanticism but as one of the great poets of the West, and even more as a poet whose thought is so close to our most immediate concerns that his vision takes on the aspect of a premonition. Heidegger is right in applying to the poet himself this mysterious, and perhaps spurious, line:

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Der König Oedipus hat ein
Auge zuviel vielleicht (Hellingrath VI, 26)
[King Oedipus has one eye too many perhaps]
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But we are far from knowing this great poet, for he presents the major difficulty of being precise above all. The abundance and the beauty of the images, the richness and the diversity of the rhymes entrance us, but this ebullience is always accompanied by a thought and an expression that are always in search of the extreme rigor and meticulousness. Through erasures, drafts, reworked fragments, Hölderlin seeks an ever truer and more correct expression.
More so than for everyone else, the reliability of his text is all important. But the Hellingrath edition soon turned out to be inadequate. New discoveries and a more extensive knowledge of the works established the need for a new critical edition. This is a task now partially completed: under the direction of Friedrich Beissner, three parts of the so-called great Stuttgart edition have been published: all of the poetry, the letters, and the translations. It is one of the great achievements of modern scientific philology. By drawing upon the most proven methods (detailed study of the sources and of historical and biographical references, internal comparative references, syntactic explanations, study of formal metrics, etc.) as well as upon some modern technical processes (study of paper and writing with the aid, I am told, of slides of enlargements of the manuscript) Beissner has produced the irreproachable critical edition, something that, in the case of Hölderlin, was at once necessary and most difficult to achieve.

The editor insists upon his objectivity; he has decided not to write a preface, and his commentaries are of a purely informational nature; his work is intended solely to provide the materials for a future interpretation at last well grounded. The virtues of such an asceticism are obvious, but there is a drawback to this very virtue; prudent philological modesty, which bars itself any interpretation as long as the objective dimensions of the work have not been established, is forced to leave unresolved a number of issues, including some at the level of the text establishment. In the case of Hölderlin, this margin of indeterminacy is especially large, for the material condition of the manuscripts is frequently such that it is often impossible to choose between two possible lessons in the very places where explication is most necessary. The editor finds himself obliged to rely upon the principle that he follows; as a result, scientific philology attempts to find objective and quantitative criteria, while Heidegger decides in the name of the internal logic of his own commentary.

Here is an example among others. Beda Alleman (pp. 8ff.) cites the case of line 39 in the hymn “Wie wenn am Feiertage...” Beissner reads:

Wenn es [das Lied] der Sonne des Tags und warmer Erd/Entwächst... [When the song grows out from the sun of the day and the warm earth...]

But it appears that for Entwächst [awakens], which results in a perfectly well with Heidegger against both Hellingrath and Beissner, whereas Beissner refers to some where Hölderlin wrote entwächst quantitative evidence in favor of these two criteria is obviously have in its favor a certain preserves nonetheless arbitrary for his term on the basis of statistical well and proceeds in the hope of draws attention to the problem cannot be denied that the exegetical responsible interpretation has according to the conclusions of the goals of all exegesis, even the interpretation. The matter becomes even more important to assert the fundamental impetus to a work of art. Heidegger requires it, although he does not declare it; and he declares himself upon it. Such violence he but it must be seen that it de- milion, which he thought. To accept this poetic, which he claimed, but it must be said that such poetry exercises that she raises against by design that Heidegger goes scholarship. He relies upon a design known to him, and engages in the corrections, marginal notes, or at least without doing so independently of one another.
But it appears that for Entwächst, Hölderlin had written entwacht [awakens], which results in a stranger meaning, but happens to work perfectly well with Heidegger’s general interpretation of this poem; against both Hellingrath and Beissner, he preserves the lesson entwacht, whereas Beissner refers to seven other instances in the complete works where Hölderlin wrote entwacht for entwächst, and decides from this quantitative evidence in favor of entwächst. A rational decision between these two criteria is obviously difficult. The quantitative method does have in its favor a certain positive probability, but its final choice remains nonetheless arbitrary for it is most unlikely that Hölderlin chose his term on the basis of statistical distribution. Philology knows this well and proceeds in the honest and sensible way: in a note, the editor draws attention to the problem and leaves the question open. But it cannot be denied that the exegete capable of providing a coherent and responsible interpretation has the right, indeed the obligation, to decide according to the conclusions of his interpretation; that is, after all, one of the goals of all exegesis. Everything rests, then, on the intrinsic value of the interpretation.

The matter becomes even more complicated insofar as Heidegger’s interpretation is based in turn upon a notion of the poetic that seeks to assert the fundamental impossibility of applying objective discourse to a work of art. Heidegger reduces philology to a subordinate position, although he does not hesitate to call upon it when his cause requires it; and he declares himself free of the restrictions it has imposed upon itself. Such violence has been found shocking, and rightly so, but it must be seen that it derives directly from Heidegger’s conception of the poetic, which he claims to have deduced from Hölderlin’s thought. To accept this poetics is to accept its consequences. Unlike Else Buddeberg, one cannot follow Heidegger in his philosophical statements and then disavow him in the name of a methodology that these very statements claim to transcend. The strictly philological objections that she raises against him are without merit, for it is manifestly by design that Heidegger goes against the established canons of literary scholarship. He relies upon a text whose unreliability must have been known to him, and engages in detailed analyses, referring to manuscript corrections, marginal notes, and the like, without verifying for accuracy, or at least without doing so enough. He comments upon the poems independently of one another and draws analogies only in support of
his own thesis. When a passage is at odds with his interpretation—we shall see an example of this—he simply sets it aside. He ignores the context, isolates lines or words to give them an absolute value, without any regard for their specific function in the poem from which he plucks them. He bases an entire, and fundamental, study (“... dichterisch wohnet der Mensch [poetically man dwells] ...”), upon a text, probably apocryphal, included by Beissner under the heading: “of dubious authenticity.” In the very same study, he quotes without qualms, and in the same manner as the other works, a poem from Hölderlin’s madness, a poem that Hölderlin signed and dated: “Very humbly yours, Scardanelli. 24 May 1748.” He ignores altogether all matters of poetic technique that had certainly been of great import to Hölderlin; a number of anomalies and obscurities in these poems cannot be explained without reference to them. And one could go on listing Heidegger’s heresies against the most elementary rules of text analysis. However, these heresies are not arbitrary because of a lack of rigor but because they rely upon a poetics that permits, or even requires, arbitrariness. It is incumbent upon us, then, to examine briefly this poetics.

For Heidegger, Hölderlin is the greatest of poets (“the poet of poets”) because he states the essence (Wesen) of poetry. The essence of poetry consists in stating the parousia, the absolute presence of Being. In this, Hölderlin differs from the metaphysicians Heidegger dismisses: all, at least in some degree, are in error; Hölderlin is the only one whom Heidegger cites as a believer cites Holy Writ. It is not merely a matter of a critique, in the epistemological sense of the term. Just like Hölderlin, every great thinker is in the parousia, for it is of the essence of the parousia that no one may escape it. There is, however, an essential difference: Hölderlin states the presence of Being, his word is Being present, and he knows that this is the case; the metaphysicians, on the other hand, state their desire for the presence of Being, but, since it is Being’s essence to reveal itself by hiding in that which it is not, they can never name it. They are the dupes of Being’s subterfuge; they are naive even though they claim to be hyperconscious, for that which they name as the essential is nothing more than Being disguised, and that which they dismiss as the negation of the essential is, in fact, the authentic face of the very same Being. They say the truth but without knowing it, and this truth is apparent only to the meta-metaphysician (Heidegger), who finds himself in a position who already possesses the Absolute of Mind: just as the latter had penetrated and was able to denounce the naivety in the name of the absolute truth of the movement to presence of Being as it manifested the parousia of Being. This, as advanced in the commentary added is said that what metaphysics concealed is Being (p. 21).

Hölderlin, on the other hand, describes it in the elegy “Heim”:

Was du suchest, es ist nahe,
[What you seek, it is near, it is preserved for young and old]

Aber das Beste, der Fund, die
[But the best, the find, which]
Bogen lieget, er ist Jungen
[is preserved for young and old]

Read Heidegger’s way, this line absconds. The poet who has seen more than any metaphysician, finds himself in the absolute presence of Being by the Heraclitean bolt of lightning and the deceitful mask that being its authentic face.

Jetzt aber tags! Ich harrt un
[But now day breaks! I waited]
Und was ich sah, das Heilige
[And what I saw, the Holy be]

The commentary to the elegy character of Being, in which we
with his interpretation—we put it aside. He ignores the absolute value, without quoting a poem from which he plucks a text ("... dichterisch J ..."), upon a text, probably the heading: "of dubious quotes without qualms, and a poem from Hölderlin's "Dichterleben," "“Very humbly yours, together all matters of poetic port to Holderlin; a number cannot be explained without citing Heidegger’s heresies analysis. However, these are not merely a matter of rigor but because they require, arbitrariness. It is fly this poetics.

poets (“the poet of poets”) poetry. The essence of poetry is the presence of Being. In this, Heidegger dismisses: all, at Hölderlin is the only one whom Heidegger finds himself in a position akin to that of the "philosopher" who already possesses the Absolute Spirit in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Mind: just as the latter had penetrated the movement of consciousness and was able to denounce the naïve certainty of natural consciousness in the name of the absolute truth of the consciousness-of-the-self, Heidegger has penetrated the movement of Being and can unmask the will to presence of Being as it manifests itself in being (étant), in the name of the parousia of Being. This thought is most clearly and generally advanced in the commentary added to Was ist Metaphysik?, where it is said that what metaphysics conceives of as non-being is in fact forgotten Being (p. 21).

Hölderlin, on the other hand, knows this movement of Being. He describes it in the elegy “Heimkunft,” especially in two passages:

Was du suchest, es ist nahe, begegnet dir schon
[What you seek, it is near, it meets you already]

a line that states the parousia and the paradoxical necessity that what gives itself immediately must be sought. This line is completed and explained by the following:

Aber das Beste, der Fund, die unter des heiligen Friedens
Bogen lieget, er ist Jungen und Alten gespart
[But the best, the find, which lies under the arch of sacred peace, is preserved for young and old]

Read Heidegger’s way, this line states the movement of Being as it absconds. The poet who has seen and thought this, has seen and thought more than any metaphysician, for he has seen Being as it truly is. He finds himself in the absolute presence of Being, he has been struck by the Heraclitean bolt of lightning of truth, henceforth he will no longer name the deceitful mask that Being presents to the metaphysician, but its authentic face.

Jetzt aber tagts! Ich harrt und sah es kommen
Und was ich sah, das Heilige sei mein Wort.
[But now day breaks! I waited and I saw it coming
And what I saw, the Holy be my word.]

The commentary to the elegy “Heimkunft” states the ambiguous character of Being, in which we ought to recognize the particular waver-
ing, the ecstatic character of human Dasein in Being and Time.
The commentary to the hymn “Wie wenn am Feiertage . . .”, from which the lines quoted above are taken, states the destiny that results from this revelation: the proximate end of the night of error by a cyclical return to the original illumination of truth, the temporal ecstasis that reopens upon a historical future conceived of in the form of an eschatology, and a closer adequation of destiny to Being. In a somewhat different idiom, a portent of Heidegger’s latest manner, the commentary to “Andenken” reworks and brings together the two previous commentaries in the final line:

Was bleibt aber stiften die Dichter
[But what remains, is founded by the poets]

which Heidegger takes to mean: the poet founds the immediate presence of Being by naming it.

One question arises above all: why does Heidegger need to refer to Hölderlin? It has been said and repeated that these commentaries do no more than formulate his own thought and use Hölderlin as a pretext, or merely as a prestigious reference that would give more authority to his assertion. But Heidegger is the thinker who has shoved aside all available authorities (in ambiguous fashion, to be sure, and much could be said about his treatment of Kant and Hegel); why would he spare Hölderlin in particular? It is not because Hölderlin is a poet, for we know from the Rilke study that poets are just as capable of “error” as metaphysicians: to Else Buddeberg’s outrage, Heidegger equates the angel of the Elegies to Nietzsche’s Zarathustra. And yet Rilke seems to be the poet closest to Heidegger, the one who shares the same concerns. This anomaly may set us on the track of an explanation.

As one reads the last commentary on Hölderlin (“... dichterisch wohnt der Mensch [poetically man dwells] . . .”), one understands why Heidegger is in need of a witness, of someone of whom he can say that he has named the immediate presence of Being. The witness is Heidegger’s solution to the problem that had tormented equally poets and thinkers, and even mystics: how to preserve the moment of truth. All Western metaphysicians, from Anaximander to Nietzsche, have forgotten the truth, according to Heidegger, by forgetting Being. Of Eastern philosophies no more is known.

philosophies no more is known than what Hölderlin said in the mysterious poem “Der Ister.” How are we to shore up our remembrance of authentic Being so that we can find our way back to it? This Fund, this find, it must be somewhere; if it had never revealed itself, how could we speak of its presence? But here is someone—Hölderlin—who tells us that he has seen it, and that, moreover, he can speak of it, name it, and describe it; he has visited Being, and Being has told him some things that he has collected and that he is bringing back to mankind. With respect to himself, Heidegger is not so sure that he has seen Being and, in any case, he knows that he has nothing to say about it beyond the fact that it conceals itself. Yet he does not intend to give up discourse since it is still his intention to collect and find Being by means of language. And he intends to remain a thinker and not turn to mysticism. The experience of Being must be sayable; in fact, it is in language that it is preserved. There must be someone, then, of unquestionable purity, who can say that he has traveled this route and seen the flash of illumination. One such person is enough, but there must be one. For then, the truth, which is the presence of the present, has entered the work that is language. Language—Hölderlin’s language—is the immediate presence of Being. And the task that we, who, like Heidegger, cannot speak of Being, inherit, is to preserve this language, to preserve Being.

The preservation of Being is the commentary, the “thinking-of” (andenken) Hölderlin. That is the method. Hölderlin knows Being immediately and he says it immediately; the commentator need only know how to listen. The work is there, itself a parousia. Being speaks through Hölderlin’s mouth as God did through the mouth of the seer Calchas in the Iliad (cf. M. Heidegger “Der Spruch Anaximandrs,” Holzwege, pp. 318 ff.). To preserve the work is simply to listen to it, in all passivity, knowing that it is uniquely and absolutely true. Borrowing an image from Hölderlin, Heidegger compares the work to a bell; the commentator causes it to resound (Erliiuterung: interpretation, commentary contains lauten, to sound, peal); he makes us hear what it holds wholly by itself, as when snow falls on the bell. It is not a case of a freedom grasping another freedom that, like it, attempts to clear a way to the truth: that would be interpreting and critiquing, and there simply can be no question of interpreting Being; all that can be done is to receive it and preserve it. Interpretation is applicable only to metaphysi-
cians, and then it takes the form of an onto-analysis, a purification that can be carried out by one who has been able to listen to the voice of Being. With Hölderlin, there never is any critical dialogue. There is nothing in his work, not an erasure, no obscurity, no ambiguity, that is not absolutely and totally willed by Being itself. Only one who has truly grasped this can become the “editor” of Being and impose commas that spring forth “from the very necessity of thought.” We are far from scientific philology.

In its apparent excesses, such a position invites parody, but from within Heideggerian thought it is necessary, for the ambition of this thought is not to merely say the truth, but to install itself in parousia, to dwell in it, to inhabit it. Commentary, which is the preservation of Being, is also, in the final analysis, the manner in which we can dwell in real Being instead of dwelling as we do in its reverse. The immediate unity of the three entities: Being, the poet, and human Dasein, which listens, found a construction in which we can proceed to install ourselves. In Heidegger’s most recent texts, the supreme promise that concealed itself behind the slaughter of traditional metaphysics proclaims itself more and more openly. Since Being has founded itself in language in the work of the poet (Hölderlin), by “thinking-of” (an-denken) this work as we do in the commentary, we ready ourselves to live in the presence of Being, to “dwell poetically on earth.”

Heidegger’s need for a witness is understandable, then, but why must it be Hölderlin? There are, to be sure, secondary reasons, of a sentimental and national nature, in his favor. Heidegger’s commentaries were thought out just before and during World War II, and are directly linked to an anguished meditation upon the historical destiny of Germany, a meditation that finds an echo in the “national” poems of Hölderlin. But that is a side issue that would take us away from our topic. There is, however, another and much deeper reason that justifies this choice: it is the fact that Hölderlin says exactly the opposite of what Heidegger makes only in appearance. At a glance, one might try to distinguish between a pro and a con.

A demonstration of this prop of Hölderlin’s work. We must distinguish between a proposition and its opposite. In fact, to state the opposite in an opposite sense, to have, in a dialogue of this sort of the same thing. It can indeed speak of the same thing; when Heidegger’s commentaries, they surpass other studies. No

The unfinished and untitled Ein Andenken am Feiertage das Feld zu (1800) is one of Hölderlin's poems deeply, Stefan George an with the specific tension from with than any poem, expresses its opposite. Heidegger's commentary begi
analysis, a purification is able to listen to the voice of any critical dialogue. There is no obscurity, no ambiguity, that one who has the \textit{possibility of Being} and impose \textit{cessity of thought.} We are invades parody, but from necessity, for the ambition of this world to install itself in parousia, which is the preservation of a manner in which we can dwell in its reverse. The immediate \textit{Dasein}, and human \textit{Dasein}, which proceed to install ourselves. The promise that concealed \textit{metaphysics} proclaims itself rounded itself in language in the \textit{being-of} (\textit{an-denken}) this work of ourselves to live in the presence of the \textit{Presence.}

Heidegger's commentaries of World War II, and are directed on the historical destiny of \textit{Hölderlin's} work, among all others, that is totally forbidden to man. The unfinished and untitled hymn that begins with the line \textit{Wie wenn am Feiertage das Feld zu sehen} \textit{(Just as on a feast day, to see his field)} \textit{(1800)} is one of Hölderlin's most famous poems. It has moved poets deeply, Stefan George and Rilke in particular, because it deals with the specific tension from which the poetic act is born and, more than any poem, expresses its essence.

Heidegger's commentary begins by establishing that the hymn names

\textit{posite of what Heidegger makes him say.} Such an assertion is paradoxical only in appearance. At this level of thought it is difficult to distinguish between a proposition and that which constitutes its opposite. In fact, to state the opposite is still to talk of the same thing though in an opposite sense, and it is already a major achievement to have, in a dialogue of this sort, the two interlocutors manage to speak of the same thing. It can indeed be said that Heidegger and Hölderlin speak of the same thing; whatever one may otherwise reproach in Heidegger's commentaries, their great merit remains to have brought out precisely the central \textit{concern of Hölderlin's work;} and in this, they surpass other studies. Nonetheless, they reverse his thought.

A demonstration of this proposition would require an extensive study of Hölderlin's work. We must limit ourselves to sketching out some of the elements of such a demonstration, basing ourselves upon the central commentary, of the hymn \textit{Wie wenn am Feiertage...} Before we begin, though, we must stress the importance of this question for all of Heidegger's philosophy. With Hölderlin, Heidegger cannot take refuge in the ambiguity that constitutes at once his positive contribution and his defense strategy: he cannot say, as in the case of the metaphysicians, that they proclaim both the true and the false, that they are the greater the more they are in error, that the closer they are to Being, the more they are possessed by its abscending movement. For the promise of Heidegger's ontology to be realized, Hölderlin must be Icarus returned from his flight: he must state directly and positively the presence of Being as well as the possibility of maintaining it in time. Heidegger has staked his entire \textit{system} on the possibility of this experience. This may explain why, obeying a tactic perhaps not fully conscious, he feels the need to base himself upon the work which proclaims that it is this experience, among all others, that is totally forbidden to man.

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the poet as the one who is in the presence of Being, and that the word "Nature" must make us think not of even the Pre-Socratic's phusis, for it is a term corrupted by the metaphysical tradition, but of Being as Hölderlin thinks it and as it truly is. This definition of the word "Nature" is established in the following passage:

Denn sie, sie selbst, die älter denn die Zeiten
Und über die Götter des Abends und Orients ist,
Die Natur...
[For she, she herself, who is older than the ages
and above the gods of the Occident and the Orient,
Nature...]

a definition completed by adjectives that characterize nature and its action, and especially the term wunderbar allegegenwärtig [wondrously all-present]. The identification posited by Heidegger between Being and nature is therefore justified by the description: it is clear that this is no longer nature in the pastoral sense, not even in the sense of nonconsciousness that the term possesses in the philosophical fragments of the Homburg period; it is rather the immediate apprehension (presence) of that which serves as a support to all beings, that which precedes and makes possible their re-presentation to consciousness. It is indeed that which in Heidegger's own terminology is generally called the presence of the presents, the common Wesen of all individual presents that makes for the all-presence of things. It is the immediate givenness of Being that, for Hegel, is "just being" (nur Sein) as long as it has not been re-presented to consciousness. From a Hegelian perspective, it is legitimate to refer to it as "just being" because, of itself, it has neither the possibility nor the necessity to constitute itself into logos. Its all-presence is a matter of indifference, then, for there is no need for the philosopher to linger on in the nostalgia of originary immediacy, a state about which there is, after all, nothing to say. But for Hölderlin, the poet, this all-presence is "wondrous," for it is the immediate revelation of what appears most desirable to him. For the poet the anguishing question—and it is indeed the subject of the poem—is: how can one not only speak of Being, but say Being itself. Poetry is the experience of this question.

Heidegger is right, then, to see in the poem a statement of the relation of poet to Being; this is a good example of the fundamental worthiness of his commentaries. But he begins to distort the meaning when he continues by showing the poet. His demonstration rests on...

* * *

Does the first passage tell us because they dwell in the presence of Being and belong to Being (zugehören und zugehören) because they are part of Being (zugehören zu)? The text says that Being belongs to them, and it is for him an example of a state of all-being. All-present education is not the Aristotelian Bildung: initiation through the primeval unity of the immediacy of Hölderlin's youth, where the Erziehung, is defined as the immediate givenness of Being, as long as it has not been re-presented to consciousness. From a Hegelian perspective, it is legitimate to refer to it as "just being" because, of itself, it has neither the possibility nor the necessity to constitute itself into logos. Its all-presence is a matter of indifference, then, for there is no need for the philosopher to linger on in the nostalgia of originary immediacy, a state about which there is, after all, nothing to say. But for Hölderlin, the poet, this all-presence is "wondrous," for it is the immediate revelation of what appears most desirable to him. For the poet the anguishing question—and it is indeed the subject of the poem—is: how can one not only speak of Being, but say Being itself. Poetry is the experience of this question.

Heidegger reads: "Those whom no master...

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French translators generally take allein as indicating a single master, and insist on "a single master" as the true meaning of the text. This may be going too far in the text, but Heidegger's point is that, at least in the context of the passage, all three versions are justified.

Heidegger points out that the syntactical difficulties, better an idea of the difficulty of interpreting than at least, we know that the ambiguity of the text is not due to the difficulty of interpreting.
of Being, and that the word in the Pre-Socratic’s phusis, "pure"
ical tradition, but of Being
This definition of the word passage:

So stehn sie unter gunstiger Witterung
Sie die kein Meister allein, die wunderbar
Allgegenwrtig erzieht in leichtem Umfangen
Die Machtige, die gotlichschone Natur.
[literally: Thus they stand under balmy skies
Those whom no master alone, whom wondrously
All-present educates in a light embrace
The powerful, the divinely beautiful nature]

Does the first passage tell us that poets stand under propitious skies because they dwell in the presence of Being? Does it say that poets belong to Being (zugehoren und entsprechen), as Heidegger claims (p. 52)? The text says that Being (nature) educates (erzieht) the poet: nature is for him an example of a state he wishes to attain and imitate. This imitation is not the Aristotelian mimesis but rather the Romantic Bildung: initiation through the conscious experience of Being. It is perfectly legitimate and indeed necessary to refer to Hyperion, the novel of Hölderlin’s youth, where the notion of Bildung, synonymous with Erziehung, is defined as the eccentric road man travels toward the primeval unity of the immediate. The poet is one who accepts nature

4. The literal translation does not reveal the meaning of the second line. A possible reading of it would put allein in opposition to Natur:

Heidegger reads: “Those who, unable to be masters themselves... are educated by nature”—undeniably a richer reading; the ambiguity is not essential to the commentary. French translators generally take allein as an adjective modifying Meister, but the necessity of insisting on “a single master” is not clear, unless one sees here the unique God of Christianity. This may be going too far in the direction of a pantheistic interpretation. Grammatically, all three versions are justifiable.

These syntactical difficulties, better revealed by literal translation than any reading, give an idea of the difficulty of interpreting Hölderlin. Next to him, Mallarmé is easy, because there at least, we know that the ambiguities occur by design.
(the immediate unity of Being) as his guide instead of submitting to some institution that accepts and perpetuates the separation between man and Being. One may think of Rousseau, taking care to avoid a pantheistic interpretation: to accept someone as one's master, far from signifying that one identifies with him and that one belongs to him, means rather that there is, and continues to be, an unbridgeable gap. In any case, the passage in Hölderlin does not say that the poet dwells in the parousia, but only that it is the principle of his becoming, in the same way as the absolute is the moving principle of the becoming of consciousness in Hegel's *Phenomenology*.

Now, to the second passage: "And what I saw, the Holy be my word." Hölderlin says that, guided by Nature, he has seen the Holy. He does not say that he has seen God, but indeed the essence of the divine, the Holy, which transcends the gods as Being transcends beings. We may well grant Heidegger that we are indeed dealing with what he calls Being. The poet, faithful disciple of Being, is privileged because he is called upon to see it in its wondrous all-presence. He is struck by the bolt of this truth insofar as he knows the supreme value of this vision that, locked up as it is for ordinary mortals in false partial consciousness, does not appear in the full force of its positivity. But Hölderlin knows as well that to see Being is not enough, that, in fact, the difficulty arises immediately after this moment. Before Being produces itself, one lives in expectation; the mind stands vigil (ahnen) and is brought closer to the moment as concentration increases, in thought and in prayer. It produces itself then in the lightning of the *Jetzt*, in absolute temporal present. If one could say it, it would be founded because the word has durability and founds the moment in a spatial presence where one could dwell. That is the supreme goal, the ultimate desire of the poet, which is why Hölderlin adopts the tone of prayer:

Und was ich sah, das Heilige sei mein Wort.

He does not say: das Heilige *ist* mein Wort. The subjunctive is here really an optative; it indicates prayer, it marks desire, and these lines state the eternal poetic intention, but immediately state also that it can be no more than intention. It is not because he has seen Being that the poet is, therefore, capable of naming it; his word prays for the parousia, it does not establish it.

It cannot establish it for as the immediate and discovers the state mediation. For man the ing, and Being necessarily appear of highest achievement, the two dimensions we distinguishing are not, and their opposition. But it is not to be said, because it is not the absolute presence of immeasurable. Propelled by the absolute presence of immortality, the poet pray or struggle, never found. Following:

Und war der Aether bis
Nach dem Gesetz, wie
Fühlte neu die Begeisterung
Die Allerschaffende, wieder

A literal translation, which follows, reads

And high from ether to the following stable law, as the Being manifests itself anew:

The all-creator again.

"The essence (Wesen) of which word," writes Heidegger, "B separates the essential from the contingent: das Wesen vom (scheidet), it decides (entscheidet). The separation does occur, mediate Being, all the inessential word that separates the ineffable spirit (Being) does not manifest anew ("fühlte sich neu"); it acts but more than ever it appears in the words scheidet-entscheiden of the separation that it cause.
It cannot establish it for as soon as the word is uttered, it destroys the immediate and discovers that instead of stating Being, it can only state mediation. For man the presence of Being is always in becoming, and Being necessarily appears under a non-simple form. In its moment of highest achievement, language manages to mediate between the two dimensions we distinguish in Being. It does it by attempting to name them and by seeking to grasp and arbitrate their difference and their opposition. But it cannot reunite them. Their unity is ineffable and cannot be said, because it is language itself that introduces the distinction. Propelled by the appeal of parousia, it seeks to establish the absolute presence of immediate Being, but can do no more than pray or struggle, never found. Heidegger contests this, relying on the following:

Und hoch vom Aether bis zum Abgrund nieder
Nach vestem Geseze, wie einst, aus heiligem Chaos gezeugt,
Fühlt neu die Begeisterung sich,
Die Allerschaffende wieder.

A literal translation, which follows Heidegger’s profound interpretation, reads

And high from ether to the netherdepths below
Following stable law, as one, from holy chaos drawn
Being manifests itself anew
The all-creator again.

“The essence (Wesen) of what is named (Being) is revealed in the word,” writes Heidegger. “By naming Being’s essence, the word separates the essential from the non-essential (or the absolute from the contingent: das Wesen vom Unwesen). And because it separates (scheidet), it decides (entscheidet) their struggle” (Erläuterungen, p. 57). The separation does occur; however, from the point of view of immediate Being, all the inessential is on the word’s side, since it is the word that separates the ineffable from the named and destroys it. The spirit (Being) does not manifest itself (erscheint, p. 59) but feels itself anew (“fählt sich neu”); it acts once more as the goal of becoming, but more than ever it appears in the form of struggle. The play on the words scheiden-entscheiden is a misprision, because it is by virtue of the separation that it causes that the word prevents the struggle.
reaching conclusion. It transfers the struggle within itself, which is why it is ever-renewed mediation. Heidegger seems on the verge of granting it: "Nature must preserve this opening where mortals and immortals can meet. The opening intercedes to create relations between all real beings. The real is constituted only through this intercession, and is, therefore, a mediated thing. What is thus mediated is nothing but the power of mediation. But the opening itself, which permits the existence of all relations of appurtenance and simultaneity, does not come from a mediation (an intercession: Vermittlung). The opening itself is the immediate. No mediate thing, be it god or man, can attain the immediate immediately." The necessity of mediation is clearly stated. This passage is a faithful commentary of one of Hölderlin's philosophical fragments, which Heidegger quotes ("Das Höchste," Hellingrath V 2, p. 276). He continues: "That which was ever present in all things gathers all isolated presents in a single presence and intercedes to allow each thing to manifest itself. Immediate all-presence is the power that intercedes for all that must be manifested through intercession, that is for all mediate things. But the immediate, it can never be mediated; rigorously speaking, the immediate is the intercession, that is the mediate character of the mediate (Mittelbarkeit des Mittelbaren), because it permits mediation in its being. 'Nature' is the mediation which mediates all things, it is the 'Law'" (ibid., p. 60).

This passage, which is the turning point of the demonstration, is contradictory. It states that mediation is possible thanks to the very immediate that is its agent; indeed, in this movement, it is the immediate that appears as the positive and moving element. It does not follow, though, that the immediate, as the sole agent of action, must be identifiable to mediation itself, which defines the multiple structure of the action. If the word mediation has any meaning, it is that what mediation ends up with is never identical to one of the two elements in presence to the exclusion of the other; it is a third entity that contains them both. To say that the immediate contains the possibility of the mediation of the mediate because it permits it in its being, is correct, but it is not correct to go on to the conclusion that the immediate is, therefore, itself the mediating intercession.

Heidegger's thesis can be considered as demonstrated if the following identification is granted: also the immediate itself; the the intercession, the immediate; the the plane of Being. By saying "appears as chaos (heiliges Chaos)". However, nothing, in this authorizes such a conclusion of naming the two dimensions of pairs of terms: nature and art; heaven and earth; but at no knowledge of its necessarily a.

Nach vestem Gesee, wij contains a direct allusion to the means of the Word taken in the distinction between the sacred and the mediate, which the sacred, and, therefore, is the poet does not say Being, thing anything but an order that, Being.

Heidegger's proposed identification in any case, to account for the running into the very question for Hölderlin, must remain with immediately, how is he to put Heidegger is forced to suppress death and the birth of Dionysus in the manner of Pindar), and action, treating it as if it were apolated. By contrast, if it is the possibility of the desired identification, then its development and the apparent. The awakening of natural mediate manifestation of Being resumes its progress. The poet its indirect action, because he immediate relation to the sacred

5. This passage has its counterpart in the commentary to "Andenken," op. cit. p. 103.
HEIDEGGER'S EXEGESIS OF HÖLDERLIN

...
ensuring, through his own person, the mediation between Being and the consciousness of Being, its law founded in the Word. This supreme act is also a supreme sacrifice, for the restoration of Being to consciousness is effected at the cost of necessarily denying its ineffable all-presence and the no less necessary acquisition of the finite and alienated character of Dasein. The poet knows this necessity, but to those who have not reached this stage of consciousness, it appears in the guise of sorrow. By interiorizing the sorrow, the poet assumes it (the prose project of this hymn states: mitleidend die Leiden des Lebens [share-suffering the sorrows of life] Beissner, II. 2, p. 670) and through his total sacrifice, which goes beyond death, gives it the value of an example and a warning: Dasz ich... das warnend ängstige Lied/den Unerfahren singe [that I may sing the warning anguished song/to the inexperienced] (ibid.). It is impossible not to be reminded of the drama Empedokles, written shortly before this poem, which defines the theme that will be dominant in the national and historical poems.

Hölderlin begins to perceive, however, the traces of a new tension. The internal death (it is the "death" of a natural consciousness superseded by a superior consciousness, in Hegel's sense of the term "death" in the introduction to the Phenomenology) is at first thought of as human sorrow. However, the interior experience (Erinnerung) of this sorrow no longer suffices. In the later version of the poem instead of "suffering the sorrows of life" we have "suffering the sorrows of a God" and "the sorrow of a mightier one." Human suffering is transposed to a higher plane, which means that this sorrow transcends the mortal and, as Heidegger did not fail to see, that mediation is also, although in a form barely conceivable to us, law for divine being with respect to its essence, which is the sacred. For us, however, the sorrow of mediation lies in finitude, and we are able to conceive of it only under the form of death. As long as we remain within the human sphere, which is also the sphere of poetic word, we can think of divine sorrow only in the form of God's death. The poet's task is then to interiorize this death, to "think-of" God's death. But this is much too vast a matter for this particular hymn, whose critical orientation was historical rather than religious, and it remains only sketched out to become, later, the central theme of the Christian hymns. "Wie wenn am Feiertage..." is a transition piece marking the new period. The very possibility of the transition shows that there is no essential transformation in the structure of the act, and that also a mediation.

In conclusion, this hymn is essentially open and free act, conscious prayer that achieves a conception diametrically opposite Hölderlin's poetic concentration asserts itself, if nowhere else metrical tasks he imposes upon even more complex ones. In this gives way to a childlike simplicifyingly lucid irony. Who will despise of the mind or Hölderlin's skepticism? And would it not be madness an exemplary force an last poem as the final promise?

A commentary on Hölderlin it wishes to be faithful to its poetry is critical of its own certainties. Such a critique could achieve wished so often for among the more regrettable because it is, in fact, a meditation on the diametrically opposite to Hölderlin's two possible attitudes could exist Any exegetical method will the same problem: how to elaborate the tension between the ineffable demands the direct adherence which Heidegger treats his text implies a reflection that tends to be and rigorous as possible, but not to comprehend it can substantially

6. This transition is quite close to the one in its counterpart in the second half of Hölderlin's Wandering [in the spiritual work of art, with some note of the stage of comedy at this point] has a poetical thought and philosophical though Hölderlin is inexhaustible.
iation between Being and
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ial transformation in the
structure of the act, and that, for Hölderlin, religious experience is
also a mediation.6

In conclusion, this hymn suggests a conception of the poetic as an
ecessarily open and free act, a pure intention, a mediated and con-
scious prayer that achieves self-consciousness in its failure; in short,
a conception diametrically opposed to Heidegger’s. As long as
Hölderlin’s poetic concentration lasts, this aspect of wager and challenge
asserts itself, if nowhere else in the nearly insuperable formal and
metrical tasks he imposes upon himself, which he resolves only to seek
even more complex ones. In the works of his madness, the complexity
gives way to a childlike simplicity, coupled, one suspects, with a terri-
fyingly lucid irony. Who will dare say whether this madness was a col-
lapse of the mind or Hölderlin’s way of experiencing totally, absolute
 skeptic? And would it not require even greater daring to give this
madness an exemplary force and to cite, as Heidegger does, Hölderlin’s
last poem as the final promise of dwelling in the parousia of Being?

A commentary on Hölderlin’s poetry must essentially be critical, if
it wishes to be faithful to its author’s definition of poetry, just as this
poetry is critical of its own certitudes, their illusory character unveiled.
Such a critique could achieve the status of the dialogue Heidegger
wished so often for among thinkers, but denies to Hölderlin. This is
the more regrettable because Heidegger’s meditation upon the poetic
is, in fact, a meditation on the ineffable, and as such it follows a way
diametrically opposite to Hölderlin’s. Yet the encounter between these
two possible attitudes could constitute the center of a valid poetics.

Any exegetical method will ultimately have to come to grips with
the same problem: how to elaborate a language capable of dealing with
the tension between the ineffable and the mediate. The ineffable
demands the direct adherence and the blind and violent passion with
which Heidegger treats his texts. Mediation, on the other hand, im-
pies a reflection that tends toward a critical language as systematic
and rigorous as possible, but not overly eager to make claims of cer-
titude that it can substantiate only in the long run. As a control

6. This transition is quite close to the dialectics of the unhappy consciousness, as well as
to its counterpart in the second half of Hegel’s *Phenomenology*, which leads to religion from
the spiritual work of art, with some notable differences (such as the absence, in Hölderlin,
of the stage of comedy at this point) having to do with the essence of the distinction between
poetical thought and philosophical thought. The problem of the relation between Hegel and
Hölderlin is inexhaustible.
discipline, equally scornful of arbitrariness and pseudo-science, philology represents a store of established knowledge; to seek to supersede it, and it is far from obvious that that is possible, is without merit. When it is negated by equally excessive mysticism or scientism, it gains in increased self-awareness and provokes the development of methodological movements within the discipline itself, which ultimately reinforce it.

Beda Alleman’s study of the same questions we have covered represents a viewpoint exactly opposed to ours, since he argues for a parallelism and a homogeneity between Heidegger’s and Hölderlin’s thought. Alleman defends this perspective with an intelligence capable of introducing original dimensions in the interpretation of Hölderlin, and of raising fruitful questions concerning the philosophical fragments of the Homburg period, the commentaries to the translations, and the last hymns. And although the author follows Heidegger’s thought, he never does so in slavish or automatic fashion, but rather evinces an intellectual passion that reveals a personal and independent partaking in the procedures of Heideggerian ontology.

Without entering into exegetical polemics that would need be very detailed, there is reason to oppose Beda Alleman’s theses, not so much in their general conclusion as for their philosophical implications. The claimed homogeneity between Hölderlin and Heidegger rests upon the movement of “reversal” (Kehre) that occurs in both thoughts, and whose structure and intention are supposed to be analogous. Hölderlin’s reversal manifests itself in a radical turnabout that takes him away from a philosophy of reconciliation toward a philosophy of necessary separation. Heidegger’s reversal is the ambiguous movement of Being itself, although Alleman sees it rather, and quite correctly, in the historical perspective that derives from this movement: a backtracking to the far side of traditional metaphysics in order to go beyond this very metaphysics.

If it is true that there is a reversal in Heidegger, it is not the case that it occurs in the same way in Hölderlin. Alleman’s case rests upon an unacceptable interpretation of Empedocles’ death, which he sees in conventional terms as a return to undifferentiated pan—an absolute reconciliation. Quite the opposite, Empedocles’ death is “death” in the Hegelian sense. The reversal is the reversal of consciousness in the Phenomenology (Introduction, to a higher level of consciousness. There is no ontological reversal, but a live is nothing more than the not thought that is about to undergo a definitive study. It seems quite (wohnen), as it begins to emerge opposite to the torn and struggle in the last Hölderlin. It is true and includes the work from the...
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Alleman’s theses, not so much
to the poetic, it would be better not to start with the setting-up of non-existent differences when the analogies are so much more fruitful.
Hölderlin and Hegel’s critique of Schelling’s teachings applies equally to Beda Alleman who discovers ultimately the impossibility of preserving the immediate. But in this, he moves away from Heidegger’s thought, whose most recent efforts have consisted in a return to a more originary unicity. From this perspective, it is regrettable that Alleman has written his study at this early a juncture when it appears that Heidegger’s thought is about to undergo a reversal and does not lend itself to any definitive study. It seems quite clear that the notion of “dwelling” (wohnen), as it begins to emerge from the texts of the Vorträge, is totally opposite to the torn and struggling thought that Beda Alleman discovers in the last Hölderlin. It is true that Heidegger goes beyond this point and includes the work from the madness period and sees it as contain-

the Phenomenology (Introduction, § 14), the transition, through mediation, to a higher level of consciousness, which in Empedocles’ case is historical consciousness. There is not to be found in Hölderlin a singular ontological reversal, but a lived philosophy of repeated reversal, that is nothing more than the notion of becoming. Since there is always reversal, there is never any effective reconciliation, not even in the early works. The reversal makes a last appearance in the form of the extraordinary effort to think it within the divine. The description of the last period as the mediation of the divine is therefore correct, but not the account of its genesis. As a result, the movement of Kehre is transformed into an absolute phenomenon and Hölderlin’s situation within what is called Idealist philosophy is presented in a false light. By emphasizing the idea of reconciliation as a basic feature of all idealism, Alleman writes of Hölderlin and Hegel as if he were dealing with the young Schelling. The body of Hegel’s works, in its most essential intention, gives the lie to such a description; the critique it has been subjected to, from Kierkegaard to our day, confirms this fact. If there ever was a philosophy of necessary separation, it is Hegel’s; to assimilate the notion of Absolute Spirit with idealist reconciliation is to simplify all the way into misprision. Hegel’s and Hölderlin’s thoughts are remarkably parallel on this point; their difference lies deeper since it requires so dissimilar a tone and a vocation in spite of the relative similarity of thought. If one wanted to make use of this nearly miraculous happenstance to really shed light on the relations of philosophy and the poetic, it would be better not to start with the setting-up of non-existent differences when the analogies are so much more fruitful.

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ing the promise of the desired peaceableness. Alleman stops short at the fragments immediately preceding the madness; these are texts rendered hallucinatory and obsessive by the mental torture they evoke, most certainly among the least peaceable. Actually, Beda Alleman’s Hölderlin is much closer to Hegel than to Heidegger. Alleman has fallen victim to an error that Heidegger’s influence may indeed induce: to preserve the historical perspective which requires that Hegel remain short of the superseding of Western metaphysics while Hölderlin is already on the far side of it, he has deformed the issue at hand which he refuses to seek in the very place where it is most explicitly formulated.