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Myth and Truth in Heidegger's Lecture Course on Parmenides

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## Myth and Truth in Heidegger's Lecture Course on Parmenides

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Immediately after his publication of *Sein und Zeit* (1927), Heidegger began to reframe his approach to the question of being. By his own admission, a principal problem with *Sein und Zeit* is that it describes the disclosure of *Dasein* but fails to describe how being discloses itself to *Dasein*. A recurring observation in Heidegger's later thought is that, since Plato's introduction of the forms and Aristotle's structuring of logic, philosophy has obscured the fundamental question of being (*Grundfrage*), substituting instead what he calls "the guiding question [*Leitfrage*]," namely, the inquiry into the "being of beings." In order to free himself from this alleged obscurity, Heidegger begins an investigation of the Presocratics, and a pivotal moment in this investigation is his lecture course of 1942-43, *Parmenides*, on the mythical proem of Parmenides's poem.

Many scholars have explored Heidegger's writings on truth in article-length works; a few, including Bambach and Caputo, have published longer works placing *Parmenides* in a developmental context, but even these do not make the lecture course their primary focus, and their assessments do not always take Heidegger's ideas seriously on their own terms. Therefore this dissertation, the first book-length investigation of *Parmenides* in English, examines the significance of the work in the development of Heidegger's concept of truth and seriously

engages his concepts of being, truth, and myth to determine the value of his claims in *Parmenides*.

I will begin by discussing Heidegger's explorations of truth in the period prior to *Parmenides* and considering his interpretations, in texts other than *Parmenides*, of three Presocratic thinkers: Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides himself. Then I will examine a specific claim in *Parmenides*, namely, that myth is a mode of speech that discloses truth without regard for logical correctness. Finally, I will examine other prominent interpretations of Heidegger's thought and, in response, suggest a new approach. While it is true that Heidegger's conclusions can be dangerous, risking the severing of human concern from inquiry, it is also true that to reject Heidegger's thought outright is to slip back into the prevailing claims and systems which he has shown are inadequate.

This dissertation by John Teepen Schlachter fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in philosophy approved by Holger Zaborowski, D.Phil., as Director, and by John C. McCarthy, Ph.D., and Jean DeGroot, Ph.D., as Readers.

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Holger Zaborowski, D.Phil., Director

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To Jessie, whose discomfort with standing in life's clearings  
has taught me how to be good all over again.

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## Introduction

This dissertation focuses on interpreting the development of Heidegger's concept of truth by examining his recourse to the thought of Parmenides in the winter semester of 1942-43 as a heretofore overlooked moment within that development. The course he taught that term, "Parmenides und Heraklit," was first published as Volume 54 of the *Gesamtausgabe* in 1982 as *Parmenides* and subsequently translated into English ten years later. These dates are significant in that, in the thirty years since its first appearance, comparatively little has been written about this particular volume of the *Gesamtausgabe*.<sup>1</sup> The editor of *Parmenides*, Manfred Frings, explains that he shortened the title used for the lecture course, given that Heidegger does not really address the fragments of Heraclitus during the course. However, Frings also points out that Heidegger reviewed student recorded transcripts of the lectures in comparison with his manuscript while he was preparing the lecture course on Heraclitus he delivered in summer, 1944. That course, along with another on Heraclitus from the summer of 1943, appears as

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<sup>1</sup> These include: Kenneth Maly, "Parmenides: Circle of Disclosure, Circle of Possibility," *Heidegger Studies* 1 (1985): 5-23; Alexandre Lowit, "'Le principe' de la lecture heideggerienne de Parménide," *Revue de philosophie ancienne* 4 (1986): 163-210; Manfred S. Frings, "Parmenides: Heidegger's 1942-1943 Lecture Held at Freiburg University," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 19 (1988): 15-33; Carol J. White, "Heidegger and the Beginning of Metaphysics," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 19 (1988): 34-50; Manfred S. Frings, "Heidegger's Lectures on Parmenides and Heraclitus (1942-1944)," *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 22 (1991): 179-99; Lawrence J. Hatab, "Heidegger and Myth: A Loop in the History of Being," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 22 (1991): 45-64; Véronique M. Foti, "Aletheia and Oblivion's Field," in *Ethics and Danger*, ed. Arleen B. Dallery (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 71-82; Agnes Heller, "Parmenides and the Battle of Stalingrad," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19 (1997): 247-62; Drew Hyland, "Caring for Myth: Heidegger, Plato and the Myth of Cura," *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 90-102; David C. Jacobs, "The Ontological Education of Parmenides," in *The Presocratics after Heidegger*, ed. David C. Jacobs (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 185-202; Ivo De Gennaro, "Heidegger und die Griechen," *Heidegger Studies* 16 (2000): 87-113; William V. Spanos, "Heidegger's Parmenides: Greek Modernity and the Classical Legacy," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 19 (2001): 89-115; Peter Warnek, "Saving the Last Word: Heidegger and the Concluding Myth of Plato's *Republic*," *Philosophy Today* 46 (2002): 255-73; and Günther Neumann, *Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu den Parmenides-Auslegungen von Emil Angehrn, Günter Dux, Klaus Held und dem frühen Martin Heidegger* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006).

Volume 55 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, and is also edited by Frings.<sup>2</sup> Given the original title that Heidegger intended for the winter 1942-43 course and these two subsequent courses on Heraclitus, it is safe to assume that Heidegger did not say all that he meant to say when he initially conceived of offering a single course on both Parmenides and Heraclitus. This is not to suggest that these later courses revise what Heidegger says in *Parmenides*, but indicates that he did think that the topic, the thought of both Parmenides and Heraclitus, had not been sufficiently addressed therein.

This presents the reader of *Parmenides* with a few questions. The first question is whether all three courses should be read together in order or not. That is, it is unclear, at first, whether it is necessary for the reader of GA 54 to continue on to GA 55 in order to gain any insight into what Heidegger means in *Parmenides*. Second, it is also unclear whether the course, taken on its own, contains anything worthwhile for understanding Heidegger's thought. If the course is so unfinished as to need two follow-ups, it might be the case that it does not contain any new paths of thought or is only preparatory for the investigations in the later courses. Such a

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, ed. Manfred Frings, vol. 54, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982), 251. All references to *Parmenides* hereafter are to this text and not the work written by Plato bearing the same name. The available English translation is Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides* transl. by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). When citing this translation, I will refer to it as "*Parmenides* (English)." The English translation generally renders Heidegger's terminology in readable English and the translators do outline why they have chosen to use specific English translations of important terms. For example, they choose to translate *Anfang* as 'inception' so as to make the various forms of word play at work in the German visible. Since this is a fairly standard English word, it makes the text readable. There are times when my own reading of a passage requires considering whether the translation needs correction or comment. For example, the choice of rendering *Entbergung* as 'sheltering en-closure' is clunky. Their reason for doing so is justifiable, as Heidegger means to pack quite a bit of connotation into the word. Translators of other texts of Heidegger's usually use 'disclosure' for *Erschlossenheit* (e.g., Macquarrie and Robinson do in *Being and Time*), and so using 'disclosure' to translate *Entbergung* while providing a lengthy explanation of the possible connotations in the foreword might be confusing. For the sake of readability, my preference would be for translating *Entbergung* as 'disclosure' with the appropriate explanation, despite the possibility of confusion. See *Parmenides* (English), xiii-xv and 169. Frings also explains the reason for the change in title in his article from 1988, Frings, "*Parmenides*", 15.

question is also justifiable, given the limited amount of scholarly commentary on *Parmenides*, as noted above.

If it is the case that the latter two courses on Heraclitus continue to broach the topics first addressed in *Parmenides*, then it is perhaps advisable to read them all together. Frings states that “the *Parmenides* text must be seen in conjunction with the two lectures on Heraclitus,” and furthermore, “It is by way of a retrospective view taken from the Heraclitus lectures that the detours to be found in the *Parmenides* text become understandable, much as they are, indeed, problematic upon first reading.”<sup>3</sup> And so, it is the judgment of the person who compiled the text of all three, corrected structural and grammatical errors, and inserted Heidegger’s various redactions and recapitulations of each lecture into the published version that the connection between the three courses cannot be overstressed. But Frings also suggests that the enterprise of determining the entire scope of the interconnections between *Parmenides* and the subsequent lectures on Heraclitus is a large undertaking, and he confines himself to discussing *Parmenides* alone, even after having made this claim.<sup>4</sup> What I take this to mean is that, even though the lectures on Heraclitus are valuable for gaining insight to what is said in *Parmenides*, to read and interpret them as a unified whole is not absolutely necessary.

While it is true that much has been written about Heidegger’s interest in the Presocratics, especially *Parmenides*, much of the monograph-length literature on the subject was written while

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<sup>3</sup> Frings, “*Parmenides*”, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Frings, “*Parmenides*”, 16. Regarding the editor’s role in formulating the structure of the courses, see, *Parmenides*, 251. The ‘recapitulations’ that follow a given lecture in the text are from Heidegger’s hand, but were left to the editor, Frings, to decide where to insert them.

Heidegger was alive or very soon after his death, and prior to the publication of Volume 54.<sup>5</sup> By 1982, there was, therefore, already a large quantity of scholarship on Heidegger's appropriation of Parmenidean thought, and the scholarship published since the release of both the German edition and the English translation largely attempts an ameliorative assimilation of *Parmenides* with what had already been published.<sup>6</sup>

With few exceptions, the treatment of *Parmenides* in the scholarly literature focuses principally or exclusively upon the political significance of the course. Since Victor Farias's *Heidegger et le nazisme* appeared in 1987, the scholarly literature regarding Heidegger's philosophy on the whole has often been concerned with his affiliation with the Nazis.<sup>7</sup> Because the Parmenides lectures take place in the winter semester of 1942-43, during the months-long battle of Stalingrad, scholars interested in determining Heidegger's mid-war politics have understandably turned to *Parmenides* as an important resource. There is, doubtless, evidence of Heidegger's preoccupation with political matters in the lectures. A most explicit example in Heidegger's *Parmenides* comes during the explication of the Myth of Er from Book X of Plato's

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<sup>5</sup> See Klaus Held, *Heraklit, Parmenides und der Anfang von Philosophie und Wissenschaft: Eine phänomenologische Besinnung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980); Otto Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, trans. Daniel Magurshak and Sigmund Barber (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1991); Jochen Schlüter, *Heidegger und Parmenides: Ein Beitrag zu Heideggers Parmenidesauslegung und zur Vorsokratiker-Forschung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1979); George J. Seidel, *Martin Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics: An Introduction to His Thought* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964); and George R. Vick, "Heidegger's Linguistic Rehabilitation of Parmenides' 'Being'," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971): 139-50.

<sup>6</sup> These include Robert Bernasconi, "Heidegger and the Invention of the Western Philosophical Tradition," *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 23 (1995): 240-54; Gennaro's article cited above; both Frings articles cited above; Dermot Moran, "Heidegger's Phenomenology and the Destruction of Reason," *Irish Philosophical Journal* 2 (1985): 15-36; Steinmann, Michael, "Die Humanität des Seins: Das Denken des späten Heidegger und sein Verhältnis zu Parmenides," In *Heidegger und die Griechen*, edited by Michael Steinmann, (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2007), 47-74. and White's article cited above.

<sup>7</sup> This text was originally published as *Heidegger et le nazisme* (Paris: Verdier, 1987) and has been subsequently translated into English as *Heidegger and Nazism*, trans. Paul Burrell and Gabriel R. Ricci, ed. Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

*Republic*. Seemingly without any proximate cause, Heidegger there launches into an attack on Goebbels by comparing him to the thoughtless souls in the myth who drink too much from the river and think nothing of philosophy. Goebbels's erroneous opinion, remarks Heidegger, is that Germany needs no poets and thinkers, but only grain and oil.<sup>8</sup>

How Heidegger's politics informs his philosophy, and indeed how his philosophy informs his politics, are doubtless valuable topics, and this dissertation is not entirely removed from them. However, insofar as this dissertation seeks to show how *Parmenides* fits within the development of Heidegger's concept of truth, the political context of the lectures is not my primary focus. Nor am I committed to contextualizing *Parmenides* as the introductory, first part of a three-part series of lectures on Parmenides and Heraclitus. In contrast, my method of investigation will be to examine a particular theme within *Parmenides*, namely Heidegger's interpretation of the Greek word *muthos*, as a means of informing a discussion about Heidegger's interpretation of the Presocratics, his development of the concept of truth and, only by extension, that development's political context. Two studies cited above, Drew Hyland's article from 1997 and Peter Warnek's from 2002, were instrumental in determining my way of proceeding—these articles provoked me into thinking about Heidegger's understanding of myth as the way to begin interpreting *Parmenides*.

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<sup>8</sup> *Parmenides*, 179. As to the scholarship which has Heidegger's politics at the forefront, I have in mind the monographs by Bambach and Caputo that I address in chapter 4: Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); and John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). More recent examples include Charles Bambach, "Heidegger, der Nationalsozialismus und die Griechen," in *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus II, Heidegger-Jahrbuch 5*, edited by Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, (Freiburg and München: Alber, 2009), 200-8; Holger Zaborowski, "Eine Frage von Irre und Schuld?" *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2010.

On the whole, *Parmenides* should be seen as consistent with those projects and courses of Heidegger's that appear in the period immediately antecedent to it, that is, the period subsequent to the publication of *Sein und Zeit*. The vast literature devoted to Heidegger's thought as it regards the nature of truth during this period is, at once, a help and a hindrance to the researcher.<sup>9</sup> It is a help in that so much of the work required to piece together an account of the progression of Heidegger's thought from the publication of *Sein und Zeit* to the middle of World War II has already been done. On the other hand, it can be difficult to identify and come to terms with important, but overlooked, elements of Heidegger's thought from the overabundance of informed critical review.

This difficulty can be seen as a consequence of the rather single-minded pursuit central to Heidegger's philosophical oeuvre: what he terms the '*Seinsfrage*', that is, the question of the meaning of being.<sup>10</sup> In 1935, Heidegger recasts the question by asking why there are beings

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<sup>9</sup> Recent examples include Enrico Berti, "Heidegger and the Platonic Concept of Truth," in *Heidegger and Plato: Toward Dialogue*, ed. Catalin Partenie and Tom Rockmore (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 96-107; Daniel Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) (hereafter referred to by author's last name and page number); Daniel O. Dahlstrom, "Transcendental Truth and the Truth That Prevails," in *Transcendental Heidegger*, ed. Steven Crowell and Jeff Malpas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 63-73; Dorothea Frede, "The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 42-69; Michael Inwood, "Truth and Untruth in Plato and Heidegger," in Partenie and Rockmore, *Heidegger and Plato*, 72-95; Joseph Margolis, "Heidegger on Truth and Being," in Partenie and Rockmore, *Heidegger and Plato*, 121-39; Maria del Carmen Paredes, "Amicus Plato Magis Amica Veritas," in Partenie and Rockmore, *Heidegger and Plato*, 116-8; Bernhard Radloff, "Heidegger's Critique of Imperial Truth," *Existential: An International Journal of Philosophy* 10 (2000): 51-68; William J. Richardson, "Toward the Future of Truth," in *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Drew Hyland and John P. Manoussakis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 98-104; Mark Wrathall, "Unconcealment," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 337-57; and Mark Wrathall, "Truth and the Essence of Truth in Heidegger's Thought," in Guignon, *Cambridge Companion*, 241-67.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 2, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 25. This text will hereafter be referred to as *SZ* followed by page number. In writing this dissertation, I have often checked my own translation of *SZ* against *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).

rather than nothing; this is, he says here, the source-question of all philosophizing.<sup>11</sup> In 1938, he refers to the *Seinsfrage* as the question of the truth [*Wahrheit*] of being [*Seyn*].<sup>12</sup> In 1942, he begins his course on Parmenides by describing the Greek philosopher's thinking as the heeding of the essential,<sup>13</sup> such that the content of Parmenides's poem addresses the truth of being. No matter how the *Seinsfrage* is posed, its critical aim is to disrupt the traditional scopes of metaphysics and formal logic. Truth, he says, is not the mere correspondence of a declarative sentence with an experienced state of affairs, but is part of the fundamental conditions out of which any such declaration descends. Heidegger's question concerning the meaning of being has to do with altering the way philosophy handles speaking about truth. Therefore, any examination of Heidegger's confrontation with metaphysics must examine his concept of truth, and to examine his confrontation with metaphysics is to determine the way he views the scope of all philosophizing.

In particular, Heidegger's interpretation of the Greek word for truth, *alētheia*, follows familiar Heideggerian tropes from this period. He renders the word as *a-lētheia* in order to emphasize the alpha privative; truth is the 'un-hidden' which arises out of the 'hidden', *lēthe*. He favors translating the word into German as *Unverborgenheit* as opposed to *Wahrheit*, and he criticizes those who understand *alētheia* merely in opposition to *pseudos*, and, by the same token, *Wahrheit* in opposition to *Falscheit*. Finally, he challenges the modern conception of truth

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<sup>11</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, ed. Petra Jaeger, vol. 40, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 5-6. Hereafter referred to as *EM*, followed by page number.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 65, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), 7. Hereafter referred to as *Beiträge*, followed by a page number.

<sup>13</sup> *Parmenides*, 4-5.



by locating the origins of its narrow delimitation in the adequation of the intellect to the object as first found in Aristotle's *logos apophansis* and Plato's divine ideas. In order to demonstrate the consistency of Heidegger's *Parmenides* with his earlier work, chapter 1 of this dissertation reviews the development of these topics from the period immediately following the publication of *Sein und Zeit* to the time of the Nietzsche lectures.

*Parmenides* is also consistent with other contemporaneous examples of Heidegger's thought in its recourse to the Presocratics, Parmenides in particular, as a means of extricating philosophy's investigation of *alētheia* from the control of Platonic and Platonist metaphysical principles on one hand and Aristotelian metaphysics and logic on the other. For Heidegger, Parmenides is an *anfängliches Denker*, an inceptive thinker, whereas Plato and Aristotle most certainly are not.<sup>14</sup> In *Parmenides*, as elsewhere, the inceptive thinker is recognizable not by his place at the beginning of the history of philosophy, but by his willingness to think about and attempt to answer the *Seinsfrage* in a reticent or cryptic manner. Chapter 2, therefore, examines Heidegger's account of inceptive thinking in detail by showing how the ideas of Parmenides, Heraclitus, and Anaximander function as examples of it for Heidegger.

While the first two chapters provide a general overview of the development of Heidegger's appropriation of the Presocratics and his desire to challenge the prejudices of traditional metaphysics, chapter 3 is devoted to a close reading of *Parmenides*. The aim of this close reading will be to show how Heidegger revisits the themes discussed in my first two chapters while also developing a central claim that is particular to this lecture course: that for the Greek inceptive thinker, myth is a kind of speech that preserves the mysteriousness of the

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<sup>14</sup> Heidegger also calls Anaximander and Heraclitus inceptive thinkers or, alternatively, primordial thinkers.

encounter with the *Seinsfrage*. The specialized disclosure, or *alētheia*, of myth allows the thinker to refrain from committing to the kind of assertions characteristic of the metaphysician's response to the question. As will be shown, Heidegger arrives at this understanding of myth by contrasting the style of Parmenides's poem with Plato's use of myth in Book X of *Republic*.

Chapter 4, the concluding chapter of the dissertation, will discuss the value of Heidegger's project; specifically the contribution of *Parmenides*, by comparing my approach to two other recent criticisms of the development of Heidegger's thought in Nazi Germany. On the one hand, John Caputo argues that Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of presence is inherently skewed by his intellectual desire to see what isn't there. He says that Heidegger's method is guilty of "mythologizing the Greeks" in order to draw them into close affinity with his own ethnocentrism, at the expense of a diversity of approaches to the *Seinsfrage*. According to Caputo, by "demythologizing Heidegger" we can open up those approaches by expanding his hermeneutic to include any well-told story that is in some way concerned with the unity and the multiplicity of the whole. On the other hand, Charles Bambach proposes that Heidegger uses his own conception of myth-making as well as the Greek myth of autochthony in order to engage in them himself and thus insulate himself from the political dangers that his philosophy may run up against. This argument is predicated upon Heidegger's clear support for the National Socialist Party (NS) in the *Rektorsrede* of 1933 and then his subsequent ouster and unofficial withdrawal from politics in the same academic year.

Both of these interpretations, I think, fall short of fruitfully evaluating Heidegger's concept of truth because they fail to engage it on its own terms, particularly as regards the

function of Greek myth. Caputo's account of Heidegger's "mythologizing" trades upon the very understanding of myth that Heidegger specifically contradicts in *Parmenides*, namely, that myths are instituted by a mythmaker who concocts a fantastic story that demonstrates a particular truth while promoting a particular agenda or idea that he cannot express another way. If Caputo is correct, then Heidegger engages in the very activity he argues against in the midst of making that argument. While ideological reasoning does contain this kind of lack of self-reflection, it is also possible to consider Presocratic sayings to be unique in the history of thought without automatically becoming an ideologue. In my estimation, Caputo goes out of his way to avoid confronting Heidegger's Nazi entanglements, and he is therefore unable to show why his particular preferences of means in "demythologizing" Heidegger's thought are superior to others.

While Bambach's critique does attempt to understand and follow Heidegger's account of myth, I believe Bambach misunderstands it by accusing Heidegger of engaging in it—specifically, in the Greek myth of rootedness to the soil, autochthony. This seems to show a misunderstanding since, as I show in chapter 3, Heidegger himself dismisses the possibility of any new mythmaking on the grounds that only the Greeks could listen and speak in this fashion. Quite apart from the disappearance of the Greek culture in which the mythical account originates, a culture that hardly regards its myths self-consciously, as a philosophical tool, the analytical or scientific character of metaphysics precludes anyone else from actually speaking mythically. Additionally, Bambach's interpretation goes too far in accusing Heidegger of the attitudes and activities which Heidegger condemns as early as 1935 in communism, ideological capitalism, and the rhetoric of Goebbels which I noted above.

In engaging these critics I seek to offer a more surefooted and responsible account of Heidegger's philosophical self-understanding as it emerged during the winter of 1942-1943, when he first lectured on the philosopher Parmenides, even as the battle of Stalingrad was raging. In the first place, then, Caputo and Bambach are right to find Heidegger's preoccupation with inceptive thinking to be disturbing. His way of philosophizing is problematic because it, by all accounts, seems morally disinterested and detached. His preoccupation with inceptive thinking yields stilted speech, because heeding a myth or approaching the 'primordially' of the Presocratics' sayings means deciding against any pattern of distinctly practical reasoning that follows from them. Secondly, though Bambach's careful analysis of "Heidegger's roots" rightfully leads him to these conclusions, my approach yields a different interpretation of Heidegger's mid-war motivations. Whereas Bambach takes Heidegger's move away from practical politics as implicit acceptance of the nationalist language used by the Nazis to promote their cause, I argue that Heidegger's thought during this time distances itself from the fascist interpretation of stories about rootedness to the soil or to country. My support for this opinion comes from my analysis in chapter 1 of Heidegger's progression in thought about the concept of truth that is evident in his calling for a "new inception," coupled with the reconstruction of the concept of *muthos* that is offered by *Parmenides*, for which I will argue in chapter 3.

Because of the language of a "new inception" used in Heidegger's private writings from the mid-1930s, and because of his definition of Greek *muthos* as the pious act of speech that remains in awe of the mysterious, Heidegger's philosophizing appears to be a call not to attend to 'convenient-story-myths', but to say that they are not really myths at all. They are instead

argumentative tools of the logical prejudice inherent in metaphysics. By imploring his students to truly rethink *muthos*, he offers them a way to liberate their thinking about neo-mythologies from the particular agenda of a given storyteller. Heidegger's sense of rootedness, as demonstrated in 1943, is a rootedness in the "home of being,"<sup>15</sup> the prevalence of awe before the mysteriousness of existence and its powerful grip on human language and reason. It is certainly the case that Heidegger's call for rootedness has all the look and feel of an authoritarian autochthony, like a superficial interpretation of Plato's myth of the metals or the German-Arian pseudo-history. Yet the picture that emerges during World War II is more like what he expresses in the "Letter on Humanism" from 1947 than it is like that of the "Rectoral Address" from 1933.

Heidegger's re-envisioning of *muthos* understands that the logical prejudice is active within the 'will to power', just as it has been in every other metaphysical system since Plato. Heidegger's understanding of *muthos* calls for the thinker to give up control over the meaning and intent of language, but he simultaneously attempts to retain the thinker's authority over reason and speech. He wishes to avoid the supposed tendency toward violence against the foundations of thought. However, the turgidity of his own speech shows the insufficiency of his project.

While it is true that his approach to thinking through the assumptions of metaphysics can help the heedful mind to navigate the thorny paths of Western tradition, the very idea of a 'new inception' remains thoroughly modern, that is, Cartesian. Heidegger's project absolutely avoids the subjective procedure of mastery and possession characteristic of the modern turn in

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter 2, section 5.

metaphysics, but it re-performs Descartes's own mid-war seclusion as a means for rethinking and recollecting the mystery of being.

Heidegger's problem, then, is not that he concocts a new myth about the Greeks or about the history of philosophy in general. His problem is that the hermeneutic through which he tries to counter the practical reasoning that follows from the logical prejudice is not a path of serious resistance to practical politics. If the premises of my argument are correct, Heidegger's philosophical project is a failure not because he does not see or attempt to counter the moral vacancy of the modern metaphysics of subjectivism and its corresponding political ideologies, but rather because his method abandons morality to anyone who promotes that system in any form, because of Heidegger's insistence on the reticence to speak. His attempt at a "new inception" abandons the practical necessities of living in community and, as a result, asks for a kind of patience that yields no corresponding action.

His attempt to recall philosophy to the condition of wonderment at the whole—where the one and the many remain, as yet, unproblematized, as his interpretation of Parmenides's poem proposes—is a decision against any codification and implementation of moral life. This is because it isolates the thinker from communal action, that is, from a notion of justice that is not the opposition of paired elements, or dyads, such as 'one-many', 'revealed-concealed' or 'truth-untruth' that fundamentally cannot be divorced from one another. Heidegger's project assumes these oppositions to be at the heart of being, and, in making this assumption, he divorces his philosophy from the struggle over ethics that is internal to metaphysics. In sum, Heidegger's

decision is that ethical life can remain in the *poêle*, a place where even Descartes admits no ethics can have a ground and a provisional moral code must be employed.

Heidegger's philosophy does not only fail because of a meagre attempt at publicly repudiating the Nazis. His attempt at repudiation turns on saying that their metaphysics (or lack of attending to being) is empty, just as every form of subjectivism is sorely lacking in the truth.<sup>16</sup> The problem is also that he unwittingly re-performs that which he says should not be done again. In other words, Heidegger's philosophy is a critical failure because it does not know itself.

According to Socrates in the *Apology*, the one true moral failure is a lack of self-awareness. Socrates's guilt at his trial is that of a dangerous, public nuisance as a result of his pursuit of self-awareness for himself and for the citizens of Athens. That is, Socrates is thought to be dangerous because his philosophizing directly proposes changes in the attitudes of others and the Athenian system itself. In contrast, Heidegger's lack of self-knowledge is problematic precisely because he seeks to do what Socrates does: to reground wonder, to re-question being. But Heidegger tries to avoid direct confrontation with the ills of political action through an affirmation of the principles necessary for ameliorating the ills within politics. I can only conclude that Heidegger is restless and uncomfortable with Socrates's knowledge that he does not know, despite Heidegger's own definition of *muthos*. Heidegger seems either unaware or unwilling to admit even to himself that his position of awe is a means of intellectual self-preservation. He is stuck in a 'Presocratic' mode of thinking insofar as he assumes an intellectual position of urgent awe rather than one of action or questioning in common with others.

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<sup>16</sup> See chapter 1, n. 93. Heidegger's claim about Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence" is that, as a form of subjectivism, it avoids the real question of our relationship to being.

# Chapter 1

## *Section 1. Subtending the logical prejudice: interpreting Alētheia as Unverborgenheit*

This chapter constitutes an overview of the development of Heidegger's conception of truth from the time of the publication of *Sein und Zeit* (SZ) in 1927 through his Nietzsche lectures in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Those lectures date from the winter of 1936-7, summer 1937, summer 1939 and the autumn of 1940. As such, it aims to provide a context for the analysis of *Parmenides* that will make up chapter 3 of this dissertation. Given that Heidegger's thought follows a discernable progression within which *Parmenides* clearly fits, I hope to show in the current chapter that this progression, also described as the so-called 'turn' in Heidegger's thought,<sup>1</sup> is self-consistent. Heidegger's concerns in understanding truth are principally the same in 1927 as they are mid-war, though his expression of the problem to be overcome becomes much more detailed and nuanced over that fifteen-year period.<sup>2</sup>

My claim is that the two central, critical issues for Heidegger are the 'logical prejudice' and the corresponding 'metaphysics of presence' within which it works. Within SZ, Heidegger comes to grips with Aristotle's explanation of arriving at truth, an explanation that defines truth

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<sup>1</sup> See William J Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993). Richardson's thesis that Heidegger's thought noticeably shifts in emphasis after *Sein und Zeit* is still provocative. But the point of this chapter is to show the continuity of Heidegger's central concerns both early and late. For an argument similarly concerned with 'periods' in Heidegger's thought, focused specifically on the Greeks, see Jean-Francois Courtine, "The Destruction of Logic: From Λόγος to Language," in *The Presocratics after Heidegger*, ed. David Jacobs (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999), 25-53. Also compare my approach with that of George Seidel in *Martin Heidegger and the Pre-Socratics: An Introduction to His Thought* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964). Seidel's choice of Heidegger's extended treatment of Heraclitus and Parmenides in *Einführung in die Metaphysik* as the point at which the Presocratics take on a more central role in Heidegger's deconstruction of the history of philosophy is in perfect keeping with the "early" and "late" distinctions. His work is the earliest book-length, English-language treatment of Heidegger on the Presocratics.

<sup>2</sup> See Frede, "Question of Being," 42-69. Frede's article, though not without its flaws, attempts to show Heidegger's 'one idea', that is, the *Seinsfrage*, in light of his ongoing conversation with the philosophical tradition, the Greeks in particular. For an excellent critical examination of the way the discussion of truth shifts from the time of *Sein und Zeit* to that of *Beiträge*, see also Dahlstrom's "Transcendental Truth and the Truth That Prevails," 63-73.



primarily as the correspondence between a declarative statement and a given state of affairs.

Without exploring all of the details of the vast phenomenological enterprise that is *Sein und Zeit*, I treat Heidegger's examination of Aristotle's logic in that text as a jumping-off point. Though it is certainly possible to pick an earlier text in which this is a critical issue, I have chosen *SZ* because, along with the historical importance granted to it by the philosophical community and the relative familiarity that most students of Heidegger have with it, it is only after *SZ* that Heidegger's critique of Aristotle expands into a systematic critique of Plato and of the history of metaphysics in general. While important work has been done on Heidegger's engagement with Aristotle in the 1920s,<sup>3</sup> my aim here is to show what happens after that engagement, as there are relatively few traces left of his critique of Aristotle to be found in *Parmenides*. One exception is what is, to Heidegger, the central problem with Aristotle's definition of truth: that the priority given to the present, indicative, active, declarative sentence when considering what one means by 'encountering the truth' seems superficial and inadequate. Heidegger's concern with this problem remains active in *Parmenides*, and indeed this seeming inadequacy is the source of his incessant reevaluation of the conception of truth through the period and cannot be stressed enough.

As I will show by comparing the analysis of Aristotle in *SZ* with a similar approach in *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, a course Heidegger offered in 1929, it is not until after Heidegger fully expresses his trouble with Aristotle as a deeply rooted ontological or metaphysical problem that he begins to flesh out his own concept of truth. At the same time,

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<sup>3</sup> Particularly noteworthy are Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1993); and Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Heidegger's method of philosophizing—a method which clearly informs his findings and directs each subsequent investigation into truth—proceeds by circumspection. That is, his method of philosophizing attempts to avoid mere syllogistic thinking in articulating a concept of truth, for to do so would grant priority to the Aristotelian approach that he critiques. Instead, his method works by considering the parts and wholes of Aristotle's logic in order to uncover what Heidegger thinks is a more foundational concept: "disclosedness," or, alternatively, "unconcealment." By an indirect, roundabout delimiting of Aristotle's system, Heidegger wishes to discover what Aristotle perhaps loses in his system, and he concludes that what is lost is the pre-theoretical, pre-judicative concurrence of *Dasein* with its world and with being itself.

To recapitulate, I want to show that, for Heidegger, Aristotelian logic hides the very nature of what makes truth important to the human way of existing: that being itself is revealed to and by *Dasein*. Human beings are always-already interpreting 'what is', even when no conscious move to interpret has been made. The essential, conditional necessity of always "taking something as something," even if one does not consciously set out to do so in speech, reveals that an inquiry into truth is not just an epistemological question, but a serious question in ontology. Through his circumspect method, Heidegger articulates a fundamental paradoxical principle: that the self-revelatory nature of being itself is also self-concealing. Hence, the reason that Aristotle's notion of truth prioritizes the declarative present is because the human encounter with being—the moment of truth, so to speak—occurs by closing off an account of being-as-such to the thinker. In Aristotle's logic the priorities are the static and the present. The problem with this, for Heidegger, is that what ends up happening in philosophy after Aristotle is a

prioritization of truth as the agreement of syllogistic reasoning with a static, present or remembered event or set of occurrences. The question of being-as-such is pushed into the background and subsequently forgotten because of the way in which Aristotle formulates logic.

To be sure, I do not think Heidegger means to denigrate Aristotle, nor do I think he objects to the idea that one does, in fact, acquire particular knowledge by the inductive-deductive model of Aristotelian science. On the contrary, he is something of an apologist for Aristotle, insofar as much of Heidegger's thought from 1930 to 1935 tries to unearth the sources of Aristotle's prioritization of present, existent things. While it is his study of Aristotle that reveals the problem of the logical prejudice, one of my chief claims in the dissertation is that it is not Aristotle with whom he primarily wrestles, but Plato.

After discussing how Heidegger identifies the problem of the logical prejudice, I will show that he then makes it a priority to discover the 'how' and 'why' of its occurrence, which is not merely a paleographic or philological issue for him. In several essays and lectures from 1930 to 1935, Heidegger attempts to convey that a more fundamental concept of truth than Aristotle's can be found in Plato. The primary examples of this are "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" (winter of 1931-32, amended in 1940) and *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (also winter of 1931-32). In these two lectures can be found many of the tropes and modes of arguing that characterize Heidegger's philosophizing through the end of World War II.

Heidegger continually struggles with understanding Plato as a pivotal thinker, the figure upon which metaphysics, as a systematic science, depends. In Plato's thought, Heidegger finds evidence to support his ideas about the fundamentally deep-seated nature of truth as the self-

disclosure of being itself, but he also sees Plato as attempting to codify being, to define it as the static, existent present through the doctrine of ideas. Plato's divine ideas are at once concealed and revealed, present and absent. They are absent insofar as they are not apparent to the naked eye, but they are present insofar as they are the perpetually active truth which allows what is visibly present to resemble or seem to be anything at all. In one stroke, Plato's divine ideas recognize the dyadic pairing of concealing and revealing that Heidegger himself wants to express, yet Plato's way of talking about this fundamental 'truth of being' shares the problem that Heidegger finds in Aristotle: the idea that truth is the adequation of the mind to an object. In Plato's case, this object is the eternally present, divine idea.

The upshot of Heidegger's examination of Plato is that he now sees a clear way to develop his project: he begins a thorough critique of metaphysics as the science of being, which is historically and completely determined by the systematic approaches in Plato and Aristotle, and contrasts this systematic metaphysics with what he calls the 'inceptive thinking' of the Presocratics, in particular Parmenides and Heraclitus. According to Heidegger, Heraclitus and Parmenides recognize the relation of being with seeming, thinking, and becoming; and they understand these relationships—whether being and seeming are only separable in speech or not—to be only one way in which human beings encounter and belong within *phusis*, i.e. being. For Heidegger, Heraclitus and Parmenides are far from being systematizers; they recognize the dyadic determination of concealment with disclosure, and thus in no way inaugurate a metaphysics that prioritizes the analysis of being. Heidegger's most well-known explanation of the difference between Plato and his predecessors is from a 1935 lecture course, later published

as *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (*EM*). While a critique of the entire history of metaphysics appears in bits and pieces throughout the early 1930s, *EM* is his most complete attempt at this.

The next section of the dissertation concludes, therefore, by showing how this critique of Plato and the science of metaphysics sets in motion a critique in *EM* of Nietzsche as the last metaphysician. For Heidegger, the Nietzschean revaluation of all values persists as a derivative kind of metaphysics, dependent upon reversing the operation of Aristotle's adequation of the mind to present objects. Unlike the inceptive thinking of Heraclitus and Parmenides, Nietzsche's response to Aristotle and Plato is dependent upon them for its method and procedures. The revaluation of values cannot help but be an analytic enterprise in which the Platonic metaphysics of presence is the paradigm to which Nietzsche responds.

For the remainder of the 1930s and until the time of *Parmenides*, Heidegger's critique of metaphysics continues to develop in two ways: first, by clarifying the difference between Plato's metaphysical thought and inceptive thinking, and second, by showing the insufficiency of Nietzsche's project as a response to metaphysics. In section 3 below, I will show that these critiques themselves reveal to Heidegger their own insufficiency, insofar as they merely remain analytic, negative responses to the history of metaphysics.

The second half of the section investigates how the aphorisms and pronouncements collected in *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and *Besinnung* not only aim to deepen and expand Heidegger's critique of metaphysics, but do so by attempting to discover modes of speaking and writing that are, in fact, inceptive, in order to overcome the insufficiency of his previous critiques. Heidegger is well aware that it is neither possible nor desirable to recreate the

conditions under which the inceptive thought of the Presocratics took place. On the contrary, his new inception must attempt an originaive, speculative way of expressing the dyadic codetermination of unconcealment and concealment, predated by and fully aware of the history of philosophical analysis. Inceptive thinking, if Heidegger can himself understand and engage in it, must be reticent and sigetic; it must remain quiet in order to avoid both the Scylla of the logical analysis he criticizes and the Charybdis of a self-inflicted, vacuous derangement of meaning.<sup>4</sup>

It is in the midst of exploring inceptive thinking as both productive of and responsive to the logically prejudiced history of metaphysics that Heidegger begins working on individual essays and lectures devoted to the Presocratics. The Parmenides course, I contend, must be taken as a small but significant attempt to analyze and explain inceptive thinking in order to clarify his own halting attempts at enacting it in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*. Heidegger's project, which began as a result of his discomfort with the insufficiencies of Aristotle's *logos apophansis*, becomes an urgent attempt to develop a new and philosophically rigorous means of expressing what it means to speak the truth. What I hope to show in this chapter, therefore, is that, by 1942, Heidegger thinks the critical engagement is with Plato and Nietzsche, because they serve as pivotal figures within the history of metaphysics. If Heidegger's thought achieves anything significant, it does so by choosing a path which is informed by, but different from, the paths of these two pivotal

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<sup>4</sup> Later in life, Heidegger expressly states that this was on his mind in 1941, noting that he had a conversation with Reinhardt on the very topic of avoiding mere philological precision on one hand and vacuous philosophizing on the other. See Martin Heidegger, *Seminare (Heraklit)*, ed. C. Ochwadt, vol. 15, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1986), 4.

thinkers. Thus, *Parmenides* investigates inceptive thinking because, for Heidegger, Plato and Nietzsche are so influential that they must be understood and countered.

*Section 2. Subtending the logical prejudice and clarifying the Seinsfrage beyond “Being and Time”: 1927-35*

As I have already noted, Heidegger’s persistent concern as regards the history of metaphysics is to respond to the so-called “logical prejudice.” As Daniel Dahlstrom puts it, “Disabling the logical prejudice and all that it entails constitutes a considerable part of Heidegger’s philosophical logic, his effort to investigate the senses of truth.”<sup>5</sup> That is, Heidegger sees the presupposition that “truth is one of two (or more) possibilities of a sentence or its equivalent” as a constraint on the philosophical investigation of truth.<sup>6</sup> Philosophy works within the framework of the logical prejudice insofar as the locus of truth is found primarily in judgments and propositions, so that truth finds its definition as the opposite of falsity. For Heidegger, this definition is superficial. He reinterprets foundational truth as the “unconcealment” [*Unverborgenheit*] or “disclosure” [*Erschlossenheit*] that allows the possibility of a superficial truth or falsity of judgments to exist.

In *SZ*, Heidegger locates the source of the logical prejudice in the thought of Aristotle, specifically in his understanding of the human being. The *zōon logon echon*, which has simply been translated as the *animal rationale* by traditional metaphysics, Heidegger explains, ought to

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<sup>5</sup> Dahlstrom, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Dahlstrom, 9.

be reinterpreted as the living thing that possesses the abilities of discursive thinking and speech.<sup>7</sup> Heidegger here interprets *logos* as discourse, indicating that it is in discourse that the *zōon logon echon* encounters the structure of being by speaking about any entity. This follows upon his introduction of *Dasein* as the entity for which its own being is an issue.<sup>8</sup> What Heidegger admits here is a fundamental insight on the part of Aristotle, that *logos* is the way in which *Dasein* enquires into being—not only the being of other entities, but also that of the world and of *Dasein* itself; it is in discourse that being itself is disclosed.

This disclosing, discursive character of *Dasein* is reiterated in the lecture course of 1929-30, in which Heidegger calls *logos* the “speaking out” [*Aussprechen*] of the manifestness of being.<sup>9</sup> It is fundamental, both here and in *SZ*, that the being of entities is spoken out or disclosed. An entity, insofar as it exists, is any ‘thing’ disclosed by *Dasein*. Thus, when Heidegger states that *Dasein* is fundamentally “being in the world,” it is discourse, or *logos*, inherently a characteristic of *Dasein*’s own being, that reveals something about any entity.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 74: “‘Man’ is here defined as a ζῷον λόγον ἔχον, and this is interpreted to mean an *animal rationale*, something living which has reason. But the kind of Being which belongs to a ζῷον is understood in the sense of occurring and Being-present-at-hand. The λόγος is some superior endowment: the kind of Being which belongs to it, however, remains quite as obscure as that of the entire entity thus compounded.” All translations of *SZ* are from this text unless otherwise indicated; *SZ*, 48: “Die Definition des Menschen: ζῷον λόγον ἔχον in der Interpretation: animal rationale, vernünftiges Lebewesen. Die Seinsart des ζῷον wird aber vierstanden im Sinne des Vorhandenseins und Vorkommens. Der λόγος ist eine höhere Ausstattung, deren Seinsart ebenso dunkel bleibt wie die des so zusammengesetzten Seienden.”

<sup>8</sup> *Being and Time*, 32: “Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it;” *SZ*, 12: “Das Dasein ist ein Seienden, das nicht nur unter anderem Seienden vorkommt. Es ist vielmehr dadurch ontisch ausgezeichnet, daß es diesem Seienden in seinem Sein *um* dieses Sein selbst geht.”

<sup>9</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 29/30, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 40. Hereafter referred to as *GM*, followed by page number.

<sup>10</sup> *Being and Time*, 70: “But the Being of these entities must be something which can be grasped in a distinctive kind of λέγειν (letting something be seen), so that this Being becomes intelligible in advance as that which it is—and as that which it is already in every entity;” *SZ*, 44: “Das Sein dieses Seienden muß aber in einem ausgezeichneten



In both *SZ* and *GM*, Heidegger correlates the disclosure of *logos* with the Greek word for truth, *alētheia*. What *Dasein* conveys, in disclosing being, is *a-lētheia*, where the Greek alpha is a privative prefix attached to the word *lēthē*, meaning the concealed or the hidden. Thus, to disclose, says Heidegger, is to steal or tear out of concealment.<sup>11</sup> Concealing [*Verbergen*] is the prerequisite for revealing [*Entbergen*]; nothing is spoken and thus disclosed without first being hidden or undisclosed.<sup>12</sup> This grounding of the revealed in the concealed is central, for Heidegger, to every subsequent examination of truth, *Parmenides* included. Throughout the period between the publication of *SZ* and the end of the war, it serves as the joist upon which the remaining plank-arguments concerning the logical prejudice are set.<sup>13</sup>

For example, in *SZ*, Heidegger notes the customary ways of defining *logos* in terms of *alētheia* by discussing the alternative translations of *logos* as “reason” [*Vernunft*], “judgment” [*Urteil*], and “concept” [*Begriff*], among others.<sup>14</sup> Of particular interest is “judgment,” because that translation associates discourse with assertions. This association Heidegger traces back to

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*λέγειν* (sehen lassen) faßbar werden, so daß dieses Sein im vorhinein als das, was es ist und in jedem Seienden schon ist, verständlich wird.”

<sup>11</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 29: “Truth is understood by the Greeks as something stolen, something that must be torn from concealment in a confrontation in which precisely *φύσις* strives to conceal itself.” All translations of *GM* are from this text unless otherwise indicated; *GM*, 43: Die Wahrheit wird von den Griechen als ein Raub verstanden, der der Verborgenheit entrissen werden muß in einer Auseinandersetzung, in der gerade die *φύσις* danach strebt, sich zu verbergen.” See also *Being and Time*, 265: “Entities get snatched out of their hiddenness;” *SZ*, 222: “Das Seiende wird der Verborgenheit entrissen.”

<sup>12</sup> *Fundamental Concepts*, 27: “The opposite concept to *λέγειν* is concealing ...; the fundamental concept and the fundamental meaning of *λέγειν* is ‘taking out of concealment’, *revealing*;” *GM*, 41: “Der Gegenbegriff des *λέγειν* ist das Verbergen; der Grundbegriff und die Grundbedeutung des *λέγειν* ist ›das aus der Verborgenheit Nehmen‹, das *Entbergen*.”

<sup>13</sup> See Wrathall, “Unconcealment,” 338, hereafter referred to as Wrathall (1), followed by page number. Wrathall argues that there are four central “planks” to Heidegger’s philosophical “platform” defining the concept of truth. Truth may be understood through: (1) correspondence, (2) entities or things showing themselves, (3) being revealing itself through things, and (4) *die Lichtung*, that is, the clearing (or openness to being and meaning) in which understanding occurs. These planks are helpful clarifications of the different layers of truth at issue for Heidegger, but my opinion is that the dyadic relationship of *Unverborgenheit* with *Verbergen* is central to all of these planks.

<sup>14</sup> *SZ*, 32.

Aristotle, for whom the primary mode of *logos* was the “pointing out” of an assertion.<sup>15</sup>

*Apophanesthai* is to let something be seen, to point out entities insofar as those entities are judged in the assertion. Thus, because *logos* lets something appear, any assertion can be true or false only as a consequence.<sup>16</sup> In *SZ*, Heidegger emphasizes that, even when *logos* is read primarily as *apophansis*, as it is by Aristotle in *De Interpretatione*, the *alētheia* of assertion and judgment does not rest merely in agreement, but in unconcealment.<sup>17</sup>

As Heidegger argues in *SZ* as well as in *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt—Endlichkeit—Einsamkeit* (*GM*), that which remains concealed, that which *logos* does not point to in *apophansis*, is not falsity. Rather, in order for something to be false, it must already be unconcealed or disclosed. The *logos apophansis*, the logical assertion, is not itself the locus of truth; instead, it refers back to something else. It lets a thing be seen *as* a thing, and, therefore, it has the implied capacity for concealing a thing as well. For Aristotle, on the contrary, truth is merely the opposite of falsity and not this more originaive concealing; as such, it is ‘true’ in a secondary, dependent sense.<sup>18</sup> Aristotle’s *logos apophansis* can either reveal or conceal and still

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<sup>15</sup> *Being and Time*, 56: “Aristotle has explicated this function of discourse more precisely as ἀποφαίνεσθαι. The λόγος lets something be seen (φαίνεσθαι), namely, what the discourse is about; and it does so either *for* the one who is doing the talking (the *medium*) or for persons who are talking with one another, as the case may be;” *SZ*, 32: “Aristoteles hat diese Funktion der Rede schärfer expliziert als ἀποφαίνεσθαι. Der λόγος läßt etwas sehen (φαίνεσθαι), nämlich das, worüber die Rede ist und zwar für den Redenden.”

<sup>16</sup> “Furthermore, because the λόγος is a letting-something-be-seen, it can *therefore* be true or false,” *Being and Time*, 56; “Und wiederum, weil der λόγος ein Sehenlassen ist, *deshalb* kann er wahr oder falsch sein,” *SZ*, 33.

<sup>17</sup> *SZ*, 214. What is more fundamental than the *adaequatio intellectus et rei* for Heidegger is that “The ‘Being-true’ of the λόγος as ἀληθεύειν means that in λέγειν as ἀποφαίνεσθαι the entities *of which* one is talking must be taken out of their hiddenness: one must let them be seen as something unhidden (ἀληθές): that is, they must be *discovered*,” *Being and Time*, 56–7; “Das »Wahrsein« des λόγος als ἀληθεύειν besagt: das Seiende, *wovon* die Rede ist, im λέγειν als ἀποφαίνεσθαι aus seiner Verborgenheit herausnehmen und es als Unverborgenes (ἀληθές) sehen lassen, *entdecken*,” *SZ*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> “The ‘truth of judgments’, however, is merely the opposite of this covering-up, a secondary phenomenon of truth, *with more than one kind of foundation*,” *Being and Time*, 57; “Die »Urteilswahrheit« aber ist nur der Gegenfall zu diesem Verdecken – d.h. ein *mehrfach fundiertes* Phänomen von Wahrheit,” *SZ*, 34.

take part in disclosure. In other words, an assertion is either *alētheuein* or *pseudesthai*, yet both kinds of assertion perform the act of revealing.<sup>19</sup> Aristotle's emphasis on *logos* as either revealing (*alētheuein*) or concealing (*pseudesthai*) is apophantic because it is always a pointing out, even in the case of the false assertion.<sup>20</sup> *Logos* always has the intrinsic possibility of revealing and concealing, because the very nature of speech is bound up in performing both of these functions.<sup>21</sup>

The propositional assertion, the judgment which results in either truth or falsity, always “lets” one thing or another “be seen” [*Sehenlassen*],<sup>22</sup> even if what is seen turns out to be a false front. Thus Aristotle's *logos apophansis* is not and cannot be the foundation of truth, but it does point to the more foundational unconcealment. The mistake of realist and idealist metaphysics, according to Heidegger, is that they miss what *logos apophansis* reveals when it does its pointing.<sup>23</sup> The logical prejudice is the mistake of seeing in the assertion only the truth or falsity of the declarative sentence. In order to articulate this sense of *alētheia* as unconcealment, indicated by the alpha privative at the beginning of the word, in *GM* and *SZ* Heidegger aims to show how Aristotle's *logos apophansis*, even though it is superficial, also yields to Heidegger's own interpretation.

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<sup>19</sup> “Similarly, ‘being false’ (ψεῦδεσθαι) amounts to deceiving in the sense of *covering up*.” *Being and Time*, 57; “Imgleichen besagt das »Falschein« *ψεῦδεσθαι* soviel wie Täuschen im Sinne von *verdecken*.” *SZ*, 33. Heidegger reuses this explanation of falsity in *GM*, 449.

<sup>20</sup> This point also appears in *Parmenides*, as I discuss in section 8 of chapter 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>21</sup> “The λόγος that points out must point out even when it conceals,” *Fundamental Concepts*, 312; “Der aufweisende λόγος muß auch dann aufweisend sein, wenn er verbirgt,” *GM*, 452.

<sup>22</sup> *GM*, 452–3.

<sup>23</sup> “Both realism and idealism have—with equal thoroughness—missed the meaning of the Greek conception of truth...” *Being and Time*, 57; “Realismus und Idealismus verfehlen den Sinn des griechischen Wahrheitsbegriffes...” *SZ*, 34.

In section 33 of *SZ*, assertion is contrasted with interpretation, wherein the latter is the foundation upon which any assertion of understanding can be made.<sup>24</sup> For Heidegger, assertion is a derivative form of interpretation, and its meaning is not merely the content of the judgment, separable from the act of judging, nor is the act of judgment the sole path toward obtaining meaning. There is always some interpretation on which any assertion already depends; Heidegger explains this dependency in terms of the “as” structure of interpretation.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “In so far as assertion (‘judgment’) is grounded on understanding and presents us with a derivative form in which an interpretation has been carried out, it *too* ‘has’ a meaning,” *Being and Time*, 195; “Sofern die Aussage (das »Urteil«) im Verstehen gründet und eine abgeleitete Vollzugsform, der Auslegung darstellt, »hat« *auch* in einem Sinn,” *SZ*, 153–4.

<sup>25</sup> See Dahlstrom, 181–200, 242–8. Dahlstrom has already provided an excellent, detailed account of the development of the ‘as’ structure, as well as ‘formal indication’ and its relationship to ‘taking something as something,’ through 1930. ‘Formal indication’ is Heidegger’s term for the pre-scientific thematization of concepts or states of affairs. Philosophy, insofar as it performs formal indications, delimits the scope of what is under investigation and avoids scientific categorization by using circumspect, declarative statements. Formal indications thus invite the reader or listener to reconsider particular concepts or events with a view towards identifying the references of the ‘as’ structure and doing so without slipping into a scientific mode of categorization. Dahlstrom is skeptical regarding the ability of a formal indication to shake one loose from everyday ‘taking something as something’ while refraining from scientific objectification. Heidegger discusses indication [*Anzeige*] in general in *SZ* in §17, 76–83. He does not use the phrase ‘*formale Anzeige*’ more than a handful of times after 1930. *GM*, 424–31, thus represents one of the last explications of *formale Anzeige* in Heidegger’s thought. In formulating my description of the ‘as’ structure, I have also consulted Mark Wrathall, “Truth and the Essence,” 242–50, hereafter referred to as Wrathall (2) followed by page number. Regarding the relationship between Aristotle’s *logos apophansis* and the hermeneutics of interpretation, I have also consulted Günter Figal, “Heidegger’s Philosophy of Language in an Aristotelian Context: *Dynamis meta logou*,” in Hyland and Manoussakis, *Heidegger and the Greeks*, 83–92; Andrew Inkpin, “Formale Anzeige und das Voraussetzungsproblem.” In *Heidegger und Husserl im Vergleich; Heidegger Forum 3*, edited by Friederike Rese (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2010), 13–33; Helmuth Vetter, “Heideggers Destruktion der Tradition am Beispiel des Aristoteles.” In *Heidegger und Aristoteles; Heidegger-Jahrbuch 3*, edited by Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski (Freiburg: Alber, 2007), 77–95; and Sean Joseph McGrath, “Formal indication, irony, and the risk of saying nothing.” In *A Companion to Heidegger’s “Phenomenology of religious life;” Elementa 80*, edited by Sean Joseph McGrath and Andrzej Wierciński, (New York: Rodopi, 2010), 179–205. My own thoughts about Heidegger’s method have been greatly influenced by the interpretation of Heidegger’s hermeneutics as set forth by Holger Zaborowski, “Heidegger’s Hermeneutics : Towards a new practice of understanding.” In *Interpreting Heidegger: Critical Essays*, edited by Daniel O. Dahlstrom. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 15–41. Zaborowski’s argument is that Heidegger retains, with some modification, what may be called his hermeneutics of formal indication, even after he stops using the term. Zaborowski claims, and I follow him in this, that Heidegger’s way of thinking shifts from a “hermeneutics of facticity” in *SZ* to a hermeneutics of the meaning of being or, later, of “dwelling.” Insofar as a hermeneutics is supposed to be concerned with the relation of part to whole, the hermeneutics of formal indication is concerned with the how the individual interprets being as he also considers his own *Dasein*, while the latter two “hermeneutics” are focused on expressing how being discloses itself to and for human thought and speech, which are, at every moment,

The “as” structure, for Heidegger, is the way in which any understanding occurs, where ‘understanding’ is the disclosure characteristic of *Dasein*. Understanding provides *Dasein* with the possibility of accounting for anything at all, whether of *Dasein*, other entities, or ‘being’ itself. In other words, to interpret is to articulate a meaning by which something is related to something else or is put in context. This means that interpretation fundamentally takes the form of a circumspective “as.” Heidegger describes the “as” structure in section 32 of *SZ*: one appropriates objects, situations, and people by taking them as one thing or another. This means that, prior to any assertion, one’s very interaction with a set of circumstances is already interpretive.<sup>26</sup> In order to take something as something, one encounters a totality of relationships through which the circumstances are understood.<sup>27</sup> The “as” structure of interpretation is none other than the structure of disclosure. Any understanding, even the most basic, already has this structure of “as.” Interpretation always takes something as something.<sup>28</sup>

Here Heidegger insists that interpretation need not take the form of an assertion, though that seems to be the clearest case of taking something as something. Primordially, that is, most originally, interpretation is not scientific theory, but an act of circumspection wherein one takes

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a kind of interpretation. In both its earlier and later forms, Heidegger’s hermeneutics is about the nature of language as a kind of interpretation, as opposed to a traditional understanding of hermeneutics as a way of analyzing the meaning of a text. That is, his hermeneutics is concerned with the disclosure of being to the thinker in a time and place as the determinate factors of any resulting interpretation (taking something as something). The shift in his hermeneutics is a shift in focus toward being disclosing itself to the thinker and away from a focus on the particulars of how interpretation functions within “factual” (everyday) life.

<sup>26</sup> Examples of pre-assertive interpretation include the following: taking a person as a friend or foe (or even as recognizable), seeing a door as a door and not a window, and walking over a bridge and, in doing so, taking the bridge as a tool used for crossing bodies of water.

<sup>27</sup> “The “as” makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood. It constitutes the interpretation,” *Being and Time*, 189; “Das »Als« macht die Struktur der Ausdrücklichkeit eines Verstandenen aus; es konstituiert die Auslegung,” *SZ*, 149.

<sup>28</sup> Note that any taking of something “as” something, when verbalized in the declarative, becomes an assertion, but not always of the strict, apophantic variety. See Dahlstrom, 203-5. Here, Dahlstrom outlines three possible forms of assertion, of which the properly thematic, apophantic assertion is the third.

something as something “without wasting words.”<sup>29</sup> Heidegger describes this primordial taking of something as something as an existential-hermeneutical taking.<sup>30</sup> In other words, taking something as something, a pointing out, is always interpretive insofar as it is in reference to the totality of relationships. An assertion, however, is a derivative of the hermeneutical interpretation, which is itself constituted of pointing out parts and referencing a whole circumstance and vice versa.

The “existential-hermeneutical ‘as,’” where the totality of references is still in view, is discarded in the act of assertion in favor of exhibiting something in such a way that we just stare at it in order to perform categorizations.<sup>31</sup> The *logos apophansis* of Aristotle, insofar as it is a judgment of either putting together or taking apart—*sunthesis* and *diaeresis*—is so because taking apart and putting together are functions already used in hermeneutical interpretation, the relating of wholes and parts. However, Aristotle himself, claims Heidegger, did not pursue the analysis of *logos* far enough to overcome the prejudice of treating every interpretation in terms

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<sup>29</sup> “Interpretation is carried out primordially not in a theoretical statement but in an action of circumspective concern—laying aside the unsuitable tool, or exchanging it, ‘without wasting words,’” *Being and Time*, 200; “Der ursprüngliche Vollzug der Auslegung liegt nicht in einem theoretischen Aussagesatz, sondern im umsichtig-besorgenden Weglegen bzw. Wechseln des ungeeigneten Werkzeuges, »ohne dabei ein Wort zu verlieren«,” *SZ*, 157. See Dahlstrom, 188-9. Dahlstrom talks about other ways of interpretation through action or inaction, as opposed to speech.

<sup>30</sup> “The primordial ‘as’ of an interpretation (ἐρμηνεία) which understands circumspectively we call the ‘existential-hermeneutical ‘as’ in distinction from the ‘apophantical ‘as’ of the assertion,” *Being and Time*, 201; “Das ursprüngliche »Als« der umsichtig verstehenden Auslegung (ἐρμηνεία) nennen wir das existenzial-hermeneutische »Als« im Unterscheid vom apophantischen »Als« der Aussage,” *SZ*, 158.

<sup>31</sup> “This leveling of the primordial ‘as’ of circumspective interpretation to the ‘as’ with which presence-at-hand is given a definite character is the specialty of assertion. Only so does it obtain the possibility of exhibiting something in such a way that we just look at it,” *Being and Time*, 201; “Diese Nivellierung des ursprünglichen »Als« der umsichtigen Auslegung zum Als der Vorhandenheitsbestimmung ist der Vorzug der Aussage. Nur so gewinnt sie die Möglichkeit puren hinsehenden Aufweisens,” *SZ*, 158.

of *synthesis* and *diairesis*.<sup>32</sup> Thus, in *SZ*, the very structure of *logos* is more fundamental than the *logos* of judgment, and Aristotle is neither a proponent of the logical prejudice nor does he adequately defend against it.<sup>33</sup>

In disclosing something hermeneutically, the totality of references, including the references to *Dasein* and being, are left intact. In the *logos* of assertion, if assertion is taken to be the locus of truth, however, the references are unnoticed so that a thing may be seen apart from such references. Given this explanation of the “as” structure, Heidegger then claims in *SZ*, section 44, that truth, *alētheia*, is not the agreement of terms with an object, but the uncovering that is concomitant with *Dasein*’s being. Here, truth is not merely a condition of asserting one thing or another about something, but the condition of appropriating things—and for Aristotle these are either *pragmata* or *phainomena*—as they disclose themselves.<sup>34</sup>

While the heart of this critique is repeated in *GM*, Heidegger does more in *GM* to develop the conception of a self-disclosive *alētheia*. That is, while *Dasein* is the entity to or for which something is disclosed, it is being itself that does the disclosing. The description of the logical prejudice in *GM* is consistent with that in *SZ*: the prejudice locates truth only in the judgment of an assertion, assumes that such truth depends on the “agreement” of the judgment with its object, and likewise assumes that Aristotle affixes the locus of truth in the judgment by defining truth as

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<sup>32</sup> “It is true, of course, that Aristotle did not pursue the analytical question as far as the problem ...” *Being and Time*, 201–2; “Allerdings hat *Aristoteles* die analytische Frage nicht weiter vorgetrieben zum Problem ...” *SZ*, 159.

<sup>33</sup> “And because Aristotle never upheld the thesis we have mentioned, he was also never in a situation to ‘broaden’ the conception of truth in the *λόγος* to include pure *voēiv*,” *Being and Time*, 268–9; “Und weil *Aristoteles* die genannte These nie behauptete, kam er auch nie in die Lage, den Wahrheitsbegriff vom *λόγος* auf das reine *voēiv* zu »erweitern«,” *SZ*, 226.

<sup>34</sup> *Pragma* and *phainomena* are “the ‘things themselves’; it [*alētheia*] signifies what shows itself—entities in the ‘how’ of their uncoveredness,” *Being and Time*, 262; “das »Sachen selbst«, das, was sich zeigt *das Seiende im Wie seiner Entdecktheit*,” *SZ*, 219.

“agreement.”<sup>35</sup> In addition to these claims, Heidegger argues that the hermeneutical “as” rests upon an even deeper and more primordial structure of *alētheia*, the openness of being itself as the possibility for revealing. The possibility of truth in any statement, that is, any *logos*, is not of itself the ground of disclosure, because it is not the act of self-manifestation of things. Such self-manifestation is required if the human capacity to take something as something is to function at all.<sup>36</sup> In *GM*, Heidegger’s conception of “man as world-forming” [*der Mensch ist weltbildend*], which is terminologically consistent with the language of “care” and “being in the world” in *SZ*, takes on a different sense.<sup>37</sup> To disclose is to “be open” [*Offensein*] or “allow oneself to be bound” [*Sich-bindenlassen*] to the way things give themselves to us.<sup>38</sup>

In *GM*, the logical prejudice is found to be even more inadequate than in *SZ*, because the encounter with truth is pushed even further away from the assertive judgment; it is the very possibility of the self-disclosure of being, as such, that allows the truth of *logos* to come into view.<sup>39</sup> The hermeneutic character of any distinction relies on the openness of *Dasein* to entities,

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<sup>35</sup> “Aristotle, the father of logic, not only has assigned truth to the judgment as its primordial locus but has set going the definition of ‘truth’ as ‘agreement’,” *Being and Time*, 257; “Aristoteles, die Vater der Logik, hat sowohl die Wahrheit dem Urteil als ihrem ursprünglichen Ort zugewiesen, er hat auch die Definition der Wahrheit als »Übereinstimmung« in Gang gebracht,” *SZ*, 214.

<sup>36</sup> “However ... in order to be able to comport himself in general within this ‘either/or’, man in his propositional discourse must have *leeway* in advance for the comparative to-and-fro of the ‘either/or’, of *truth or falsity*,” *Fundamental Concepts*, 339; “Um aber über Angemessenheit dessen, . . . muß der redend aussagende Mensch im vorhinein einen *Spielraum* haben für das vergleichende Hin-her des ›entweder-oder‹, der *Wahrheit oder Falschheit*, und zwar einem Spielraum, innerhalb dessen schon das Seiende selbst, darüber es auszusagen gilt, offenbar ist,” *GM*, 493.

<sup>37</sup> *GM*, 495.

<sup>38</sup> *GM*, 496.

<sup>39</sup> “What we analyzed above ... as characteristic of ordinary understanding was its failure to make any distinctions in encountering all the beings it comes up against. This failure to distinguish in its comportment toward beings—which is itself rooted in something deeper—is part of the reason for this failure to see world,” *Fundamental Concepts*, 347; “Was wir früher . . . als Charakteristikum des vulgären Verstandes auseinanderlegten, jene Unterschiedslosigkeit, in der er alles Seiende hält, das ihm in den Weg läuft, diese Unterschiedslosigkeit im Verhalten zum Seienden ist – selbst in Tieferem verwurzelt – mit ein Grund für dieses Nicht-sehen der Welt,” *GM*, 504.



indeed to being itself.<sup>40</sup> *Dasein* is open to the world and to being as a whole, and its openness constitutes its freedom [*Freiheit*].<sup>41</sup> In *SZ*, however, the interpretive “as” structure is the ground of disclosure. There is no “disclosure of being” more ‘deeply’ grounded than *Dasein*’s interpretive act of understanding.

This shift of perspective in *GM* is critical to the development of Heidegger’s critique of the logical prejudice, because it further clarifies that his objections are ontological and not merely logical or epistemic. If his thoughts about the self-disclosure of being out of concealment are correct, then the problem with the prejudice is that it reduces a fundamental encounter with being itself to a mere logical or epistemological procedure. Even if Aristotle promotes the prejudice unwillingly, it means that his metaphysics and all subsequent metaphysics which retain his understanding of truth speak about entities—and about being—in the same way: that is, by means of *logos apophansis*. Since Heidegger has already clarified the inadequacy of merely contrasting truth with falsity, he must try to show that there are other senses of concealment that fit better with his interpretation that truth arises out of *lēthē*. Moreover, by the time of *GM*, it seems, Heidegger’s dismantling of the prejudice consists of an indictment of the entire science of

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<sup>40</sup> On this point, see John D. Caputo, “Demythologizing Heidegger: ‘Aletheia’ and the History of Being,” *Review of Metaphysics* 41 (1998): 528. Working with the 1937-38 lectures, titled *Grundfragen der Philosophie*, Caputo states that *alētheia* is the ‘openness of entities’, which is also their unconcealment. By this point in Heidegger’s philosophy, “There are accordingly two distinguishable senses of the word *alētheia* in Heidegger’s story,” the first being unconcealment, and the second, which makes unconcealment possible, the openness of freedom. See also Wrathall (1), 348-9; and William J. Richardson, “Toward the Future of Truth,” 98-104.

<sup>41</sup> *GM*, 497 and 505. Heidegger concisely recapitulates most of his thoughts from *GM* on truth and the logical prejudice in the short essay “*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*,” which is from the same year. See Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 9, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 73-108. *Wegmarken* hereafter referred to as ‘Wm’ followed by page number. Compare my assessment here with Wrathall (1), 353; and Wrathall (2), 250-63.

metaphysics, not just its modern proponents. His next move is to show evidence of the prejudice in Plato's dialogues, an effort to confirm the charge.

Less than a year after *GM*, Heidegger shifts his attention toward Plato, to whom he had given little time since the *Sophist* lectures of 1924-25.<sup>42</sup> "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" is one of the earliest examples of this shift in attention.<sup>43</sup> This essay-length lecture uses the cave allegory in Book VII of *Republic* to show that Plato is as guilty as Aristotle of providing a framework for the logical prejudice. Here, the argument for locating the beginnings of the logical prejudice in Plato's thought is that *alētheia* is directed by the *idea*<sup>44</sup>—that is, that Plato's divine ideas ambiguously focus both on their own self-revealing and on the human capacity for correctly identifying them.<sup>45</sup>

In this essay, through what becomes a rather customary strategy, Heidegger frames the prejudice as taking truth to be only the *adaequatio intellectus et rei*.<sup>46</sup> In contrast to this view,

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<sup>42</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*, ed. I. Schüssler, vol. 19, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992). Heidegger does discuss Plato between 1926 and 1931, but in bits and pieces which he draws together in a concise way in the "Platons Lehre" essay. For an overview of these discussions, see Catalin Partenie, "Imprint: Heidegger's Interpretation of Platonic Dialectic in the *Sophist* Lectures," in Partenie and Rockmore, *Heidegger and Plato*, 65-6.

<sup>43</sup> Wm, 109-44.

<sup>44</sup> "When Plato says of the *īdeā* that she is the mistress that allows unhiddenness, he points to something unsaid, namely, that henceforth the essence of truth does not, as the essence of unhiddenness, unfold from its proper and essential fullness but rather shifts to the essence of the *īdeā*," Martin Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," trans. Thomas Sheehan, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 176; "Indem Platon von der *īdeā* sagt, sie sei die Herrin, die Unverborgenheit aus eigener Wesensfülle entfaltet, sondern sich auf das Wesen der *īdeā* verlagert. Das Wesen der Wahrheit gibt den Grundzug der Unverborgenheit preis," Wm, 136. All English translations of *Wegmarken* are from the above volume unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>45</sup> This way of framing the argument in "Platons Lehre" is a common way of interpreting the text. See, for example: Michael Inwood, "Truth and Untruth," 72-95. In the same volume, also see Enrico Berti, "Heidegger and the Platonic," 96-107; Maria del Carmen Paredes, "Amicus Plato," 116-8; and Joseph Margolis, "Heidegger on Truth," 121-39.

<sup>46</sup> "And for a long time now in Western thinking, truth has meant the agreement of the representation in thought with the thing itself: *adaequatio intellectus et rei*," Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine," in *Pathmarks*, 168; "Und »Wahrheit« bedeutet für das abendländische Denken seit langer Zeit die Übereinstimmung des denkenden Vorstellens mit der Sache: *adaequatio intellectus et rei*," Wm, 124.

Heidegger himself finds in the cave allegory textual support for picking out *alētheia* as unhiddenness. According to his interpretation, the surroundings within the cave are stolen from their hiddenness because they reveal themselves as they are to the one willing to struggle with seeing them. The story of the philosopher's educational liberation from the shadows of the cave functions because the author of *Republic* cannot help but view *alētheia* as necessarily in contrast with the hidden. That is, the reference to a cave as a place through which truth might be revealed can only function if the hidden and the unhidden are already presumed by Plato to go together. This presumption of truth as the proper opposite of hiddenness is confirmed by the alpha privative—the now customary conclusion drawn by Heidegger—at the beginning of the Greek's word for truth, *alētheia*.<sup>47</sup>

On the other hand, Heidegger notes, Plato subordinates the self-disclosure of entities to the realm of ideas that exists outside the cave. At each stage of the philosopher's progress out from under the ground, the 'truth' of what he sees is revealed by the ever-increasing closeness of his perceptions to the metaphorical light of the ideas beyond the mouth of the cave. Even though the cave is already a context wherein hiding and revealing are conjoined, the clarity and precision of the unhidden is tied to the ability of the thinker to 'see' the ideas, which allow everything at the earlier, lower stages of the cave to be revealed at all. The act of knowing the truth is thus yoked to the act of seeing.<sup>48</sup> In this way, knowing and apprehending are acts of

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<sup>47</sup> "Stage four of the 'allegory' gives us a special glimpse into how 'privation'—attaining the unhidden by wresting it away—belongs to the essence of truth," Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine," in *Pathmarks*, 172; "Daß die »Privation«, das abrigende Erringen des Unverborgen, zum Wesen der Wahrheit gehört, dahin gibt die vierte Stufe des »Gleichnisses« einen eigenen Wink," Wm, 129–30.

<sup>48</sup> "The essence of the idea consists in its ability to shine and be seen," Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine," in *Pathmarks*, 173; "Das Wesen der Idee liegt in der Schein- und Sichtbarkeit," Wm, 131.

correctly ‘seeing’ ideas and conforming one’s thoughts to them. *Alētheia*, by being subordinated to *idea*, is now an act of *homoiōsis* or *orthotēs*: to say the same as what one sees, to speak or think with correctness.<sup>49</sup>

In this examination of the cave allegory, Heidegger essentially reuses the structure of his critical examinations of Aristotle. Plato’s text offers an indication that there is a fundamental, Greek conception of *alētheia*: unconcealment arises out of and in opposition to hiddenness. And yet, overshadowing this glimpse is an explanation of that conception that promotes the logical prejudice. However, whereas the synthesis and diaeresis of *logos apophansis* function to sort out an ‘adequate’ account of an always-already interpreted state of affairs, the Platonic ideas function as the representative objects about which a ‘correct’ statement can be made. The cave allegory is thus not as rigorously concerned with the structure of judgments as it is with the underlying “as” structure and the way any taking of something as something may be ‘correctly’ performed.

For Heidegger, in yoking truth to the ideas, Plato asserts the absolute metaphysical tie between unhiddenness and thinking. So, whereas Aristotle provides a framework for conceiving of *alētheia* through the medium of logic, Plato frames truth in terms of the permanent presence of essences. The telltale evidence for this, Heidegger notes, is that the divine ideas are contrasted with the shadows on the wall of the cave; the true things themselves are in opposition to what is

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<sup>49</sup> “Truth becomes ὁρθότης, the correctness of apprehending and asserting,” Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine,” in *Pathmarks*, 177; “Wahrheit wird zur ὁρθότης, zur Richtigkeit des Vernehmens und Aussagens,” Wm, 136.

*pseudos*, or false, not what is hidden from view.<sup>50</sup> As permanently present, the ideas are the ground upon which *alētheia* stands. That is, Plato provides an explanation of the self-manifestation of beings, but he unsatisfactorily makes entities the ground rather than making the disclosure of being itself the ground. By 1931, then, for Heidegger, the logical prejudice is not only problematic because of the insufficiency of Aristotle's *logos apophansis*, but also because it may be found in what Heidegger henceforth calls the Platonic "metaphysics of presence."<sup>51</sup>

Heidegger repeats the central arguments from "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" in the early 1930s in the two courses which contain "*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*" in their titles.<sup>52</sup> The examples I will use here are from the first of these courses, now published as *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und "Theätet"* (VWW). With much more time to devote to examining the cave allegory in these lectures, he is able to use greater precision in picking out evidence of the logical prejudice. For example, in order to support his argument that Plato confuses *pseudos* with *lēthē*, Heidegger now rigorously delimits all the different modes of concealment. That is, he makes it his project to point out all of the possible ways of thinking about something as concealed, of which 'the false' is but one kind.<sup>53</sup> Heidegger's reason for this exposition is that the second half of VWW is devoted to *Theaetetus*, a text which, he asserts,

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<sup>50</sup> "The assertion of a judgment made by the intellect is the place of truth and falsehood and of the difference between them," Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine," in *Pathmarks*, 178; "Das urteilende Aussagen des Verstandes ist die Stätte der Wahrheit und Falschheit und ihres Unterschiedes," Wm, 138.

<sup>51</sup> Compare with Berti, "Heidegger and the Platonic," 105; and Carol J. White, "Heidegger and the Greeks," in *A Companion to Heidegger* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 134-9.

<sup>52</sup> Here I have in mind both Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und "Theätet"*, ed. H. Mörchén, vol. 34, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988); and Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit: Die Grundfrage der Philosophie/Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, ed. H. Tietjen, vol. 36/7, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 2001). Volume 34 is from the Winter semester of 1931 and 1932, and Volume 36/7 is from the summer of 1933. Volume 34 will hereafter be referred to as VWW, followed by a page number.

<sup>53</sup> VWW, 145. Here, Heidegger calls his description of all the modes of the hidden a "schematisch-formale Anzeige."

contains the first and only other time in the history of philosophy that the nature of untruth is addressed wherein the preference for interpreting *pseudos* as *lēthē* is promoted.<sup>54</sup> The presumption is that, in order to understand how *Theaetetus* leads to the prejudice, Heidegger must contrast *pseudos* with other modes of concealment.

The basic strategy of this argument is to show how *pseudos* and its supposed German correlate, *Falschheit*, do not mean the same thing, nor do they, together, cover all of the different kinds of concealment. Falsity as incorrectness does not really have the same meaning as *pseudos*, because things like pseudonyms reveal and conceal at the same time. In other words, whereas the pseudonym reveals something about an author in a distorted way,<sup>55</sup> a logically false statement may be ‘incorrect’ by blotting out and disrupting all meaning or sense.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, neither of these interpretations incorporates another sense of *lēthē* found in Homer: that of being veiled, forgotten, or completely absent. If truth is opposed to *pseudos*, or falsity, alone, as the divine ideas are opposed to the shadows on the wall in the cave allegory, then it is understood only in contrast with distortion or disruption, and the sense that it arises out of what is veiled, absent, or forgotten is overlooked.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> “It is that stretch of the road of the question concerning untruth which, for the first and last time in the history of philosophy, Plato actually *trod*: in his dialogue the *Theaetetus*, which also bears the title ‘The Dialogue on Knowledge’,” Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and “Theaetetus,”* trans. Ted Sadler (New York: Continuum, 2002), 93; (“Es ist jenes Wegstück der Frage nach der Unwahrheit, das *Platon* zum ersten und letzten Mal in der Geschichte der Philosophie wirklich *gegangen* ist, – in seinem Dialog »*Theaitetos*«, der auch den Titel trägt: das Gespräch über das Wissen,” VWW, 129. All English translations of VWW are from the above volume unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>55</sup> Heidegger’s example here, as it will be in *Parmenides*, is Kirkegaard’s use of pseudonyms. Compare with: *Parmenides*, 43–4. See. n. 38, chapter 3.

<sup>56</sup> “A pseudonym, therefore, is not a false name (*qua* incorrect) but a concealing name,” *Essence of Truth*, 98; “Pseudonym heißt also nicht falscher (qua un richtiger), sondern verbergender Name,” VWW, 135.

<sup>57</sup> VWW, 137–44. This entire argument regarding *falsch* and *pseudos*, as it appears in its revised fashion in *Parmenides*, is discussed in detail in chapter 3. See *Parmenides*, 24–85.

His stated reason for making these claims, which is that they are a basis for understanding the approach to concealment in *Theaetetus*, provides valuable insight into the status of his critique of the prejudice to this point. Because he claims that *Theaetetus* is the only place in the history of philosophy in which the nature of “untruth” is addressed, he can provide very little evidence to show that distinguishing between other modes of concealment has any substantive grounds for support. What examples he does provide—from Homer—do not discuss concealment directly but only enact particular instances of it. What this argument yields for Heidegger is the possibility, and therefore the challenge, of turning to other sources in order to clarify that *lēthē* need not be confined to meaning *pseudos* as in *Republic*, *Theaetetus*, and *De Interpretatione*. In other words, the introductory clarification of the modes of concealment in *VWW* foreshadows Heidegger’s notion of the inceptive thinker as a means of solidifying his interpretation of truth as unconcealment.<sup>58</sup>

Also in *VWW*, Heidegger addresses his earlier notion of binding the self to the openness to truth discussed in *GM*. Within his exposition of the cave allegory, he defines freedom as the fundamental way in which the person exiting the cave in *Republic* comports himself toward *alētheia*. That is, *alētheia* is that to which freedom is directed. Freedom is not the absence of restraint, but the self-assigning of a goal; it is not ‘from’ something but ‘for’ something. Becoming free in the cave is a kind of dependency upon what he calls the *Lichtblick*, the lighted view.<sup>59</sup> Freeing oneself, essential to the process of education and coming to know, requires a projection of being, a glance at the light outside the cave that must occur before the unshackled

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<sup>58</sup> As will be discussed in the next section and then in more detail in chapter 2, the inceptive thinker is the one who retains the issue of concealment in the effort to name being itself.

<sup>59</sup> *VWW*, 59.

captive can actually exit it. Freedom is thus a decision made in advance, a prejudice about the truth of the way things are and about being itself.<sup>60</sup> This prejudice may be more or less correct in the cave, that is, more or less appropriately guided by the divine ideas themselves. The yoking of seeing and knowing in “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit” is here reinterpreted as the self-binding or letting-oneself-be-bound function of freedom. To ‘see the light’ is possible only for those who allow the light to penetrate into the cave and guide them. The ideas, symbolized by the light, must be pre-assigned as the guarantors of truth, because they are, for Plato, most fully what is.<sup>61</sup>

Taking these insights from *VWW* together, then, *alētheia* construed only in opposition to *pseudos* turns out to narrowly bind freedom to the metaphysics of ever-present forms, and the progression of the history of philosophy after Plato is equally bound to this conception. *VWW* thus performs one task the need for which Heidegger had seen earlier in his examinations of the prejudice in Aristotle: to provide a more rigorous account of all the senses of concealment in order to bolster his own conception of truth as the unconcealment of being itself. As a consequence, this concept of truth is now inescapably bound up with Heidegger’s critical account of the history of metaphysics.

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<sup>60</sup> “What was decisive, what actually happened, is that a projection was made which *delineated* in advance what was henceforth to be *understood* as nature and natural process ...” *Essence of Truth*, 45. (“Das Entscheidende, was geschah, ist, daß ein Entwurf vollzogen wurde, durch den vorausspringend *umgrenzt* wurde, was überhaupt unter Natur und Naturvorgang künftig verstanden werden soll: . . .” *VWW*, 61.)

<sup>61</sup> “Becoming free for beings, seeing-in-the-light, means to enact the *projection of being*, so that a look (picture) of beings is projected and held up in advance, so that in viewing this look one can relate to beings as such.” *Essence of Truth*, 45. (“Freiwerden für das Seiende, das Ins-Licht-sehen, heißt den *Seinsentwurf* vollziehen, darin ein Anblick (Bild) des Seienden vor-geworfen und vorgehalten wird, um so im Blick auf diesen Anblick zu Seiendem als solchem sich zu verhalten.” *VWW*, 61.)



There is no clearer indication of this than the fact that Heidegger now speaks of the primordial <sup>62</sup> truth that Plato no longer grasps, an understanding of truth that may or may not even have an actual, historical appearance in Greek philosophy. By 1935, his task of explicating primordial truth and dismantling the logical prejudice consists of examining early Greek philosophy in order to determine the sources of the transition away from this primordial sense. This is a cyclical process of interpretively translating the meaning of Greek philosophical concepts and searching for ways in which the essential unity of the unhidden with the hidden can be expressed.

The critical portions of *EM* are the clearest evidence of this process in Heidegger's thought during the mid-1930s.<sup>63</sup> The outline of the second half of the course, originally given in 1935, traces four central, interconnected ways in which philosophy historically delimits being by contrasting it with four other terms: "becoming", "seeming", "thinking", and "the ought."<sup>64</sup> For each of the first three contrasts—being with becoming, seeming, and thinking—Heidegger seeks to show how philosophy comes to associate being with presence, and thus label truth as the

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<sup>62</sup> VWW, 93.

<sup>63</sup> See Johannes Fritsche, "With Plato into the *Kairos* before the *Kehre*: On Heidegger's Different Interpretations of Plato," in Partenie and Rockmore, *Heidegger and Plato*, 140-77. Fritsche argues that it is only after 1935 that one can properly refer to Heidegger's 'turn'. The term 'turn' that scholars use is an attempt to describe Heidegger's change in word usage and phrasing and the corresponding shift in focus toward the disclosure of being to the thinker as opposed to the structure of the disclosure that the thinker himself performs. To be sure, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* is a critical point in Heidegger's thinking-through of Platonic metaphysics, but I am not interested in identifying exactly when we can rightly speak of a shift in his thought insofar as it affects his response to the Greeks. My own sense of the pattern of Heidegger's thought from the *Einführung* through the Nietzsche lectures has been, in no small part, informed by the argument Dennis Schmidt puts forth regarding the influence of Greek tragedy upon Heidegger and Nietzsche, in addition to the work of Zaborowski cited in note 25 above. See Dennis Schmidt, *On Germans and Other Greeks: Tragedy and Ethical Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 238-66.

<sup>64</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, ed. Petra Jaeger, vol. 40, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983), 72. Hereafter referred to as *EM*, followed by a page number.

correct assertion about present things. The fourth contrast, being versus “the ought,” Heidegger proposes as the logical consequence of restricting being to the “merely present.”

Becoming, seeming, and thinking are in evident opposition to being, given that they have a common reference to the apparent, to what appears. (‘The apparent’ that Heidegger has in mind is what he here understands the Greek word *phusis* to mean.<sup>65</sup>) The first opposition, being with becoming, is very closely tied to the second, being with seeming, because the sense in which the early Greeks understood *phusis* ambiguously points to both the fleetingness of entities as well as the immediate persistence of their presence when viewed.

According to Heidegger, the historically customary approach to the cosmologies of Parmenides and Heraclitus is to say that they are in opposite camps regarding *phusis*: Parmenides’s ‘way of truth’ promotes a cosmology of static being, whereas Heraclitus opposes this by asserting that all is in flux and ever-changing.<sup>66</sup> For Heidegger, this clear contrast of static being with the flux of becoming arises only because the meaning of *phusis* as the emergent or the apparent gets bifurcated; *phusis* must either be what remains constant and shows itself *or* it must be the flux of the mere semblance of the apparent.<sup>67</sup>

In contrast, Heidegger’s stance is that there is no absolute bifurcation of *phusis* original to the thought of either Heraclitus or Parmenides. Parmenides’s poem opposes being and seeming with non-being, where seeming is the apparent-on-the-way, a middle between complete concealment and full disclosure. Heraclitus’s aphorism “*phusis kruptesthai philei*” similarly

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<sup>65</sup> *EM*, 77-9 and 96.

<sup>66</sup> *EM*, 74.

<sup>67</sup> *EM*, 79-80.

asserts that out of absence or complete concealment beings emerge and have already emerged.<sup>68</sup>

Uncharacteristically, Heraclitus and Parmenides agree in this case by each proposing that being and seeming (as a kind of becoming) are intellectually separable but together constitutive of *phusis*. This intellectual separation of seeming and becoming points toward the third opposition: being with thinking.

At the heart of the thought of Heraclitus and Parmenides, says Heidegger, lies the clarification of thinking, of *logos* itself. Their appropriation of *logos*,<sup>69</sup> in attempting to account for *phusis*, consists of two opposing functions, gathering and setting-apart. Heidegger's position is that *logos* is, for both Heraclitus and Parmenides, the way in which humanity's essence reveals and is revealed by being—*phusis*—itself.<sup>70</sup> The function of *logos* is to gather or collect oneself together with being, to harmonize with it or hearken to the way things show themselves and thereby disclose being to humanity. However, the very act of disclosure also reveals human beings as set apart from being itself and from other entities. To gather or collect requires that things be set apart from one another in the first place, and thus the first action of *logos* is one of *polemos*, the struggle of disjunction and opposition.<sup>71</sup>

For Heidegger, Heraclitus and Parmenides are not concerned with identifying the disjunction of thinking from its object, but rather with identifying thinking in conjunction with

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<sup>68</sup> *EM*, 83-7.

<sup>69</sup> *EM*, 108. For Parmenides, it is *noein*, not *logos*.

<sup>70</sup> *EM*, 96. See chapter 2, n. 25.

<sup>71</sup> Avoiding Heidegger's phraseology here is nearly impossible, even in a summary of his position. His point is that philosophical and poetic thinking coincide for Heraclitus and Parmenides. This is thematic in *EM*, 99-102, 108-11, and 126-33. See also Gregory Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos: From Being to Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Fried's central claim is that *polemos*, taken to mean *Auseinandersetzung*, guides Heidegger's entire project from the early 1930s onward, through the rest of Heidegger's examinations of the Presocratics. Even the seemingly passive 'letting be' of *Gelassenheit*, which appears in the late 1930s, is still a kind of setting-over-and-against, a kind of overcoming of struggle itself.

*phusis*, that is, that thinking is always about being, and being is revealed only in thinking. By thinking, the human being “wrestles entities away from hiding,” that is, discloses a thing in opposition to its concealment, and also happens upon his own identity as the sort of being who discloses things. This concomitant determination of humanity’s essence with the disclosure of being itself picks out that the opposed functions of setting apart and gathering are themselves codetermined. Furthermore, it means that the contents of thinking, that is, determinations about *phusis* as either the emergent or the static, are also codetermined. In other words, because for Heraclitus and Parmenides thinking is always about being rather than radically disjoined from it, neither seeming nor becoming is actually separate from being, either. Human existence constitutes the opening in which being and the apparent show up together. And this is because human existence is not interpreted in radical opposition with *phusis*, but instead is necessarily conjoined with it, if *phusis* is to mean anything at all.<sup>72</sup>

In short, Heidegger’s argument in *EM* about the thought of Heraclitus and Parmenides is that there is no hardened, set distinction between epistemological concerns and metaphysical ones, because there is no systematic delimiting of metaphysics as a specific mode of philosophizing. Put in Husserlian terms, any bracketing of the cosmos within the scientific attitude<sup>73</sup> is simply alien to the thought of Heraclitus and Parmenides, and the evidence for this is that their philosophizing remains poetic.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *EM*, 133-4.

<sup>73</sup> Note the stark contrast of this view of the early Greeks with what Husserl says at roughly the same time about all ancient Greek philosophy: that the basic goal of philosophizing, even at the earliest stages, is to disambiguate *epistēmē* from *doxa*. See Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie*, ed. Walter Biemel (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1954), esp. §5 and §12. See also: Christian Martin, “Heideggers Physis-Denken.” *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 116 (2009): 90-114. Martin argues that Heidegger’s interpretation of *phusis* is neither to be taken as a philological

The customary approach to Heraclitus and Parmenides, Heidegger thinks, arises out of the Platonic response to their fundamental questioning of the identity of being. Once *phusis* is interpreted as *idea* in Plato's dialogues, the contrast of the seeming appearance of the cosmos with the static divine forms inaugurates a disjunction between mere appearance and being—and also, consequently, a disjunction between apprehension or perception, and the contemplation or knowledge of the ideas themselves. Whereas *alētheia* as unconcealment means a dyadic conjunction—hence Heidegger's translation of *logos* as “gathering”—of human essence with and through *phusis*, the opposition of thinking to the divine ideas yields an interpretation of *alētheia* as mimetic *homoiōsis*, the attempt to imitatively represent what is.<sup>75</sup> Plato's divine ideas respond to the *Seinsfrage* by defining essence as the primary means by which being is addressed; *alētheia* is a procedural result of addressing the paradigm, that is, of measuring one's representations and, correspondingly, the way things appear against the ideas themselves. Truth is not the way being addresses the thinker; it instead becomes the correctness of the way in which the thinker speaks about things.<sup>76</sup>

Heidegger's three oppositions of being with seeming, becoming, and thinking in *EM* thus define a transition in Greek thinking from the inceptive or primordial sense of truth as unconcealment to the correspondence or adequation of the mind to the object inaugurated by Plato's metaphysics and systematized by Aristotle's logical writings. *EM* remains consistent with *VWW* and *GM* in this regard: Aristotle and Plato are transitional thinkers who first voice the

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enterprise nor as a strictly historical account of what the Presocratic Greeks actually said. This explanation may help to account for the difference between Husserl's and Heidegger's approaches, as Husserl intends a historical account.

<sup>74</sup> *EM*, 110.

<sup>75</sup> *EM*, 138-43.

<sup>76</sup> *EM*, 141-2.

component concepts of the logical prejudice. While Aristotle and Plato themselves hold onto the terminology of *logos* and *phusis*, the terms are now set in opposition to one another. The significant advance of this critique is that Heidegger now has examples of thinkers to go along with his notion of “primordial truth” in *VWW*; Parmenides and Heraclitus do not separate the epistemic from the metaphysical by distinguishing *logos* from *phusis*. By thinking poetically, they are not yet concerned with the superficial comparison of the idea with an object, but rather puzzle about the very struggle to bring *phusis* to speech at all.

In picking out this transition, Heidegger’s approach to challenging the logical prejudice ultimately contains a paradoxical difficulty. If the conception of truth as unconcealment has any validity at all, it must have it in light of what he says about Plato and Aristotle as transitional thinkers who complete Greek thinking by inaugurating the prejudice. Yet, by reviewing the structure of metaphysical thinking in a historical context, Heidegger’s critique of the adequation of the mind to the object cannot help but argue in the same fashion as this prejudice itself: any preference for the thought of Heraclitus and Parmenides in contrast to that of Plato and Aristotle necessarily functions as a kind of adequation of the mind to present objects. By determining that the inceptive thinker thinks not about the adequation of one’s thoughts to present things, but rather thinks about being in contrast to what is hidden from view, Heidegger’s own thinking remains bound by the analytic, evaluative procedure characterized by a correspondence theory of truth. Heidegger’s own thought remains superficial on its own terms; the conception of truth as unconcealment remains only one interpretive possibility which stands in contrast with another that he happens to use in order to delimit this possibility. As Heidegger himself sees, the

prejudice cannot actually be eclipsed if the determinations about its superficiality remain tied to the manner of speaking espoused by the prejudice itself.

The fourth contrast in *EM*—the cursorily examined “being” versus “the ought”—is evidence that philosophy which recapitulates the language of metaphysics remains bound by it.<sup>77</sup> This fourth contrast arises, Heidegger says, as the necessary response to the narrowing of the question of being via metaphysics after Plato. Since, for Plato, the ideas are the measure of truth, they are also the measure of all values, whether moral values or any other kind. After all, the chief divine idea for Plato is the idea of the good.<sup>78</sup> Since being is contrasted with becoming, seeming, and thinking in the doctrine of ideas, every thinker after Plato must speak and think of the truth as a kind of evaluation over and against what is absolutely present. Philosophy is reduced to the constant evaluation of what is valid, that is, of what one *ought* to say and do in light of the metaphysics of presence. For Heidegger, the thinker most clearly—and hopelessly—engaged in working through and opposing this “ought” is Nietzsche. Inevitably, Nietzsche’s revaluation of values depends on the Platonic assumption that there is a model or paradigm against which any valuation must occur.<sup>79</sup>

While it is true that Nietzsche’s thought is referred to at several points in Heidegger’s work during the 1930s,<sup>80</sup> after *EM* it becomes thematic. In addition to his continued examination of the transition from inceptive to metaphysical thinking in Greek philosophy, of which *Parmenides* is an example, Heidegger sets before himself the task of also showing that the

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<sup>77</sup> *EM*, 152.

<sup>78</sup> *EM*, 150.

<sup>79</sup> *EM*, 151-2.

<sup>80</sup> See *GM*, 532. For example, Heidegger concludes *GM* by calling Nietzsche the last great metaphysical philosopher and then reciting lines from the “Rundgesang” in *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

modern, critical response to Platonic metaphysics is still bound by its fundamental presumptions about being and truth. From the winter of 1936-37 to the autumn of 1940, Heidegger offers four courses on Nietzsche's metaphysics; these remain similar in structure to his previous examinations of the sources and proliferation of the logical prejudice. In these courses, as will be shown in the next section, Heidegger demonstrates that Nietzsche's critical response to metaphysics—including his subversion of the good as the Platonic idea *par excellence*—relies upon the metaphysics of presence. As a result, Nietzsche can discuss Plato only in the language of Platonism, and he must hesitantly recapitulate the same concept of truth.

Correspondingly, if all Heidegger's own thought does is to recapitulate and critically evaluate Nietzsche's inability to break the grip of the metaphysics of presence, then it must also be caught in the same implicit affirmation of the systematic approach of *logos apophansis* and the adequation of the mind to objects. Merely indicating the possibility of another, more fundamental means of speaking about being is different from showing that such a means is preferable. *EM* thus identifies two simultaneous ways forward for Heidegger if he wishes to legitimately ground his conception of truth as *Unverborgenheit*. The second way appears in another set of texts: at the same time that Heidegger is developing his full critique of Nietzsche in the Nietzsche lectures, he also composes *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* from 1936 to 1938 and *Besinnung* from 1938 to 1939.<sup>81</sup> These collections of aphorisms and paragraphs

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<sup>81</sup> The Nietzsche lectures appear in two volumes: Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, ed. Brigitte Schillbach, vol. 6.1, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996); and *Nietzsche*, ed. Brigitte Schillbach, vol. 6.2, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1997). These volumes will separately be referred to as *Nietzsche* (I) and *Nietzsche* (II). *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and *Besinnung* are consecutively numbered in *Gesamtausgabe*. *Beiträge* is Volume 65. The latter is: *Besinnung*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 66, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1999).



represent the second path, one that attempts to express the meaning of truth as unconcealment by providing a glimpse at a form of speech that resists the logical prejudice. These texts attempt to lay out a basic structure for inceptive thinking itself, rather than merely explaining that such a way of thinking is possible (though the content of several aphorisms attempts such an explanation as well).

Since the very nature of Heidegger's response to the logical prejudice becomes more variegated after *EM*, chronologically tracing its development is difficult. Rather than continuing in the current pattern of explication, therefore, the next section will separately examine the two simultaneous approaches that are identifiable in Heidegger's thought between 1936 and 1941. I will first show how Heidegger comes to grips in the Nietzsche lectures with Nietzsche's thought as the fulfillment of the metaphysics of presence. After this, I will show how the so-called esoteric writings, *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*, seek to surpass both stylistically and conceptually Nietzsche's attempt to overcome Platonic metaphysics. Finally, the section will conclude with a summary of the development of the critique of the logical prejudice through 1941 in order to delimit the importance of the inceptive thinker in Heidegger's thought during the time immediately prior to *Parmenides*.

### *Section 3. Subtending the logical prejudice and the response to Nietzsche: 1936-41*

To see that Heidegger views Nietzsche's philosophical project as an inherently incisive and yet incomplete response to the metaphysics of presence and the logical prejudice, one need look no further than the title and first few paragraphs of his first lecture on Nietzsche from

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1936.<sup>82</sup> From the outset, his concern is to show that Nietzsche is a metaphysical thinker bound by the leading question of philosophy, which asks, “Was ist das Seiende?”<sup>83</sup> or “What is being?” This leading question, or *Leitfrage*, is not the same as the *Grundfrage*, which Heidegger asks himself at the outset of *EM*.<sup>84</sup> Rather, Nietzsche’s thought, when placed in juxtaposition [*Auseinandersetzung*] with this *Grundfrage*, shows itself to be led by those concerns central to the history of metaphysics. The assertion of the “will to power,” which seems to be the assertion of the particular over the abstract and thus the death knell of metaphysics as the science of abstraction, comes about only as a response to abstraction.<sup>85</sup> *Wille zur Macht*, the title posthumously applied to the collection of notes that Nietzsche had left unfinished at his death, is a metaphysical statement; it requires abstraction as a premise in order to oppose the interpretation of being as the idea of the good in Platonic metaphysics.<sup>86</sup> Heidegger’s approach at the outset and throughout the Nietzsche lectures is, therefore, to show how Nietzsche sustains metaphysics

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<sup>82</sup> The title of the first lecture is “Nietzsche as Metaphysical Thinker,” or “Nietzsche als metaphysischer Denker,” in *Nietzsche* (I), 1.

<sup>83</sup> *Nietzsche* (I), 2.

<sup>84</sup> *EM*, 1–4. The *Grundfrage*, or grounding question, doesn’t merely ask how or what being is; it asks why there is being at all instead of nothing. The inceptive thinker, as will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2, does this while also naming being.

<sup>85</sup> “Nietzsche does not belong among the philosophers, who think only about abstract, shadowy affairs, far removed from life,” Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 5; “Nietzsche gehöre nicht zu den Philosophen, die nur abstrakte, vom Leben abgezogene und schattenhafte Sachen ausdenken,” *Nietzsche* (I), 3. All English translations of *Nietzsche* (I) are from the above text unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>86</sup> As John LaRocca, a former history professor of mine, quipped shortly before I finished my undergraduate studies, “Remember, ‘metaphysics is garbage’ is a metaphysical statement.” Dr. LaRocca’s joke presupposes the abstract presence of the metaphysics of presence in order for “metaphysics is garbage” to be either true or false. Thus, if one takes Nietzsche to mean that “metaphysics is garbage” in his assertion of the will to power, then he is making a statement about the approach of prioritizing abstraction within metaphysics, not whether or not abstraction is a legitimate object of inquiry at all.

as a science—and the logical prejudice, by extension—while seeking to overturn and replace the very assertions that the western tradition embraces.<sup>87</sup>

Regarding the overall construction of Nietzsche's thought, Heidegger's opinion is that there are two central concepts at work. The "will to power" and the "eternal recurrence of the same" are of a piece; they are the two faces of a single doctrine. Whereas the "will to power" re-conceives entities and their changeability, the eternal recurrence responds to the question of what being, itself, is.<sup>88</sup> Given that Heidegger has recently said in *EM* that the customary approach of metaphysicians is to assume that Heraclitus and Parmenides are fundamentally opposed, it may perhaps be implied that Nietzsche, in his own way, makes the same mistake.<sup>89</sup> In other words, one might take Nietzsche's will to power to correspond with the conception of Heraclitean flux and the eternal recurrence of the same to correspond with Parmenidean, static, permanent 'being' as such. However, Heidegger resists this interpretation, for to accept it would be to argue that the interpreter of Nietzsche must make a choice as to which concept, either eternal recurrence or will

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<sup>87</sup> Compare my interpretation here with Bambach, 247-301. Bambach's painstaking research concerning the historical and political conditions of Heidegger's "confrontation" with Nietzsche is eye-opening, to say the least. I think Bambach's evidence successfully demonstrates a shift in rhetoric against Nietzsche—and thereby also against Nationalist Socialism—as a proponent of the subjectivism central to modern metaphysics. To Bambach, Heidegger is at first more inclined to adopt Nietzsche's thought—and thus NS politics—as a means of introducing himself to the possibility of overcoming the failings of metaphysics. However, my basic claim in this section is that Heidegger's ongoing confrontation with the logical prejudice shows that he views Nietzsche's inverted metaphysics as insufficient and misdirected, regardless of whether Nietzsche is seen as a failed brother-in-arms or an antagonist. In developing my account of the function of Heidegger's investigation of Nietzsche's thought, I have also consulted: Stanley Rosen, "Remarks on Heidegger's Plato," in Partenie and Rockmore, *Heidegger and Plato*, 178-191; Golfo Maggini, "L'éternel retour nietzschéen et la question de la technique: De l'amor fati au nihilisme technique selon Heidegger," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 108 (2010): 91-112; Robert D. Stolorow, "Heidegger's Nietzsche, the Doctrine of Eternal Return, and the Phenomenology of Human Finitude" *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 41 (2010): 106-14.

<sup>88</sup> "Nietzsche's basic metaphysical position may be defined by two statements. First, the basic character of beings as such is 'will to power.' Second, Being is 'eternal recurrence of the same.'" *Nietzsche Vols. 1-2*, 25; "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung sei durch zwei Sätze bestimmt: Der Grundcharakter des Seins als solchen ist »der Wille zur Macht«. Das Sein ist »die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen«,," *Nietzsche* (I), 22.

<sup>89</sup> *EM*, 96-7.

to power, is his true metaphysical doctrine. Instead, Heidegger proposes that the will to power and the eternal recurrence are one and the same doctrine, but expositied differently.<sup>90</sup> Thus, he says, one should read Nietzsche's metaphysics as asserting the unity of being and becoming. In other words, for Nietzsche, the sentence "being is becoming" is, if not the same as "becoming is being," at least an attempt to say that being and becoming are not contradictory terms.<sup>91</sup>

The unity of the "will to power" and the "eternal recurrence" is, however, decidedly not an example of inceptive thinking, according to Heidegger. It remains metaphysical as a disruption or contradiction of Platonic metaphysics, a metaphysician's rejection of the Platonic answer to "what is being?" and a supplanting of that answer with something else.<sup>92</sup> Such a disruptive procedure, Heidegger notes, is nihilism within nihilism, a formal negation of what has already lost currency.<sup>93</sup>

The definition of truth as dependent upon Plato's idea of the good is already nihilistic for Nietzsche; the extreme expression of it in Idealism and the metaphysics underlying Christianity, he thinks, denies life by denying the brute appearance and understanding of the sensate as a guide for action. In contrast, Nietzsche's assertion of the will to power installs art and the "creative" [*schaffende*] life as the inquest for truth. However, notes Heidegger, this is ultimately

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<sup>90</sup> *Nietzsche* (I), 15-22. The position he argues against, namely, choosing 'will to power' as the true doctrine rather than 'eternal recurrence', he associates with Alfred Baeumler and Karl Jaspers.

<sup>91</sup> The full sentence reads: "The immediate result of our considerations so far is that there is not necessarily a contradiction between the two statements 'Being is Becoming' and 'Becoming is Being,'" *Nietzsche Vols. 1-2*, 22; "Daraus ergibt sich zunächst, daß nicht notwendig ein Widerspruch besteht zwischen dem Satz: Sein ist Werden, und dem Satz: das Werden ist Sein," *Nietzsche* (I), 19.

<sup>92</sup> "Plato and Aristotle also think that thought ... but just as little as Nietzsche do they think it as a question," *Nietzsche Vols. 1-2*, 20; "Auch Platon und Aristoteles dachten diesen Gedanken, . . . aber sie dachten ihn sowenig wie Nietzsche als Frage," *Nietzsche* (I), 17.

<sup>93</sup> "Hence the subtitle, which in the final phase of Nietzsche's philosophy becomes the main title, designates the general character of the countermovement to nihilism *within* nihilism," *Nietzsche Vols. 1-2*, 27; "Deshalb bezeichnet der Untertitel, der in der letzten Phase von Nietzsches Philosophie zum Haupttitel wird, den allgemeinen Charakter der Gegenbewegung zum Nihilismus *innerhalb* des Nihilismus," *Nietzsche* (I), 24.

the replacement of one kind of metaphysical epistemology for another in which truth is grounded not in the ideal but in the concrete, the sensible. Rather than an aesthetic of the ideal, Nietzsche's will to power is an aesthetic of the proximate, the brutal, and the persistent influx of the matter-at-hand. This creative life is dependent upon the senses and, as such, depends upon knowledge of the individual, tangible thing, not the abstract universal. Nietzsche's view is not completely a relativist or positivist response, but it is a redaction or an inversion of the Platonist adequation of the mind to its object. Truth, for Nietzsche, remains a procedure of corresponding the mind to its object, though the absolute priority of this procedure is denied, given that the object to be known and the manner of knowing are re-envisioned.<sup>94</sup>

On the one hand, Nietzsche's will to power is not purely relativist because it so heavily depends upon acquaintance with the apparent, sensed matter-at-hand. If one interprets the creativity of the will to power as commanding whatever it wants, including absolutely nothing at all, then one affirms the necessity of willing without any regard to the sensed, present object that is part of the command. As Heidegger says: "Thinking this way, we are too hasty. We forget that the truth as error is a *necessary value* and that semblance in the sense of artistic transfiguration is the *higher value* when compared with truth."<sup>95</sup> Though truth is not the highest value, the artistic

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<sup>94</sup> Nietzsche (I), 147-63, 552-64.

<sup>95</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volumes Three and Four*, ed. David Farrell Krell, trans. Joan Stambaugh, David Farrell Krell, and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 130; "So denkend, übereilen wir uns und vergessen, daß die Wahrheit als Irrtum ein *notwendiger Wert* ist und daß der Schein im Sinne der künstlerischen Verklärung der *höhere Wert* ist gegenüber der Wahrheit." Nietzsche (I), 563-4. See also *Polemos*, 121-2. In discussing Heidegger's so-called turn, Fried picks out along the way that Heidegger's attempt to get behind the correspondence theory espoused in the Platonic idea of the good is bound up with his response to Nietzsche's will to power. Fried shows that, as early as 1931, Heidegger thinks that Nietzsche unsuccessfully revalues the good to mean what is asserted or accomplished by the will of the artistic subject. In Fried's words, "The subject assumes hubristic dominion over being, arrogating to itself alone the power of inception." The inversion of Plato is still a metaphysics of presence; it is not the divine idea that serves as the incipient measure of truth, but the powerful will of the subject.

transformation of the sensate depends upon necessity and acquaintance, and therefore correspondence. While it is the case that Nietzsche's response to Platonism disrupts the comfortable assurance of truth as constant presence identifiably persisting through a particular, it is also the case that he still affirms *mimesis* and *homoiosis* as the structure of asserting the truth. The relativism of the creative artist is not absolute, since the will to power requires only the denial that truth is a submissive enterprise. Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's truth-as-error is that only the priority of permanent presence is denied, not the metaphysics of presence itself.

On the other hand, Heidegger is willing to go only so far in calling the will to power a kind of positivism. While he states that Nietzsche asserts the primacy of the sensate and that this is indeed a form of positivism, he adds that this is to miss the fact that Nietzsche's aim is to invert Platonism: "But what matters is precisely the transformation, especially in relation to the overturning of Platonism as a whole."<sup>96</sup> In other words, merely to label the "will to power" a "positivism" misses the importance of Platonist doctrine throughout his project. Ultimately, Nietzsche's elevation of the sensate and the subjective rests upon his disaffection with the seeming lifelessness of the metaphysical tradition which prioritizes the abstract universal.<sup>97</sup>

According to Heidegger, to see this disaffection correctly is to understand that the will to power asserts transient, particular truths, and this requires a correlate means for handling being

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<sup>96</sup> *Nietzsche Vols. 1-2*, 154; "Aber gerade auf diese Wandlung kommt es an. Das gilt erst recht von der Umdrehung des Platonismus im Ganzen." *Nietzsche* (I), 157.

<sup>97</sup> Consider even Nietzsche's earliest writings, such as the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, which seek to correct the frustrating effect of the compartmentalization of truth to a series of propositions that one must assent to in all realms of life, including the 'science of history'. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1989).

as a whole, or rather, the collection of entities entire.<sup>98</sup> This correlate means is the doctrine of the eternal recurrence. Since the will to power is still dependent upon the logic of assertion and the metaphysics of present objects, it cannot help but fail at achieving a metaphysics of becoming where all is in flux. The will to power is the ongoing succession of asserting—and thus statically affixing—particular truths, posited by the creative thinker. It is this perpetual succession that the phrase “eternal recurrence of the same” describes. Eternal recurrence, according to Heidegger, is the necessary correlate of asserting the primacy of the sensate particular over the immaterial abstract. Eternal recurrence is the abstraction from the particular, but not as an end or formula for the whole; instead, it merely describes how the universe is a valueless manifold unto itself, requiring the subjective assertion of meaning. Nietzsche’s creative artist must himself posit the eternal recurrence in order to preserve his own subjective capacity to will, and thus to affix particular truths.<sup>99</sup>

In the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger thus interprets the doctrine of eternal recurrence as the condition under which the will to power can manifest itself to itself. Such a manifestation presents Nietzsche’s entire project as “nihilism within nihilism” on the grounds that it not only asserts that the subject has sole authority to affix truth, but also remains thoroughly Platonist in its understanding of what truth is. Nietzsche’s solution to the logical prejudice is not to challenge

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<sup>98</sup> Richard Polt calls this interpretation of Nietzsche’s inverted Platonism a critique of Empiricism. That is, Empiricism does not account for the function of will in formulating claims about the sensed object. See Richard Polt, *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 96. Hereafter referred to as *Emergency*, followed by a page number.

<sup>99</sup> “Under the pressure of this heavy burden, in which the relation to beings as such and as a whole essentially determines individual beings, the Being of beings must be experienced as will to power. Yet the being that is determined through that relation is man,” *Nietzsche Vols. 3 and 4*, 215; “Unter dem Druck dieses Schwergewichts wird dort, wo der Bezug zum Seienden als solchem im Ganzen wesenhaft ein Seiendes bestimmt, die Erfahrung gemacht, daß das Sein des Seienden der Wille zur Macht sein müsse. Das durch jenen Bezug bestimmte Seiende aber ist der Mensch;” *Nietzsche* (II), 262.

the opposition of mind and object, but to reverse the direction of the opposition. Truth-as-error denies the notion of ‘correctness’ by denying the sway of the object and replacing it with the will of the subject. Like the metaphysical tradition that he seeks to overcome, Nietzsche “forgets Being by contemplating only beings and the principles that would account for them.”<sup>100</sup> As Heidegger points out later in *Parmenides*, Nietzsche’s metaphysics addresses ‘what is’ in a decidedly post-Platonic way.<sup>101</sup> That is, in seeking to subvert the influence of the metaphysics of absolute, present ideas, Nietzsche leaves the logical prejudice regarding truth largely unquestioned.

Heidegger’s assessment of Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence and will to power in the Nietzsche lectures is a clear indication of Heidegger’s own philosophical problem. As long as he merely continues the process of de-sedimentation—pointing out the persistent influence of the metaphysics of presence and the logical prejudice that follows from it—his own project fails, bound or partially determined by the very position he is trying to disrupt and overcome. To remain a reactionary against the conclusions reached by Plato and Aristotle is to remain determined by their mode of thinking, a shortcoming that is evident in Nietzsche’s works.

During the period of the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger also composes two other works: the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and *Besinnung*. Given his assessment of Nietzsche in the lectures described above, it is apparent that these compositions are Heidegger’s attempt at surpassing Nietzsche’s project by thinking through the question of being (*Grundfrage*) without being led around by the concerns governed by the question of the being of entities (*Leitfrage*). Heidegger’s

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<sup>100</sup> *Polemos*, 125.

<sup>101</sup> *Parmenides*, 139.



thought, if it is to be consistent with its professed aims, must perform the task of speaking truthfully about truth without being limited to the affirmation of assertions and the resulting syllogistic reasoning, both of which are central to the metaphysical claims in Aristotle's correspondence theory, Plato's conception of ideas, and Nietzsche's subjective assertion of meaning.

Perhaps the reputation of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* as esoteric texts is not less justified, but more so, when they are contrasted with the Nietzsche lectures. Richard Polt's book *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy* makes particularly good sense out of *Beiträge* by bringing to the fore the esoteric attempt to speak the meaning of being and by providing some context for the abstruse wordplay and term-coining that Heidegger intentionally uses to prevent the unprepared reader from following his thought.<sup>102</sup> For example,

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<sup>102</sup> *Emergency*, 20: In so doing, "The mystery of be-ing may then prove to be not a confused and confusing unintelligibility, but a coherent happening that can show us how it does not show itself." Various strategies have been proposed for reading *Beiträge*. I have had recourse to the following texts for evaluating how near or far from the mark my own reading seems to be: Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, "Die *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (Vom Ereignis) als Grundlegung des seinsgeschichtlichen Denkens" In *Heideggers "Beiträge zur Philosophie;" Internationales Kolloquium vom 20.-22. Mai 2004 an der Universität Lausanne (Schweiz)—Les "Apports à la philosophie" de Heidegger*, edited by Emmanuel Mejía and Ingeborg Schübler, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009), 25-35; Ivan KordiĆ, "Das Sagen des Seyns und die Sprache: Zur Frage der Sprache in Heideggers *Beiträgen zur Philosophie*." In *Heideggers "Beiträge zur Philosophie;" Internationales Kolloquium vom 20.-22. Mai 2004 an der Universität Lausanne (Schweiz)—Les "Apports à la philosophie" de Heidegger*, edited by Emmanuel Mejía and Ingeborg Schübler, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009), 367-82; Susan Schoenbohm, "Reading Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*: An Orientation," in *A Companion to Heidegger's "Contributions to Philosophy,"* ed. Charles E. Scott et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 15-31; Dennis Schmidt, "Strategies for a Possible Reading," in Scott, *Companion to Heidegger*, 32-47; Ingeborg Schüler, "Le système et la fugue: Deux modes de penser." In *Heideggers "Beiträge zur Philosophie;" Internationales Kolloquium vom 20.-22. Mai 2004 an der Universität Lausanne (Schweiz)—Les "Apports à la philosophie" de Heidegger*, edited by Emmanuel Mejía and Ingeborg Schübler, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009), 85-102 Alejandro Vallega, "'Beyng-Historical Thinking' in Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy*," in Scott, *Companion to Heidegger*, 48-65; Helmuth Vetter, "über das Eigentümliche des Raumes bei Heidegger mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der *Beiträge zur Philosophie*." In *Das Spätwerk Heideggers : Ereignis - Sage – Geviert*, edited by Damir Barbarić, (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2007), 109-27. Vallega is especially clear about connecting *Beiträge* and the *Nietzsche* lectures. Schoenbohm and Schmidt's articles are helpful insofar as they present the context for Heidegger's reason for writing *Beiträge*. Schüler and Vetter are good resources for analyzing the structure of *Beiträge*, that is, they focus primarily

Polt focuses on Heidegger's use of tense, mood, and voice as indicators of how to interpret particular passages and the text as a whole. Like Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht*, *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* are futurally directed.<sup>103</sup> However, unlike in Nietzsche, this futural thinking is not simply the subjective assertion of transient 'is's from a willed 'ought.' According to Polt, Heidegger's approach intends to shed the problems inherent in discussing being using the ordinary, present, indicative, active 'is' by taking up the less definitive, even furtive or reticent, subjunctive mood, future tense, and middle voice. If Heidegger's "*Ereignis*" is truly "inceptive," and if the whole text really springs "from appropriation," then this thinking asks us to transform our words and concepts in accordance with it, not to subject I to some prior conceptual scheme."<sup>104</sup> The approach in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* is esoteric, therefore, not only by virtue of Heidegger's focus on the meaning of being as such, but by virtue of his determination that ordinary indicative language and hierarchically structured methods of argument must be set aside. He sets them aside intentionally in order to make the attempt at revealing being an unsettling, event of appropriation—an *Ereignis*—that is not restricted by a meaning acquired from another ontology. The attempt pushes against using familiar language because familiar language carries with it the assumption of the logical prejudice. Thus, this attempt requires, or rather calls for, a leap (*Sprung*) not just in language use, but in how one appropriates or what one

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on how one portion of the text leads to or contrasts with another. Von Herrmann, Kordić and Vetter are much more concerned with working out readings of *Beiträge* given a particular topic that the text addresses, e.g. "being-historical thinking" for von Herrmann.

<sup>103</sup> See also Charles Guignon, "The History of Being," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 392-406. Guignon specifically argues for the influence on Heidegger of Dilthey's conception of history-as-movement, pointing out its connection to Nietzsche's three beneficial types of historical thinking: the monumental, antiquarian, and critical. (The critical is the futurally directed mode of historical thinking.)

<sup>104</sup> *Emergency*, 73-4.

means in expressing being. And yet, for Heidegger, any such appropriation of meaning can be interpreted as synonymous with being itself. The appropriative leap is not, therefore, a blind jump toward a radically new conception of being never to be reconciled with the metaphysics of presence, but a way of rekindling the *same* question of being anew, a new beginning or inception (*Anfang*) of how philosophical thinking may reground metaphysics and all of its subordinate assertions.<sup>105</sup>

Polt's observations provide solid support for the claim that *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* are Heidegger's critical response to his contemporaneous investigation of Nietzsche's metaphysics. That is, by using esoteric means of engaging in "appropriation," Heidegger seeks to overcome the subjective assertion of meaning within Nietzsche's metaphysics, and thus also avoid conceiving being in terms of present, static objects. While I want to postpone my examination of Heidegger's account of inceptive thinking in Heraclitus and Parmenides until the next chapter, I nevertheless will discuss here the "new beginning" of inceptive thinking central to these two texts, because this new or "other inception" becomes the critical theme through which Heidegger's response to Nietzsche emerges.

There are several passages from *Beiträge* that demonstrate that inceptive thinking requires a shift in language use and a corresponding "leap" in meaning. For example, section 35 of *Beiträge* states that the inceptive thinker must have a *Wegbesinnung*, a clear path for the questioning of being, set out both ahead of time and along the way. Such a path requires laying out what inceptive thinking is and expressing how another inception [*andere Anfang*] might be

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<sup>105</sup> *Emergency*, 88-138.

performed.<sup>106</sup> Even while inceptive thinking is attempted, it must be delimited and its means explored. A new inceptive thinking is always a practice; its essential statements and structure are not simply set at the beginning in order to reason to a particular conclusion. To think inceptively requires accepting revision of the path of one's thought while in the midst of thinking. It requires a self-awareness regarding the familiarity or strangeness of one's speech and whether or not a particular statement or insight ought to be amended given its proximity to a concept already made manifest within a known system of metaphysics. This constant self-awareness separates what Heidegger seeks to enact as "another inception" from Nietzsche's inverted metaphysics, on the one hand, and from the first philosophical inquiries concerning being, performed by Heraclitus and Parmenides, on the other.

An example of what Heidegger might mean by having a *Wegbesinnung* can be found in section 27, preceding his explanation of it. Here, Heidegger compares inceptive thinking with the logical prejudice begun by Plato and Aristotle. For them, logical thinking retains originality, but

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<sup>106</sup> "*Mindfulness of the way*: 1. What inceptual thinking is. 2. How the other beginning is enacted as *reticence*. 'Enowning' ['Appropriating Event'] would be the proper title for the 'work' that here can only be prepared for; and therefore instead of that the title must be: *Contributions to Philosophy*. The 'work' is the ... [self-revealing] structure in turning back into the towering ground," Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 54; "Die Wegbesinnung: 1. Was anfängliches Denken ist. 2. Wie der andere Anfang als Erschweigung sich vollzieht. »Das Ereignis« wäre der rechte für das »Werk«, das hier nur vor bereitet werden kann; und daher muß statt dessen stehen: *Beiträge zur Philosophie*. Das »Werk«: ser sich entwickelnde Bau im Sichzurückwenden in den aufragenden Grund," *Beiträge*, 77. English translations of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* will be from the above editions unless otherwise noted. These translations of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* by Emad and Maly have been the only available English translations until recently. Says Polt of *Beiträge*: "The few analytic philosophers who have not ignored the book have mocked it; that was predictable enough, but the mockery is all the more gleeful thanks to the sheer silliness of the available English translation." *Emergency*, 3. The "silliness" of the Emad and Maly translations is the result of trying to put into English the highly unfamiliar sense intended by Heidegger even though he uses familiar German words. Words like 'enowning' must be replaced with a clearer translation for a general readership. I have offered my own translation of key words in brackets where Emad and Maly offer non-standard English terms. My translation of "*Ereignis*", for example, is "appropriating event," following Polt's own use of "appropriation" and incorporating the standard English translation of that German word as it appears in any other literature besides Heideggeriana. *Ereignis*, in Heidegger's usage, tries to encapsulate a particular, momentous occurrence of removal out of day-to-day life.

Heidegger thinks such originality is subsequently lost as metaphysics begins defining thought as only representational. Consequently, inceptive thinking should regain and retain this originality in meaning, which Heidegger terms “Anklang, Zuspiel, Sprung, Gründung in ihrer Einheit.”<sup>107</sup> Inceptive thinking is alternatively a “sounding-out,” “playing-out,” “leap,” and “grounding” to which one must return as a possibility. These terms at first seem odd and ungraspable, but they are themselves already an attempt to shape inceptive thinking, even as Heidegger is in the midst of explaining what it is.

Heidegger characterizes this special mode of thinking in *Besinnung*, saying that it is “becoming free from the ‘freedom’ of the ‘subject’, from the self-entangled ‘dis-humanization’ of man.”<sup>108</sup> The attempt at mindfulness (*Besinnung*) is an attempt not at radical displacement, but at re-rooting or affirming a solid footing for rational discourse. On its own, “‘Reason’ remains closed off to the sway of truth; it only pursues a thinking that is turned towards beings and is always a superficial thinking.”<sup>109</sup> The ordinary sense of reason as the logical speech of the metaphysician is not itself capable of encountering the fundamental character of truth as the disclosure of being, precisely because truth becomes particularized to the declarative sentence and, through correspondence, to the presence of the object. Truth itself, and correspondingly, being itself, are pushed into the background and lost. They are assumed without becoming thematic.

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<sup>107</sup> *Beiträge*, 64.

<sup>108</sup> *Mindfulness*, 40; “zugleich die Befreiung von der »Freiheit« des »Subjektums«, der in sich eingerollten Vermenschung des Menschen,” *Besinnung*, 48.

<sup>109</sup> *Mindfulness*, 40; “Der »Vernunft« bleibt das Wesen der Wahrheit verschlossen; sie betreibt und ist nur das dem Seienden zugekehrte, immer vordergründliche Denken,” *Besinnung*, 48-9.

Part of the strangeness of this characterization is lessened by Heidegger's insistence that inceptive thinking is done reticently or sigetically. That is, he says that such a self-aware mode of thought must operate through furtive moments of speech and corresponding moments of reflective silence.<sup>110</sup> By remaining silent or reticent to speak, the mindful or inceptive thinker resists the superficiality of the subject-object relationship assumed in the logical prejudice. The reticent speech of inceptive thinking is, therefore, not just a kind of guess-and-check method of poetry, striking out blindly without any guidance or sense of its own appropriate function. Not just any response will do. On the contrary, the mindful, inceptive thinker speaks with masterfully precise insight or knowledge.<sup>111</sup> Inceptive thought resists talking about individual entities and has only being itself in mind. And yet, it resists measureable results and clear markers of success, because these markers are the telltale signs of Aristotle's *logos apophansis*.<sup>112</sup>

The reticence or silence of inceptive thinking then operates as a kind of alternation between preparative, patient silence and spontaneous, poetic expression. Since its results are not measurable, it requires the persistent, patient openness of a silent listener, as well as recapitulation. What is recapitulated is an "appropriate" representation of being itself. The aim is for being to present itself so that, through poetic, mysterious terminology, a name is assigned.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> "Reticence in silence is the "logic" of philosophy, insofar as philosophy asks the grounding-question from within the other beginning," *Contributions*, 54-5; "Die Erschweigung ist die »Logik« der Philosophie, sofern diese aus dem anderen Anfang die Grundfrage fragt," *Beiträge*, 78.

<sup>111</sup> "Inceptual thinking is masterful knowing," *Contributions*, 41; "Anfängliches Denken ist herrschaftliches Wissen," *Beiträge*, 59.

<sup>112</sup> "This thinking itself must know that it can at any time count as unrewarded effort," *Contributions*, 41; "Es selbst muß wissen, daß es jederzeit als unvergoltene Mühe gilt," *Beiträge*, 59. See also Stanley Rosen, "Remarks on Heidegger's Plato," 190. Rosen critiques Heidegger's reconception of truth in inceptive thought as needless, given that there is no absolutizing of 'being-as-presence' really at work in *Republic*.

<sup>113</sup> See Daniela Vallega-Neu, "Poetic Saying," in *Contributions to Heidegger's "Contributions to Philosophy"*, ed. Charles E. Scott et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 69. Vallega-Neu puts this point rather

The sense of terms such as “*Anklang*,” “*Zuspiel*,” and “*Sprung*” is, then, double-edged: on the one hand the mindful, inceptive thinker cannot help but attempt to speak and name being as it is apparent to him, and yet on the other, to speak just any word or phrase will not do. To name or speak the meaning of being anew means to rely simultaneously on the self-givenness of being and on one’s own ability to speak when that givenness clearly arises. This moment of being’s emergence in speech is what Heidegger calls *Ereignis*. It is a moment in which the speaker puts being into words, and can do so by being cognizant of the moment at hand. Inceptive thinking is a practice of thought that defers speech until just the moment when a name for being presents itself. The thinker thinks inceptively insofar as he must realize the coming of the moment in which being is ready to be spoken about just as it happens or is about to happen. There is no trustworthy ground for this act of speech or thought other than a sense of simultaneity or conjunction with momentous, emergent truth.<sup>114</sup>

Heidegger explains inceptive thinking as knowledge or insight [*Wissen*] in careful contrast with day-to-day activities like farming and other manual labor. But the inceptive thinker’s insight can also be seen in contrast with standard, Aristotelian philosophical terminology. That is, Heidegger’s “insight” is certainly not comparable to Aristotle’s understanding of *nous*, especially as it appears in *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.6. While *nous*, as Aristotle explains it, is the grasping of an unproveable first principle, even this grasping is acquired inductively and is reproducible as the ground of scientific truth and prudential

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succinctly: “A certain blindness marks the origin of this saying [naming] since in the origin we do not have present to our mind that which the saying names, a presence that we are accustomed to when we think or speak propositionally.” See also Polt, *Emergency*, 113-14 and 128-9. According to Polt, the blindness is not due to some error, but is part and parcel of the mysteriousness of being itself.

<sup>114</sup> See *Emergency*, 167. In Polt’s words, “To leap, then, means to dispense with the constant safety of a ground.”

judgment.<sup>115</sup> In other words, Aristotle's explanation of *nous* is dependent upon the fact that *epistemē*, the result of inductive and deductive reasoning, is the much clearer mark of philosophical thinking.<sup>116</sup> Heidegger is here, again, trying to avoid the deference of metaphysics to the epistemic correspondence of idea and object. He intentionally uses "*Wissen*" in order to say that it's not what the metaphysician means by "knowledge" or "insight." Rather, it is far less reproducible and scientific. Hence, it requires patient, silent waiting for the apt moment to speak, whenever it might occur. The approach is frustrating to normal speech by design.

Heidegger's use of obscure spellings<sup>117</sup> and term-coining now comes into focus: the inceptive thinker must make it his business to know the history of philosophy in order to avoid recapitulating its way of speaking and falling prey to the very prejudice he seeks to avoid. This tension explains why, at the same time that Heidegger puts pen to paper in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*, he presents courses on Plato and Nietzsche.<sup>118</sup> Even within the esoteric collections themselves, Heidegger explicitly formulates inceptive thinking in contrast to the logic of metaphysical thought. The third *Fuge*, or "juncture," of *Beiträge*, entitled "Das Zuspiel,"

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<sup>115</sup> *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139b25-33 and 1140b30-1141a9.

<sup>116</sup> This interpretation is in contrast with the younger Heidegger's reflections on *nous* and *phronēsis* versus *nous* and *sophia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. See Martin Heidegger, *Platon Sophistes*, ed. I. Schüssler, vol. 19, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992), 157-65. Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle in 1924 is not as obviously critical as it has become by the end of the 1930s.

<sup>117</sup> Heidegger notoriously spells 'being' as 'seyn', rather than 'sein', except where he contrasts 'seyn' with 'sein' as it is ordinarily used in metaphysics. English-language commenters alternately represent this specialized word by similar alterations, such as 'Beying' or 'be-ing'. For example, see the translators' forwards to the English translations of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*: *Contributions*, xxii-xxiv; and *Mindfulness*, xxviii-xxix. Further, see *Emergency*, 5 and 58, where Polt also discusses the various means by which scholars render Heidegger's spelling.

<sup>118</sup> Dermot Moran states that Heidegger would welcome being called anti-rationalist insofar as his project attempts to move phenomenology away from the logical prejudice. However, Moran's general thesis is that Heidegger's intuition of being is not, therefore, a radically subjectivist, emotive or romanticist irrationalism: Dermot Moran, "Heidegger's Phenomenology and the Destruction of Reason," *Irish Philosophical Journal* 2 (1985): 15-6.



performs this contrast.<sup>119</sup> The *Zuspiel* of the mindful thinker is a “playing-out” by sorting through the historical conceptions and reconceptions of how to speak about being in order to lessen their influence on his own reticent attempts to speak. Historical examination is a necessary preparation for any mindful thinker, because a leap (*Sprung*) toward a new manner of expressing ‘being’ meaningfully has, on its own, no means by which its truth is measured. To attempt to name being is also to know the insufficiency of previous attempts, and thus to prevent oneself from expressing what amounts to sheer silliness.<sup>120</sup>

Structurally, then, *Beitäge* and *Besinnung* operate in a recursive, depth-plumbing fashion. Like the pearl diver who must periodically return to the surface for breath in order to make a return journey to the seabed, Heidegger’s thought returns to the same themes again and again in an attempt to overcome their attachment to the logical prejudice. By repeating themes from the history of western metaphysics or repeatedly inquiring into the meaning of *logos* and *alētheia*, Heidegger attempts to uncover how the meaning of each might have come about. This enriches the pursuit of a name for being by making the possibility of slipping into formal, scientific categorization and judgment seem more oppressive or confining in what the thinker can say, and thus, to be avoided. The hope is that, in repeatedly revisiting themes in metaphysics from Plato through to Nietzsche, an emergent moment may arise in which the thinker can indeed say

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<sup>119</sup> *Beiträge*, 170-224. And also, see *Contributions*, 42: “No ‘metaphysics,’ because one does not proceed at all from beings as extant or from object as known (Idealism), in order then to *step over to* something else (cf. Playing-Forth);” “Keine »Metaphysik«, weil überhaupt nicht vom Seienden als Vorhandenem oder gewußtem Gegenstand (Idealismus) ausgegangen und zu einem anderen erst *hinübergeschritten* wird (vgl. Das Zuspiel),” *Beiträge*, 59.

<sup>120</sup> *Emergency*, 165-6.

something that departs from intentional, rational judgment of being as one thing, as an object among other objects.<sup>121</sup>

In *Beiträge*, this repeated performance of themes is explicitly fugal. That is, the text presents itself in six metaphorical junctions or crossroads or, more artistically, musical movements. Just as a crossroads presents a moment of critical spatial decision-making for drivers, and just as musical fugues present temporal tension and unity to the listener, each of the six divisions of the text seeks to enact a critical moment or intellectual place in which the inquiry into the essence of being might become a direct expression of that essence. This fugal structure brings to the fore the criticality or emergency inherent in persisting in thinking metaphysically without thinking about its groundedness in being itself. Being might not have to be present the way it is momentarily present; its meaning must become elusive by virtue of themes in metaphysics becoming stifling and oppressive. The tension built up by the fugal structure relies on the subjunctives ‘might’ and ‘must.’ Heidegger wants to accentuate the meaning of being as urgent, as always on the cusp of disclosing itself more and more.<sup>122</sup> This urgency comes about as a result of realizing the extent to which our ordinary way of thinking is determined by the definitions and rational arguments first put in place at some point in the history of metaphysics.

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<sup>121</sup> According to Dermot Moran, “The whole area of rationality and its structuring must be abandoned. Thus meditative thought is not a technique or an instrument to gain access or mastery over an object. In a certain sense it has no steps, or none that Heidegger wishes to enumerate. I am not at all sure that it involves discursive thought at all. . . . Meditative thinking becomes aware of itself only to become more aware of its ground - which is really an *Abgrund*, an abyss, original openness. In other words such thinking is not seeking its first principle in the Aristotelian or scholastic sense, the sense of metaphysics; it rather is experiencing the actual movement of manifestation itself, its process.” Moran, 27-8.

<sup>122</sup> *Emergency*, 134-8 and 151-3. See also Hans Ruin, “Contributions to Philosophy,” in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 361-6. Ruin compares this fugal structure with Heidegger’s method of formal indication from the late 1920s and early 1930s.

While *Besinnung* does not have an explicitly fugal structure, it is characterized by the same oppressively recursive inquiry about the meaning of being. In each division, the same question, the *Grundfrage*, is re-asked and rethematized through the language provided by the history of philosophy, and Heidegger's response calls for both leaping out of this language and attending to it. Many of the sections are entitled "Seyn und ..." followed by either a contrasting term or a mode of thinking about *seyn*.<sup>123</sup> As Heidegger reveals at the conclusion of the first division, each attempt is characterized by both truth and error. The capacity to name being is up to being as much as it is to the human capacity to speak; to make an attempt, to wrestle with or confront being, results in it easily slipping from one's grasp.<sup>124</sup> Each attempt, each *Auseinandersetzung*, is faulty and preparatory, calling forth inceptive thinking rather than completely enacting it.<sup>125</sup>

The contrast with the Nietzsche lectures and with Nietzsche's own writing is evident here. In terms of content, Heidegger's confrontation with the history of philosophy in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* is markedly different from what is seen in his lecture courses. Yes, these esoteric writings examine and deconstruct the terminology and self-understanding of Plato, Nietzsche, and other metaphysicians in between.<sup>126</sup> However, the texts are also productive of terminology that seeks to reground or re-solidify the traditional metaphysics of present objects. Whether or

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<sup>123</sup> *Besinnung*, V-XIII. Merely a quick examination of the table of contents reveals this repetitive structure.

<sup>124</sup> *Besinnung*, 12.

<sup>125</sup> See n.72, Chapter 1. Human existence and the capacity to think about being is not in radical opposition to being but conjoined with its own self-revealing. That conjunction is the source of any *Auseinandersetzung*.

<sup>126</sup> Claudia Baracchi notes the consistency of the approach in *Beiträge* with that of the earlier lectures and courses on the Greeks. Heidegger's theme is still the unearthing of the logical prejudice by showing that the thought of Parmenides and Heraclitus need not have developed into the metaphysics of Plato. See Claudia Baracchi, "Contributions to the Coming-to-be of Greek Beginnings: Heidegger's Inceptive Thinking," in *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Drew Hyland and John P. Manoussakis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 23-42.

not terms such as “*Sprung*” and “*Zuspiel*” can be called successful—how would one measure that in the first place?—his aim is not success, but preparation. As Heidegger himself says at the conclusion of the first division of *Besinnung*, to speak reticently is to know that one might fail and slip back into the kind of easy speech concerned with present objects. The hope of engaging in inceptive thinking and, as a result, repeatedly erring is, metaphorically, to make room for the “truth of being” to appear. What, then makes this inceptive thinking preparatory is also what makes it “new.” The first task of the new inceptive thinker, the one who is not present at the time of the first beginnings of philosophy but who inaugurates the new inception [*andere Anfang*], is to provide *die Lichtung*, that is, a clearing, an open, sheltered space in which both the question of what ‘being’ means and its answer—in the form of a name—can appear.<sup>127</sup> Put less metaphorically, unless the thinker is prepared to respond accommodatingly to the way in which being appears to him, he will assimilate being into a metaphysical framework. In contrast to Nietzsche’s assertions in *Wille zur Macht* as Heidegger understands them, *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* do not inaugurate a new metaphysics or “invert” Platonism; instead, they try to untangle, as much as possible, fundamental thought about being from metaphysical thought, thereby providing the opportunity for something like the original, poetic declarations of the Presocratics to occur. Heidegger’s hope is that his preparations for inceptive thinking allow the thinker to release himself from the oppressiveness of metaphysical thought.

Stylistically, the texts directly evoke *Wille zur Macht*. They are aphoristic and nonlinear. However, the fugal structure of *Beiträge* and the repetition of *Besinnung* explicitly imitate the relationship between Nietzsche’s “will to power” and “eternal recurrence” in order to subvert

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<sup>127</sup> *Besinnung*, 108-9; *Beiträge*, 331-2.

and surpass it. The language of assertion, no matter how discrete an assertion is, carves being at some joint<sup>128</sup> or another. By contrast, the structure of these texts aims to let joints appear as joints and to prepare a way of speaking that undergirds the joint-cutting. In the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger interprets the “will to power” as a never-ending succession of joint-cutting at whatever posited place one pleases, thus making the eternal recurrence merely a recurrence of presence and rendering any particular assertion banal and void in the very attempt.

Heidegger’s statements seek to avoid at all costs making claims about the present. Rather than situating truth in a declaration about a present state of affairs, *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* oppress the reader with a constant recapitulation of insufficient speech. This speech implies that Nietzsche’s assertion of truth-as-error might be rendered mute, because truth always appears incomplete in any static assertion. The very style of Heidegger’s esotericism is to show that being, and thus speaking the truth, is emergent and incomplete at any static moment or juncture. Nietzsche’s subjective, creative assertions never express the essence of truth at all: for Heidegger, the error is to say that truth is a kind of error, if error can occur only when something fixed or static contrasts with another equally static condition or statement. Junctures reveal that, at any given static point, something is always occluded, hidden, or undisclosed. This ‘something’ might arise in the future or may have arisen already and escaped notice. This is why Heidegger insists that preparing oneself to speak truly means doing so with reticence, knowing that each attempt is, in Nietzsche’s terms, erroneous. For Heidegger, no matter how “thinly” one “slices”

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<sup>128</sup> I am here recalling Socrates’ comments at *Phaedrus*, 265e. The very essence of thinking about being, for Plato, is to be a good butcher and carve *phusis* at its joints.

up being, to use Malcolm Gladwell's terminology, no complete picture of being can be assembled.<sup>129</sup>

The task of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* is therefore twofold: to reveal the insufficiency of Nietzsche's response to Platonic metaphysics and to surpass Nietzsche by preparing for a return to the question of the meaning of being through inceptive thinking.<sup>130</sup> Heidegger's own inceptive thinking, however, is a new inception. The next chapter expressly addresses the way in which Heidegger envisions inceptive thinking as it was first attempted by Anaximander, Parmenides and Heraclitus. What I have shown to this point is that Heidegger's own inceptive thought is mindful of metaphysics and speaks reticently and carefully, hoping that a non-metaphysically based expression of being can emerge. The new inceptive thinker's reticence to speak comes from sensitivity to the invasive hold that the logical prejudice has upon the mind of anyone who must contend with more than two-and-a-half thousand years of philosophical terminology. As I will show in the next chapter, from Heidegger's point of view the Presocratic inceptive thinker is in an enviable position, because his reticence is not negative; it need not attempt to block out the metaphysics of presence. Rather, the poetic speech of Presocratic thought is reticent in a positive way: it speaks with a sense of reverence or awe toward being only in an attempt to give being an appropriate name.

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<sup>129</sup> Malcolm Gladwell posits that it is simply impossible for a human being to not "thin-slice" the world. His thesis in the pop-psychology work *Blink* is that the psycho-physical structure of the human being, at least in part, deterministically binds thinking to the sensory nervous system, which does the carving for us at a subconscious level that we can't help but overlook in ourselves, yet can come to recognize in others. Gladwell's thesis necessarily affirms metaphysics as the way in which human beings access being, since his version of naturalism or mechanism presumes a joint-carving enterprise. See Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2005).

<sup>130</sup> This is also the thesis advanced by Parvis Emad in his reflection on the function of *Beiträge* for Heidegger's turn to the Presocratics. See Parvis Emad, "The Place of the Presocratics in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*," in *The Presocratics After Heidegger*, ed. David Jacobs (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999), 55-71.

## Chapter 2

### *Section 4. The identification of Heidegger's Greeks as inceptive thinkers*

As I have shown in the preceding chapter, by the time of the *Parmenides* lectures in 1942, Heidegger has already developed an account of inceptive thinking that subverts the metaphysical approach to the fundamental question of being. As his argument goes, insofar as metaphysics owes its claims about being to Plato and Aristotle, it is bound to take truth superficially as the adequation of the mind to an object. This superficial definition fails because it limits the definition of being to correctly speaking about things rather than attempting to speak about the disclosure of being itself—and the latter is what allows for the correspondence between speech and things to take place at all. For Heidegger, the task of the new inceptive thinker, who is burdened with knowing systematic metaphysics, is to be silent and circumspect in his approach to speaking about being. This is because any new inception can never precisely imitate the first, due to the pull of the interceding millennia of metaphysical thought. The new inceptive thinker must avoid the danger of remaining a metaphysician and also the opposite danger of becoming a sham whose speech brings forth nothing of consequence, since the syntax and semantics of his speech is so alien to ordinary discourse.

Heidegger's pursuit of inceptive thinking as an avenue for philosophical thought is thus dependent upon the central claim that metaphysics, as the culmination of Greek philosophy, brings to a close all the possibilities of Greek thinking. According to Heidegger, the Presocratics who speak about being itself—specifically Heraclitus, Parmenides and Anaximander—are not bound by the logical prejudice precisely because they do not separate *logos* from *phusis*, given that they think poetically. Therefore, my goal in the current chapter is to outline what Heidegger

deems the central characteristics of inceptive thinking in the extant writings of these three thinkers. Specifically, Heidegger claims that each gives being a name and uses poetic language to do so. I further contend that his understanding of inceptive thinking, as seen in these three thinkers, implies that many corollaries that follow from this naming must be purposely left unclear and that Heidegger accepts this implication, even if he does not clearly say so.

My exploration of this topic will concern itself with only those commentaries of Heidegger that address these writers and were written in light of his engagement with Platonic metaphysics, beginning in the early 1930s and extending to the first few years after World War II.<sup>1</sup> While this certainly includes the portions of *EM* discussed in the previous chapter, it does not include comments from the much later seminars and essays of the 1960s. I make these restrictions because Heidegger's later references to the Presocratics either recapitulate many of his earlier claims or do not directly address the identity of the inceptive thinker.<sup>2</sup> The next section of this chapter will concern itself with presenting Heidegger's claims that Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus each name being and thus "think the beginning." In section 6, I will

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<sup>1</sup> For a concise exposition of Heidegger's early interpretations of the Presocratics, Parmenides in particular, see chapter 5 of Günther Neumann, *Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 2006), 121-188. Neumann's goal is to show how Heidegger's early interpretations of Parmenides inform the development of his thought in *Sein und Zeit*, and how that early interest carries forward to the war. Neumann indicates that the identity of the inceptive thinker is not precisely defined until some time after *EM* in 1935, though Heidegger is clearly studying Parmenides's relationship to the tradition of philosophical metaphysics as early as 1922. Heidegger's early interest is at least in part a response to Karl Reinhardt's *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* from 1916.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Martin Heidegger, *Seminare (Heraclit)*, ed. Curd Ochwadt, vol. 15, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1992). Note also that I do not address the overarching themes of the lecture course on Heraclitus that Heidegger gives in 1943, directly following *Parmenides*. Rather, I wish to highlight other critical portions of Heidegger's thought that are pertinent to defining the Greek inceptive thinker. (The central theme of that follow-up lecture course is related to the subject of inceptive thinking by virtue of the fact that Heidegger claims that Heraclitus is seeking to name what is essential to the divinity of the gods.) For a detailed analysis of this theme, see chapter 3 in Shawn Patrick Loht, *Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger: German Philosophy's Interpretation and Appropriation of Heraclitus* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 2009).



discuss Heidegger's claims about their poetic speech and how these claims imply accepting that consequent problems or questions arising from the naming of being must be purposely left unclear. By the end of the chapter, my aim is to have situated all the central themes that Heidegger addresses in *Parmenides* within the context of several contemporary essays and texts that address Greek inceptive thinking. The detailed analysis of that lecture course that occurs in chapter 3 thus aims to elucidate Heidegger's explanation of myth as a specific kind of inceptive, poetic thought that is enacted by Parmenides not ironically or self-consciously, in the manner of Plato in the Socratic dialogues, but in earnest.

#### *Section 5. Naming being: poetic disclosure for the Greek inceptive thinker*

Heidegger's principal claim regarding what makes an ancient Greek philosopher an inceptive thinker rather than a metaphysician is that the inceptive thinker attempts to give being a name as a means for grounding any subsequent claims about truth. Heidegger's inceptive thinkers name being because, he says, they rightly see the identity of being as a result of an intimate unveiling or disclosure of the mysterious or the hidden. According to Heidegger, Anaximander names being *to chreōn*, the useful; Heraclitus addresses the divine, hidden *logos*; and in Parmenides's poem, the goddess names being in a peculiar tense, *eon*. Not only will this section of the dissertation show how Heidegger identifies and understands these names, but it will also show the similarities that he finds among the three. That is, each name necessarily results in a delimitation of being that the inceptive thinker performs as an act of reverence or awe, and which is intentionally vague so as to incite the same reverence in the reader.

Toward the end of the essay entitled “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” Heidegger joins Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus together as inceptive thinkers through their naming of being. He states,

Τὸ Χρεών birgt in sich das noch unhobene Wesen des lichtend-bergenden Versammelns. Der Brauch ist die Versammlung: ὁ Λόγος. Aus dem gedachten Wesen des Λόγος bestimmt sich das Wesen des Seins als des einenden Einen: “Ἐν. Dasselbe “Ἐν denkt Parmenides. Er denkt die Einheit dieses Einenden ausdrücklich als die Μοῖρα (Frg VIII. 37). Die aus der Wesensfahrung des Seins gedachte Μοῖρα entspricht dem Λόγος des Heraklit. Das Wesen von Μοῖρα und Λόγος ist vorgedacht im Χρεών des Anaximander.<sup>3</sup>

Anaximander’s *to chreōn* does not merely describe the coming to be and passing away of things “according to necessity,” but also picks out and names being. For Heidegger, this naming prefigures Heraclitus’s and Parmenides’s own attempts to name being. This is not to say that the latter two are imitators of Anaximander. Rather, because each thinker addresses himself to being itself and avoids the constraints of scholarly influence or precedent, the speech employed by all three happens to sound alike, ‘treading upon the same ground,’ so to speak. If Heidegger’s interpretation finds some affinity between what Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides each say, it is owing to their adherence to the task at hand, not to plagiarism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” in *Holzwege*, ed. F. W. von Herrmann, vol. 5, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 340 (Page numbers are those of the first edition); “Τὸ Χρεών harbors the still hidden essence of the gathering which clears and shelters. Usage is the gathering: ὁ Λόγος. From the essence of the Λόγος thought in this way, the essence of Being is determined as the unifying One, “Ἐν. Parmenides thinks this same “Ἐν. He thinks the unity of this unifying One expressly as the Μοῖρα (Fr. VIII. 37). Thought from within the essential experience of Being, Μοῖρα corresponds to the Λόγος of Heraclitus. The essence of Μοῖρα and Λόγος is thoughtfully intimated in the Χρεών of Anaximander,” Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, transl. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 55. All English translations of “Der Spruch des Anaximander” are from this edition, unless otherwise noted. The translator’s choice of “usage” to translate *Der Brauch* is consistent with how Heidegger talks about *to chreōn* throughout the whole of “Der Spruch des Anaximander.” I will say more about this interpretation later in the section.

<sup>4</sup> “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” 340-41.

Some scholars have pointed out that it may, of course, be Heidegger's own intellectual desires that are the source of this affinity. According to these scholars, Heidegger is guilty of "mythologizing the Greeks," twisting the words and thoughts of the Presocratics.<sup>5</sup> To these scholars, Heidegger situates inceptive thinking within limited, artificial bounds and is guilty of making a grandiose kind of 'Texas sharpshooter argument' about the origins of philosophical thinking. The claims of these scholars, I think, amount to a serious criticism of Heidegger's project, which aims to show and counter the limitations of the metaphysics of presence and the correspondence theory of truth. In chapter 4, I will address these arguments directly; in doing so I will suggest a means of critically evaluating the development of Heidegger's concept of truth without either throwing it away entirely or modifying it to such a degree that Heidegger himself would not recognize it.<sup>6</sup>

As I have shown in chapter 1, by 1935 Heidegger clearly contradicts the traditional view that Parmenides and Heraclitus are fundamentally opposed to each other in their articulation of *phusis*. In addition to that extended argument in *EM*, Heidegger also undertakes more focused, lecture-length investigations of the Heraclitean fragments regarding *logos* and the portions of Parmenides's poem that express the meaning of *eon*. In order to examine this activity of naming being, I shall begin with Heidegger's account of Heraclitus's use of the word *logos*, an account found in the "Logos" essay in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. I shall follow with an examination of the essay entitled "Moira," from the same *Gesamtausgabe* volume, which contains a short

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<sup>5</sup> I particularly have in mind John D. Caputo, 28 and Bambach. The term "mythologizing the Greeks" is Caputo's. His complete articulation of Heidegger's myth-making also discusses the connection Heidegger sees between the first inception and the new one, the specifically Germanic capacity to ask the *Seinsfrage*.

<sup>6</sup> Caputo explains that his own project operates by so greatly modifying Heidegger's thought that it has little resemblance to it; see *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 97-8.

explanation of Parmenides's name for being. After that, I will return to the passage quoted above from "Der Spruch des Anaximander," so as to piece together how these latter two thinkers might "say the same" thing in their names for being.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Heidegger frequently focuses on the word *logos* when engaging the Greeks and attempting to challenge the metaphysics of presence. Just as in 1935 in *EM*, in the "Logos" lecture Heidegger translates *logos* as "gathering" or "collecting." However, in the time between 1935 and 1944, Heidegger makes interpreting the word *logos* a way to enter into identifying the inceptive thinker as the namer of being. While his discussion of *logos* in 1935 describes the difficulty of bringing together human hearkening and the nebulous self-revealing of being, the later lecture reframes *logos* as the identity of that self-revealing. By naming being "*logos*," Heidegger says, Heraclitus intends a richly connotative name whereby being speaks itself out in all things as what reveals them, unites them, and guards them.

In the "Logos" lecture, Heidegger specifically comments on Heraclitus fragment B50 (Diels-Kranz notation). Even today, the standard English translation of that fragment reads quite like the version by Snell cited by Heidegger as typical. Heidegger reports Snell's translation: "Habt ihr nicht mich, sondern den Sinn vernommen, so ist es weise, im gleichen Sinn zu sagen: Eins ist Alles."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Kirk, Raven, and Scofield translate the fragment: "Listening not to me but to the Logos it is wise to agree that all things are one."<sup>8</sup> Heidegger's own interpretation

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<sup>7</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Logos (Heraklit, Fragment 50)," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. F.W. von Herrmann, vol. 7, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 199 (Hereafter referred to as *Logos*, followed by page number. Page numbers are those of the first edition); "When you have listened not to me but to the Meaning, it is wise within the same Meaning to say: *One is All*," *Early Greek Thinking*, 59. All English translations of *Logos* are from this edition, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>8</sup> G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and Martin Scofield, eds., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 187. Hereafter referred to by the editors' last names, followed by page number.

of the fragment begins by noting the superficiality of this translation—which, he says, is evidenced by the fact that the reader can quickly grasp the meaning of the fragment. In contrast, he offers an intricate etymological argument about the verbal form of *logos*, *legein*. *Legein* comes to mean ‘speaking’ insofar as it has the same connotations as the Latin *legere* and German *legen*: to put something down in front of oneself. In turn, the term also has another connotation that it shares with its German cognate *lesen*, which ordinarily means ‘to read’ (as opposed to ‘to speak’) but also connotes ‘gathering’ or ‘collecting’ or ‘bundling together’ in a protective fashion, much as the vintner gathers a prize vintage (*eine Lese*).<sup>9</sup> So, according to Heidegger, when Heraclitus uses *logos* in the above fragment, the word carries all of these connotations. Thus Heidegger states that “The original λέγειν, laying, unfolds itself early and in a manner ruling everything unconcealed as saying and talking.”<sup>10</sup> The original meaning of *legein*, that is, the act of selectively collecting and protecting in order to let what is collected to be shown, is the essential meaning of the disclosure of any act of speech. In other words, speech always discloses by selectively bringing elements together and laying them out before the speaker so that the listener may attend to them.

What follows from this understanding of *logos* is therefore a reenvisioning of what is essential to language. Heidegger notes that the protective disclosure of *logos* is the ongoing “presencing of what is present.”<sup>11</sup> Language’s proper identity is not reducible to the proximate indicators of human language, vocalization and signification, but instead consists of what these

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<sup>9</sup> *Logos*, 200–4.

<sup>10</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 63; “Das ursprüngliche λέγειν, das Legen, entfaltet sich früh und in einer alles Unverborgene durch waltenden Weise als das Sagen und Reden.” *Logos*, 204.

<sup>11</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 64. “das Anwesen selbst des Anwesenden.” *Logos*, 204.

indicators attempt to accomplish, the laying-out of a moment, event, situation, relationship, circumstance, possibility, or otherwise before the speaker for others to hear. Speech is not meant merely to approximate or hint at how things are, but to reveal the very essence of things while guiding the way in which they are revealed. To speak is to bring meaning into the open.

In human speech, being itself is manifest in things, but it is difficult to see how it could make itself manifest all on its own.<sup>12</sup> It is the primordial speaking-out of its own identity, the hitherto unspoken identity of being, that Heraclitus names *Logos*. This, Heidegger claims, is the critical message of the B50 fragment. If the human being is merely supposed to listen, and the thing to be listened to is not Heraclitus but *Logos*, then Heraclitus is serious about identifying being as a proper speaker, capable of revealing its own identity. In this case, listening to being reveals a dyad: all-one. As Heidegger puts it, “Ἐν Πάντα says what the Λόγος is. Λόγος says how Ἐν Πάντα essentially occurs. Both are the same . . . When mortal λέγειν is dispatched to the Λόγος, ὁμολογεῖν happens.”<sup>13</sup> *Hen Panta*, “all-one,” is the meaning, or ‘what’, of *Logos*, and *Logos* is ‘how’ *Hen Panta* is spoken or brought to bear. They are the same, though differentiated into ‘how’ and ‘what’. Moreover, when human speech manifests *Logos*, it is homologous, that is, in and of the same meaning, though the speaker has now changed.

What is key for Heidegger is that *Logos* and “all-one” are identical, though different for Heraclitus, whereas human speech must overcome a difference if it is to be homologous and not merely an approximation, indicator, or sign. The human speaker who attends to the self-

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<sup>12</sup> *Logos*, 205.

<sup>13</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 71; “Ἐν Πάντα sagt, was der Λόγος ist. Λόγος sagt, wie Ἐν Πάντα west. Beide sind das Selbe . . . Wenn das sterbliche λέγειν sich in den Λόγος schickt, geschieht ὁμολογεῖν,” *Logos*, 213. In an effort to emphasize Heidegger’s insistence that *logos*, *hen* and *moira* are proper names, I have capitalized the first letter of each in the next several paragraphs.

disclosure of being is also wise : *sōphon estin*. In a deft play with the root word *schick*, Heidegger notes that the connotation of skill, fittingness, or appropriateness inherent in wisdom really means that the human being attends to what is fateful (*geschicklich*), that is, to the identity of *Logos* and *Hen*, “one,” under a third name, *Moir*a, “Fate.”<sup>14</sup>

At this point, it is critical to point out that Heidegger is now connecting Heraclitus with Parmenides, though he does not say so directly.<sup>15</sup> His evidence for this connection is the reverence and awe toward the divine that are apparent in Heraclitus’s extant fragments. Even in the English and German translations cited above, *Logos* is treated as an independent speaker whom the human being must agree with or speak alongside. The idle reader can surely follow Heidegger so far as to accept the identification of *Logos* with being. However, to see along with Heidegger that *Hen* is also a name for being is more difficult, and that *sōphos* actually means *moira*, and is a third name for being, is even more so. Like any interpreter of Heraclitus, Heidegger must turn to other Heraclitean fragments in order to make sense of a particular one; in this case, he cites the two fragments in which Heraclitus speaks of *Hen* and *Panta* as a deity, specifically as Zeus or as his sign, the lightning bolt.<sup>16</sup> Fragment B32 is the clincher here, since this fragment directly calls *Hen* “to *sōphon*” and says that *Hen* both may and may not consent to being named Zeus. Additionally, he references fragment B64, in which Heraclitus writes that “lightning steers all things,” *Panta*. Put another way, one might say that Zeus’s function is the fating of the world.

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<sup>14</sup> *Logos* 209-10 and 216.

<sup>15</sup> George Seidel provides an extended interpretation of the *Logos* essay, and this claim is part of his thesis. See Seidel, 87-105.

<sup>16</sup> *Logos*, 214-5.

To recap: in order to make sense of the naming of being, Heidegger turns to those fragments in which the Ephesian author invokes the chief Olympian and his signs in a way that confoundingly conceals as much as it reveals. This is the very heart of speaking inceptively: to acknowledge what must be, but in so doing to reveal dyadic conditions, frequently paradoxical ones, and leave them unanalyzed, available for the reader to take in and yet not really understand clearly.

Like Heraclitus, in Heidegger's view, Parmenides also thinks inceptively because he too invokes the gods, making every bit of his analysis of *hen* and *panta* the speech of a goddess<sup>17</sup>—this is a primary claim of the *Parmenides* lectures in 1942. Parmenides himself can speak only homologously, translating into speech what the goddess reveals about being though he himself does not fully comprehend what she says. Just as Heraclitus identifies being with *logos* and, ultimately, *hen* by invoking the gods, Parmenides announces on behalf of a goddess a name for being, *eon*, that bears a dual meaning. This name encompasses both the one, *to hen*, and the range of all things, *panta*. Moreover, like Heidegger's Heraclitus, Parmenides associates being with fate, *moira*.

Heidegger's essay "Moira" dates from 1952, soon after the end of World War II, and represents one of his last attempts to clarify inceptive thinking. Seventeen years after *EM*, Heidegger still focuses on the same fragments of text that were so critical in developing his critique of metaphysics in 1935. Taking as his starting point a sentence from Parmenides

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Moira," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. F.W. von Herrmann, vol. 7, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 239-41. Hereafter referred to as *Moira*, followed by page number. Page numbers are those of the first edition.



ordinarily translated as “thinking and being are the same,”<sup>18</sup> he singles out the word *eon*, the participial form of the verb ‘to be’, as specifically chosen by the goddess to show the inherent duality of being, whole and complete on the one hand and individuated on the other. Just as he emphasizes that Heraclitus’s *Logos* is the disclosure of being itself, here too Heidegger emphasizes that it is not Parmenides, but being itself, that utters or brings forth the duality implicit in the term *eon*.<sup>19</sup> Being reveals its duality in its own disclosure—and here the Greek terms for that disclosure are alternately *noein* and *pephatismenon*—through some special access to the divine on the part of the thinker who transmits the message.<sup>20</sup> The one who speaks being in its duality is the goddess. The transmitter—that is, the inceptive thinker—is Parmenides.

In order to show that Parmenides does not completely understand the message, Heidegger points out the casual way in which Parmenides expresses the goddess’s explanation of *eon* as both one and many and, therefore, concomitant with thinking.<sup>21</sup> In a subordinate clause, Parmenides’s goddess names the divinity who dispenses the duality of being, *moira*.<sup>22</sup> *Moirā*, that is, Fate or Destiny, chains being together as whole and unchanging.<sup>23</sup> Heidegger makes much of this name because of what it connotes: the act of manifestation or dispensation. In order

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<sup>18</sup> “Moirā,” 223. See also Kirk, Raven, and Scofield, 246 n. 2.

<sup>19</sup> “Moirā,” 237.

<sup>20</sup> Seidel, 86: “In the beginning Parmenides grasped the meaning of thinking . . . and this thinking was together with being and oneness . . . As Heidegger says, the twofold (*Zweifalt*) character of being, as such, remained unthought by Parmenides.”

<sup>21</sup> David Jacobs’s own reading of Parmenides’s poem, which is dependent upon Heidegger’s approach in the “Moirā” essay, also says that Parmenides is not really quite certain about what he is saying. See David C. Jacobs, “The Ontological Education of Parmenides,” in *The Presocratics After Heidegger*, ed. David Jacobs (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 185-202.

<sup>22</sup> “Moirā,” 243-5. Note also that the goddess pairs Fate with Necessity, a name which Anaximander uses for what binds or rules the whole. In Diels-Kranz Fr. VIII, the goddess clearly refers to Necessity, *Anagkē*, as the limit, *peiratos*, of being. It would seem odd to name two deities to perform the function of keeping being ‘set’ or unalterably one, unless they connote different things; hence Heidegger’s notion of *moira* as dispensation. See Kirk, Raven, and Scofield, 251-2.

<sup>23</sup> “Moirā,” 244. This is the translation offered as the Diels-Kranz version of Fr. VIII, line 37.

for the wholeness and unchangeable nature of being to be communicated at all—and therefore potentially misunderstood as only a collection—it must be seen through the panoply of things and ideas that make up what appears to be a transient collection. As Heidegger remarks, “There are many (πολλά) of these σήματα. They are not signposts for something else. They are the manifold shining of presencing itself, out of the unfolded duality.”<sup>24</sup> The dual nature of one and many is thus a relationship of sign and signified, but not in the same way that the spoken or written word is the sign or signifier of a human thought. Things, *pragma*, are *sēmata* because they are manifold “shinings” of being. Since being itself cannot ever fully be revealed to the human thinker, Fate displays its unity through the manifold.

This display, insofar as it is a “shining out”—the root *phasis* in the term *pephatismenon*—is *legein*. Just as Heidegger claims that Heraclitus’s revelation is that being lays itself plainly before the thinker in its own *logos*, he also says that the “speaking” or “shining” of being to which the goddess refers in Parmenides’s poem functions in the same way.<sup>25</sup> Thus there are two concomitant senses of the sentence “being and thinking are one and the same.” One way of putting it is that being speaks itself to mankind in names, ideas, and things, since to intelligibly speak means to think. Alternatively, the one who thinks about beings while hearkening correctly or speaking homologously will, to parrot Heraclitus, wisely agree that all the manifold shinings are one, or to parrot Parmenides, will follow the path laid before him by Truth itself.

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<sup>24</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 98; “Deren sind gar vielfältige (πολλά). Die σήματα sind keine Merkzeichen für anderes. Sie sind das vielfältige Scheinen des Anwesens selber aus der entfalteten Zwiefalt,” “Moirā,” 245. All English translations of “Moirā,” are from the above translation unless otherwise noted.

<sup>25</sup> “Moirā,” 245-8.

The real crux of Heidegger's argument here is that inceptive thinking is rooted not in the words of the human being to whom the unity of being is revealed, but in the actual speaking-out performed by being itself. As Heidegger elucidates, the names of being are not temporary *topoi*, but a more firm *Heimat*.<sup>26</sup> The naming of being is like a home: it protects being from the mistaken human adherence to the coming-to-be and passing away of transient things. To extend this analogy, it is as if the naming of being is a shelter in a storm, a place where being itself can settle in and remain despite the threats and distractions that surround it, a welcome abode on account of which transient things show up as transient. Thus, when Heidegger cryptically states that "language is the house of being" in 1947, he refers to the mode of speaking characteristic of an inceptive thinker.<sup>27</sup>

In this light, Heidegger's translation as "usage" [*Brauch*] of Anaximander's term for being, *to chreōn*, becomes clearer. Heidegger is resistant to the typical translation of *kata to chreōn* as "according to necessity," because this translation takes 'necessity' as something separable from the origin of the things that come to be and that pass away. The meaning of "usage" that he defends is not Benthamite utility; it is closer to the Latin *frui*: the useful is the fruitful, that out of which things grow, that which is brooked or enjoyed because of what it is, not merely because of its subjective purpose.<sup>28</sup> Rather than using the terminology of "house" or "home" or "shelter" in the essay on the Anaximander fragment, Heidegger uses the terminology

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<sup>26</sup> "Moirā," 246-7.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den Humanismus" in *Wegmarken*, ed. F. W. von Hermann, vol. 9, in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 145 and 150-151. See: Ivo De Gennaro in "Heidegger und die Griechen," in *Heidegger Studies* 16 (2000): 98-112. De Gennaro sees the connection between the language of *Heimat* and Heidegger's turn to the pre-socratics as I do here.

<sup>28</sup> "Der Spruch des Anaximander," 338-9. Carol White's argument is similar to my own. See: Carol J. White, "Heidegger and the Beginning of Metaphysics," in *Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 19 (1988): 36-9.

of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*, referring to *to chreōn* as the juncture [*Fuge*] which allows things to remain and tarry along in presence.<sup>29</sup> In other words, just as Heidegger himself attempts “junctures” at which possible new names for being might emerge, he here asserts that Anaximander’s “usage” names being by describing a way in which all things are bound together, even though being—no matter the name assigned—is never itself bound by anything.<sup>30</sup>

For Heidegger, Anaximander’s *to chreōn* is not so very different from Heraclitus’s *Logos* or Parmenides’s *Moira* or *eon*, because each of these names pins down being without reifying it. Being does not become one entity among the many, nor is it decidedly exclusive of the multitude of things. Things appear simply because being provides for itself a shelter, house, or juncture against which and through which any particular division of being must be measured. All of these names for being function in the same way: they emphasize that being shows itself in a protected way and, in doing so, allows the multitude of things to appear, declares its identity as their source, and stubbornly evades a complete human account.<sup>31</sup> For Heidegger, the inceptive thinker both names being and knows that the name cannot really be the measure. Each of these Presocratics is an inceptive thinker because he rightly approaches the meaning of being by using a name that shows the troubling nature of that meaning.<sup>32</sup> An inceptive thinker’s naming is not

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<sup>29</sup> “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” 338-9.

<sup>30</sup> Scott makes similar claims in discussing Heidegger’s focus on Anaximander’s use of the middle voice. See Charles E. Scott, “Ἀδικία and Catastrophe: Heidegger’s ‘Anaximander Fragment,’” *Heidegger Studies* 10 (1994): 130-4.

<sup>31</sup> See White, 47.

<sup>32</sup> This means that not all Presocratics are inceptive thinkers for Heidegger. For example, Protagoras might not fit the description of an inceptive thinker: his sayings seem predisposed toward the metaphysical outlook and the correspondence theory of truth. See Kirk, Raven, and Scofield, 411, n. 1. The editors compare Protagoras with Leucippus and Democritus, claiming the former as a sort of proto-Nietzschean nominalist and the latter as metaphysical realists, both of which, in Heidegger’s view, inherently accept different forms of a correspondence theory.

sigetic, as Heidegger's attempt is, but it is deeply deferential or reticent, letting being remain mysterious while calling that mysteriousness not a problem to be solved but a condition to be recognized.

*Section 6. Inceptive thought is a specific kind of poetic speech*

As I have shown in the foregoing section, Heidegger's inceptive thinkers are inceptive because they give names to being. To be more precise, for Heidegger, the inceptive thinker is the one who allows being to address him in an encounter that gives rise to a name; and the inceptive thinker does not himself assign a name to being, but instead lets the name be assigned, using a pious, deferential mode of speech. As I will discuss in this section, these figures of speech are what Heidegger means by the poetic. According to Heidegger, the speech of an inceptive thinker is poetic because it does not close off the encounter with being via a definitive assertion that avoids analogy, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, and other like figures of speech. Poetic speech functions by letting a mystery remain mysterious while simultaneously bringing that mystery to light; it brings forward what is hidden and strange in order to make it familiar, but it does this without eradicating the hiddenness fundamental to the mystery.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the kind of poetic speech that Heidegger himself attempts in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*. As I stated there, these attempts at a new inception aim in part at knowing the history of philosophy in order to avoid recapitulating its way of speaking and falling prey to the very prejudice Heidegger seeks to avoid. The language of these texts is stilted and obscure because of the effort involved in avoiding the easy and comfortable language of

metaphysical thinking. While Heidegger's new inception is overtly self-aware and requires silence in the face of one's own noisy, metaphysics-laden thoughts, the first inception, the inceptive thinking of the early Greeks like Parmenides, is almost completely unselfconscious. Rather than displaying a pious attitude toward the act of speech itself, they are pious about the object of speech, namely, being. Rather than concerning themselves with adequate expression, or sending out the linguistic equivalent of a trial balloon, the thinkers of the first inception make bold statements that are also inherently cryptic.

The essay on Anaximander mentioned in the previous section closes with a discussion of precisely this mystery-bearing function of poetic speech. Heidegger's translation of the Anaximander fragment is much more obscure and complex than those of other translators. Heidegger notes that a real attempt at thinking along with Anaximander over the historical breach cannot be based merely on the scientific, philological, or historiographical analysis of language. Heidegger states it must involve a poetic engagement with the truth of being: "But thinking is the poetizing of the truth of Being in the historic dialogue between thinkers."<sup>33</sup> To try honestly to uncover what Anaximander means is to forego an easy transliteration based on metaphysical or scientific interpretation, and instead to attempt poetic thought along with Anaximander.

Heidegger says that insistence upon the scientific leads humanity to confusion. In trying to master and possess the material things in this world, he says, humanity has lost the capacity to address the immaterial—and therefore the empty or abyssal—simplicity of being. Rather than

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<sup>33</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 57; "Das Denken aber ist das Dichten der Wahrheit des Seins in der geschichtlichen Zwiesprache der Denkenden," "Der Spruch des Anaximander," 343.

meditating upon this simplicity, the modern scientific attitude shuts its eyes to it. Human beings become confused because they choose to avail themselves of only a limited strain of what constitutes the ability to think. To think about being in its simplicity necessarily means to poetize, to ponder it as if it were a riddle.<sup>34</sup> This is, at least, what Heidegger says at the conclusion of *Der Spruch des Anaximander*. Because Heidegger does not say more about what poetizing-as-pondering-a-riddle might mean here, it is unclear what to make of it all on its own. Thankfully, he further discusses riddles in the “Logos” essay.

In the “Logos” essay ‘riddle’ shows up again when Heidegger begins his interpretation of the poetic speech of Heraclitus. Right after translating the Heraclitus B50 fragment in the traditional manner, Heidegger enjoins: “In the meantime, we would correspond sooner to his thinking if we conceded that several riddles remain . . . We will get closer to these riddles if we step back before them. That done, it becomes clear that in order to observe the riddle as a riddle we must clarify before all else what λόγος and λέγειν mean.”<sup>35</sup> To understand Heraclitus requires admitting that there are riddles within his speech that are not due merely to his being a tricky or crafty author, but also to the character of the object of his speech. To speak poetically is to speak meditatively or musingly (*nachzudenken*).<sup>36</sup> It is necessarily a kind of speech that is open; that is, speaking poetically requires holding back on immediately attempting to solve any mysteries or riddles that may arise as one is speaking. . In fact, to quickly draw a direct conclusion would be

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<sup>34</sup> “Der Spruch des Anaximander,” 343.

<sup>35</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 60; “Indessen dürften wir seinem Denken eher entsprechen . . . daß vielmehr in der gedachten Sache selbst einige Rätsel bleiben. Wir kommen ihnen eher nahe, wenn wir davor zurücktreten. Dabei zeigt sich: um das Rätsel als Rätsel zu merken, bedarf es vor allem anderen einer Aufhellung dessen, was λόγος, was λέγειν bedeutet,” *Logos*, 200.

<sup>36</sup> *Logos*, 200.

necessarily to make it plain that whatever is put within the context of a riddle is easily knowable, and therefore, it is not worth putting what is being talked about in the format of a riddle at all. In order to observe a riddle as a riddle, for Heidegger, one must first withhold the move to quickly try and say that Heraclitus is intentionally making vague statements in order to appear to be clever. For Heidegger, to speak about being poetically, then, is, at the very least, not a practice of picking clever ways to couch what is being talked about. It refrains from drawing conclusions about mysterious subjects, which may appear in speech as riddles.

Furthermore, in order to be poetically meditative, the speech of Heidegger's inceptive thinker is characteristically aimed at the familiar. It isn't the alien or the remote that is ideal to meditate upon, but what is 'near and dear,' what is so obvious as to remain unquestionable if left alone. As Heidegger says in 1943, "The presencing of the near is too close for our customary mode of representational thought . . . to experience the governance of the near, and without preparation to think it adequately."<sup>37</sup> Since the usual mode of representational thinking is to focus on present objects, the mysteriousness of presence, hiding, and coming-to-be is not brought into the light for us to ponder. By examining what is familiar in a way that makes it foreign and mysterious, poetic speech ponders or meditates.<sup>38</sup> Obscurantist tendencies in poetic, inceptive thinking are, thus, not for their own sake. Poetic speech functions by drawing out what is

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<sup>37</sup> *Early Greek Thinking*, 121; "Das Wesende der Nähe ist unserem gewohnten Vorstellen . . . zu nahe, als daß wir das Walten der Nähe unvorbereitet erfahren und zureichend denken könnten," Martin Heidegger, "*Aletheia* (Heraclit, Fragment 16)," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. F.W. von Herrmann, vol. 7, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 272. Hereafter referred to as *Aletheia*, followed by a page number. Pagination is from the original GA edition. English translation is from the above edition, unless otherwise noted. See also David Farrell Krell, "Kalypso: Homeric Concealments after Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Lacan," in *The Presocratics after Heidegger*, ed. David Jacobs (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 118-20. Krell highly emphasizes Heidegger's conception of the poetic as deeply intimate contact with the *daimonic*.

<sup>38</sup> *Aletheia*, 273.



overlooked from what is ordinary and familiar.<sup>39</sup> For the Greek thinker, then, obscure ways of naming and obscure forms of writing are not so much conscious efforts at crafting an appropriate way of discussing the topic as they are a means of letting the objects of discussion, truth and being, catch the attention of the reader by for once being the center of attention.

It must be noted that Heidegger does not always speak directly about Greek *poësis* when discussing the characteristics of inceptive thinking. Instead, he sometimes uses examples to show how *poësis* functions and then, more often than not, discusses the nature of human *Dasein* and the Greek term *technē*. This is his approach in *EM*; in the midst of his discussion of Heraclitus and Parmenides as inceptive thinkers, he embarks upon an examination of a text that is undoubtedly a poem, by anyone's definition: the first choral ode from Sophocles' *Antigone*.<sup>40</sup> He tells us that the central theme of the ode is the uncanny nature of human existence; it has a familiarity that is made strange and violent. This violence is necessary in order for one to be actively human in any place—the Greek *polis* being the primary example—because it indicates our affinity for and confusion about being itself.<sup>41</sup> The violence central to the artist—and therefore to the poet like Sophocles—is *technē*. The artist wrestles with being and brings it to bear, or puts it to work, in the creative enterprise by allowing it to show up as the issue and reveal itself.<sup>42</sup> Both here and in the later essays, “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” and “Die Frage nach der Technik,” the work of art is not primarily the handmade object and what it

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<sup>39</sup> Wolfgang Brokmeier makes this claim about the function of poetry for Heidegger as well in: “Der andere Anfang im ersten oder das Finden des Eigenen im Fremden der Frühe: Heidegger und Anaximander,” in *Heidegger Studies* 10 (1994): 124-6.

<sup>40</sup> *EM*, 112-26.

<sup>41</sup> *EM*, 115-7.

<sup>42</sup> *EM*, 121-2.

represents, but the insight or knowledge of the craftsman about *what is*.<sup>43</sup> Heidegger concludes that the issue in question for Sophocles is the nature of humanity. This issue resolves into the confrontation with being itself through the *Seinsfrage*. The formula of the sung ode is not what makes *Antigone* a poem; it is a poem because its form allows the thinker, reader, or listener to access being itself as it reveals itself in the words of the song.<sup>44</sup>

In both “Die Frage nach der Technik” and “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” Heidegger explicitly connects this understanding of *technē* with the Greek *poësis*. He states that “Technē belongs to bringing-forth, to *poësis*; it is something poetic,”<sup>45</sup> and alternately, “All art, as the letting happen of the advent of truth of beings, is as such, *in essence, poetry*.”<sup>46</sup> To poetize is to bring forth being through the kind of effort, that is, speaking and naming, that is essential to the way in which humans exist. Crafting a work of art or making a poem is, therefore, not artificial; in fact, artifice is the opposite of poetry or art, according to Heidegger. Poetry and art require human striving in order to bring to bear what might be at hand—and thus familiar. They are not a way of tacking on something alien or foreign to what is common. Whatever is at first glance simple and subsequently appears strange or obscure in a work of art is so because of the gloss of familiarity. That is, whenever simple subjects like ‘being’ or ‘man’s essence’ are brought to the

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<sup>43</sup> EM, 122. See also Martin Heidegger, “Die Frage nach der Technik,” in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. F.W. von Herrmann, vol. 7, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 16-7; and also “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” in *Holzwege*, ed. F.W. von Herrmann, vol. 5, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 25.

<sup>44</sup> EM, 124

<sup>45</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 318; “Die τέχνη gehört zum Her-vor-bringen, zur ποίησις; sie ist etwas Poietisches,” “Die Frage nach der Technik,” 16.

<sup>46</sup> Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 197; “Alle Kunst ist als Geschehenlassen der Ankunft der Wahrheit des Seienden als ein solchen *im Wesen Dichtung* [emphasis Heidegger’s],” “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,” 59.

fore poetically, it means that they suddenly appear strange by virtue of the fact that they are taken out of their ordinariness within daily life. By becoming the subject of meditative thinking, being suddenly appears unfamiliar and odd. Moreover, it is not just the creative, or work-like, element that is central to art and poetry, but also their ability to preserve and protect what they reveal.<sup>47</sup> In fact, they persistently force the viewer or hearer away from the commonplace so that he may attend to what is obscure, strange, and overlooked by virtue of apparent simplicity. This is not to say that everything that appears strange is actually familiar. Very many things are strange or odd because they are indeed strange, i.e., not ordinary or everyday at all. But such oddities appear as odd or bizarre from the beginning. Rather, what Heidegger means by the poetic thought of the inceptive thinker is that it allows being to become strange even though it seems familiar to us as a concept because our everyday understanding is easy and requires little effort. To poetize, for Heidegger, means to think about being, and correspondingly about truth and reason, such that their simplicity suddenly appears strange. Thus, philosophy that poetizes, that thinks inceptively, focusses on bringing forward the strangeness of being's simplicity, to its divinity, and allows that strangeness to persist.

For Heidegger, the fragments of Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Anaximander each function in the same way as does the choral ode from *Antigone*: they bring the deceptively familiar simplicity of their subjects (being, humanity) to bear by cutting through the easy gloss of everyday understanding, preserve the identity of what is revealed, and call upon the reader or hearer to enter unfamiliar territory along with the author. The author, moreover, is not an inventor or tinkerer in the modern sense; quite the reverse, since the craft of poetic speech is in

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<sup>47</sup> "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 62.

letting the spoken-of speak for itself. Structural formality is not necessarily material to poetry, but it is sufficient insofar as it draws the thinker away from his customary, everyday speech. What, then, is expressly inceptive about these Presocratic fragments is their open and inconclusive attitude to the divine, to being itself. That is, the first inception identifies the mysteriousness of being and names it out of piety, using a kind of speech made manifest during the speaker's encounter with being.

As was shown in chapter 1, the analytic speech of Aristotle and the divine ideas of Plato do not function this way according to Heidegger. However, metaphysicians like Plato and Aristotle can still talk about and use the kinds of speech characteristic of poetry, especially myth. Given this fact, Heidegger needs to show how the kind of mythmaking used by Parmenides is an example of poetic, inceptive thinking that is different from Plato's presentation of several myths in the Socratic dialogues. In the next chapter, I will show that all of the themes heretofore discussed as central to Heidegger's attempts to challenge the logical prejudice and identify the inceptive thinker are brought to bear in *Parmenides*. Heidegger uses these themes to separate the inceptive thinker's art of mythmaking from the metaphysician's wielding of it as an analytic tool. In the upcoming chapter, I will proceed through a close reading of the lecture course, along the way reinforcing many of the recurrent themes from my first and second chapters. In particular, the themes that are most prominent in *Parmenides* are the concept of reticent, inceptive speech; the meaning of *alētheia* and its relationship to *lēthē* and *pseudos*; the ancient Greek conception of *muthos* as poetic speech; and the role of Plato as the institutor of metaphysics. By the end of chapter 3, what should become apparent is Heidegger's serious commitment to a specific

definition of myth. Not only does his understanding of Greek *muthos* fit within his theme of poetic speech as I have outlined here, but it allows him to become even more specific about the separation between metaphysics and inceptive thinking.

## Chapter 3

### *Section 7. Heidegger's thesis concerning the reticent speech of Parmenides*

This chapter will address the themes of myth and truth in Heidegger's course given in the winter of 1942-43. This course continues Heidegger's exploration into the causes of the logical prejudice, an exploration begun in *GM*, and the possibility of countering the prejudice via the new inception as described in the Nietzsche lectures and attempted in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*. Insofar as *Parmenides* is, in genre, the edited and compiled text of a lecture course, it obviously cannot be understood as a continuation of the attempts in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*. If nothing else, a lecture course is far too public a place for the kind of cryptic testing of the limits of speech that Heidegger attempts in these other works. Instead, this course, along with his follow-up course on Heraclitus given in 1943, has many of the characteristics of his previous lectures and essays that contrast metaphysical thought with the entire scope of philosophizing.<sup>1</sup>

This lecture course is a bit of an amalgamation. Heidegger makes many of the same arguments already seen in his contemporaneous short essays and lectures on the Greek inceptive thinkers discussed in chapter 2. He then uses these arguments to refine his criticism of metaphysics, in particular his recurring criticism (to be found in his thought throughout the 1930s, beginning with the "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" lecture) of the Platonic doctrine of ideas. A claim particular to *Parmenides*, namely, that Parmenides's poem is a myth, causes Heidegger to reevaluate his critique of Plato as a metaphysician by contrasting Plato's handling

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<sup>1</sup> Published as part of Heidegger's Gesamtausgabe, *Parmenides* is placed within the second division of Heidegger's writings, devoted to all the lecture courses delivered either at Marburg or Freiburg that were intended for publication by Heidegger. In contrast, the Nietzsche lectures are part of the first division, as they were compiled by Heidegger and published during his lifetime, and *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* were not prepared for publication by Heidegger.

of myth with Parmenides's poem. In so doing, Heidegger argues that the full Greek conception of *logos* includes myth as a special kind, a fact that Plato recognizes but moves away from in his own thought. The early sections of the lecture course frame this argument by addressing the problem of interpreting Parmenides in light of the language of metaphysics after Plato. The careful interpreter, he says, must be mindful of the text itself, as well as of the customary, post-Platonic approach to interpretation.

At the outset of the course, Heidegger claims that Parmenides's identification of a goddess as the speaker of the 'way of *alētheia*' and the 'way of *doxa*' is not just a stylistic flourish; in fact, it reveals the full meaning of the poem as *alētheia*. Or rather, he tells his students, what is at issue in the poem is the "essence of truth," precisely because it is truth that personally speaks to Parmenides.<sup>2</sup> A personified truth with a specific identity is revealed to Parmenides, and he reports this experience or encounter.<sup>3</sup> The goddess is not the goddess of truth; her name itself is *Alētheia*. Her appearance is no mere stylistic device to be cast aside as a mere curiosity; rather, having the goddess speak for and about herself is of the highest importance. For Heidegger, the reader of Parmenides' poem is left to wonder how *Alētheia* is both the name of the goddess, and that about which she speaks.<sup>4</sup> Turning attention to the encounter with the goddess in the poem requires a specific disposition on the part of the modern reader. As Heidegger explains, one can understand the encounter with the goddess in the poem

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<sup>2</sup> *Parmenides*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> See Véronique M. Foti, "Aletheia and Oblivion's Field," in *Ethics and Danger*, ed. Arleen B. Dallery, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 72-83. Foti notes that by naming the goddess "*Alētheia*," Heidegger avoids analyzing how it is that the goddess can also speak the way of *doxa*. I think such an explanation is part of Heidegger's interpretation of *pseudos* in the central sections of the text.

<sup>4</sup> This is the central characteristic of inceptive speech, as discussed in the preceding chapter.

only in light of the rest of the poem. That is, one must thoughtfully heed or allow [*denkende Achtsamkeit*] the poem to reveal its meaning via the content that follows.<sup>5</sup> Put into the language of *SZ*, this heedful disposition is a kind of *Befindlichkeit*, or self-situatedness,<sup>6</sup> that shakes the reader loose from the customary or familiar means of appropriating a text.<sup>7</sup>

According to Heidegger, the singular error [*Einzige Irrtum*] of customary, modern interpretations of the poem is that they do not heed the poem as a guide to its own interpretation. Rather, the customary method of understanding Parmenides's encounter with the goddess is to set it aside as a mere stylistic allusion to Homeric or Hesiodic hypostasizing.<sup>8</sup> Such an interpretation reduces the style of the poem to idle talk, because the mode of interpretation is itself idle and customary.<sup>9</sup> The goddess who speaks *alētheia* to and for Parmenides is taken to be a trope or a reenactment of a familiar poetic form, and thus she can be discredited as unimportant in interpreting the rest of the poem.

Heidegger states that he is about to embark on a textual examination that will habitually refrain from allowing this customary mode of interpretation to predominate, even though he

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<sup>5</sup> *Parmenides*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> As colleague Paul Higgins has brought to my attention, Heidegger would certainly frown upon using the language of *SZ* here. Nevertheless, I think it is worth mentioning some of Heidegger's earlier jargon in order to help clarify what such a 'heeding' is supposed to be. I also contrast another concept from *SZ*, '*Gerede*,' or 'idle talk', with heedful thinking.

<sup>7</sup> See *SZ*, 134.

<sup>8</sup> *Parmenides*, 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> Note that I adopt McQuarrie and Robinson's custom of translating *Gerede* as 'idle talk' rather than as 'chit-chat' or 'palaver'. Dahlstrom's use of 'palaver' is helpful precisely because it is not the sort of word that is in common use; it does not wind up in the kind of speech it describes. As technical jargon, 'palaver' thus points out the nuanced meaning of *Gerede* that Heidegger outlines in *SZ*. Nevertheless, the German *Gerede* does find itself in common speech, inasmuch as it identifies gossip and 'weather-talk' and is a word that may be used even in a gossipy discussion. I find 'idle talk' helpful because, while it clearly may include gossip, it is also broad enough to refer to the kind of banter that scientists, philosophers, and philologists might have with one another. Such speech is idle for them, but would be considered jargon by most everyone else. See Dahlstrom, 283, n. 69. See also *SZ*, 168.



recognizes that he and his students remain drawn by such an approach.<sup>10</sup> Heidegger's explanation of the disposition of heedful thinking is, he admits, apophatic, though such thinking itself is by no means a *via negativa*.<sup>11</sup> In order to encounter Parmenides as an inceptive thinker, the reader is not dependent on a customary interpretation of what that might mean, and he also cannot expect to think precisely as Parmenides himself does. Since Heidegger explicitly states the latter claim in the course, I take him to mean that the interpreter cannot think precisely as the inceptive thinker does. To think *as* Parmenides is to claim to essentially be 'there', that is, to be alongside Parmenides, literally standing before the goddess in the encounter. The ability to do this is lost to the reader, not only because Parmenides lived 2,600 years ago, but also because the reader cannot help but reflect upon the everyday interpretations of the text made over the course of the history of philosophy and philology, interpretations that Parmenides himself could not entertain.<sup>12</sup> The element of "heeding" in the interpretive disposition called for by Heidegger situates thoughtful reading somewhere between commonplace, "idle," philological-philosophical examinations of the poem and careful explication of the content of the poem on its own terms. The heedful reader tries to perform the latter while not forgetting the prejudicial grip of the

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<sup>10</sup> *Parmenides*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> *Parmenides*, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger claims already in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* that the goal of investigating primordial thinking is to think the beginning anew. However, as I have expressed in chapter 1, such a new inceptive thinking is not the same as the original precisely because it is heedfully dependent upon and interpretive of it. See *Besinnung*, 41-2 and 53; and *Beiträge*, 55-6. Kenneth Maly suggests that Heidegger's account of Parmenides be taken as an image, that is, a kind of snapshot designed to bring the actual time and place of Parmenides into context. See Kenneth Maly, "Parmenides: Circle of Disclosure, Circle of Possibility," in *Heidegger Studies* 1 (1985): 16. Franck Robert has more recently written about how Heidegger's claims regarding the inceptive thinking of Parmenides shape the views held by Merleau-Ponty and Beaufret. See: Franck Robert, "Merleau-Ponty, Beaufret, Heidegger: Parménide ou la d'couverte de l'ontologie," *Alter* 18 (2010): 277-95.

former upon him.<sup>13</sup> The thesis of the lecture course is, therefore, that the reader can encounter the essence of truth, which makes Parmenides a primordial, inceptive thinker, by attempting this heedful reconnoiter.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Heidegger's term "primordial thinker" does not refer merely to a transitional figure between the religious poets and Plato. Primordial inceptive thought is not concerned with thinking about being only in terms of entities, that is, things. Rather, primordial thinkers think about being in such a way that they give being itself a name. For Anaximander, being is *to chreōn*, the useful; for Heraclitus, being is *logos*; for Parmenides, the goddess calls being *eon*, using the participial form of the verb 'to be'.<sup>14</sup> For Heidegger these names express being as "presencing," that is, what emerges out of and in opposition to sheer absence or oblivion. As discussed in the first chapter, one of the key features of Heidegger's conception of truth is that any unconcealment is also a partial concealment. These names designate being itself as unconcealment and what unconceals; they are the clearing, the jointure or the home in which being can reside.<sup>15</sup> Being, as it is thought by a primordial thinker, is what makes entities manifest and ready for interrogation. However, because being is the unconcealment of entities, it also preserves and protects what is not made manifest. What makes primordial thinking primordial is that it leaves what is in concealment as what remains hidden, what is not yet manifest, what is mysterious. To return then to Heidegger's initial claim about the goddess, the identification of the goddess as *Alētheia* is given during her speech to Parmenides,

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<sup>13</sup> See chapter 1, n. 4 of this dissertation. This attempt at reconnoiter occurs repeatedly throughout Heidegger's philosophizing.

<sup>14</sup> "Der Spruch des Anaximander," 335-40. See chapter 2, section 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Besinnung*, 109. See chapter 2, section 6.

and thus the heedful thinker is one who interprets Parmenides as a thinker in light of the goddess's appearance as the one speaking. Heidegger's tack is to interpret the poem by taking seriously the claim of the poem, namely, that Parmenides is the mouthpiece of the goddess and not the other way around.

Within this explication of his method of interpretation, Heidegger notes that a customary approach assumes that Parmenides is in the midst of a period in which *muthos* and *logos* are slowly being dissociated by the Greeks;<sup>16</sup> hence, one can dismiss Parmenides's goddess as mere adornment, a remnant of pre-philosophical thinking. Given the hypothesis of Heidegger's course as I understand it, I take his calling Parmenides an inceptive or primordial thinker to mean that he claims that Parmenides's poem, in its form and content, reveals a relationship between *muthos* and *logos* that is over and against this customary interpretation. I am not saying that Heidegger intends to undermine the theory that the ancient Greeks began to dissociate myth from reason; in fact, this is Heidegger's very point about the nature of Plato's and Aristotle's metaphysics, as I have outlined in chapter 1. I mention the customary interpretation here in order to highlight three points that I wish to make in this chapter. First, Heidegger's intention in the *Parmenides* course is not to disprove this kind of interpretation of a text, but to get behind it, i.e. to see its roots. Heidegger is not interested in proving that such an interpretation is incorrect; he is interested in letting such an interpretation remain in order to reveal its inadequacy as the final word on the relationship between *muthos* and *logos*. He is, I think, interested not in showing that such an interpretation is untenable, but in displaying its superficiality and inadequacy in contrast to the interpretation he himself proposes. As part of that contrast, he is also interested in demonstrating

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<sup>16</sup> *Parmenides*, 8.

why such a superficial interpretation arises in the first place in order to show why it is only superficial.

Second, the crux of Heidegger's examination of *muthos* depends upon a clarification of the identity of *alētheia*, as his introduction to the course states. Heidegger's "heedful thinking" operates by upsetting the "idle" opposition between *alētheia* and *pseudos*. According to Heidegger, *alētheia* means "truth" or "unhiddenness" in opposition with its proper counter-essence. The counter-essence of truth is "hiddenness," that is, *lēthē*, which is evident as the base-word following the alpha-privative in the compound word *alētheia*. The Greek word *pseudos*, normally translated as "false," is, according to Heidegger, a secondary mode of hiddenness dependent upon pushing something aside in order to supplant it by revealing something else. In contrast, the terms *kruptō*, *keuthō*, and *kaluptō* have meanings in which hiddenness is more originary. This is because the senses of hiddenness meant by these terms are not dependent upon kinds of unconcealment that are prior to their occurrence. This distinction between kinds of hiddenness allows Heidegger to subsequently make the claim that there is a kind of speech, *muthos*, which can present primary hiddenness as such.

For Heidegger, myth, because it shows and reveals what is protectively sheltered or cryptic, is a specific mode of speaking the truth, even though it is characteristically mysterious or vague in both form and content. Actually, as I maintain in chapter 2, this vagueness is a necessary characteristic of inceptive thinking. Contrary to the more common view, speaking via myth is not a contrivance or an artistic 'covering over', according to Heidegger. Rather, the speaker of myth is unconcerned with either achieving or distorting a factually "correct" account.

In fact, the kind of account that ‘sorts out the facts’ or separates truth from falsity can occur only in light of mythic speech.

Third, Heidegger wishes to show that the historical-philosophical preference for contrasting *alētheia* with *pseudos*, evidence of what Dahlstrom calls the “logical prejudice,” arises out of Plato’s thought, despite what Heidegger takes to be clear evidence of Socrates’s affinity for more closely associating truth and myth in the dialogues. In order to demonstrate this, Heidegger presents an interpretation of the “Myth of Er” from Book X of *Republic* in which he claims that Socrates understands *muthos* as the kind of speech whose content and form performatively disclose truth while simultaneously preserving and hiding it by being mysterious or vague. In selecting the concluding discussion of *Republic* as an example, Heidegger clarifies that Plato is not a primordial thinker. In fact, for Heidegger, what makes Plato a metaphysician and—perhaps unwittingly—a proponent of the logical prejudice is that he attempts to come to grips with the truth not merely by performing all the forms of speaking and thinking, but by analyzing them while doing so.

In making these three claims, I will argue in this chapter that Heidegger enters the discussion of myth because he sees the “essence of truth” as the issue that makes Parmenides a primordial thinker. If the proem of Parmenides’s poem is a myth in the sense that Heidegger claims myth should be understood, then I argue that Heidegger takes the proem as the definitive evidence of Parmenides’s status as a primordial thinker. On Heidegger’s own terms, Parmenides might be regarded as a metaphysician if the proem were not included in the poem, because in such a case all that would be left of the poem would be the assertive statements made by the

goddess whom Heidegger says is named *Alētheia*. Metaphysics, insofar as it seeks correct assertions about concepts by distinguishing the true from the false, seems to apply to the speech of the goddess. The words that Parmenides clearly claims as his own, however, are the lines of the proem. If the evidence of the primordially of Parmenides's thought is this mysterious encounter with the goddess, then Parmenides shows himself to be rather reticent about making the metaphysical claims contained in his poem. If one is to make sense of the poem in light of Heidegger's assessment of myth, then the poem stands as an act of piety or reverence toward the mysteriousness of the very claims that it contains. In terms of content, then, what makes the poem an example of primordial thinking is that it does not provide an assured response to the paradox of the one and the many. For Heidegger, the poem is a serious consideration of the one and the many insofar as it does not present their opposition as a problem to be sorted out via logical analysis, as Plato or any subsequent metaphysician might, but as a mysterious hendiadys that must be shown as such.<sup>17</sup> Parmenides himself does not use analytic speech to separate the true from the false contained within a myth. Rather, he performs the rhetorically inverse operation: he displays within a myth the logical analysis already spoken by the goddess. This rhetorical operation is not simply a stylistic device; on the contrary, it shows Parmenides's reliance upon the ability of myth to transmit the "un-hidden," an idea that philosophers since Plato have explicitly questioned.

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<sup>17</sup> See Klaus Held, *Heraklit, Parmenides und der Anfang von Philosophie und Wissenschaft: Eine phänomenologische Besinnung* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 564-74. Held argues for a reading of the proem that is similar to Heidegger's 'thoughtful heeding'. He also shows the parallels between Plato's idea of the good and the light metaphor in the *Doxa* segment of the poem. See also Jochen Schlüter, *Heidegger und Parmenides: Ein Beitrag zu Heideggers Parmenides-Auslegung und zur Vorsokratiker-Forschung* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1979), 305-10. Schlüter shows that Heidegger's interpretation of Parmenides clearly refutes his own concept of formal indication in *SZ* as a still metaphysical procedure, regrounding it.

In the next section, I will address Heidegger's argument that *alētheia* is dependent upon and in opposition to its fundamental counter-essence, hiddenness, as it appears in *Parmenides*. Section 9 will show why, according to Heidegger, *muthos* is the fundamental mode of speech that communicates truth out of this hiddenness. Section 10 will discuss Heidegger's presentation of the Myth of Er in Book X of *Republic* as a means for showing the difference between metaphysical thought and primordial thought. Finally, section 11 will re-address my interpretation of Heidegger's claim that Parmenides is a primordial thinker in order to clarify his goal of challenging—and simultaneously offering an explanation for—metaphysics.

*Section 8. The account of truth, falsity, and the hidden in "Parmenides"*

This section provides a detailed examination of Heidegger's interpretation of the Greek word *alētheia* in his lecture course. His interpretation is not radically opposed to his formulations from the 1930s; it is largely a recapitulation. However, the conclusion he draws is different, because the context of the word—its preeminence in the proem of Parmenides's poem—is different. Heidegger's attention to this context directs him to assert that the Greeks can and do speak about the grounding of *alētheia* in *lēthē* through myth. This section of the dissertation will, therefore, examine Heidegger's recapitulative argument about *alētheia* and *lēthē* in order to highlight his claim that myth is a kind of *logos*, which is the topic of the next section.

Early in the lecture course, soon after proposing the thoughtful heeding of the claims of the proem and the identity of the goddess, Heidegger begins an interpretation of the word

*alētheia*.<sup>18</sup> He claims that the translation of *alētheia* as merely *Unverborgenheit* does not completely untangle the meaning of the Greek word; such a translation in fact can be unhelpful because, in making it, the translator may have in mind simply another way of saying *Wahrheit*; such translation would be merely “an idle affair [*ein eitles Spiel*].”<sup>19</sup> It can be a thoughtful heeding to translate *alētheia* this way, but only if doing so helps the reader come to grips with the early Greek sense of the encounter that underlies the term.<sup>20</sup> Heidegger claims that using *Unverborgenheit*, when characterized by intensive reflection, can indeed lead to heedful thinking.

Even upon the most cursory investigation, *Unverborgenheit* calls attention to the *Verborgenheit* within it. Heidegger says that this word, “concealedness,” ordinarily just sits within the whole word undefined and unquestioned. This is, he claims, indicative of the encounter that underlies the meaning of *alētheia*. The Greeks,

experience genuinely and express in word only unconcealedness. Nevertheless, the directive toward concealedness and concealing provides us now with a clearer realm of experience. In some way or other we surely do know the likes of concealing and concealedness. We know it as veiling, masking, and as covering,

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<sup>18</sup> Maly notes that there are four distinct moments or “directions” in Heidegger’s interpretation. The first clarifies the need to re-explain *Wahrheit*, the second addresses the concealment contained in unconcealment, the third presents this as an opposition, and the fourth recharacterizes *alētheia* as ‘the open’. See Maly, 17-22. These four moments are consistent with what Frings calls the four ‘indices’ of Heidegger’s course. See Frings, “Parmenides”, 18. Frings calls the third index simply ‘strife’. Maly perhaps uses ‘moments’ to connect the lecture course with *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* in style. For the reasons I’ve cited in Chapter 1 about the difference in structure between these two texts and the Nietzsche lectures, Frings’ name for Heidegger’s four approaches to *alētheia* in Parmenides’ poem seems more appropriate for a lecture course. Whether they are called moments or indices, it is clear that Heidegger had these four approaches in mind as the way to structure the course.

<sup>19</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 11; *Parmenides*, 16-7.

<sup>20</sup> Throughout the lecture course, Heidegger refers to the ‘Greeks’ and the senses of terms as the ‘Greeks’ might understand them. The Greeks in question are, specifically, pre-Platonic; that is, in talking about the ‘Greeks’ he seeks to establish that Plato departs from the earlier, authentically Greek sensibilities of a primordial thinker like Parmenides. In following his argument, I alternatively use ‘early Greek’ or merely ‘Greek’ to refer to the specifically pre-Platonic.



but also in the forms of conserving, preserving, holding back, entrusting, and appropriating. We also know concealedness in the multiple forms of closing off and closedness.<sup>21</sup>

One part of Heidegger's claim here is that "concealedness" always remains linguistically embedded within "unconcealedness." In daily life, the concealed is occasionally the covert: that is, what is covered over, masked, veiled in shadow, or hidden away secretly. But Heidegger points out that concealment is also thought of in terms of preservation, appropriation, and confidence. Thus, if one is to understand the early Greek sense of truth, it is worth examining the relationship between *Unverborgenheit* and *Verborgenheit*. Specifically, it is worth determining how what is concealed is set aside or set apart from what is plainly evident and apparent, the unconcealed. Any sense of hiddenness is always in contrast with the clearly visible, the unhidden. Thus, unquestioningly replacing *Wahrheit* with *Unverborgenheit* overlooks this relationship between "concealedness" and "unconcealedness" and does little to assist the reader in understanding the Greek word for truth.

An additional benefit of examining the interplay between *Unverborgenheit* and *Verborgenheit*, Heidegger points out, is that it reminds the reader that *alētheia* too has its own contrasting root word, *lēthē*. The affixes *un-* in German and *a-* in Greek are privative.

"Unconcealedness" is thus a privation or cancellation of "concealedness." Concealment is shut out, banned, or taken away by unconcealment. The unconcealed is literally in argument or

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<sup>21</sup>*Parmenides* (English), 13; "Sie erfahren eigens und nennen im Wort die Unverborgenheit. Gleichwohl gibt uns jetzt die Weisung in die Verborgenheit und in das Verbergen einen deutlicheren Erfahrungsbereich. In irgendeiner Weise kennen wir doch dergleichen wie Verbergen und Verborgenheit. Wir kennen soches als Verhüllung, Verschleierung, als Verdeckung, aber auch in den Formen der Aufbewahrung, Behütung, des Zurückhaltens, des Anvertrauens und der Übereignung. Wir kennen die Verbergung in den mannigfaltigen Gestalten der Verschließung und Verschlossenheit," *Parmenides*, 19.

discord with the concealed.<sup>22</sup> The scission of the alpha privative from its root word evokes not only the tension inherent in the word, but also the reliance of the compound word on its root for meaning.

On this point, it is tempting to say that Heidegger's *Unverborgenheit* is a worthy translation merely because it terminologically reflects the function of the alpha privative. However, Heidegger's adamant claim is that the tension between *Verborgenheit* and *Unverborgenheit* is not dependent merely upon the prefix, nor is this true in the case of the Greek correlative terms. For Heidegger, knowing that the prefixes function privatively communicates nothing unless this privative function also indicates a tie to meaning derived from a particular event. Rendering *alētheia* as *Unverborgenheit* is, therefore, not an attempt to simply mimic terminological structure. Rather, Heidegger tells his students, this translation is appropriate because it heeds the function of the original word being translated.

The likeness between the privative *Un-* in *Unverborgenheit* and the alpha privative in *alētheia* is terminologically appropriate precisely because the use of the prefix is attentive to the Greek encounter with truth as dependent upon and opposed to the hidden or the concealed.<sup>23</sup> Whether the early Greeks understood *alētheia* to be terminologically derived from *lēthē* is not Heidegger's point. He means to express the sense of their encounter with truth, not the historical derivation of the word that stands as a name for the encounter.<sup>24</sup> In order to sort out the meaning

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<sup>22</sup> *Parmenides*, 20-3. As explained in chapter 1, Heidegger frequently and consistently claims that, for the Greeks, the alpha functions privatively in *alētheia*, even if its meaning was not consciously or overtly understood in contradistinction with *lēthē*. So far as I can tell, his argument here is consistent with how it is presented in the 1930s.

<sup>23</sup> *Parmenides*, 21-2.

<sup>24</sup> For similar opinions on this point, see Ivo De Gennaro, "Heidegger und die Griechen," in *Heidegger Studies* 16 (2000): 93-112; and Maly, 18.

of the Greek term, Heidegger thus turns to examining the possible ways in which *lēthē* can be understood in order to learn as much as he can about how *alētheia* opposes and arises out of it.<sup>25</sup>

Heidegger contrasts the position he is about to take concerning this opposition of *lēthē* and *alētheia* with the position taken by modern philosophy, which understands truth as *certitudo*, rather than unconcealedness. In the customary framework of modern metaphysics, this certitude, properly understood in dialectical opposition with a correlative concept, is achieved by the subjective self. While the specified targets here are Hegel and Schelling, it is the whole of modern philosophy that Heidegger decries as promoting this position.<sup>26</sup> It is, incidentally, important not to assume that Heidegger's own assertions follow the structural parameters of their metaphysics, though he investigates their conclusions in order to clarify his own position. As Heidegger states, "Unconcealedness suggests an "opposition" to concealedness. The ordinary opposition to truth is untruth in the sense of falsity."<sup>27</sup> While the first sentence proposes a general opposition, interpreting *Verborgenheit* as *Falscheit* (concealedness as falsity) is precisely the indicative "setting over and against" to which Heidegger objects. In his view, the modern philosopher customarily takes falsity as the relevant correlate to truth, and by examining this position, one can determine the extent to which it reflects the Greek senses of *lēthē* and *alētheia*. The question posed is not whether *alētheia* has its proper opposite in *lēthē*, but whether *Falscheit* is fully concomitant with the Greek sense of *lēthē*.

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<sup>25</sup> In VWW in 1932, this examination is specifically referred to as a formally indicative procedure, not as a historical unearthing of any Greek or specifically Homeric self-understanding regarding the hidden and the unhidden. See VWW, 145.

<sup>26</sup> *Parmenides*, 27-8.

<sup>27</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 20; "Unverborgenheit weist auf den »Gegensatz« zur Verborgenheit. Der sonst bekannte Gegensatz zur Wahrheit ist die Unwahrheit im Sinne der Falscheit," *Parmenides*, 29.

The Greek word that is customarily translated as ‘false’, Heidegger explains, is not *lēthē* but *pseudos*. Just as there appears to be little etymological association between *Wahrheit* and *Falscheit*, so there appears to be little between *alētheia* and *pseudos*. Given this, only an inquiry into the Greek encounter with what is *pseudos* can give any indication as to whether and how it might be taken as species of concealment. Heidegger notes that if *pseudos* is a kind of *lēthē*, then it might be the case that truth derives from or arises out of falsity, even though this may be counterintuitive.<sup>28</sup> Because false judgments are judgments in which “the way things stand” is obscured or missing, it appears, at least on the face of it, that falsity may be a kind of forgetting or concealment.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, there are places in Greek literature where attempts to ‘falsify’ or hide the way things appear are explained using words derived from *lēthē*. Heidegger uses two examples from Homer: Odysseus concealing his tears as the Phaeacian rhapsode recounts the Trojan War at *Odyssey* Θ, 93, and Athena concealing her aid to Achilles in the duel with Hector at *Iliad* X, 277.<sup>30</sup> In these examples, the actions of a god or man are carefully covered over or secreted away in an effort to conceal the identity or even the existence of the thing that is hidden. These examples from Homer may seem to indicate that concealment and falsity are more or less synonymous.

However, Heidegger states that concluding that *pseudos* and *lēthē* are synonyms is a mistake: “For the concealed is not ipso facto the false. But presumably, on the other hand, *τὸ*

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<sup>28</sup> *Parmenides*, 30-3.

<sup>29</sup> *Parmenides*, 37.

<sup>30</sup> *Parmenides*, 34-5.

*ψεῦδος*, the false, always remains in essence *a kind* of concealedness and concealing.”<sup>31</sup> While it follows that *pseudos* is a kind of concealment, not all concealment is reducible to it. This distinction is evident, in fact, in both of the selected examples from Homer. While it is evident to the audience of the poem that Odysseus and Athena are present in the midst of others, this covert presence is lost to the surrounding people within the story itself. Odysseus and Athena, rather than being revealed as something they are not, instead remain wholly shrouded and cut off. Athena goes completely unnoticed; she makes her appearance shrouded, even though the effect of her presence is Achilles receiving his lance. Odysseus, meanwhile, is physically present with those listening to the song, but, given the distraction of the song and Odysseus’s hiding of his tears, his crying goes unnoticed. Odysseus is not performing some sly operation whereby he passes himself off as something else; rather, he remains covert because he attempts to fully hide what he is doing.<sup>32</sup> The same is true for Athena, who does not give Achilles the lance by passing herself off as something else, but by being wholly invisible.

Heidegger’s explanation of the Homeric use of *lēthē* seems very plausible when one considers the passage from the *Odyssey* in the context of similar situations elsewhere in the story. For example, though Odysseus is present among the Phaeacians for several days, his identity remains hidden to them simply because he does not tell them his name.<sup>33</sup> When he is finally

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<sup>31</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 23; “Denn das Verborgene ist nicht sogleich schon das Falsche. Aber vermutlich bleibt umgekehrt τὸ ψεῦδος, das Falsche, in seinem Wesen immer *ein Art* des Verborgenen und des Verbergens,” *Parmenides*, 33.

<sup>32</sup> *Parmenides*, 40-1. Heidegger recapitulates this point in the lecture course he gives the following semester. See also: *Aletheia*, 253-5.

<sup>33</sup> Odysseus first meets Nausicaa in Book Z and does not reveal his name until Book I. For references to the *Odyssey*, I have used the following English translation: Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu, rev. D. C. H. Rieu (New York: Penguin, 1991).

pressed to do so, he professes his friendship and promptly reveals his identity.<sup>34</sup> He withholds his identity not to confuse his hosts, but because he is merely cautious about letting on who he really is. In contrast to this, Odysseus later returns to Ithaca disguised as an old man. In order to be noticed, but expressly for the purpose of fooling his wife's suitors and their friends, Odysseus enters his own homeland under the disguise of an old Cretan traveler.<sup>35</sup> In Phaeacia, though Odysseus is cautious, he acts the way he does to receive as little attention as possible. In Ithaca, on the other hand, he conceals his identity so as to appear to be someone he is not. In both cases his identity remains hidden, yet only in the second case does he 'falsify' his identity.

As I suggested in the previous section, Heidegger is not interested in obliterating the distinction between truth and falsity. He is, however, interested in showing why this opposition is simply inadequate as a way of coming to grips with the full, well-rounded meaning of *Alētheia* in Parmenides's poem. The customary, idle approach to the distinction between truth and falsity requires that falsity function in just the way that it does in Book Ξ of the *Odyssey*. However, this opposition seems to be only one way of understanding what constitutes a contrast with truth; that is, as a deliberate attempt to cover over or distort something that could be revealed by other means.

Falsity, then, would be a specific kind of concealment that confounds or dissembles information by revealing or expressing something else. According to Heidegger, *pseudos* is not just a kind of *lēthē*, but a kind of concealment that "belongs in the essential domain of appearing,

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<sup>34</sup> *Odyssey*, Book I, 11-22.

<sup>35</sup> *Odyssey*, Book Ξ, 199.

and letting-appear, of unconcealedness.”<sup>36</sup> *Pseudos* functions not by merely obscuring or covering over something, but by putting something else in place over and against it.<sup>37</sup> Thus the pseudonym Johannes de Silentio is a ‘false name’ for Søren Kierkegaard, because it obscures the name of the author of *Fear and Trembling* by providing another one in its stead.<sup>38</sup>

However, unlike in the example of Odysseus taking on the Cretan disguise, there seems to be no maliciousness or deceitfulness inherent in the use of a pseudonym. In fact, Heidegger tells us, it is unfitting to designate the pseudonym a false name, if by ‘false’ we mean something designed to obliterate any sense of the author. Kierkegaard’s choice of ‘Johannes de Silentio’ as a pen name “intimate[s] hereby something essential about himself and his literary activity.”<sup>39</sup> The function of the pen name is to reveal a specific, heart-of-the-matter attribute of the author and his authorship, not to confuse the reader.

Heidegger continues on regarding the meaning of *pseudos* by again referring back to Homer, this time to *Iliad* B, 348ff, where Zeus makes his presence known through his signs (*semata*) of lightning. In this passage, the Greeks are confused as to what the sign of Zeus indicates, that is, whether Zeus has revealed to them a direct portent or whether the lightning means their fate is still obscured. That Zeus is there to indicate their fate through signs, the Greeks know; but whether he does so clearly or obscurely—and here the word is *pseudos*—is in question.<sup>40</sup> Thus the value or meaning of the lightning to the Greeks is unclear, but that Zeus has

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<sup>36</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 31; “in den Wesensbereich des Erscheinens und Erscheinenlassens und der Unverborgenheit gehört,” *Parmenides*, 45.

<sup>37</sup> *Parmenides*, 42-3.

<sup>38</sup> *Parmenides*, 44.

<sup>39</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 30; “wollte damit etwas Wesentliches über sich und seine Schriftstellerei kundtun,” *Parmenides*, 44.

<sup>40</sup> *Parmenides*, 54.

revealed his role in their fate is clear. The activity of Zeus, though mysterious, is not deceptive about his presence and his influence. So too, the pseudonym, as it turns out, appears to be quite a fitting term for a pen name, bearing no connotation of malice or evil as part of its disguise.

The connotation that what is *pseudos* is ill, wrong, or in error, Heidegger claims, is due to the customary, improper translation of *pseudos* as ‘false’. The German word *falsch* and its counterpart in Latin, *falsum*, derive, not primarily from the Greek *pseudos*, but from the Greek *sphallo*, which means to deceive, overthrow, or bring down.<sup>41</sup> Thus, in translating *pseudos* as *falsch*, there appears a negative connotation not found in the Greek word.<sup>42</sup> Here, Heidegger again shows the sway that a customary mode of interpretation can hold over even the careful interpreter; he duplicates his earlier procedure of demonstrating the insufficiency of unquestioningly translating *alētheia* as *Wahrheit* by showing the equal insufficiency of translating *pseudos* as *Falscheit*. Though falsity and *pseudos* each operate by dissembling, that is, by obscuring one thing by revealing another, falsity carries with it the added connotation of disruption, dismantling, or ruining the very procedure of revealing. According to Heidegger, *pseudos*, as a particular kind of *lēthē*, simply does not always bear this connotation. Rather, as shown by his examples from the *Iliad* and his exploration of the term ‘pseudonym’, *pseudos* is a particular kind of hiding dependent upon the revealing of something else, where that revelation does not inherently corrupt the thing that is hidden.

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<sup>41</sup> *Parmenides*, 57.

<sup>42</sup> Heidegger spends some time here explaining that the source of this connotation can be found in the martial aspects of Roman culture and language. While I do not wish to explore the political implications here, it is worth pointing out that, at the very least, Heidegger wants his students to see that their ‘German’ sense of falsity is, in the first place, borrowed, and, in the second, unfitting as a translation of *pseudos*. This particular point in the text also runs counter to William Richardson’s arguments about *lēthē* in William J. Richardson, “Heidegger’s Truth and Politics,” in *Ethics and Danger*, ed. Arleen B. Dallery (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 11-23.



For Heidegger, then, the customary philosophical approach that takes falsity as the proper counter-essence of *certitudo* misses the full sense of truth as *alētheia*, because it fails to understand some or all of the following distinctions. The customary approach takes ‘the false’ as the appropriate way to translate *pseudos*, yet falsity carries with it a connotation of error or corruption that is not inherent in the Greek term. Furthermore, *pseudos*, as a kind of hiding, a kind of *lēthē*, turns out to also be a kind of *alētheia*; it conceals by revealing something else that is not inherently a corruption of the thing concealed. *Pseudos*, for the Greeks, is not opposed to *alētheia*, but serves as a kind of derivative mode both of it and of its proper opposite, *lēthē*. *Pseudos* thus is neither what truth opposes nor that out of which it arises; rather, *pseudos* is a mixed and dependent occurrence: for something to be disguised or dissembled implies that something more fundamental underlies the revelatory disguise. To determine the range of the Greek sense of *alētheia*, therefore, one must consider *pseudos* to be formative regarding only one sense of it and move on to investigate other possible senses of *lēthē*.

The next section will discuss the terms *kruptō*, *keuthō*, and *kaluptō* which Heidegger sees as indicating more thoroughgoing modes of *lēthē*. Heidegger thinks that considering these kinds of hiding reveals the most fundamental way in which the Greeks encounter truth, and thus, the most fundamental way about which that truth is spoken. As will be shown, this kind of speech is *muthos*.

*Section 9. Heidegger's central claim that muthos is a special kind of logos*

By uprooting what he takes to be the unquestioned assumption of modern metaphysics that truth and falsity are opposites, Heidegger performs the apophatic function of heedfully thinking about Parmenides's poem. Since *Falscheit* and *pseudos* are senses of *lēthē* that are dependent upon *alētheia*, they do not reflect the Greek encounter with truth as arising out of or through the hidden. This leaves Heidegger with the task of supporting his approach by providing a more fundamental interpretation of *lēthē*, one in which *alētheia* depends upon *lēthē* and not the other way around. In this section it shall be argued that Heidegger's explanation of the Greek sense of *lēthē* rests upon his understanding of the means by which the Greeks speak of *lēthē*, namely, myth. That is to say, myth functions as the means by which the Greeks bring the mysteriousness of the concealed, and thus the mystery of disclosure, to speech.

Heidegger's grounds for saying that myth reveals this fundamental relationship between *alētheia* and *lēthē* is that the Greeks themselves—that is, the Presocratics and the poets—do not deliver clear definitional or declarative statements about the two terms. In order to see how the Greeks understood disclosure as arising out of the hidden, the heedful thinker must remember, “granted, the Greek thinkers did not speak of these essential relations as we now are forced to express them.”<sup>43</sup> The Greeks are reticent to speak about *lēthē* and *alētheia* at all, but if they do, “it is in a way that even then does not break the silence.”<sup>44</sup> There is no direct evidence that the Greeks, in any analytical way, consciously thought, spoke, or wrote about truth arising out of

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<sup>43</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 79; “daß die griechischen Denker diese Wesensbezüge so nicht gesagt haben, wie wir sie jetzt zu sagen genötigt sind,” *Parmenides*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 79; “in einer zugleich verschweigenden Weise,” *Parmenides*, 116.

hiddenness, nor do they indicate any linguistic tie between the two words. When *lēthē* or *alētheia* are talked about, the speech is secretive and taciturn.

Rather than viewing this reticence to speak directly about *lēthē* and *alētheia* as indicative of their dissociation or their unimportance to the Greeks, Heidegger claims that it points to the interrelatedness and essentiality of the terms. The examples of this reticent speech that Heidegger turns to are epigrammatic or poetic: Hesiod's *Theogony*, V. 226f.; Pindar's *Olympic Ode* VII, 48f. and 43ff; and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, 1267.<sup>45</sup> In the passage from Hesiod, Heidegger notes that *Lēthē* is named as a goddess, one of the daughters of *Eris*, strife. As part of a list of deities in a series, Heidegger concludes that the meaning of *Lēthē* can be understood in terms of its shared connotation with the other daughters of strife. While the name can be translated as 'forgetting', Heidegger warns against understanding the word merely as the human capacity to forget; if 'forgetting' and 'strife' are part of a cosmogony, then they cannot be reduced to any modern, humanistic, biological or psychological meaning.<sup>46</sup> Hesiod's *Lēthē* is a goddess, not just the human deficiency of memory. Thus, one of the customary translations of *lēthē* as 'forgetfulness' misses what forgetting essentially is: a primordial lack, an obliviousness, or an absence. While Hesiod does not say directly that forgetting and absence are one and the same, it is clear that forgetting is of a piece with other instances of strife such as suffering and hunger, because they all point to absence, to oblivion.<sup>47</sup> Heidegger's interpretation is that *Lēthē* is what makes human forgetfulness what it is; it is oblivion itself.

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<sup>45</sup> The third example listed does not even contain the word *lēthē*. Heidegger uses it to explain the sense of the term *Aidōs* appearing in the lines from Pindar. *Parmenides*, 104-10.

<sup>46</sup> *Parmenides*, 107-8.

<sup>47</sup> *Parmenides*, 105-7.

Heidegger corroborates this interpretation of *lēthē* as oblivion by turning to Pindar. He notes that in *Olympic Ode VII*, 48ff., Pindar contrasts *aidōs* with *lathē*: “Αἰδώς (awe) comes over man as what is determining, i.e., disposing. As is clear on the basis of the opposition to λάθη (concealment), awe determines ἀλήθεια, the unconcealed in its unconcealedness, in which the whole essence of man stands together with all human faculties.”<sup>48</sup> Man is disposed to unconcealment, to truth, insofar as he reveres or is awe-struck by it. This reverence is, in part, due to the fact that unconcealment is always opposed by concealment, *lēthē*, a signless cloud [*zeichenlose Wolke*] that shows neither itself nor what it hides.<sup>49</sup> According to Heidegger, this reverence toward unconcealment drives human beings in their thinking and acting in the world. That is, because of the opposition of concealment that never announces when it is going to show up—by virtue of its never showing anything given that its identity is absence or the abyss—human beings revere the assurity of truth in everyday living. To call this a “drive” then, is to say that humanity clings to it as necessary for life. He says it is not a relentless drive akin to modern progress; rather, it is what allows human beings to find what is suitable for them, what is resolvable and within their grasp, and thus what is disclosed. However, this reverence is easily shaken; humanity can be left without the ability to find the suitable path because that path remains veiled or hidden.<sup>50</sup> For Heidegger, this passage from Pindar is telling because it poetically expresses, he thinks, the impropriety of searching for positive evidence of an early Greek analysis of the essence of truth and its relationship to concealment. Though the Greeks can

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<sup>48</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 74; “Αἰδώς (Scheu) kommt über den Menschen als das Bestimmende und d. h. Stimmende. Wie aus dem Gegensatz zur λάθη (Verbergung) deutlich wird, bestimmt die Scheu ἀλήθεια, das Unverborgene nach seiner Unverborgenheit, in der das ganze Wesen des Menschen mit all seinen Vermögen steht,” *Parmenides*, 110.

<sup>49</sup> *Parmenides*, 121.

<sup>50</sup> *Parmenides*, 117-8.

and indeed do address *lēthē* and *alētheia* as topics for thought, they cannot ‘analyze them out’ or define them as correlative terms, because it is precisely their interrelationship that is crucial to the attempt to account for anything at all. Such an analysis would be a sign of the end of inceptive, essential Greek thinking, not an achievement within it.<sup>51</sup> To think about the nature of truth using a delimiting procedure, that is, what the modern mind would take to be ‘thinking’ in the logical, scientific sense, ends thinking as a pious or reverential act towards what is unfamiliar.

According to Heidegger, the unfamiliar or unknown is, to the Greek, the sheltered or veiled. These are kinds of hiddenness that, by means of their appearance, resist disclosure. The verbs frequently used in Greek for this kind of hiding are, he notes, *kruptō*, *keuthō*, and *kaluptō*, which usually refer to the kind of veiling or covering associated with darkness and night.<sup>52</sup> To speak about what is sheltered or veiled, what remains absent from view but is nevertheless notable as absent, requires a kind of speaking that is unobtrusive. If the absent or veiled remains a “signless cloud,” as Pindar says it does, it would be incongruous or hubristic to speak about it as if it had any definite, evidential characteristics.

In Heidegger’s earlier clarification of *pseudos* as a kind of concealing that reveals something else, he notes that Zeus’s lightning bolts serve as signs, *semata*, at *Iliad* B, 348ff.<sup>53</sup> In this passage, something evident must be present—a sign from a god—for the activity of the gods to be noticed. However, both the god himself and the meaning of the sign are obscured for the Greeks, who wonder what the lightning might portend. While the Greeks in the passage are

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<sup>51</sup> *Parmenides*, 129.

<sup>52</sup> *Parmenides*, 88-9.

<sup>53</sup> *Parmenides*, 54.

worried that the activity of Zeus may be *pseudesthai*, the cause for their concern is that the god himself is, in actuality, *kruptesthai*. Even given the presence of the sign of Zeus, Zeus himself and the meaning of his lightning are hidden or veiled. Though showing his activity to the Greeks, Zeus still preserves his mysteriousness. He remains cryptic. For Heidegger, this passage from the *Iliad* is important, therefore, not only because it offers a view of how the natural signs of the gods function for the early Greeks, but because it is—as are the passages from Pindar and Hesiod—an example of Greek speech that reveals what is veiled or cryptic as such.

Heidegger takes the word *muthos* to mean, specifically, the Greek word for the kind of speech that reveals the veiled or cryptic as such. As he puts it, “Μῦθος is the Greek for the word that expresses what is to be said before all else. The essence of μῦθος is thus determined on the basis of ἀλήθεια. It is μῦθος that reveals, discloses, and lets be seen; specifically, it lets be seen what shows itself in advance and in everything as that which presences in all ‘presence.’”<sup>54</sup> Myth uniquely addresses the cryptic or veiled by presenting disclosure and hiding together, that is, presencing all that is in “presence.” Moreover, it speaks what is prior and fundamental. While this description of *muthos* may, at first, seem vague or inchoate, my assessment is that this vagueness is due to Heidegger’s claims about the content of its speech, the above cases from Pindar, Hesiod, and Homer being examples. Since the connection between *lēthē* and *alētheia* is never “analyzed out” in these passages, I take him to mean that *muthos* is a highly specialized mode of *logos* that functions through descriptive metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and other

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<sup>54</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 60; “Das griechische Wort für das Wort, worin sich das im voraus zu Sagende sagt, lautet μῦθος. Das Wesen des μῦθος ist selbst von der ἀλήθεια her bestimmt. Μῦθος ist das, was aufschließt, entbergt, sehen läßt: nämlich das, was sich im vorhinein in allem zeigt als das Anwesende in allem »Anwesen«,” *Parmenides*, 89.

poetic means. In my view, Heidegger sees the mythmaker as one who tells a story about the divine, but it is a story that does not in and of itself engage in dialectic, rule-making, or any self-reflexive examination that asserts one explanation of circumstances over another. It is for Heidegger, therefore, a way of speaking, unique to the Greeks, that avoids analytical judgment by refraining from being discursive or explanatory. My reasons for this interpretation are twofold. First, Heidegger describes the content of mythic speech as an “open secret” [*offenes Geheimnis*]<sup>55</sup> and contrasts this with the solvable and the certain. Second, Heidegger claims myth to be a kind of speech specific to the Greeks on the grounds that the ancient Greeks define themselves as Greeks precisely because they have *logos*; to speak is to speak Greek and nothing else besides.

Regarding the first point, for Heidegger, *muthos* is the speech which discloses the veiled in a poetic way because it presents the mysteriousness of a mystery. The mysteriousness of the activity of the gods is neither a detective-style problem to be solved nor an attempted solution to such a problem. Mythic speech does not aim, metaphorically, at ‘letting the cat out of the bag’ or showing the audience how the sleight-of-hand artist performs a trick. *Muthos* describes concealment and lets it alone; it opens up divine activity and shows it as sheltered and mysterious.<sup>56</sup> It does not explain how or why the gods act the way they do, for to do so would be beyond the ken of the speaker, as the examples from Hesiod and Pindar indicate. My sense is that this means that, for the Greeks, the secrets or mysteries of the gods are different from what can be explained or analyzed, because such mysteries exceed the limits of speech itself.

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<sup>55</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 63; *Parmenides*, 93.

<sup>56</sup> *Parmenides*, 93. See also Foti, 73: “In entrusting the word as *mythos*, *epos*, or *logos* to the mortal seeker, the goddess, by contrast, safeguards the lethic aspect of its manifesting power.” See chapter 2, section 6.

Secondly, his interpretation that *muthos* sets aside the mysterious activity of the gods and presents it as inexplicable can, I think, be drawn from Heidegger's comments about the Greekness of *logos*. According to his interpretation, the ability to appropriate or understand anything at all is a function of having the words to say so. *Muthos*, *logos*, and *epos* are the different Greek words for 'word' or 'speech', and their very function is to indicate that having words is that through which "Being assigns itself to man, so that he might preserve it, in his own essence, as what is assigned to him and might, for his part, find and retain his essence as man by means of such preservation."<sup>57</sup> For the Greek, to have words is to have contact with being, that is, to understand essentially and, thus, to be able to understand oneself. Since, in the eyes of the Greeks, only the Greeks have speech, no other language can be considered speech. Rather, the babbling barbarian has more in common with the cow or the donkey than with the Greek, because he can use his tongue to create specific sounds and yet these sounds don't appropriate anything. Barbarians are barbarians because they babble; they don't have words, which is to say Greek words, at their disposal. The barbarian is thus substantively different from the Greek not because he has a different kind of speech, but because he doesn't formally have words through which being is made manifest.<sup>58</sup> Heidegger's justification for claiming the Greekness of speech, i.e., *muthos*, is to contrast how it functions over and against the modern conception of 'culture' as the proper opposite of barbarism. For the Greeks, *muthos* is not theirs because of 'cultural differences', in part, because the very idea of culture is alien to the Greek sense of how speech

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<sup>57</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 78.; "das Sein sich dem Menschen zuweist, damit er es als das ihm Zugewiesene in seinem eigenen Wesen bewahre und aus solcher Bewahrung seinerseits erst sein eigenes Wesen als Mensch finde und behalte." *Parmenides*, 115.

<sup>58</sup> *Parmenides*, 103 and 115.



functions—*muthos* is not an extension of the will, the modern notion that one has the capacity fashion one's own life. If *muthos* lets being “assign itself to man,” then culture, Heidegger, says, would be a kind of barbarism to the Greek. Culture and the modern attempts at cultural comparison stand in contrast to how *muthos* functions, because the very notion of ‘culture’ implies the human ability to ingeniously create a way of life. There is nothing creative about *muthos*, it is not a creative form of speech.<sup>59</sup> Thus, to conceive of other cultures and their languages is to think in a modern fashion; speaking differently doesn't designate a substantial difference to the modern linguist, only a superficial cultural one. Contrarily, the Greeks do not think comparatively about language; they think only about whether someone has the words for how the world addresses them. Since the Greeks don't consider language and its comparative use, they don't have the corresponding notion of ‘comparative culture’.

Heidegger's account of myth turns out to be more focused than at first glance. He asserts that the Greeks view themselves as the bearers of full humanity, that is, the ones who can appropriate and address being, and all the things that exist, through the spoken word. To speak Greek is to have fundamental access to being, and this ability to understand and name the things that are—along with being—follows because the Greeks have many specific modes or ways of speech. His examples from Homer and Pindar are meant to display that the early Greeks see myth as pointing out what must remain mysterious and doing so in a way that preserves that mystery by highlighting the uncanniness or the ineffability of the divine. Myth speaks by “standing in the favor of *χάρις*.”<sup>60</sup> The aim in myth, as a specifically Greek way of talking, is on

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<sup>59</sup> *Parmenides*, 103-4.

<sup>60</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 78 ; “in der Gunst der *χάρις* steht,” *Parmenides*, 115.

the one hand to avoid analysis and on the other to avoid speaking what is *pseudos*. Rather than being at the command of the human speaker, myth defers to the divine—*Karis*, in the quote above—and is guided by it.

In the next section, I wish to show that this interpretation of myth as a specific kind of *logos* requires Heidegger to revise his critique of Plato as the founder of the logical prejudice. For Heidegger, the use of deferential speech about the divine is what separates the approach of Plato from the thought that comes before him, Parmenides in particular. Heidegger spends several lectures of the course discussing the Myth of Er from Book X of *Republic* in order to demonstrate this point. This concluding myth, Heidegger tells us, is the Greek's final word on *lēthē*. It is final because, while it presents the mysteriousness of the divinely hidden, it does so as a recollection, and therefore an examination and critique, of mythic speech. Therefore, Plato does not think inceptively, but is still sensitive to the need for it, even though he himself puts philosophy on a path away from it.

#### *Section 10. Plato's account of muthos and metaphysical thinking in "Parmenides"*

In chapter 1, I explained Heidegger's simultaneous indebtedness to Nietzsche's interpretation of Plato and his desire to surpass that interpretation in his attempt to uproot the logical prejudice of metaphysics. For Heidegger, Nietzsche stands as the continuation and completion of the metaphysical tradition, particularly because he takes all the paths of thinking, including the revaluation of all values, as dependent upon Platonist metaphysics. Thus, not only

does Nietzsche interpret Parmenides in light of the metaphysical tradition, but he interprets Plato in light of Platonism.<sup>61</sup>

Given this view of Nietzsche's position in the history of philosophy, Heidegger's proposal for approaching Plato's thought is to treat it as pivotal. That is, Plato is neither an inceptive thinker like Parmenides, nor does he completely reject the fundamentally Greek way of encountering the divine that is part and parcel of inceptive thought. As I will show,<sup>62</sup> the tack taken in *Parmenides* is to examine the concluding myth of *Republic* in order to separate Plato from his intellectual predecessors and followers. Plato 'shows his hand', because Socrates's recitation of the Myth of Er is an act of remembrance or recollection of the myth, not a first telling. Moreover, the story is about the importance of *lēthē* and subsequent *anamnēsis* as the proper method of handling the uncanny. Heidegger looks to reinforce the claim that Parmenides is an *anfänglicher Denker* by claiming that Plato sets his own philosophical inquiry—and thus the subsequent history of philosophy—apart from thinking mythically; Plato does so by talking about myth through the very act of recalling such stories. Thus, Heidegger completes his criticism of superficially interpreting Parmenides—that is, taking him to be a philosopher who engages in mythmaking as a conscious effort to recall the speech of Homer and Hesiod—by

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<sup>61</sup> *Parmenides*, 139. See also Agnes Heller, "Parmenides and the Battle of Stalingrad," in *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 19 (1997): 247-62. Heller identifies Heidegger's criticism of Nietzsche as a sign of Heidegger's rejection of National Socialism.

<sup>62</sup> My argument in this section contrasts with Fried's assessment of how Heidegger's diagnosis of post-Platonic nihilism differs from Nietzsche's. See Gregory Fried, "Back to the Cave: A Platonic Rejoinder to Heideggerian Postmodernism," in *Heidegger and the Greeks: Interpretive Essays* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 157, n. 4 and 5, hereafter referred to as "Back to the Cave." Much of what I argue in this section is also indebted to Peter Warnek's article "Saving the Last Word: Heidegger and the Concluding Myth of Plato's *Republic*," in *Philosophy Today* 46 (2002): 255-73. Both Fried's and Warnek's interpretations address Heidegger's handling of the distinction between Plato and inceptive thinking, but only Warnek deals directly with the contrast of Parmenides and Plato found in *Parmenides*. I shall refer to Warnek's text where helpful and in the places where I significantly diverge from it.

saying that any such interpretation does what Nietzsche is guilty of: unquestioningly reading all of Greek philosophy through a post-Platonic lens.

To be sure, Heidegger is well aware that his own interpretation of the Myth of Er ought to be treated as a hesitant, provisional claim. As I have already shown in chapter 1, when he discusses *Republic* throughout the 1930s and up until the period of the *Parmenides* course, it is usually in an effort to separate Plato from his predecessors as the founder of metaphysics. Such efforts thoroughly examine the text to show how crucial the “apparent look” [*Aussehen*]<sup>63</sup> of the *idea* is for metaphysics, in which truth is defined as correctly conforming the conceptions of the mind to objects.<sup>64</sup> In *Parmenides*, he recapitulates these arguments, but he does so in the context of designating Socrates’s recitation of the Myth of Er as the final instance of the Greek attempt to preserve an account of the mysterious, otherworldly encounter with *lēthē*. He is hesitant and cautious not only because this is a new path of examination for him, but also because he already thinks the philosophical tradition a poor guide to interpreting Plato on Plato’s terms.<sup>65</sup> However, Heidegger is not ready to abandon his provisional argument or its underlying assumptions,

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<sup>63</sup> *Parmenides*, 154.

<sup>64</sup> *Parmenides*, 171: “das Wesen der ἀλήθεια sich wandelt zur ὁμοίωσις, zur Angleichung und Richtigkeit des Vernehmens und Vorstellens und Darstellens.” For examples, see *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*, Gesamtausgabe 34, ed. Herman Mörchel (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1988), 7-19, 51-2, and 65-71; and “Vom Wesen der Wahrheit” and “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit,” in *Wegmarken*, Gesamtausgabe 9, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 73-97 and 109-44. See Warnek, 271, n. 2. Though Heidegger notes in “Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit” the ‘ambiguity’ in Plato’s conception of truth, he does not there pursue treating Plato in connection with his Greek predecessors as he does in *Parmenides*.

<sup>65</sup> *Parmenides*, 140. Note also that Heidegger’s claims are ‘provisional’ precisely because he claims that he cannot perform a thorough examination of the Myth of Er as he does with the cave allegory; unlike the cave allegory, which is a central topic in VWW, he takes up the Myth of Er only as a secondary topic. See also Claudia Baracchi, *Of Myth, Life, and War in Plato’s “Republic”* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 89-226, hereafter referred to by title and page number. It seems to me that Baracchi addresses Heidegger’s provisional claims and attempts her own thorough examination of the myth of Er as a response, as if Heidegger’s text here were a challenge to do so.

because such an interpretation is permitted by the anamnestic function of a written dialogue about the *politeia*; the dialogue itself is an interpretive recollection of an extended discussion about the essence of the order of the city, which of its own accord invites a repeated retelling and interpretation.<sup>66</sup>

This approach to the Myth of Er is thoroughly hermeneutical. Heidegger explains, “The whole of this myth is built upon, and is supported by, the entire dialogue on the πόλις.”<sup>67</sup> Since the dialogue is about the *polis*, any interpretation of the myth at the end of the dialogue ought to reveal how the story helps to explain the *polis*. For Heidegger, the basic connection between the *polis* and the concluding myth is clear from the outset: Socrates and his interlocutors are discussing the *topos* of *alētheia*, the place wherein the Greek lives and speaks, the ‘where’ of all disclosure and discovery. By discussing the essence of the *polis*, Plato must address the essence of *alētheia*, and thus also the hidden, *lēthē*.

For Heidegger, the *polis* is, through a small terminological slight-of-hand, the *polos*, the pole or the epicenter of the Greek encounter with anything whatsoever.<sup>68</sup> Correspondingly, the dialogue is “a recollection of the essential and not a plan for the factual.”<sup>69</sup> The city as discussed by the interlocutors is at every stage of the dialogue a ‘nowhere’, and their dialogue does not aim at procuring a real city like the utopia they discuss. Rather, Plato is concerned with what makes a

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<sup>66</sup> This is part of Warnek’s argument about Heidegger’s project. See Warnek, 262 and 272, n. 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 92; “Das Ganze dieses Mythos ist überbaut und unterlegt durch das Ganze des Gesprächs über die πόλις,” *Parmenides*, 136.

<sup>68</sup> *Parmenides*, 132, 141. Also, see Heller, 257-9. Heller argues that Heidegger’s focus on *polos* is a call to his students to become apolitical.

<sup>69</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 95; “eine Erinnerung ins Wesenhafte, aber nicht eine Planung ins Faktische,” *Parmenides*, 141.

city a city, insofar as it is the place where an ancient Greek might come to follow the dictum of the oracle and know himself.

Since the dialogue is about the place wherein a Greek collects [*Sammlung*] and safely keeps [*Verwahrung*] *alētheia*,<sup>70</sup> the interlocutors are not interested merely in the nature of the city, but also in the function of speaking and encountering the truth. Within the *Parmenides* course, Heidegger's only mention of the cave allegory from *Republic*, Book VII, concerns this point precisely: the cave allegory is properly a myth about the essence of disclosure. The most obvious feature of the story is that it takes place in a cave, a place of concealment out of which the philosopher must climb. The city is not properly understood without clarifying its function as the locus of the Greek life, the place where truth itself is at issue. Yet, even as the *polis* is the place of disclosure, *alētheia* is not always immediately attainable. The discussion of the 'city in speech' in *Republic* is about no concrete, earthly city because it does not have the component foibles and concealments of one. The concrete city is much more like the cave itself: the place where disclosure is possible, but hardly fought for and won. The city is at once where beings are ordered and yet remain reticent or withdrawn.<sup>71</sup>

The Myth of Er addresses this concealment directly. It is a myth about what is 'not here', that is, hidden, since no living person can experience and report about its topics, namely, death and the afterlife. Heidegger notes that Socrates recounts the myth carefully because what it explains resists ordinary explanation and analysis; once again, the speech of a myth is protective and guarded. Er's speech, like Socrates's recounting, reveals what is inexpressible in terms of

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<sup>70</sup> *Parmenides*, 142.

<sup>71</sup> *Parmenides*, 136-7.

deductive reasoning precisely because what it expresses is experientially odd and out of place.

Of interest to Heidegger is the passage in which Er says he is made to stay and watch others drink from the river: the field of forgetfulness [*lēthē*] within some unearthly place [*topon tina daimonion*].<sup>72</sup> Direct, clear speech cannot explain this location because it is a place out of sight of everyday life.

Heidegger contrasts this daimonic location with the day-to-day world by a precise use of the German word *Geheure* and its contrary, *Un-geheure*.<sup>73</sup> Er's story is a myth not only because it presents an event that is *un-geheuer*, but also because it speaks directly about the ineffability of the location in which the story takes place. The terms *Geheure* and *Un-geheure* are in contrast with one another, just as the ordinary is with the extraordinary, the common with the rare, and the explicable with the inexplicable. In usual German usage, *ungeheuer* is an adjective describing something 'monstrous' or 'terrible', but Heidegger quickly dismisses these definitions and explains that *un-geheuer* points to the otherworldly and inexplicable by virtue of being seemingly insignificant or simple. The English translation of *Parmenides* translates *un-geheuer* as 'uncanny', and so I use that definition here, so long as Heidegger's explanation of what that might mean is kept in mind.<sup>74</sup>

This "uncanny" place, Heidegger explains, is where being itself comes into clear view. Being comes into view for the Greek as the self-shown [*Sich-zeigen*], the god or goddess; to speak of the look or display [*thea*] of being for the Greek is to speak of the divine in general or

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<sup>72</sup> *Parmenides*, 146.

<sup>73</sup> *Parmenides*, 148-50. See also Heller, 251. Heller thinks this peculiar use of *Un-geheure* is a reference to Hölderlin's antihumanist sentiments.

<sup>74</sup> See *Parmenides* (English), 101. Note that my previous use of the term 'uncanny' relies on Heidegger's explanation here.

of a god [*theon*].<sup>75</sup> Heidegger's full claim following from these terminological explications runs as follows:

The word as the naming of Being, the *μῦθος*, names Being in its primordial looking-into and shining—names τὸ θεῖον, i.e., the gods. Since τὸ θεῖον and τὸ δαιμόνιον (the divine) are the uncanny that look into the unconcealed and present themselves in the ordinary, therefore *μῦθος* is the only appropriate mode of the relation to appearing Being, since the essence of *μῦθος* is determined, just as essentially as are *θεῖον* and *δαιμόνιον*, on the basis of disclosedness. It is therefore that the divine is the “mythical.” And it is therefore that the legend of the gods is “myth.” And it is therefore that man in the Greek experience, and only he, is in his essence and according to the essence of ἀλήθεια the god-sayer.<sup>76</sup>

Here Heidegger states plainly that Socrates's recounting of the myth confirms Heidegger's interpretation of the way *muthos* functions for the Greek, which I have described in the previous section. To speak of the divine or the uncanny requires *muthos*; it is the only appropriate way to name being because it defers to both the strangeness and the inexplicable simplicity of an encounter with the divine. The metaphorical or analogical speech of myth provides the thinker with a means of expressing the otherworldly in a concrete fashion. Myth is not a veiling of the encounter with something extra; it is not a dressing-up in the manner of *pseudos*, but a way of letting the hidden present itself as unhidden amongst the ordinary.

What is important for Heidegger is that the Myth of Er talks about the place, the *topos*, of myth directly. The story of Er's path through the afterlife identifies where he travels: the

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<sup>75</sup> *Parmenides*, 153.

<sup>76</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 112; Das Wort als Nennung des Seins, der *μῦθος*, nennt das Sein in seinem anfänglichen Hereinblicken und Scheinen—nennt τὸ θεῖον, d. h. die Götter. Weil τὸ θεῖον und τὸ δαιμόνιον (das Gotthafte) das in die Unverborgenheit Hereinblickende und in das Geheure sich dargebende Un-geheure ist, deshalb ist der *μῦθος*, dessen Wesen gleichwesentlich wie das *θεῖον* und *δαιμόνιον* von der Entbergung her bestimmt wird, die allein gemäße Weise des Bezugs zum erscheinenden Sein. Deshalb ist das Gotthafte als das Erscheinen und in seinem Erscheinen Vernommene das zu Sagende und Gesagte der Sage. Deshalb ist das Gotthafte das »Mythische«. Deshalb ist die Sage von den Göttern »Mythos«. Deshalb ist der griechisch erfahrene Mensch, aber auch nur er, in seinem Wesen und gemäß dem Wesen der ἀλήθεια der Gottsager,”*Parmenides*, 165-6.



unearthly or the divine place. At the height of the story, before returning to the land of the living, Er witnesses how reincarnated-souls-to-be must drink from the river passing through the field of *lēthē* before their own return to earthly life. After drinking a certain amount of the water, these souls can no longer recall all of their past life and their passage through the divine place, including their decision before the Muses. Er is preserved from drinking the water and so can recall the entirety of the place and what occurs there. After telling the story, Socrates says to Glaucon that they too might be saved by recalling the myth, itself kept safe by Er's original telling.<sup>77</sup> The image of the field of *lēthē* is important because it confirms Heidegger's claim that *lēthē* is the proper contrary and ground of *alētheia*. As an empty place, it is both empty and a locus nonetheless. Because Er is allowed to remember it, the empty ground is brought into the realm of the ordinary, that is, revealed [*Unverborgenheit*], by the story. The field, like the *polis*, grounds truth for the Greek, but unlike the city, it does not present the common and the reproducible. Er's field is a place contrary to *phusis*, the apparent and emergent, whereas it is in and through the *polis* that human beings must come to grips with *phusis*.<sup>78</sup> Thus Heidegger's reading of the myth at the end of *Republic* is that, though the city is the place where one can determine the truth about ordinary, daily things, the only way to fully come to grips with what makes a city a city is to address the uncanny ground that stands behind *alētheia* and its centrality to the *polis*.

As John Sallis has put it, "this *mythos* is in play throughout the dialogue, in virtually all that is said and done in the course of the dialogue. It will, then, have installed *lethe* [sic]

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<sup>77</sup> *Parmenides*, 176-7, 180-2. See also: *Republic*, 621a1-b8.

<sup>78</sup> *Parmenides*, 176.

everywhere, not only in the central images and figures of the dialogue, but from the very moment Socrates . . . says ‘I went down yesterday to Piraeus.’”<sup>79</sup> The essence of the city can be brought to light only by taking it out of hiding (through speech), because the ordinary, concrete city hides in plain view what is essential to it. The Myth of Er explicitly brings *lēthē* into view, and it does so by displaying the function of myth as preservative and protective of the uncanny. Here Heidegger connects the content of the concluding myth of *Republic* with his earlier explication of the form of myth in Pindar and Homer; the surest way to keep something safe and preserve it is not to keep it ready at hand, but to allow *lēthē* to function.<sup>80</sup> Myth functions by keeping the mystery of the divine intact while bringing it into view just enough that the listener may heed the portents of the story. Put another way, myth is anamnestic. For Heidegger, the anamnestic function of myth means not only the psychological function of remembering, but also “the incessant thinking of something, the pure saving into unconcealedness of what is thought.”<sup>81</sup> To persist in thinking is to bring the contents of thought into view and to keep them there, and myth works by keeping the mystery of the divine in view.

Plato, Heidegger says, could not invent such a story. Mythmaking happens only as a response to the disclosure of being itself. The essentially simple gives a glimpse of itself,<sup>82</sup> that

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<sup>79</sup> John Sallis, “Plato’s Other Beginning,” in *Heidegger and the Greeks*, ed. Hyland and Manoussakis, 189-90. Sallis’s argument in this article parallels the basic position that Peter Warnek takes, namely, that Heidegger seems ready to make the claim that the entirety of *Republic* is a myth, but doesn’t. However, as Sallis is primarily interested in Heidegger’s earlier confrontations with Plato in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, it is unfair to say that he misinterprets Heidegger’s view of myth and, consequently, of Plato, in *Parmenides*.

<sup>80</sup> *Parmenides*, 186-7 and 189. See also “Toward the Future of Truth,” 105-10. Richardson’s statements are similar to my own here; *lēthē* protects an original meaning or encounter over and against constant reinterpretation.

<sup>81</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 124; “das ständige Denken auf etwas, das reine Retten des Bedachten in die Unverborgenheit,” *Parmenides*, 184.

<sup>82</sup> Both for the interpreter of Heidegger as well as for Heidegger himself, even the discussion of myth tends to slip into metaphor. It seems hard to avoid. Note, though, that the distinction between mythic speech and the attempt to

is, it indicates a particular way of investigating and revealing for the speaker of myth to enlist as an aid.<sup>83</sup> It is as though the myth selects the speaker and not the other way around.<sup>84</sup> The speaker, like the one who hears the myth, is to respond to myth by hearkening to it. For the speaker, this hearkening may mean only recounting the story and keeping the mysterious safe by retelling stories about the divine.

Since, for the Greek, myth is not the speaker's invention but a way of preserving an encounter with the divine for the speaker and the listener so that they may hearken to it, Socrates's response to the myth is as important as its structure and contents. As Heidegger notes, Socrates responds to the myth by immediately commenting to Glaucon that they too might be saved [*retten*] if they were to be obedient [*gehorsam*] to it and thus pass through the field without drinking too much themselves.<sup>85</sup> Including this comment to Glaucon, the theme of saving or preserving appears on three levels in *Republic*, according to Heidegger: first, in the content of the myth, when Er is saved from drinking from the river though he witnesses those without *phronēsis* drinking too much; second, in the nature of myth, where saying it at all enacts its preservative function; and third, in Socrates's admonishment to the speaker and listener that they themselves can be saved or preserved. The anamnestic function of myth and the saving function of avoiding drinking too much are highlighted by Socrates and explained, however briefly.

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describe it is that any explication is analytic. For Heidegger, myth formally performs no analysis, though as I shall show in the next section, analysis may be presented in a myth's contents.

<sup>83</sup> *Parmenides*, 189.

<sup>84</sup> *Parmenides*, 8. This is why Heidegger says that the inceptive thinker is "in-cepted" by the beginning. This point is re-stated by David C. Jacobs in "The Ontological Education of Parmenides," in *The Presocratics after Heidegger*, ed. David C. Jacobs (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 198.

<sup>85</sup> *Parmenides*, 186-7. Heidegger translates *peithōmetha* as 'be obedient' rather than the more appropriate 'be persuaded by' at *Republic*, 621b8. Choosing this translation avoids associating myth with argument.

*Phronēsis*, Heidegger notes, is the activity of philosophy, if philosophy is understood to include all thinking that addresses being, not just metaphysical thought.<sup>86</sup> Given this understanding, for Heidegger, Socrates's explanation of the myth is that the way to save oneself is by continuing the philosophical enterprise while remembering the possibility of overstepping one's limits within it. Socrates's claim is, therefore, also about the importance of remembering the lessons of myth, not necessarily about speaking mythically. For Heidegger, this is what sets Plato apart from Parmenides and Homer: even when addressed by myth, Plato's Socrates responds with a hesitant knowledge claim about the essential function of myth. Plato's response to myth is analytic because it wishes to obtain certainty [*Sicherheit*] about the world within thinking, even if that means picking out the anamnestic function of myth that protects against such analysis. Plato's myth is a reminder of what *muthos* is just as much as it is an enactment of it.<sup>87</sup>

Plato, then, is ready to abandon myth, but he also depends upon it, since philosophy must remember the disposition of the reticent speech particular to myth even if it does not need to engage in this manner of speaking.<sup>88</sup> I understand this explication of the Myth of Er to be an attempt at separating Plato's philosophy from the inceptive thought of Parmenides, because, so far as Heidegger can tell from the fragments, Parmenides does not provide an explanation of the value of myth in his proem as Plato does at the conclusion of *Republic*. (On the other hand, myth is important for Plato insofar as remembering its function preserves the philosopher from

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<sup>86</sup> *Parmenides*, 178.

<sup>87</sup> *Parmenides*, 190. See also Warnek, 266-7. Warnek notes the brevity of Heidegger's discussion of the self-saving component of recapitulating the myth. My interpretation here focuses more on applying what Heidegger has said about myth earlier in order to understand this brief explanation.

<sup>88</sup> *Parmenides*, 145.

wandering astray, that is, from claiming to deductively know what he does not. Plato's *anamnēsis* is dependent upon retaining just that sense of preserving the hidden or the divine that is particular to *muthos*.) Still, it is notable that, even in explaining myth and contrasting the ways it is used by Parmenides and Plato, Heidegger himself does not escape the problem of using the definitional and deductive language of metaphysics to complete the analysis.<sup>89</sup> The philosopher after Plato is forced to use analytic reason in order to explain myth, hence Heidegger's claim that one ought to provisionally regard what he says about the Myth of Er as attempting to avoid the "un-Greek" interpretations of Plato that depend upon the metaphysical tradition.<sup>90</sup>

Peter Warnek has claimed that Heidegger, reticent as he is, does not chance even the interpretation of the structure of *Republic* that I present here, though much of my interpretation of Heidegger's approach to the Myth of Er is similar to Warnek's. His own reading is as rich and questioning as it is because of his confrontation with Heidegger.<sup>91</sup> That is to say, many elements of Warnek's examination of the text of *Republic* are already present in Heidegger's *Parmenides*.<sup>92</sup> I pick out Warnek's work because the question he wishes to answer is, I believe, crucial to understanding the development of Heidegger's interpretation of Plato and, as I will show in more detail in the next section, to understanding how this contrasts with the inceptive thinking of Parmenides. Warnek asks: "Why then does Heidegger not allow himself to undertake

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<sup>89</sup> Contrast with Heller, 259-60.

<sup>90</sup> *Parmenides*, 140. Note the consistency of this claim with the aim of his *formalen Anzeige* from the 1920s and early 1930s.

<sup>91</sup> See: Drew Hyland, "Caring for Myth: Heidegger, Plato and the Myth of Cura." In *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 90-102; Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger's Ways*, trans. John W. Stanley, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994) 144. Hyland's opinion, in contrast to Gadamer's view of Heidegger's early interpretations of Plato (prior to *SZ*), supports my contention that Heidegger interprets Plato as not merely doctrinal in *Parmenides*.

<sup>92</sup> See Warnek, 261-3 and 267. Warnek's own interpretation seems to work out in greater detail what I believe can be pieced together from Heidegger's *Parmenides*.

a reading of Plato that would open up the way in which the text is a *μῦθος* from beginning to end, which on Heidegger's own terms would have to be read and thought as an original saying of *lēthē[?]*"<sup>93</sup> The criticism that follows from this question is that Heidegger never succeeds at escaping the Platonist interpretation of Plato that he finds in Nietzsche and vigorously opposes in his own lecture course.

Warnek's account is similar to that of Gregory Fried, who has argued that Heidegger's interpretations of Plato through the 1930s and the war period present the dialogues as "echonic" and not "zetetic"—that is, that Plato's dialogues are, in the main, doctrinal and not exploratory<sup>94</sup>—and in both of these accounts, Heidegger seems guilty of being unable to interpret the history of philosophy without the very prejudices of the metaphysical tradition he wishes to critique. Both Warnek's question and Fried's analysis are quite helpful because they suggest that Heidegger's confrontation with systematic metaphysics is a basis for his interest in Greek inceptive thinking, and therefore in *muthos*, which inherently speaks without analyzing its own manner of speaking. In the next section, therefore, I will use these positions as a springboard for completing the interpretation that I suggested at the beginning of the chapter, namely, that Heidegger's heedful thinking about Parmenides's *muthos* provides a means of resituating the concept of truth. Ultimately, I wish to show that the claims of the Parmenides lecture course are helpful when interpreting the development of Heidegger's thought and his own self-understanding, a subject which will be addressed in the concluding chapter.

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<sup>93</sup> Warnek, 270.

<sup>94</sup> "Back to the Cave," 157 and 161-8.

*Section 11: Critical analysis of Heidegger's approach to inceptive thinking and muthos*

Peter Warnek's question of why Heidegger does not read the entirety of Plato's *Republic* as a *muthos* is well-founded. His argument begins by noting that the interpretation of *muthos* in the lecture course is, in 1942, new for Heidegger. From the time of *Plato's Sophist* to his lectures on Schelling's "Freedom" essay in 1936, Heidegger's understanding of the relationship between philosophical thought and myth remains more or less traditional in asserting that myth and reason are not yet dissociated for Parmenides, who is, therefore, not to be taken as a philosopher or thinker though Plato and Aristotle certainly are.<sup>95</sup> By contrast and as I have already shown in the forgoing sections of this chapter, *Parmenides* emphasizes the importance of *muthos* as *logos* and, in so doing, seemingly provides Heidegger with the opportunity to rescue the author of *Republic* from the logical prejudice of metaphysics. Warnek's criticism is that Heidegger does not properly exploit this opportunity. He bases this on the fact that the interpretation of the Myth of Er in *Parmenides* never explicitly argues that one ought to heed Socrates's injunctions about repetition and preservation by repeatedly returning to *Republic* itself as the kind of story that speaks about truth in the manner of a *muthos*.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Warnek, 259-60. See also Günther Neumann, *Der Anfang der abendländischen Philosophie. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu den Parmenides-Auslegungen von Emil Angehrn, Günter Dux, Klaus Held und dem frühen Martin Heidegger* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 121-203. Neumann provides an excellent synopsis of Heidegger's earlier uses of Parmenides's thought. In response to Karl Reinhardt's 1916 attempt to reconcile the 'way of Doxa' with the 'way of truth', Neumann emphasizes that Heidegger's interpretation in *SZ* of the 'way of Doxa' is indicative of inauthenticity. Here, as well as in the 1922 Aristotle lectures, Heidegger uses Parmenides's poem as a means of explicating the 'as' structure of apophantic logic. Taking into account both Warnek's brief comments and Neumann's more extensive ones, it is clear that Heidegger's early concern with explaining the structure of formal indication, i.e., the structure of *Dasein*'s manner of existence as regards truth, is not yet interested in expressing the 'hiddenness' and 'unhiddenness' of being itself. For a similar argument which considers Heidegger's "Platonic" approach to *doxa* see: Peter L. Oesterreich, "Kryptoplatonismus : Heideggers eigenwillige Adaption der Doxa." In *Heidegger über Rhetorik*, edited by Josef Kopperschmidt, (München : Wilhelm Fink, 2009), 179-95.

<sup>96</sup> Warnek, 256.

Gregory Fried's opinion is similar to Warnek's, as he argues that neither in the text of *Parmenides* nor in later writings does Heidegger ever overcome his tendency to interpret Plato as an echonic, doctrinal philosopher. Fried's argument functions by providing a counter-interpretation of Plato as a zetetic, that is, a curious thinker, willing to allow for variation and a lack of answers within a system. In this reading, Plato uses both echonic and zetetic frameworks "simultaneously, because the 'zetetic' journey (621d) needs, as its fuel, the echonic preconstructions of the truth about the whole. But Plato presents these preconstruction [*sic*] as myths (the Er story) or as unrealized ideals (Kallipolis and the philosopher-rulers)—and what is an unrealized ideal but a myth?"<sup>97</sup> Here, Plato is a philosopher because the love of wisdom always implies an incomplete search. It is a search that requires "intimations," or passing glimpses, of a complete vision of what is in order to bear any intellectual fruit.<sup>98</sup>

For both Fried and Warnek, Heidegger misses out on rethinking Plato—or at least *Republic*—against Platonism because he does not rightly appropriate Plato's own response to *muthos* as a concrete, impermanent glimpse of truth. For Warnek, this means that Heidegger squanders the chance to read Plato's dialogues as examples of myth, and hence to accept *Republic* as a case of inceptive thinking. Fried's response is to say that Heidegger's concentration on Plato's doctrine of truth misses Plato's method, which by its very nature remains reticent about doctrinal claims. Here, the reticent mood that Heidegger prizes in myth is

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<sup>97</sup> "Back to the Cave," 168.

<sup>98</sup> "Back to the Cave," 168. "Intimations" is Fried's term. It seems to correspond roughly with Heidegger's own use of the word '*Blick*.' Both mean 'a brief, passing glimpse or peek'.



recapitulated under an exploratory method that is “an outrageously everyday dance between myth and reason.”<sup>99</sup>

I cannot help but agree with both Fried and Warnek that Heidegger is committed to putting Plato on the path to Platonism. That is, his interpretation of Plato lends itself to viewing Plato as a doctrinal thinker. Heidegger’s Plato is neither a myth-teller, in the sense of an inceptive thinker, nor is he zetetic. However, this is different from saying that Plato, therefore, must be thoroughly doctrinarian, for Heidegger. I take Heidegger’s interpretation to be that Plato has a doctrine in mind, i.e. the divine ideas. However, for Heidegger, that particular doctrine is not as fully articulated as it is in Platonism; Plato uses Socrates’ zetetic explorations in order to propose the divine ideas, though he is himself not sure how to account for that doctrine from start to finish. As I have shown in the preceding section, for Heidegger, the approach to the Myth of Er taken by Socrates shows this preparation for a doctrinal philosophy. Retelling a myth enacts a method of analysis of the structural function of all mythmaking. The reticence in the Platonic dialogue is, according to Heidegger, not of an originaive kind because it makes a knowledge claim about what it reports in the act of giving the report. In *Republic*, the very intimations contained in myth give rise to an assertion about myth. Thus Plato, wittingly or unwittingly, inaugurates the path of metaphysics and its corresponding logical chains of reasoning.

However, alongside my general agreement with Warnek and Fried is a conviction that they make some important mistakes in their critiques, mistakes that are helpful in clarifying Heidegger’s claims about *muthos*. For example, if one accepts my foregoing explication of Heidegger’s understanding of the structure of mythic speech, it seems that Warnek is in search of

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<sup>99</sup> “Back to the Cave,” 168.

a Heideggerian way of interpreting Platonic dialogue that Heidegger has already ruled out. For Heidegger, even though *Republic* acts as a tale—one that may be completely fictional, to boot—it is not the same kind of thing as myth, because it functions by assessing the value of such intimations about the divine. The very structure of the dialogue points toward truth claims about one thing or another; neither the narrator of a dialogue nor its reader is like the narrator or the listener of a myth. The narrator of a myth, such as Heidegger's Parmenides, does not instruct the listener to decide what to do after hearing the myth, but rather requests that one heed or hearken to its speech. To analyze myth is unmythical by its very nature. The reader of the dialogue, on the other hand, is always in the position of assessing the claims of the interlocutors and, by extension, the claims of the narrator or author.

Unlike the dialogue, *muthos* for Heidegger constrains the narrator from arguing with the contents of the story. If the function of *muthos* is to bring the hidden into view by speaking of the gods and what they reveal, then the proem of Parmenides's poem prevents Parmenides's narration from encroaching upon the speech of the goddess that it contains. Any claims about the essence of *alētheia* and the contrasting path of *doxa* are in the mouth of the goddess.<sup>100</sup> The analysis from the goddess is mysterious to the speaker, Parmenides, a mortal who ordinarily strains to comprehend the ordering of things merely by the way emergent nature, *phusis*, appears. However—to translate from Heraclitus's fragment B123, which Heidegger frequently uses when discussing *phusis*—"nature loves to hide."<sup>101</sup> Just as the goddess is hidden and then brought into

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<sup>100</sup> See Held, 569-71; Neumann, 115-20; and also Warnek, 267.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, VWW, 14; Heidegger, "Alētheia" in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, vol. 7, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 262; "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit," in Wm, 129; "Vom Wesen und Begriff der *physis*. Aristoteles, Physik B,1," in Wm, 370; *GM*, 42; *EM*, 87.

view by the myth, so is her speech about truth. What is most hidden [*lēthē*] from ordinary human beings is *alētheia* itself. The insight into the divine is something that no deductive search can yield, hence Heidegger's comment that no myth is ever found by seeking it out.<sup>102</sup>

Plato's dialogues contain myths because they are caught up in the deductive thought that occurs as a result of a myth already having been told. Analytic interpretation is something that myths just don't do. For Heidegger, this fact does not separate *muthos* from *logos*, but it places it as a specific kind of *logos* wherein "the *μῦθος* does not tear away from concealment something unconcealed but speaks out of that region from which springs forth the original essential unity of the two, where the beginning is."<sup>103</sup> *Muthos* lays the mysteries of the divine open for consideration. One is called upon not to argue with the goddess, but to allow what she says to stand and preliminarily accept that her speech is true, though why this is so is hidden. Myths preserve, for Heidegger, the hendiadys of the hidden with the unhidden. The kind of "plucking" away [*entreißt*] from the hidden that *muthos* doesn't do is the job of deductive thinking. The *anfängliche Denker* is, therefore, the thinker who "thinks the beginning" by expressing intimations of the fundamental, and thus refrains from argument about what ought to be drawn from this view.

Though it is the case that myth subsequently requires deductive thought in order for someone to gain thorough understanding,<sup>104</sup> the mysteriousness of the encounter in mythic speech bears repeated review and reconsideration. As Socrates tells Glaucon at the conclusion of

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<sup>102</sup> See n.84 of this chapter.

<sup>103</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 125; "der *μῦθος* nicht etwas Unverborgenes der Verborgenheit entreißt, sondern aus dem Bereich sagt, in dem die ursprüngliche Wesenseinheit beider entspringt, wo das Anfängliche ist," *Parmenides*, 186.

<sup>104</sup> See *SZ*, 149. Thanks are due to Therese Cory for talking through this distinction with me.

the Myth of Er, the recollection of myth is the path to saving oneself. This recognition of myth's function repudiates the view of myth provided in *Republic*, Book II: *muthos* is no *gennāion pseudos*, or noble lie.<sup>105</sup> *Muthos* is, rather, a sufficient condition for investigative inquiry.<sup>106</sup> Heidegger designates this portion of *Republic* as the Greeks' last word on *lēthē* because it identifies the need for recalling *muthos* and being obedient to it, even though it does not put the thinker in the position of reproducing the truth of the intimation via argument.<sup>107</sup> Argument, and thus metaphysical thought, follows upon it.<sup>108</sup> Heidegger's interpretation of *Republic* sees that Plato "installs *lēthē* everywhere,"<sup>109</sup> as Sallis has put it, not because the entire dialogue is a *muthos*, but because one must reinterpret the dialogue on the basis of Socrates's final words to Glaucon. The Myth of Er functions as an intimation about the hidden truth regarding justice, an intimation that no disputation in the dialogue can reach. Plato's thought is pivotal, according to Heidegger, because it acknowledges the function of myth as a condition for argument and then hijacks it as an argumentative means in the same breath.<sup>110</sup>

While there is clearly merit to Warnek's criticism that Heidegger never quite rehabilitates Plato, he mistakes Heidegger's conception of *muthos* for a more customary one, that is, the convenient story, perhaps even the *gennāion pseudos*. Warnek takes Heidegger's assertion that *muthos* does "say the same" as *logos* to be a way of obliterating the distinction between mythical

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<sup>105</sup> See Chapter 4, n.53.

<sup>106</sup> This is Warnek's very point in his own interpretation of the Myth of Er. See Warnek, 265. This opinion about the end of *Republic* is also expressed in Barrachi's *Of Myth, Life, and War in Plato's Republic*, 138-9; and Eva Brann, *The Muse of the Republic: Essays on Socrates' Conversations and Plato's Writings* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2004), 272.

<sup>107</sup> See n. 80 of this chapter.

<sup>108</sup> See n. 82 and n. 83 of this chapter.

<sup>109</sup> See n. 79 of this chapter.

<sup>110</sup> See Brann, 154-5. Brann presents the function of the myth of Er as an explanation that is less than argument, but still persuasive.

speech and argument. But this is not Heidegger's claim, nor is it verified by the text of *Republic*. Heidegger's aim is to uncover an expanded sense of the Greek concept of *logos* that includes a kind of speech beyond argument, not to blur the distinction between logical and mythical speech as they stand after the onset of metaphysics. For Heidegger, Plato puts the function of dialogue at odds with telling a myth. The Myth of Er is an occasion to explicate something more apparent than a mythical *topos*: the essence of the city and the soul.<sup>111</sup> It is the concluding remark within the argument of the dialogue, but of itself it is no argument at all. Warnek's claim is that Heidegger's interpretation of the Greeks would be a better story if only he took Plato to be as reticent to speak knowingly about being as he does Parmenides.

Put into Fried's terminology, Warnek rightly sees that in Heidegger's view, just as Parmenides's poem is an echonic intimation of the divine, so too Plato's dialogues are echonic presentations of Socrates's zetetic method of inquiry. What Warnek misses is that Plato's text cannot help being echonic on Heidegger's terms, because it seeks to achieve some level of certainty about everyday events. The very aim of a Platonic text, for Heidegger, is always a knowledge claim, not the expression of an original, mysterious opening-up of the possibility of making that claim. The indefinite dyad<sup>112</sup> of the unity of being with the multiplicity of the path of *doxa* in Parmenides's poem becomes a point to be clarified by argument, something that can be intellectually grasped as the 'problem of the one and the many'. This is in direct contrast with Heidegger's assessment that *muthos* preserves the mystery in its mysteriousness without

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<sup>111</sup> *Parmenides*, 189-90.

<sup>112</sup> Brann, 177, 197-99, n.28 and n.35. The terminology, as Brann points out on these pages, is Aristotle's. For an example in context, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. W. D. Ross (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 986b1-989b19.

problematizing its contents.<sup>113</sup> On these grounds, then, on his own terms, Heidegger himself remains Platonic and doctrinal in *Parmenides*, because he remains the interpreter of the myth of *alētheia*. The heedful thinker is not the inceptive thinker, because the act of heeding already has the possibility of other interpretations in mind.

Fried's assessment that Heidegger overlooks or pushes aside a zetetic interpretation of Plato can now be seen in proper focus. For Fried, Heidegger's thoughtful heeding dismantles the artifices of a hyper-doctrinal Platonism only to supplant them with his own moderately echonic reading. In Heidegger's *Parmenides*, one can pick out where the zetetic seeking of Socrates is always in service of the *idea*. To speak truly is to perform an *homoiōsis*, the matching of a perception with an object, to recollect what is already presently given.<sup>114</sup> This interpretation of Plato, according to Fried, is part of Heidegger's heedful thinking, wherein "Construction might follow deconstruction, but because Heidegger did not believe in the notion of a final vision of Being, there could be no standard for what new construction would be best."<sup>115</sup> The essence of truth for Heidegger turns out to be at odds with a zetetic Plato, because "Plato's truth as genuine transcendence is falling away from the conflictual heart of truth as unconcealment."<sup>116</sup> And yet, almost in the same breath, Fried, like Warnek, commits to the interpretation of *muthos* as the effective story: any "unrealized ideal" is a myth.<sup>117</sup>

In pointing out Heidegger's apparent inability to read Plato against the Platonists, Fried overlooks one of its root causes. Heidegger's conception of *muthos* is, as I have shown, an

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<sup>113</sup> See n. 56 of this chapter.

<sup>114</sup> *Parmenides*, 171 and 185.

<sup>115</sup> "Back to the Cave," 166.

<sup>116</sup> "Back to the Cave," 170.

<sup>117</sup> "Back to the Cave," 168.

attempt to both clarify the “conflictual heart of truth” and to ground it. *Muthos*, for Heidegger, is a specialized *logos* that does not oppose deductive assertion, but grounds it. In contrast, Fried’s understanding of mythic intimations is that they arise out of or for rational argument and dispute, not being separable from or antecedent to them.<sup>118</sup> Fried’s argument thus dismisses the claim that *muthos* is *logos* without even addressing the claim directly. The strength of Fried’s critique is therefore somewhat undermined by the fact that it omits Heidegger’s notion of *muthos* from a discussion in which myth is central to critiquing Heidegger’s philosophizing.

However, this is not to say that a more complete review of how the interpretation of *muthos* informs the development of Heidegger’s thought will find his concept of truth, and its descent from the Greeks, to be any less problematic. In the next chapter, I will show that Heidegger’s interpretation of *muthos* provides good evidence for claiming that much of what is problematic in his thought from this period stems from his inability to engage his philosophy in a practical discussion beyond defending the Greek sense of *logos* he proposes. This critique will not only present the problems in the development of Heidegger’s thought at the time of World War II, but also argue against the general criticism—differently espoused in recent years by John Caputo and Charles Bambach—that Heidegger’s own reading of the Greeks is a kind of myth.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> “Back to the Cave,” 171.

<sup>119</sup> See Heller, 254. Heller’s critique, though in opposition to Bambach and Caputo regarding Heidegger’s political involvements, also calls Heidegger’s interpretation of the Greeks a *muthos*, an example of ‘originary thinking’. For Bambach, as I will show, it is just this move to mythical, originary thinking that is objectionable.

## Chapter 4

### *Section 12. Heidegger's project in light of "Parmenides"*

From *SZ* to *Parmenides* and for many years after, Heidegger's philosophical project focuses upon unearthing, delimiting, and undermining the logical prejudice. The proponents of the prejudice with whom Heidegger is most concerned mid-war are Nietzsche and Plato. As I show in the first chapter, Nietzsche and Plato bookend the historical possibilities of the metaphysics of presence. It makes not a scrap of difference whether truth can be identified as an eternally present universal or as an eternally recurrent subjective assertion. Plato, Nietzsche and everyone in between and since have limited reason by affirming that truth is the adequation of the mind to an object. Philosophy in the west has decided that reason is essentially the logical argument in its many forms.

Heidegger's inceptive thinkers—Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Parmenides—are not bound by this limitation on reason. Neither do they submit to any doctrinal position about ideas, nor do they analyze the functions of speech through performing every kind of it. That is to say, they do not concern themselves with revealing how speech works in a self-reflective way. As I have shown in chapter 2, Heidegger takes inceptive thinking as it appears in their extant fragments to be a revelatory act, one that is pious toward what is mysterious. Inceptive thinkers lay bare the mysteriousness of being and truth without analyzing or attempting to overcome any vagueness or self-contradiction in the act of speaking. Their modes of speech, the poetic or epigrammatic, are reticent modes. Inceptive thinkers decide to remain non-analytical or non-theory-driven in the face of what is most mysterious. Their approach is not the logical prejudice;



it is a stance of piety or awe. Plato claims in *Theaetetus* that all philosophy begins with wonder,<sup>1</sup> and Heidegger sees the inceptive philosopher as one whose speech aims to reveal the possibility of *remaining* in a state of wonder.

As I have shown in chapter 3, the critical claim of *Parmenides* is that, to Heidegger, *muthos* is a kind of *logos*. Myth is not irrational or prerational or a-rational, but wholly functional as the kind of reasonable speaking that is performed in the act of piously remaining in awe of the mysterious. Heidegger makes this claim in order to call or recall the listener (or reader) to undergo that same experience along with the speaker, inasmuch as this is possible. Claiming *muthos* as a kind of *logos* is different from the metaphysician's viewpoint, which Heidegger sees as derogatory toward myth. Heidegger's metaphysician understands myth as the noble lie, the convenient story, the music to quell the aberrant desires of human irrationality by instilling new, 'better' desires.

Heidegger's judgments in *Parmenides* about the biases of the metaphysician, coupled with his ongoing self-critical view regarding the essence of truth, are the premises from which his explanation of—and attempts at—inceptive thinking grow. While *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* attempt to enact inceptive thinking, *Parmenides* serves as a much more standard argument—a provisional one—about myth as a mode of inceptive thinking. Heidegger knowingly remains within the scope of the logical argument in his lecture course, and he even addresses this fact in the first few sections of it, as I note in chapter 3, section 7.

In this chapter, I wish to address the problems and concerns that arise out of these conclusions I have drawn about the progression of Heidegger's philosophy. My first concern is

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<sup>1</sup> *Theaetetus*, 155d.

to determine whether Heidegger is guilty of the same mistake that he accuses the superficial metaphysician of making, namely, of understanding myth as the likely story and thus treating it as an irrational mode of speech, a kind of cheat or philosophical “work around.” This issue is important for two reasons. The first reason is that it seems highly likely that Heidegger could fall into this “singular error,” just as any metaphysician can, simply due to his means of arguing. The second reason is that there are valuable and serious criticisms of Heidegger that accuse him of mythmaking about the history of philosophy, particularly in drawing so many close ties between ancient Greek and modern Germanic thought. I wish to examine two works in particular that make such accusations. The first, John Caputo’s *Demythologizing Heidegger*, appears within a few years of the official publication of *Parmenides* in 1988. It is therefore relevant as one of the first lengthy works that critiques Heidegger’s history of philosophy as ‘mythmaking’ and could take into account the content of *Parmenides*. The second, Charles Bambach’s *Heidegger’s Roots*, reflects a more contemporary approach to reading Heidegger in light of his involvement with Nazi politics.

On the one hand, as Caputo argues in *Demythologizing Heidegger*, the myth of this philosophical and cultural affinity between ancient Greeks and modern Germans is what allows Heidegger to enter into such close agreement with the National Socialist Party in the early 1930s. According to Caputo, Heidegger’s story of philosophy can and must be revised to be much more inclusive; it must not assert a mono-cultural basis for the development of human reason and the study of truth. On the other hand, as Bambach argues in *Heidegger’s Roots*, Heidegger is guilty of promoting certain likely stories, particularly the notion of autochthony, as he works through

and out of his engagement with Nazi politics. For Bambach, as Heidegger's interpretation of autochthony changes, so changes the mood of his philosophy, so that it is at first politically dangerous and then, essentially, dangerous for politics and ethics altogether.

My second concern in this chapter is to pinpoint the flaws in Heidegger's conception of inceptive thinking in order to reveal the inherent blindness in his philosophical self-understanding. This is because if Heidegger is indeed guilty of mythmaking in any way, including in the ways proposed by Bambach and Caputo, then the foundation and the fruits of his philosophical development are all questionable. On the other hand, if he is not guilty of mythmaking, then it is worth looking into other valid ways of critiquing Heidegger's philosophy. I wish to show that, while Heidegger is not guilty of mythmaking in the conventional sense, his understanding of inceptive thinking in general and myth in particular are ultimately dangerous to the very act of philosophizing. While I strongly disagree with Caputo's conclusions regarding Heidegger's mythmaking and how to correct it, I affirm Caputo's underlying unease: Heidegger's project lends itself to intellectual myopia, leading the thinker away from philosophically engaging with the everyday world. Similarly, while I reject Bambach's view that Heidegger is guilty of wielding myths, I agree with much of what he says regarding Heidegger's overemphasis of "rootedness," or autochthony. This overemphasis is part and parcel of the very identity of the inceptive thinker as one who remains piously in awe of the mysterious. Part of the evidence for this is the stilted, forbearing speech in his attempts at a "new inception" in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*. Additionally, the definition of *muthos* in *Parmenides* indicates a prejudice about Greek thinking that removes the Presocratic thinker from the *agora* of political and ethical

debate. That is, inceptive thinkers do not make metaphysical judgments. Of their own accord they pass no ethical judgments, nor do they enter political debate. By being so overtly rooted in the act of piety, the inceptive thinker acts the part of a sibyl or an oracle. His speech is thus a presentation of divine speech, which is, as a consequence, left open to interpretation by others—and it is in this attempt at interpretation that truth as “correctness” would become an issue.

What I shall claim in comparing Heidegger’s explanation of *muthos* in *Parmenides* with Bambach’s and Caputo’s different accusations of his ‘mythmaking’ or ‘mythologizing’ is that Heidegger’s account is essentially myopic and lacks self-awareness. I do not mean that Heidegger does not know what he is doing, nor do I mean that his thought slips into any sort of ideology, say in the Hegelian or Marxist fashion. Rather, his self-blindness comes in the form of refusal. In attempting to make a formally indicative account of *muthos* and other forms of inceptive, poetic speech on the one hand and calling forth a “new inception” on the other, Heidegger consciously withdraws from engaging with the political, ethical, and metaphysical arguments during the lead-up to World War II and through at least 1943. What Heidegger does not seem to grasp is that this refusal does not fulfill its promise; it is not disruptive of nor does it offer a sure-footed replacement for the practical and moral thinking that follows from metaphysics.

This is not to say that Heidegger’s thought does not offer a positive account. The path of his thought from the “Rektorsrede” through the *Parmenides* lectures is one of consistent revision that, taken together over time, reveals that the essence of pious, poetic speech is within the bounds of *logos*. However, once his thought lights upon the possibility of the new inception,

it ceases to offer a way back out of the clearing and into the thicket where the test of human reasoning actually takes place. That is, the promise of hearing and speaking the “truth of being” via inceptive thought, as Heidegger would like, does not bring forth a corresponding application, at least not during the period in which Heidegger adopts the terminology of “*Anfang*,” that is, from 1935 to 1943. This is evident insofar as Heidegger tries to position his thought as calling for a new inception. His focus on Plato as the pivotal thinker, the one who ushers in the metaphysics of presence, is a model for his own attempt at intentionally becoming the pivotal thinker or herald of a new inception.

The problem with this attempt as I see it is that the futural language of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung* confuses the new inception with responding practically to present political concerns, and this confusion is similarly evident in *Parmenides*. Though he interprets the Myth of Er as a warning for ethical and political behavior, Heidegger’s account in the concluding lectures fails to acknowledge the real need to heed the myth in a practical way. Socrates indicates that his interlocutors ought to respond practically to the myth—that is, they ought to “do something about” what they have learned—but for Heidegger, to heed the myth is to recognize the possibility of inceptive thinking, that is, of remaining by the river *Lēthē*—despite the fact that Er does not do this himself. For Heidegger, the lesson is to remember the forgetfulness inherent in metaphysics. The goal of *Parmenides*’s poem, according to this interpretation, is to promote the recollection of what is otherwise forgotten in making judgments about the one and the many in metaphysics. The inceptive thinker refrains from judging unity in opposition to multiplicity and piously acknowledges the mysteriousness of their dyadic relationship.

But to assert any of this is to ignore the basic facts of how human beings learn from one another and even how they live in community with one another. Parmenides's poem also requires its readers to discuss it and disagree about it in order for its meaning to become clear. Though Heidegger's simultaneous call for and attempt at enacting inceptive thinking is a worthwhile reconsideration of the form and content of a myth, it also undermines the value of mythmaking by cutting it off from its effects, namely, communal reflection, argumentation and subsequent action that knowingly takes a specific moral course contrary to other possibilities. Heidegger's means of achieving a new inception is dangerous because it is too reticent. It desires the safety of thinking without a political or public consequence. The practice of politics is understood as a kind of propaganda on behalf of the metaphysics of presence and its logical prejudice. But this ignores the fact that such reticence is an explicit rejection of addressing practical politics while one thinks about being. If his thinking operates this way, then Heidegger's attempts at inceptive thought are, in disposition, analogous to the one proposed by Descartes in Part III of the *Discourse on Method*, wherein all rules of conduct are regarded as provisional. While it is true that Heidegger announces that his description of the Myth of Er is provisional, the urgency of *Parmenides*, *Beiträge*, and *Besinnung* suggests Heidegger's inability to see the attempt at inceptive thinking as entering into a disposition toward contemporary politics and ethical questions that regards them as provisional. Heidegger's arguments about myth and truth are, therefore, incomplete because either he lacks an awareness of how his attempt at a new inception affects his own interaction with the workaday world or he intentionally sets a critical or immediately responsive account of the current political state of

affairs aside as Descartes does. Because his arguments about myth are unready for the very thing they seek, i.e., reasonable speech about the mysteries of being and becoming, the one and the many, and the uncertainty of dyadic opposition, they vacate claims upon practical meaning to any and every subsequent interpretation.

*Section 13. The critique of Heidegger as mythmaker or myth propagator*

As I have stated, the first concern of this concluding chapter is to discern whether Heidegger is guilty of slipping into what he calls the “singular error” of the metaphysician, who too narrowly defines reason and misinterprets the true essence of myth in order to exclude it from purely rational speech and consider it a lesser means of communication. The evidence for Heidegger’s guilt in this respect would be either that he uses carefully chosen myths as metaphors—traditional legends in place of logical argument—or that he manufactures likely stories specifically as a means of bypassing the rigor of logical argumentation. Because the logical prejudice is a prejudice by virtue of its blindness to its own doctrine that myth is not rigorous and rational, Heidegger would therefore be guilty of the prejudice in the process of trying to show how one might avoid it and still make sense.

One of the critical premises of John Caputo’s *Demythologizing Heidegger* is that Heidegger is indeed a mythmaker insofar as he manufactures an account of the history of philosophy wherein the German people are the rightful heirs to an all-too-narrowly defined identity of the West handed down from the ancient Greeks. Similarly, in *Heidegger’s Roots*, Charles Bambach judges that Heidegger’s investigation of and attachment to the idea of

autochthony, or *Heimat*, provides him with a likely story in a time of need, a myth of a homeland. This is used, by turns, as a means of connecting his philosophizing with National Socialist politics in 1933 and as a means of claiming an apolitical ground in the years subsequent to World War II. As I shall show, these premises are a boon for the reader of Heidegger scholarship insofar as they are a terminological confusion of what is at issue: the definition of *muthos*. Unpacking that confusion will help clarify the trajectory of Heidegger's thought.

By claiming that Heidegger "mythologizes the Greeks," John Caputo means that Heidegger spins a yarn or tells a legend about Greek philosophy in order to advance his, that is, Heidegger's, own aims. This much, I think, is clear from the very beginning:

I have been troubled, on purely internal, textual, and philosophical grounds, by the exaggerated and, as I say here "mythic" significance that Heidegger attaches to the early Greeks, by what is called in the present study the "mythologizing" tendencies in Heidegger's thought. By this I mean the tendency of Heidegger to construct a fantastic portrait of the Greek sources of Western thought and culture—in the most classically German manner—and to represent these Greek sources as a single, surpassing, great "Origin" (*Ursprung*), a primordial incipience or "beginning" (*Anfang*) of the West.<sup>2</sup>

For Caputo, Heidegger's conception of the Greeks is fantastical. And because of this, the Greeks are part of a well-crafted story, a myth. Since Heidegger's attempt to undercut the logical prejudice involves recasting the *Seinsfrage* through this myth, he is also guilty of producing a "highly dangerous metanarrative, a sweeping myth about Being's fabulous movements through Western History." Caputo further claims that this metanarrative "needs to be deconstructed down into a more radically pluralistic, disseminative notion of 'events,' or of the 'happening' of Being

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<sup>2</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 1.



and truth, of the sort one finds in post-Heideggerian thinkers like Lyotard and Derrida.”<sup>3</sup>

Heidegger is therefore guilty of being a mythmaker on two related counts: his ancient Greeks are imaginary versions of their historical counterparts, and these imaginary Greeks serve as a basis for espousing an ahistorical, incipient access to being itself. The evidence of this access is obtained by telling a likely story of forgetting that access throughout the history of philosophy since the Presocratic, inceptive thinkers. Caputo’s response to this kind of mythmaking is not to reject the value of the storytelling that he claims is central to—perhaps even synonymous with—Heidegger’s philosophizing, but to say that Heidegger’s chosen brand of myth is insufficient because it is culturally myopic. In other words, Heidegger’s story is not on the wrong path only because it is a likely story (in fact, Caputo, for his own purposes, defends the practice of mythmaking-as-philosophizing); Heidegger is also on the wrong path because of his Germanic xenophobia.

Caputo’s ‘demythologizing’ Heidegger is, it seems, a misnomer. His objective is to make a counter-mythology, not to dismantle what he claims is Heidegger’s method. I have already stated that Caputo seems to understand mythmaking in a stereotypical way, that is, as a form of tale-telling, yarn-spinning, or fairytale-making for the purpose of drawing forth analogies to help people understand the moral, spiritual, and practical exigencies of human life. Besides the reference to Lyotard and Derrida cited above, there is evidence in *Demythologizing Heidegger* of an even broader interpretation of myth. Caputo says there is no question of ending mythmaking in philosophy, “which is no more possible than getting beyond or laying aside metaphysics, but rather of inventing new and more salutary myths, or of recovering other and older myths, myths

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<sup>3</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 2.

counter to the destructive myths of violence, domination, patriarchy and hierarchy.”<sup>4</sup> So, even if the book, *Demythologizing Heidegger*, is not about Heidegger’s politics, but the content of his philosophizing, “demythologizing Heidegger is also an operation of denazification and of putting Heidegger’s thought in service of other, more honorable ends.”<sup>5</sup> In short, Caputo does not wish to whitewash Heidegger’s thought; he wishes to take apart the procedure of mythologizing in order to insert new content and reassemble it in a more societally inclusive way.

For Caputo, what links the myth of Greek inceptive thought with a metanarrative of being in Heidegger’s thought is his extensive treatment of the Greek word *alētheia*. Caputo sees Heidegger as saying that the Greek word means “unconcealment” but is routinely thought of as “correctness,” even by Homer and other early Greeks. Further, *alētheia*, in both the phenomenological sense of ‘unconcealment’ and correspondence-theory sense of ‘correctness’, is grounded in the ahistorical but nonetheless real capacity of Being for unconcealment, which Heidegger designates by the hyphenated “*a-lētheia*.”<sup>6</sup> On this point, Caputo’s assertions do not run counter to the development of Heidegger’s conception of truth as I have described it in this dissertation. As I have shown in chapter 3, Heidegger acknowledges as much in the Parmenides lectures when he discusses the inability of the Presocratics to fully understand the relationship between truth and concealment.

What Caputo claims about this conception of *alētheia* is that it is wholly a mythic account, since it both does and does not claim a historical occasion: “It gives a historical instantiation to an antehistorical structure (*a-lētheia*), assigning it a time and place, giving it a

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<sup>4</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 22-25.

proper name.”<sup>7</sup> As I have shown in chapter 2, one of the central functions of telling a myth or thinking inceptively, for Heidegger, is assigning a proper name to being in order to express its mystery. Because Caputo’s sense of myth clearly includes naming as part of mythmaking, if Heidegger’s *a-lētheia* is such a name, then it follows that Heidegger’s account is either insufficient by his own standards or not rigorous enough according to some other standard within metaphysics.

Caputo’s explicit problem with this proper name is that “Heidegger would have gotten very different results had he followed the ‘jewgreek’ considerations that I am pressing.”<sup>8</sup> What I take Caputo to be driving at is that Heidegger’s thought falls apart not because it makes a myth, but because this myth is all too narrow. By situating a touchstone moment with the early Greeks alone and hearkening back to it alone, Heidegger’s account of truth and his corresponding hope for a new inception implies accepting all of the harsh cultural realities of the Greek world. Heidegger falls short not because he fails to achieve something beyond the standard framework of metaphysics, but because his metaphysics is of the wrong sort.

In light of Caputo’s use of the term ‘myth’, his arguments against Heidegger’s philosophical insensitivity to the practical world fall into place. According to Caputo, Heidegger’s ‘recovery’ of *a-lētheia* is illusory. It is a myth of a first inception created by Heidegger, something he wills to be the case in order to justify the new inception. However, simply creating a myth is not the problem, for Caputo. Mythmaking is part of what Caputo himself hopes to accomplish. The problem is that Heidegger’s hope in a new inception is

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<sup>7</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 29.

exclusionary in its search for an affinity between his sense of the German *Volk* and the Greece that never was. Heidegger is able to remain hopeful about a new inception because his account does not brook additional evidence. It does not allow for other myths that soften the view that humanity requires violence in order to determine its own essence. By focusing on the essential, Heidegger's myth of a Greek inception avoids the real, historical ancient Greek world, and his hope for a new inception, a German one, similarly avoids direct criticism of or sensitivity to the harshness of the Nazi regime and subsequently to the Holocaust and its victims.<sup>9</sup> If this understanding of Caputo's argument is correct, then I think a different interpretation that is critical of Heidegger's account of the Greeks is in order.

Caputo's second point, that Heidegger's thought is guilty of a kind of single-mindedness, I take to be true, but not for all the reasons he cites. What I affirm is that Caputo's fundamental disagreement with Heidegger's insensitivity is on the right path; along with him "I deny the idea that the clearing or *a-letheia* represents a sphere that is *prior* to ethics or more originary than ethics . . . I reject the idea that ethics is not *first*, not originary, not there at the beginning . . . ethics is always already in place, is factually there as soon as there is Dasein, as soon as there is a world."<sup>10</sup> On why and how I agree with this critical point, I will say more in the next section. Still, I do not think that Caputo's method provides a firm footing for making this claim. This is because he simultaneously categorizes Heidegger's method incorrectly and talks about myth in terms that are too broad. Caputo's criticism conflates myth and narrative, history and fiction, interpretation and fantasy. If he were not following in Heidegger's philosophical footsteps with

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<sup>9</sup> This is the thrust of chapters 5 through 7 of *Demythologizing Heidegger*, pages 101-47.

<sup>10</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 167.

regard to interpretive method, I would argue that this might be due simply to disagreement with the traditional uses of the term ‘myth’. However, because he is very much influenced by Heidegger’s methodology, I think it instead arises out of a critical disagreement with Heidegger over the procedures of deconstruction or formal indication.

Caputo’s understanding of myth is, at first glance, traditional: myth is the legend, the well-told story that places an encounter with the divine within the realm of human experience. But Caputo also broadens the traditional view, categorizing all forms of storytelling as part of the genus ‘myth.’<sup>11</sup> That is to say, any story about something mysterious that relies on first-person experience is a myth, especially when retold by someone other than the person who went through the experience. Caputo puts it that “Heidegger’s *Denkweg* traces a path from demythologizing the mythic world of the scriptures to remythologizing the world in the accents of a Greek neomythology . . . one which silences and excludes a competing biblical myth, what I call in the next chapter the myth of justice.”<sup>12</sup> I take this to mean that, at the very least, all of the following are myths: Heidegger’s account of the Greeks’ *a-lētheia*, the myths of Homer, the works of Hesiod, the plays of Sophocles, the narrative accounts of the Torah, the historical and prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Epistles, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.

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<sup>11</sup> See Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 14-16 and 23-7. I note Eliade’s explanation of myth here if only because it has proven formative in the fields of the philosophy of religion and theology in the United States throughout much of the latter portion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Insofar as this is the case, his account of myth would, for my purposes, count as the ‘customary view’ that I think Caputo broadens. Eliade includes in his conventional definition of myth all types of story that connect the mysterious divine with the material world. By his account, myths always must contain or hint at cosmogony, even when they are about how a specific creature came about or how a particular habit came to be defined as civilized. Only when myths become decadent in the eyes of the people who listen to them do they stop being truly about the order of the world, becoming instead mere legends or fables.

<sup>12</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 169-70.

Caputo's explanation of his approach includes an appeal to the method of deconstruction espoused by Derrida, Levinas, and Lyotard: the interplay between the constructions of systems in order to find their weaknesses, a method which both emulates and contravenes what Heidegger calls *Destruktion* or what Husserl might call *Abbau*.<sup>13</sup> Because the method of Caputo's deconstruction is to let the construction of opposed systems display their failings and disorders by tying them to one another dyadically, the "myth of justice" is the procedure of treating the individual appropriately as who and what he is, which is decided by engaging in the interplay between the two opposed methods of the dyad. One decides what is just at the individual level by considering how to act in light of the Greek and Judeo-Christian systems contradicting or supporting each other as they apply to the person at hand.<sup>14</sup> As he says, this myth of justice "is not the myth of an ideal pattern, a heavenly archetype. It is a myth of another sort, a way of mythologizing differently, one that I am groping here to identify . . . a myth that has to do not with making but with action, not a mytho-technics but a mytho-praxis."<sup>15</sup> Caputo's "myth of justice" is not a story of what justice is, derived from a combined Greek and Judeo-Christian worldview; it is a story of seeking out right action with the Greek and the Judeo-Christian conceptions of and arguments about justice as a backdrop. It is, by definition, loosely tethered and transitory, since its inherent stance is that all systems arise out of principles that are,

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<sup>13</sup> For my understanding of this connection I have also consulted: Daniel Coluciello Barber, "On Post-Heideggerean Différence: Derrida and Deleuze." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 47 (2009): 113-29; Françoise Dastur, "Derrida's reading of Heidegger." In *Interpreting Heidegger: Critical Essays*, edited by Daniel O. Dahlstrom. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 272-98.

<sup>14</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 186-208.

<sup>15</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 191.

themselves, prejudicial; and so he states that “Deconstruction holds the law up for scrutiny, lets it waver in instability.”<sup>16</sup>

The justification for the “myth of justice” within a “jewgreek” framework is essentially that Heidegger’s understanding of the confrontation within *Destruktion* is inadequate to the task of letting principles like ‘justice’ or ‘truth’ show up *in concretum*. This is because his thought is too focused on unearthing some antehistorical or even nonhistorical ground of their possibility. For Caputo, deconstruction functions by letting systems, or competing metaphysical philosophies, remain what they are in order to show a way to live, not by showing the condition for the possibility of metaphysics. From this perspective, Heidegger’s understanding of myth as I have described it in the previous chapter is, then, itself a piece of the overarching myth of *a-lētheia*. It is insufficient because it is a probable story based on a method that excludes other likely stories for the sake of a prejudice, the prejudicial belief in the Germanic succession to the authentic Western-ness that was first instantiated by the Presocratics. It is dismissible insofar as it is a critical piece of the framework holding up an inherently faulty structure. At this point, therefore, it is unclear whether to accept Heidegger’s account of myth over and against a more familiar account, though it looks as though it might be the case that Caputo’s critique holds water. If Heidegger’s *muthos* is a fabrication based on a desire to only promote one kind of story, then he misses what myth is entirely, and his account of poetic, inceptive speech is inherently flawed. Heidegger’s account of *muthos* is a sales pitch he makes to himself in order to continue believing in a new inception, and in making this pitch he persists in fabricating myths, even in

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<sup>16</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 195.

the midst of saying that such a practice is the result of a barbaric adherence to the modern conception of culture.<sup>17</sup>

However, I don't think Heidegger's account of inceptive thinking fails because of Caputo's demythologizing. This is because I don't think Caputo's demythologizing and subsequent remythologizing necessarily produce a result any more salutary than Heidegger's own path of thought. If my understanding of Caputo's approach is correct, then, as I hope to say in the next few paragraphs, his conception of myth is far too nebulous and indistinct to adequately counter Heidegger's method. My response to this "myth of justice" is that there seems to be no principle or material reason for claiming this praxis-myth and not another.

As I have shown in chapter 1, it is precisely the theme of the prejudicial that Heidegger's own thought attempts to understand through the poetic speech and esoteric style of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*, attempts at a "new" inceptive speech. Heidegger's reason for proposing an ahistorical *a-lētheia* is not to endorse a fishy kind of Greek philology (that is, he is not making a definite claim about the ontogenesis of the Greek language), but to show the necessary condition of prejudice within prosaic speech. What is critically important for Heidegger's thought is that the nature of philosophy as systematic, as concerned with arriving at essentials through argumentation, is inherently a prejudicial enterprise.

Moreover, what is most important for Heidegger in attempting a "new inception" and in narrowly defining myth—as I have shown in chapter 3—is to show that truth exists not merely within the province of the argumentative speech of metaphysics and logic, but also within the province of the poetic, the silent, and the reticent-to-speak. His narrow conception of myth is

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<sup>17</sup> *Parmenides*, 103



conditioned by the fact that to say *muthoi* at all is to speak Greek and to speak in a way that conveys one's own lack of understanding regarding what is spoken. Even here, one does not avoid prejudice about speaking and about what is said in the act of speaking. To tell a myth is to be prejudicial against making any judgment whatsoever. Reticence holds back the tongue from going any further. Heidegger's thought at the very least, demonstrates that, in a practical sense, *Dasein* always takes something as something, even in attempting to hold back from doing so. Human existence is inherently prejudicial because existence is always-already at issue. Heidegger's hermeneutics is not a method of eliminating prejudice in speech, but of accepting it in order to unearth prejudicial speech of a certain kind: the logical assertion central to metaphysics as a science. It turns out that the initial problem held up for analysis in *SZ* and *GM* remains not a problem to be solved, but is a tool of the hermeneutical method with which to examine the ability of all speech to bear the truth.

Caputo's treatment of this approach as a kind of "mythologizing" overlooks the essential contents of Heidegger's method and gainsays its resultant interactions with ethics and politics. This is not at all an argument against Heidegger's method; it is a revision. Because Caputo does not address the content of Heidegger's attempts at articulating the nature of the prejudices inherent in human speech, he makes room for a negative response to Heidegger's thought and to his own. His "remythologizing" begs other "remythologies" to be born continually, and for as many instantiations as there are people and circumstances to permit it. Whereas Heidegger knowingly speaks of "the clearing" as a response to metaphysical "jointure," a prejudicial breaking-away from one known and hazardous path in favor of a seemingly preferable, though

more unsettled, course, Caputo's response to this prejudice trivializes the necessity of the prejudicial 'taking something as something' at the heart of every act of speech. Heidegger's retreat into poetic speech, encouraged by his picture of a (likely nonexistent) Presocratic Greek world, can be judged as a poor philosophical move in hindsight, but not because the move asserts a prejudice. Rather, it is a poor move because of its own internal failings; to "remythologize" Heidegger as Caputo does is simply to supplant Heidegger's prejudice with a new one.

To go further, Caputo's strategy, perhaps unwittingly, invites others to do the same in response to his thought, with all of their own inherent prejudices built in. This path Heidegger himself has already described as Nietzsche's truth-as-error and the eternal recurrence. The danger of Caputo's response is that one who does not favor the "jewgreek" response can simply respond with his or her own "remythology." Anyone may continue the metaphysics of the Will to Power, since every new myth of justice is ontologically (and therefore ethically, in Caputo's terms) the same, as long as a monocultural prejudice is prejudicially avoided. While Caputo's deconstruction purports to be antithetical to any systematic, subjective metaphysical system, it does not appear to militate against slipping into a Nietzschean framework, one which both he and Heidegger apparently abhor.

In Caputo's defense, it might be said that his conception of a "jewgreek" re-mythology is an appropriate response because it accounts for the additional cultural underpinnings central to the development of western metaphysics. That is, it is a superior account because it attempts an understanding of the interplay between the Greek and Semitic conceptions of being. In doing so, he avoids representing either the Greek or the Jewish prejudices through a method which exceeds

their own self-understanding. The clear merit of this approach is that it is a deconstructive method that isn't wholly dependent upon Heidegger's own. Caputo might contend that the whole point is to avoid recreating Heidegger's method since the prejudice of uncovering a Greece-that-never-was is part of the method itself. To see the Greeks as they themselves could not is performed by uncovering their own process of 'falling away' from being. The merit of the "jewgreek" remythology, Caputo might say, is that one can see the Greeks as they themselves could not because the deconstructive stance provides a critical view that neither the Greeks nor the Biblical tradition could obtain on their own. Where Heidegger's method exceeds the Greek self-understanding to try and achieve what is most essential to the Greek encounter with being, Caputo's method exceeds the Greek self-understanding by presenting it in contrast and complement with the metaphysics of western monotheism.

My reply to this likely defense is that, what winds up happening as a result of taking the deconstructive stance regarding both the Greek and Judeo-Christian self-understanding, the sense of the key terms 'myth' and 'truth' for the ancient Greek and the Judeo-Christian are rendered mute through the act of interpretation. Because Caputo's means of deconstruction knowingly avoids the prejudices inherent in Greek *mythos* and *logos*, it also dismisses accessing potential changes in the refinement of those terms in their intellectual use and, therefore, their historical influence. As a result, Caputo's conception of myth is too broad to allow him to adequately critique Heidegger's method, precisely because it levels all modes of interpretive speech. If interpreting what one ought to do next, based on the evidence of tradition, is always mythmaking, then the internal framework and content of Heidegger's method—which analyzes

Greek myths, investigates the philology of terms, displays the structure of intentionality in logical thought, and articulates basic reasons for interrogating the Greek beginnings of philosophy—really ought to not matter. Caputo’s rejection of Heidegger’s aversion to explicit political and ethical discourse is so strong that it pushes his own analysis away from investigating what might be wrong with the internal arguments and structures of Heidegger’s thought. The grounds for calling Heidegger’s mode of investigation in lecture courses like *Parmenides*, *EM*, or the Nietzsche lectures an exercise in mythmaking are faulty, if for no other reason than that they give an excuse for dismissing out of hand the arguments of these lecture courses.

Moreover, it might be added that Caputo’s definition violates the customary use of the term ‘myth’. His “jewgreek” myth itself is a linguistic stretch. In the first place, whether or not one agrees with Heidegger’s turn toward the Greeks and his claim of a Graeco-German affinity, the claim he makes in *Parmenides* concerning the Greekness of mythmaking is not easy to contradict. Strictly speaking, idle talk about myth inherently means talk about the Greek stories of the gods, the demigods, and the semi-worldly realms they inhabit; it is only by extension that ‘myth’ conventionally also refers to similar stories in other religions.<sup>18</sup> But the Greeks would deny this second usage, since to speak *mythoi* is to speak Greek; all other stories are, by definition, barbaric.<sup>19</sup> This is, in fact, part of the reason why Caputo claims that Heidegger’s myth is unsalutary in the first place, namely, that to find affinity with the ancient Greeks is to

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<sup>18</sup> Collections of mythologies like Bulfinch’s or Hamilton’s rely on the assumption that something different happens in the ancient Greek stories. Hamilton explicitly quotes Herodotus’s Greek exceptionalism in order to justify beginning her collection with the Greek myths. See Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (New York: Grand Central, 1969), 1-16.

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, 1.

find affinity with this xenophobic attitude about speech. So two options remain, neither of them helpful to Caputo's argument: either the Greeks aren't monocultural in their outlook about speech and would concur that all talk about the gods is myth, in which case some of the objection to Heidegger's approach fades away, or else they do deny that other peoples speak mythically, in which case Caputo chooses to overlook the historical definition of myth according to the people who first used the term.

Correspondingly, there is evidence from within the Judeo-Christian tradition that denies use of the term 'myth' to describe the stories of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, because such an appellation places the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on the same plane and within the same intellectual space as Zeus, Apollo, and Athena.<sup>20</sup> Whether or not one agrees with this distinction, the fact that the Christian or Jewish believer can articulate it coherently indicates that to treat the Judeo-Christian stories as functionally equal to the Greek is to reduce the Judeo-Christian concept of pagan myth to a purely positivist enterprise.<sup>21</sup> To go further and say that the Greek myths and the Christian ones are also functionally the same as Heidegger's method extends this charge of positivism to all three. While the narrative structure of each is similar, as Erich Auerbach points out in comparing the story of Odysseus's scar in the *Odyssey* with the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in *Genesis*, the contents and the structural ways each narrative

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<sup>20</sup> See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 3-23. The first chapter, titled "Odysseus' Scar," takes pains to show that the kind of storytelling in Homer's poems is very different from the story of salvation history in the Hebrew Scriptures, because the two texts treat the world and the conception of deity in different ways. To label both kinds of stories 'myths' is to obliterate their differences and trivialize their value. However, many contemporary anthropologists and historians of religion disagree with Auerbach's distinction, including Eliade, who proposes interesting arguments for why portions of Christian speech, such as the liturgy, are mythic in nature. See Eliade, 29-31.

<sup>21</sup> Eliade, 23.

presents its content are strikingly dissimilar. (In the *Odyssey* the story of Odysseus's scar is full of rhetorical devices, symbolism, and exposition, whereas the sacrifice of Isaac seems empty of reference to time, place, or signs except for the particular moments when God speaks to Abraham. Auerbach's claim is that the former presumes that improvement can come from further embellishment, while the latter assumes a level of truth irrespective of whoever repeats the story.)<sup>22</sup> To overlook distinctions in content is to reduce the opinion of one who believes in one set of stories but not the other to the level of mere blind partisanship. In other words, Caputo's approach, by widening the definition of myth, eliminates the middle-ground possibility of treating different kinds of storytelling differently, of treating Greek myths one way, Judeo-Christian salvation history another way, the histories of Plutarch or Herodotus another, and Heidegger's method yet another.

That such differentiation between kinds of narrative is possible is central to my claim.<sup>23</sup> This is contrary to Peter Warnek's opinion that Heidegger ought to have considered the entirety of *Republic* a myth. If quoting Socrates as he recounts a story about a conversation that may contain a few fictions is sufficient reason to call the whole of *Republic* a myth, then there is no distinction between the thought of the inceptive thinker and Plato's own thought. In such a case there would be little reason for Heidegger, or for anyone else, to say that Plato's thought is fundamentally different in structure and method from that of the Presocratics. As I have shown, the difference is that Plato uses myths as tools, as stand-ins for rational argumentation, and this habit is characteristic of the metaphysician. It is a skill that all philosophical argument after Plato

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<sup>22</sup> Auerbach, 3-23.

<sup>23</sup> See chapter 3, section 11.

has at the ready. Whether or not Heidegger uses myths in the same way is something I will address shortly. For the current argument if it is clear that Plato's method and the method of the Presocratics are fundamentally different, then one can, at least when making claims about the lecture courses and essays, say that Heidegger's method is not mythmaking. His thought contains far too much analysis about the nature of myth and the poetic—analysis that he himself owns up to—to count as myth. Caputo's account would have it that Heidegger is recounting a myth about myth, but this falls apart because the boundaries between analysis, history, and the various kinds of stories become too indistinct for any new analysis, history, or story to gain any traction as a proper response.

Finally, even if Caputo's conception of myth were to turn out to be in tune with Heidegger's, there would still be another roadblock in the way: the fact that, for Heidegger, the speaker of the myth is, in some sense, not responsible for the conclusions drawn from its content. That is to say, the speaker of the myth—whether it is Parmenides, Hesiod, Sophocles, or any Greek poet—speaks the myth in order to heed the gods, not because he understands what the divine is saying, as I have pointed out in chapters 2 and 3. Heidegger's inceptive thinker presents the mysteriousness of being in speech that he himself does not claim to control or understand; this is a central theme of the arguments in the "Logos" essay, as well as in the early portions of *Parmenides*. So, even if I am wrong and Caputo's understanding of myth does align more closely with Heidegger's own, there is an additional problem: making judgments about the moral failings of Heidegger's thought is hard to do, given the mythmaker's lack of responsibility for what he speaks. The critic who accepts the arguments that follow from Caputo's claims about

myth would have to agree that mythmaking is an act of piety—no matter whether the content of that pious act is ominous or benign—and the mythmaker’s responsibility for that content is, at the very least, mitigated. If for no other reason, this problem alone clarifies that Caputo’s understanding of myth and Heidegger’s do not agree, and that Caputo’s is not, as a consequence, a superior account.

Despite these objections to Caputo’s argument, he does draw out many serious concerns regarding the consequences of Heidegger’s thought. What Caputo objects to in Heidegger’s thought is, as I have already said, the concept of a Graeco-Germanic hegemony over all things Western. It is not hard to see how closely such a concept compares with Nazi propaganda. Saying that Germans have a chance, like the Greeks before them, to reintroduce the essence of being can easily look like Nazi neo-paganism. However, to jump to the conclusion that Heidegger’s cultural myopia is the same as, or is absolutely affixed to, Nazi propaganda misses Heidegger’s conception of *Heimat*, or being-at-home. Charles Bambach claims that Heidegger’s concepts of autochthony and *Heimat* are revamped myths he uses to first support the rising Nazi regime and then later dismiss it as another utilitarian example of the metaphysics of presence. To show why Caputo’s distrust of Heidegger’s relationship with politics and ethics makes sense and is in fact a worthy reason for wanting to “remythologize” his method, I will analyze Bambach’s claims about Heidegger’s “roots.” In the process, I will also show why Bambach’s criticism helps to illuminate the danger in Heidegger’s conception of truth, even though I think Heidegger avoids wielding myths as tools of analysis.



The main argument in *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism and the Greeks* is that Heidegger's thought from 1933 to 1945, heavily steeped in the emerging dissatisfaction with the Weimar Republic and the growing reactionary rejection among intellectual circles of the 'Cartesian' worldviews of communism and capitalism, adopts and promotes a myth of German *Bodenständigkeit*. As Bambach puts it, Heidegger "was convinced that originary philosophy could only be done in dialogue with politics . . . the historical-ontological site within which *Dasein* struggles to find its place and its own sense of being rooted—in a community, a *Volk*, a tradition and a history."<sup>24</sup> The image of a rooted people with a common history connects Heidegger with his Germano-centric contemporaries and their response to Nietzsche's interpretation of the Presocratic Greeks. In other words, as Bambach puts it, "Heidegger reads thinkers and poets like Plato, Heraclitus, Nietzsche, Hölderlin, Descartes and Eckhart within the political context of his own generation."<sup>25</sup>

The subtlety in Bambach's argument is that as Heidegger performs his own interpretation while in dialogue with his contemporaries, "[in] the postwar epoch he will present his work as something that takes place outside the sphere of politics, a purely thinkerly dialogue with the Western philosophical tradition that . . . cannot be properly grasped in terms of its historical and cultural conditions."<sup>26</sup> In essence, as the 'writing on the wall' becomes clear, Heidegger seeks to reinterpret his own philosophical path in order to preserve its seminal insights while also excising from those insights any practical political considerations whatever. For Bambach, Heidegger's interactions with National Socialist politics just prior to—and throughout—World

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<sup>24</sup> Bambach, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Bambach, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Bambach, 15.

War II do become deeply critical, but they do not abandon the intellectual roots of what the superficial politics of the new Germany might have been. Heidegger's remarks are now critical insofar as he believes his overtly ideological contemporaries misunderstand the relationship of philosophy to politics. During this time, "Heidegger will advocate a new politics of the anti-political: an originary politics of the *arche* that dispenses with, extinguishes and deracinates the aggressively nationalist dimension" from his philosophy of rootedness to the soil and "will now assert that 'the essence of power is foreign to the *polis*.'"<sup>27</sup> The practical politics of Nazism are misguided because of its inability to come to grips with the ontological meaning of the political.<sup>28</sup>

And so, even though Heidegger abandons practical politics, says Bambach, the next question to ask is whether Heidegger properly resists Nazi politics via this shift in rhetoric. He states, "we need to ask: How can we account for a change in Heidegger's political position if he continues to embrace the selfsame myth of ontological autochthony that animated his earlier political writings?"<sup>29</sup> Bambach's response to this question is that, instead of rejecting biological racism outright, Heidegger promotes a kind of metaphysical racism, in which his intentionally simplified history of the Presocratics' focus on *archē* is conflated with an equally simplified historical view of Plato's version of autochthony, as portrayed in the myth of the metals and the cave allegory. Heidegger's myth is that all of the Greek stories of autochthony in Plato are aimed

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<sup>27</sup> Bambach, 187. See also *Parmenides*, 135. The conclusion of that same section in *Parmenides* states that no modern political order will allow the true *polis* to be understood. In other words, the Nazis are guilty of being Cartesians and are, therefore, subjectivist proponents of the metaphysics of presence.

<sup>28</sup> This recalls Heidegger's quip about Goebbels and his statement that the Reich doesn't need philosophers but grain and oil. See my introduction and *Parmenides*, 179.

<sup>29</sup> Bambach, 188.

at an originaive *alētheia*, an *archē* that the Presocratics knew but never fully brought to speech. According to Bambach, this is a myth that Heidegger tells himself so that he can retain the methodological commitments that his thought contains during the period of his rectorate and shortly after, when he was still making explicitly political remarks about how to reclaim Germany's roots.<sup>30</sup>

On this account, Heidegger's carefully orchestrated retreat from the exigencies of political wrangling remains steeped in a kind of exclusivism, a story-in-earnest about the Germanic share in an oversimplified vision of Greek thought as inceptive, which means pursuing the principles of thought and meaning in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C.E. The intentional removal of all external influences on Greek thought, whether Christian, Roman, Islamic, Jewish, or otherwise, is a different kind of purification: not a systematic, racial annihilation, but a racial purification nonetheless.<sup>31</sup> Heidegger's myth, in Bambach's view, is a simile of circumstances, a likening between peoples ancient and modern who share similar stories about their origins and about tragically falling away from what was originally ordained.<sup>32</sup> Every philosopher after Socrates is, in this view, a Johnny-come-lately. By drawing this conclusion, Heidegger retains his language of rootedness, but the roots are now embedded in the soil next to the river of forgetfulness with Er, nowhere except in a Greece that never quite existed.

The myth of autochthony that Bambach describes is almost the same as Caputo's account of Heidegger's "mythologization" of the Greeks, except that Bambach adds that the myth of

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<sup>30</sup> Bambach, 213-9.

<sup>31</sup> Bambach, 211-2.

<sup>32</sup> For an in-depth account of Heidegger's profound interest in the ancient Greeks and his claims about the parallelism between Greek tragedy and modern metaphysics and the politics that accompany it, see Schmidt, *On Germans and Other Greeks*, 225-70.

autochthony is Heidegger's method of gradually distancing himself from the Nazi ideologues of his day. Despite Heidegger's efforts on this front, however, his relationship to those ideologues appears like that of two friends quarrelling over how to make a three-minute egg: one talks about practical technique and utensil-use, while the other insists that the essential physical and chemical properties of eggs must be acknowledged, even if not fully understood, before putting the pot on to boil.<sup>33</sup> In Bambach's view, Heidegger's thought remains attached to his contemporaries' way of speaking, though it retreats away from their aims in order to show why they don't really understand what it is they are saying. There is no rejection of Nazi politics, but there is an indictment of modern politicking as Cartesian or utilitarian, as "free-floating" and subjectivist.

Bambach's critique of Heidegger's thought is, therefore, that he remains attached to a distorted account, and every such account that ventures to point at an ideal such as the universal *Heimat* of *a-lētheia* is a myth. For Bambach, the danger is not that Heidegger's myth is unsalutary, but that he is attached to a myth as an *explanans* at all. By stubbornly sticking to the myth of homeland, Heidegger prevents himself from really exiting Nazi politics, because he offers no positive, practical ethics to accompany his new inception. Whereas "Nietzsche understood these romantic longings for the homeland to be part of the German malady of Nationalism," as Bambach puts it, "in Heidegger's hands the Nietzschean injunction 'to discover now the fifth and sixth centuries' will be employed as a weapon to combat the modern

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<sup>33</sup> My analogy is drawn from the back cover of: Art Buchwald, *You Can Fool All of the People All of the Time* (New York: Putnam, 1985). Buchwald recounts that his only political 'spat' with Jackie Kennedy occurred while making breakfast in the White House kitchen, where he maintained that a three-minute egg must be cooked for three minutes, while she stubbornly insisted that it took five.

metaphysics of *techne* in the name of an archaic primordiality.”<sup>34</sup> Heidegger’s transformation in thought is dangerous because it is a move from “political mythology to a mythology of the anti-political.”<sup>35</sup>

Bambach’s insights into the path of Heidegger’s thought make clear Caputo’s reasons for wanting to demythologize Heidegger. For both, the pattern of Heidegger’s thought is markedly enthusiastic and myopic. They share distaste for Heidegger’s intellectual longing and clinging to a past that never was;<sup>36</sup> the many guises of Heidegger’s conception of truth turn upon what seems to be a socio-emotional reaction, an ‘us-versus-them’ picture of the history of metaphysics. Bambach’s argument relies frequently upon Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche in order to show why this reaction is dangerous, and a particular reference to the *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* is the clearest in this regard. According to Bambach, “In the name of an ordinary history of being, Heidegger dispenses with the merely ‘historical.’ Instead, following Nietzsche’s injunction in *Untimely Meditations* to interpret the past only out of the vitality of the present, he attempts to free history from the noxious malady of historicism.”<sup>37</sup> Heidegger’s brand of philhellenism is a divisive myth; it seeks to bind this love of Greece specifically with Germanic self-identification. It is directed by Nietzsche’s Dionysian injunction to make use of the past insofar as it enlivens the present. Heidegger thus avoids being a mere historian, whether monumentalist, antiquarian, or critical. That is, he is not possessed by the antiquarianist mental furniture; he also does not make past moments into monuments to the

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<sup>34</sup> Bambach, 219.

<sup>35</sup> Bambach, 246.

<sup>36</sup> Bambach, 186: “Heidegger will persist in clinging to his exclusionary myth of Graeco-Germanic affiliation.”

<sup>37</sup> Bambach, 215.

exclusion of detail; and he does not throw out the old for the sake of the new. Instead, he seems to show antiquarian, monumentalist, and critical-historian tendencies in equal measure. His goal is to issue a futural, critical response to the *Seinsfrage* that is like a monumental revealing of being and that is a precursor to the antiquarian dissection by metaphysics of Greek philosophy. Heidegger's thought is dangerous because it enacts a characteristically Nietzschean fervor about the Greeks and applies it to an apolitical future of a German essence, despite Nietzsche's own rejection of nationalism.<sup>38</sup> The danger of Heidegger's Nietzscheanism is its irrationality; Heidegger's clinging to and longing for a Greece that never was are evidence of the passions directing the method of his thought, and thus critical thinking devolves into mythmaking, or into using myth in the misguided way characteristic of ideology. For Caputo, what is frightening is not the mythmaking but the impassioned preference for a solely Graeco-Germanic access to the truth. For Bambach, the very mythmaking tendency of Heidegger's thought is the issue, since the move toward a romanticization of *alētheia* is fundamentally irrational.

If Heidegger's myth of autochthony is mythical by virtue of being a story that preys upon the irrational elements of the human mind, then Bambach's conception of mythmaking is thoroughly conventional, insofar as it agrees with the interpretations of Eliade and Hamilton. I have already stated why I think Heidegger is not guilty of Caputo's charge of "mythologizing." Bambach's accusation of Heidegger's mythmaking, insofar as it is conventional, is subject to many of the same criticisms. Primarily, I want to focus on one of these, which happens to be the

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<sup>38</sup> Compare Bambach's opinion with that of Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 206-26.

same as the reason for which Warnek is wrong about the possibility of treating all of *Republic* as a myth.<sup>39</sup>

To recap that claim, for Heidegger, myths do not self-analyze or self-interpret. As I have shown in the previous chapter, if one takes Heidegger seriously in his description of the Myth of Er, then what follows is that Parmenides is not the one performing the analysis of the One as synonymous with being in his poem. Rather, the goddess *Alētheia* performs the analysis, while Parmenides recounts the whole as a myth. When comparing the structure of *Republic* to that of Parmenides's poem, Heidegger draws an analogy between Parmenides and Er, not Parmenides and either Plato or Socrates. With inceptive speech, both the listener and the speaker are left to wonder at the goddess's words, and all analysis follows after the telling.

If Heidegger's myopic account of an ontological homeland is really a myth, then his explanation of myth is a kind of smokescreen. If Heidegger is knowingly composing a myth about myth, then there really is no reason to tell it at all, except the cynical reason of providing himself with a backstory and cover. Even if Heidegger unknowingly makes a myth about myth, that is, if he unwittingly engages in the customary kind of mythmaking while attempting to say that such a thing is not mythmaking at all, then the charge that his thought is cynically motivated may be heightened. That is, it might appear that Heidegger cannot himself really believe what he is saying, since he is incapable of not enacting the very form of speech he criticizes within the form of the criticism itself. The only reason to say something new about Parmenides' poem in 1942 is out of fear; Heidegger is merely separating himself from Nazi politics and is willing to do so at the expense of his own philosophizing, paying no attention to an easy-to-spot self-

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<sup>39</sup> See chapter 3, section 11.

contradiction. If Heidegger is either cynically motivated or self-contradictory in this regard, then the very notion of the *anfängliche Denker* is just a prop or, retrospectively, a scapegoat. The interpreter of *Parmenides* is left with a dilemma: either Heidegger's understanding of *muthos* ought to be taken seriously or it ought to be understood as a mere tool, one among several, for extricating Heidegger from involvement with Nazi politics. Bambach chooses the latter, and, by extension, so does Caputo.

In my view, Caputo's and Bambach's responses represent two kinds of critique that rightly see the dangerous consequences that follow from Heidegger's thought. To be specific, both of the means of critique used by Bambach and Caputo have the same problem-to-be-analyzed as their starting point: Heidegger's involvement with Nazi politics. Both arrive at a similar conclusion: that Heidegger's thought retreats into storytelling, into myth, and that this retreat is dangerous for two reasons. First, it is dangerous because it remains myopically focused on Greek inception thinking and the possibility of a new, German, inception, which is an ethnocentric view of the past and future of philosophy. Second, it is dangerous because Heidegger seemingly abandons direct political engagement in favor of critiquing modern conceptions of the political *en bloc*, calling them manifestations of the metaphysics of presence. Caputo's response borrows some of Heidegger's methods and language but alters their direction to suit his own thought. That is, Caputo fluently uses Heidegger's terminology, but his definitions of key terms—of *alētheia* and *muthos* at the very least, as I have described above—are deliberately changed as part of his process of remythologization. Meanwhile, Bambach's critique functions by understanding the path of Heidegger's thought in terms of its connection to



that of the contemporary scholars with whom he interacts. Heidegger's terminology and thought is brought into clearer light when compared with the blatant Nazi propagandizing of others who use the same terminology and who share similar conceptions of *Volk* and *Heimat*.

If both Bambach and Caputo support these two critiques of Heidegger's thought as I describe them in the previous paragraph, it is possible that their arguments would be better served by analyzing Heidegger's conception of *muthos* rather than passing over it and using the term 'myth' in a more or less conventional manner. In the first place, failing to do so devalues their work. If the notion of inceptive thought is a myth, according to the conventional definition of myth, then Caputo must be content with merely promoting one myth against others, and Bambach must be satisfied with a picture of Heidegger's thought as intellectual posturing that focuses on the transcendent as a means of self-measurement in comparison to or contrast with one's contemporaries. In the second place, these approaches themselves operate within a field heavily influenced by Heideggerian language and terminology. To paraphrase Richard Polt in his attempt to categorize the possible pitfalls open to the scholar contending with Heidegger's interaction with Nazism, criticisms of this kind avoid taking up Heidegger's thought and wrestling with it fully, because they are one-sided in their critical approach.<sup>40</sup> To say either that

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<sup>40</sup> Richard Polt, *Heidegger, An Introduction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 159-64. Polt proposes seven categories into which commenters on Heidegger's politics may be classified. Briefly, these categories are as follows: (1) the traditional *ad hominem* approach of "Immoral man? He must be a bad philosopher;" (2) the complete dissociation of thinking from acting, i.e., Heidegger's philosophy has nothing to do with what he does in everyday life; (3) Heidegger was a naïve dreamer who did not understand the practical realities of Nazism; (4) in context, Heidegger's actions and thoughts are understandable; he is not excused, but he is not the only intelligent person who succumbed to the draw of Nazism given Germany's economic and political plight after World War I; (5) Heidegger didn't stick to his own thoughts about authenticity as articulated in *SZ*, but could have and should have; (6) contrary to position 5, *SZ* is crypto-fascist and puts Heidegger inescapably on the path toward collaboration; (7) Heidegger's own thought succumbed to Nazism because he remained under the influence of the metaphysics of presence. In my analysis, Bambach's criticisms belong to Polt's fourth and sixth types of Heidegger criticism:

Heidegger must be remythologized or that his thought from 1933 to 1945 becomes mythic in dimension is to be unwilling to allow Heidegger's method and concepts any viability while in the midst of analyzing them. If Heidegger's thought is a deracinated approach, then the criticism of it as deracinated is trivialized by its very appearance. Heidegger's influence on philosophizing is minimized, and responses to it are therefore less important and less interesting.

In contrast to these approaches, I propose taking Heidegger's conceptions of *a-lētheia*, *muthos*, and inceptive thought seriously on their own terms, knowing full well the problems presented by the political backdrop out of which they came and the subsequent self-interpretation offered by Heidegger himself in later life. If one takes it that Heidegger's claims about *muthos* and the method of his philosophizing—exclusive of later self-interpretation—are consistent with one another as I have attempted to show in the previous three chapters, then I believe some of the concerns raised by Caputo and Bambach can be reaffirmed.

In particular, Heidegger's thought remains open to the criticism that his interpretation results in an exclusionary vision of affinity between ancient Greek and contemporary German thought that is predicated upon similarities in language form and usage. I do not doubt any evidence provided by Bambach regarding the link between the language of Graeco-Germanic autochthony used by Heidegger and that of his contemporaries. However, the arguments within *Parmenides* show a kind of Greek thinking that is tempting for Heidegger precisely because it gives rise to metaphysics as a science. The inceptive thinkers—Heraclitus, Anaximander, and Parmenides—appear as the basis of Plato's divine ideas, but they also suggest that the

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Heidegger's thought is understandable given the circumstances of his time, but also his writing prior to 1933 is proto-fascist, displaying an affinity with the Nazi regime. Conversely, Caputo's criticism is of the seventh type listed by Polt: Heidegger is just another proponent of the metaphysics of presence.

conception of being as dyadically one and many might properly be maintained in a different kind of rational thought, the wonderment of *muthos*. In the concluding section, I will elaborate on my own interpretation of Heidegger's self-understanding as it presents itself in *Parmenides* in order to show why I am in basic agreement with Caputo's and Bambach's criticisms and yet believe that Heidegger offers philosophy something of lasting importance in claiming that *muthos* is a type of *logos*.

#### *Section 14. Conclusions about Heidegger's muthos and its function in inceptive thought*

As I have shown in chapter 1, the pursuit of the source of the logical prejudice and its corresponding view of truth and falsity becomes Heidegger's thematic research project throughout the 1930s. The culmination of this research is his arrival at the possibility of inceptive speech and thought, which happens at roughly the same time as his series of courses on Nietzsche. While I do not deny the societal conditions under which Heidegger pursues this course of investigation, to focus on them alone is to overlook Heidegger's genuine revision and his significant achievements during this time. Heidegger's need for regrounding his own thought becomes, by the time of *GM* and after, a need for regrounding philosophy itself. This may be, in part, because of dissatisfaction with Weimar Germany, but it also grows out of a dissatisfaction with the modern, human-as-maker vision of metaphysics given full voice in Nietzsche's "will to power."<sup>41</sup> Heidegger's pursuit of a *logos* that avoids the logical prejudice adopts the language of rootedness, at least in part because of a real philosophical dissatisfaction with the roots of

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<sup>41</sup> See chapter 1, section 3; and also chapter 1, section 2, n.79.

language as presented in modern thought. By his own account in the 1930s, his thought in *SZ* suffers from this malady by overly stressing the role of *Dasein* in the emergence of *alētheia*.

*Logos*, insofar as it remains a merely human skill for shaping the encounter with being, exhibits itself as fully achieved in the judgment and the logical assertion. It remains prejudicially closed to the order of being, an order which is a necessary condition for *Dasein* to have its own existence at issue in the first place. This prejudicial behavior is not countered by an opposed system of argumentation, since both systems inherently refuse to revert to an ‘open’ position, namely, the state of wonderment (for Heidegger, this is the clearing, *die Lichtung*). Heidegger’s account of the metaphysics of presence and the logical prejudice defines rational argument as inherently ideological. Seen through this lens, the structure of Hegel’s phenomenology, Kant’s antinomies, and Nietzsche’s dyadic will to power and eternal recurrence—despite the exhortations promoting the Dionysian—are always-already consequentialist. They insinuate that there is a fated order for the future, dependent upon the logical rigor of their approach. All metaphysics, when applied to the exigencies of everyday life, are susceptible to becoming the source of propaganda; metaphysics is the necessary soil for political decisions and self-justification, but, once ensconced, it does not allow one to question the principle that the *polis*, like *logos*, is a result of man-as-world-forming. Even Plato’s thought, at least in the end, gives way to the echonic.<sup>42</sup>

Alighting upon the possibility of inceptive speech is, for Heidegger, an antidote, because it provides a means for resituating how philosophy, and by extension Germany, might recast itself in a manner that remains open. The structures of *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*—their

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<sup>42</sup> See my discussion of Gregory Fried’s use of this term at the conclusion of section 11.

subjunctive moods hoping to hit upon a new, futurally oriented vision of being; their articulation of the poetic as the heart of the philosophical encounter with being; and their assertion of Greek *muthos* as the specific mode of the inceptive thinker—are Heidegger’s own struggling attempts at emerging, fully formed like Athena herself, from the pull of modern metaphysics and its corresponding self-assertive modes of political discourse. Heidegger’s longing is as much of an intellectual despondency as a practical one. His struggles with philosophy are as much governed by the stifling conditions of the discourse in which he finds himself as they are governed by a doggedly hopeful attempt to invert that discourse against itself.

Seen in light of these struggles internal to his thought, Heidegger’s ability to first find affinity with Nazism and then backpedal in the way that Bambach suggests becomes clearer. Heidegger is not guilty of mythmaking, even in the contemporary sense, because his philosophizing is always driven by the analysis of the logical prejudice, and the logical prejudice accepts the modern account of the irrationality of myth out of hand. Heidegger identifies with the Nazi use of the terminology of homeland and Greek autochthony precisely because this language can be seen to invoke something other than the scientific, subjectivist conception of polity. Taking what I have tried to show in section 3 along with Bambach’s claims about Heidegger’s antipolitical shift after his rectorship, it is clear that Heidegger seeks to distance himself from Nazi politics because he objects to their adherence to modern technization. This shows up in the appropriation of Nietzsche’s thought for their purposes of self-justification and subsequent propaganda. It is not that the Nazis and their intellectual supporters provide an improper interpretation of Nietzsche, to Heidegger; it is that Nietzsche’s thought, so very influential on

Heidegger's own progress toward a resurrection of the Presocratic Greeks, is itself nothing more than the final culmination of metaphysics. No matter Nietzsche's injunction that one must interpret the past from the vitality of the present, with Dionysian desires and the emotions leading the way; for Heidegger, Nietzsche's final word on the future of philosophizing is that every such interpretation is still only a manifestation of the thoroughly metaphysical eternal recurrence and its requisite, subjective counterpart, the will to power.

For Heidegger, Nietzsche's will to power is a continuation of the understanding of the relationship between human beings and the world as found in Descartes' metaphysics, over and against interpreting the human way of being, i.e. *Dasein*, as the being for which being itself is an issue. In 1942, Heidegger's thought still retains the rejection of the Cartesian metaphysics that takes shape in *SZ* back in 1927. In *SZ*, Heidegger's comments about Descartes are focused on his account of the world as reducible to the collection of things, i.e. all that may be called *res extensa*. He writes: "Descartes has narrowed down the question of the world to the Things of Nature as those entities within-the-world which are proximally accessible."<sup>43</sup> These "Things of Nature" are dubious starting points for an ontology, he says because "prephenomenological experience shows that in an entity which is supposedly a Thing, there is something that will not become fully intelligible through Thinghood alone" and that "if we are to reconstruct this Thing of use . . . does not this always require *that we previously take a positive look at the phenomenon whose totality such a reconstruction is to restore?*"<sup>44</sup> For Heidegger, Descartes reformulates

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<sup>43</sup> *Being and Time*, 133; "Descartes hat die Verengung der Frage nach der Welt auf die nach der Naturdinglichkeit als dem zunächst zugänglichen, innerweltlichen Seienden verschärft," *SZ*, 100.

<sup>44</sup> *Being and Time*, 132; "Schon die vorphänomenologische Erfahrung zeigt aber an dem dinglich vermeinten Seienden etwas, was durch Dinglichkeit nicht voll verständlich wird," and "bedarf diese Rekonstruktion des

traditional metaphysics in such a way that access to what constitutes the world and, by extension, *Dasein* leaves the metaphysician with limited, superficial possibilities; everything is determined by thinking about extension in a mechanical way. Cartesian *res extensa* leaves the world as merely a consequence of all things being extended, left in the space of physics.

In *Parmenides*, Heidegger's rejection of the purely scientific view of nature shows itself during the moments where he specifically addresses the modern intellectual behavior to which the Nazis readily ascribe, or to the technization of modern life. The greatest example of the latter in *Parmenides* is Heidegger's example of what counts as a signless cloud [*zeichenlose Wolke*]. That is, what is most lethal, what most hides what it itself is in the midst of hiding our appropriation of the truth, is the typewriter. Typewriters hide the unique handwriting of the writer, and, thus, hide the identity of the writer from the reader. Type-script makes all writers look the same.<sup>45</sup> Heidegger uses this example in contrast to what the Greek poet, Pindar, has to say about *alētheia*, that it is determined by a stance of awe in which human essence "stands together" with all human capacities.<sup>46</sup> This stance of awe or wonderment is, for Heidegger, essential to mythic speech. It is, Heidegger says, no mistake that the invention of the printing press, a kind of proto-typewriter, goes hand in hand with the beginning of modernity.<sup>47</sup> The typewriter is the prime example because it separates the human faculty of writing from the actual written word on the page, hence the comment that all writers are made to look the same. Modern technization is a signless cloud, for Heidegger, because it is the material manifestation of the

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zunächst »abgehäuteten« Gebrauchsdinges nicht immer schon des *vorgängigen, positiven Blicks auf das Phänomen, dessen Ganzheit in der Rekonstruktion wieder hergestellt werden soll?*" SZ, 99.

<sup>45</sup> *Parmenides*, 126, and also Chapter 3, section 9 above.

<sup>46</sup> *Parmenides*, 110, and also Chapter 3, section 9 above.

<sup>47</sup> *Parmenides*, 125.

metaphysical understanding of man-as-maker, the logical conclusion to Descartes' conception of the things which comprise the world as *res extensa*.

This rejection of modern metaphysics accompanies each statement where Heidegger either explicitly or implicitly criticizes the Nazi regime. As I have mentioned in the introduction, Heidegger's calls Goebbels' cry for the need for grain and oil rather than philosophers careless.<sup>48</sup> The carelessness is not due to the fact that there's something morally or politically unsavory about the Nazi propaganda minister's policies or tactics, but due to the fact that the Nazi regime rejects poets and thinkers in favor of the material of mechanized war, the material things that allow the regime to will its own continued existence. Moreover, in the portion of the text where Heidegger explicitly argues for myth as a uniquely Greek figure of speech, he rejects interpreting myth as a merely cultural artifact of the Greeks. The very conception of 'culture' is, he says, the same in essence as modern technology.<sup>49</sup> It is the use of a modern view of the world to try and explain what is foreign to it, what doesn't fit within its conception of the human being. This is an implicit rejection of the Nazi use of the Arian 'myth' in 'creating' a view of an elite German culture. The Arian pseudo-history is, then, barbaric, but not because it seeks the destruction of whole groups of people. Rather, it is barbaric because it is like the typewriter. Arianism isn't a *pseudo*-history, but a "signless cloud." It is, in essence, like the typewriter, since it adheres to a modern conception of human beings and, correspondingly, the world as reducible to material things. The very notion of cultural supremacy is about the fashioning of humanity's essence in its relation to the world. As I have shown in chapter 3, this is unmythical for Heidegger because to

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<sup>48</sup> *Parmenides*, 179.

<sup>49</sup> *Parmenides*, 104, and also Chapter 3, section 9 above.



think mythically, for the Greeks, requires allowing the essential to appear on its own, not to be forcibly fashioned by speech.

Heidegger's interpretation of Nazism is that it is bereft of any intellectual depth, as evidenced by its use of poetry, i.e. story-telling, as a propagandist tool. In other words, the Nazis abusively misinterpret what counts as myth, itself indicative of their reliance upon the logical prejudice, and, in so doing, gloss over any real insight into the question of the meaning of being. For Heidegger, the fascist political movement at first appears promising because it seems to harken back to a conception of a German *Volk* that cannot be altered by the conventional course of self-manufacture and ideological implementation: a picture of a populace rooted to the soil from which it sprung. If I am right about Heidegger implying that the Arian pseudo-myth is a "signless cloud," then it can be argued that he sees Nazi propaganda as cynically motivated: it is simply the use of the modern, Cartesian way of thinking about the world in order to reclaim a more ancient ideal. But this conclusion that the Nazi movement is manipulative is unsatisfying, since Heidegger does not articulate any argument about what is wrong with the practical means and purposes of Nazi politics.

Within an anthropology that uses the framework of a traditional metaphysics for making its distinctions, one can complete an argument against the rationalization that there is something really, ontologically lesser about certain groups of people—Jews, Poles, blacks, homosexuals, communists, Catholics—that warrants their removal from within the boundaries of the *Volk*. In fact, the Nazi rationalization of genocidal extermination falls apart under such an analysis, because it confuses parts and wholes in its own logic, leveling the distinctions between ways of

living, essential and nonessential human features, moral determinations about these features, and existence itself. Heidegger does not perform this kind of analysis, having decided that such a counterargument is fruitless since it, like the Nazis, attends only to its own system and its own hyper-rationalized ideal. Instead, he earnestly presses against metaphysics itself. He comes to favor the possible safety of a more mystical way of living in response to ethical systems, a way that allows the philosopher to be furtive, suggestible, and capable of remaining silent and patient in the face of absolute assertions about both the way things are and the way they ought to be. Heidegger chooses to overlook the possibility of using the particulars of philosophy and history to directly challenge the present regime, because he concludes that Nietzsche's thought, including the advantages of history for life proposed in the *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, fails to evade that which it purports to evade: the pull of Platonism and the hyperrationalism of modernity. Instead, Heidegger enacts a method of investigation, what he calls formal indication in *GM* (1929) and earlier, that uses carefully selected elements from the history of philosophy to show the possibility of a different kind of appropriation of being. In such an appropriation, becoming would be on equal footing with being, because the wonder of their interconnection would be retained via a momentous event of understanding, an *Ereignis*, achieved through poetic discourse.

As I have tried to show in Chapter 1 and throughout this dissertation, Heidegger's method of investigation, insofar as he makes use of assertion and declarative statements, does so in a circumspect or non-definitive manner, however forceful his claims may appear. While he no longer calls this method formal indication in *Parmenides*, Heidegger's thought presents itself as

promoting what ought or could be brought forth as an interpretation due to either the identity of the thinker or of being itself as it shows itself to the thinker. Heidegger's method is one of turning toward another capacity or possibility contained within encountering, identifying and speaking about being—really any possibility that is counter to the pull of the logical prejudice. His entire project after *SZ* until *Parmenides*, and perhaps after, is the pursuit of this possibility in interpretation.

Plato is pivotal for Heidegger in 1942. He is the thinker who holds open and points through the door of interpretation; the rest of the history of metaphysics will close that door. Throughout the period which the present study encompasses, Heidegger habitually references Plato and, specifically, *Republic*. The conclusion of *Parmenides*, a dialogue the aim of which is to espouse a view of *muthos* as *logos*, ends with an extended examination of the Myth of Er from *Republic*, Book X. Bambach argues that, by reformulating in his rectoral address the influence that Plato has among the Nazi intellectuals of the 1930s, “Heidegger attempted to become the Platonic leader of the German nation, the philosophical *Führer* to lead the *Führer*.”<sup>50</sup> By the time of the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger has already had his Syracusan moment, his failure at putting the language of homeland and rootedness to work. The subsequent recasting of Plato as a pivotal thinker is, I think, the key to glimpsing Heidegger's own self-understanding.

If my interpretation that the post-rectoral Heidegger takes Plato to be a pivotal thinker is correct, then the picture that Heidegger appears to be painting concerning his own philosophy is that while he desires to become the voice of a new inception, the achievement of becoming that voice is, as yet, out of reach. To actually achieve speaking inceptively is to become, on

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<sup>50</sup> Bambach, 104.

Heidegger's own terms, a mystical poet alone. To be the new inceptive thinker, one must become analogous to Parmenides, and this new speech would be like that of the Sybil or a demigod. In Heidegger's words, "The poet of such poetizing necessarily stands between human beings and gods. . . . From the perspective of this 'between' between humans and gods, the poet is a 'demigod.'"<sup>51</sup> The new inception, the new speaking-out of being, like the Greek affinity for the mysterious, embraces the dyadic and remains captivated by it. But Heidegger does not himself completely enact this kind of speech. Rather, he calls for it, even in *Beiträge* and *Besinnung*, where he makes grasping attempts at it.<sup>52</sup> If Plato's thought is the pivot, the herald of the metaphysics of presence, then Heidegger restyles his own thought as the new pivot and himself as a new herald. This is what Heidegger's self-understanding shows itself to be. However, what Heidegger does not see, or at least is not capable of acknowledging at the time in 1942, is that to claim this heraldic position in thought is not any different from the intellectual 'bracketing' of practical life that Descartes claims as part of his method. Whether or not Heidegger's interpretation of the post-Nietzschean permutations of Cartesian metaphysics—namely, that it is merely a weak continuation of the metaphysical tradition in that it reduces the world to extension

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<sup>51</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* transl. by William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 139; "Der Dichter ist von diesem »Zwischen« zwischen Menschen und Göttern aus gesehen ein »Halbgott«. Wenn Hölderlin das Wesen des Dichters dichtet, muß er das Wesen des Halbgottes denken . . . . Der Dichter des Dichterischen ist der Halbgott," Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymne "Der Ister,"* ed. Walter Biemel vol. 53, *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1984), 173. In this lecture course from earlier in the summer of 1942, Heidegger holds Hölderlin up as a model, as evidence of the possibility of inceptive thinking. Heidegger claims just this demigod status for Hölderlin. For Heidegger, Hölderlin is unlike Parmenides or the goddess—is neither man nor god—because he poetizes the essence of poetry. He is the evidence of successful inceptive thinking that takes the original inception into account. It should be noted, however, that Heidegger pursues his own new inception because Hölderlin's inceptive thought occurs prior to the completion of metaphysics in the thought of Nietzsche. The interpretation of Heidegger's Hölderlin interpretation as presented by Bärbel Frischmann addresses this difference. Bärbel Frischmann, "Die Wahrheit der Dichtung: Zu Heideggers Hölderlinrezeption." In *Sprache - Dichtung - Philosophie: Heidegger und der deutsche Idealismus*, edited by Bärbel Frischmann. (Freiburg and München: Alber, 2010,) 76-94.

<sup>52</sup> See Chapter 1, n. 106.

and, thereby, limits human reason—is correct, this criticism does not prevent Heidegger from engaging in the kind of arm’s length distancing of ethical and political issues that Descartes describes in his own provisional moral code in *Discourse on Method*, Part III.

To see how this works, I want to contrast my picture of Heidegger’s Plato-as-pivot theory with a more straightforward interpretation of the source for Heidegger’s language of homeland, namely, the myth of the metals from *Republic*, Book II. In Book II, after introducing each class of citizens, Socrates turns to discussing their education. He proposes that education must begin with speech making, with both true speeches and false. Moreover, Socrates tells his companions that false speeches are more suitable for the very young: “Don’t you understand . . . that first we tell tales [*muthous*] to children? And surely they are, as a whole, false [*pseudos*], though there are true [*alethē*] things in them too. We make use of tales [*muthois*] with children before exercises.”<sup>53</sup> Socrates also informs his companions that they, as the intellectual founders of this city, must be perspicuous censors of the tales allowed into the city. At the end of the discussion on education, Socrates includes his own tale, the myth of the metals, to convince the citizens of the ideal city that their way of life is as it should be.

For Plato, or rather for Socrates in *Republic*, myth is necessary, but it can also be dangerous. Myths are the first educational tools that human beings employ, but not all myths are alike. For a myth to remain in the ideal city, the true things it contains must somehow outweigh the fact that myths are, as he says, on the whole false [*pseudos*]. The noble falsity [*gennāion*

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<sup>53</sup> Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 377a3-5. Bracketed text mine. For the Greek, I have used the Loeb edition: Plato, *Republic*, vol. 1, trans. Paul Shorey (London: Harvard University Press, 1982).

*pseudos*] characterizes the tale the content of which, though false, brings truth to whoever hears it; it is a noble lie because it is, as a story, apt.

If Socrates intends his audience to accept that he is both philosopher and censor, then it seems that philosophers are the ones capable of identifying the truth (as opposed to the false) and designating which myths are ‘true’ and thus worthy of telling. The good tales, Socrates says, are those that present the gods as they are, so that the listener might imitate them and live a good life.<sup>54</sup> Since children are disposed to emulate living as the gods and heroes do, myths must show that the gods and the heroes are good and should not portray them acting in negative ways. The amount of truth in a myth is determined by how closely the poet’s representation of the god matches up with the form [*ideas*] of the good god.<sup>55</sup> Implicitly, then, in order to separate the worthwhile myths from the expendable ones, the philosopher must have some insight into the divine in order to correctly judge how the gods ought to be portrayed.

In books VI and VII, the importance of this capacity in the philosopher is repeated in Socrates’s description of the divided line and the cave.<sup>56</sup> In the account of the cave, Socrates tells Glaucon that truth is only had by insight, which is to say that discerning truth takes time and practice at all of the intellectual skills, particularly dialectic. The best means of separating the true from the false, it seems, is only available to those with a lifetime of practice at performing the separation.

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<sup>54</sup> *Republic*, 379a6-9.

<sup>55</sup> *Republic*, 380d8-9. Note that Bloom uses the English word ‘idea’ to translate *ideas*. I prefer ‘form’ to ‘idea’ when discussing the term in Plato’s texts for a few reasons. First, “form” differentiates what Plato’s Socrates is talking about from later Neoplatonic or Platonist arguments about divine ideas. Second, the contemporary use of the word ‘idea’ connotes a merely psychological event within the human mind.

<sup>56</sup> *Republic*, 509c-511d and 534b-c.

For the Socrates of *Republic*, it appears that the main reason philosophers occupy themselves with separating the true from the false is so that the physical world may imitate the formal more completely. As an imitative art used in education, myth-making is done well and may be accepted as true when it accurately represents the divine, that is, the immutable form of the divine, in a very carefully constructed story. As Socrates would have it, myth is properly part of the craft of the poet, but its nature is properly known only by the philosopher, who understands its use through analysis of form and content. At best, myth leads mankind to a worthwhile opinion, but it never provides the thought or insight proper to philosophical reasoning. Because it is primarily a falsity, myth can only lead to a mitigated understanding of truth. Myth, as proposed by Socrates, is neither demonstration nor dialectic, and thus it does not fully share in reason.<sup>57</sup> If the person who listens to a philosophical discussion cannot grasp its meaning, then the proper convenient story will be enough to guide the irrational parts of his soul. Correspondingly, the philosopher alone is competent to judge the value of myth, not by standing in awe when telling one, but by being judicious about aligning the content of myth with the philosopher's knowledge of the good, that is, with the metaphysical conception of the ethical and political good.

To be sure, this brief interpretation of *muthos* in *Republic* is, on Heidegger's terms, a rather standard and even "idle" one. Such an interpretation is not meant to fall within the bounds

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<sup>57</sup> There are, of course, scholars who oppose such an interpretation. Examples include Claudia Baracchi, *Of Myth, Life, and War in Plato's "Republic"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), hereafter referred to by title and page number; Eva Brann, 108-245 and 256-72; Stanley Rosen, *The Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and John Sallis, *Being and Logos: Reading the Platonic Dialogues* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 312-455. Note that each of these authors is, to some degree, influenced by Heidegger's reading of the Greeks, Plato in particular. Thanks to Paul Higgins for directing me to Brann and Rosen as alternative interpreters.

of a “thoughtful heeding” of the text. By contrast, Heidegger’s revised Platonic gesture is to use the capacity for provisional argument as a guide for his own method in order to show that there is a path that reconnects the poetic with the rational. Just as Plato’s use of argument and resultant confusion in *Republic* invites the reader to analyze further in order to fill in the gaps and counter the mistakes made by the interlocutors, Heidegger’s method of circumspection, trial and error, and carefully selected investigations of Presocratic utterances invites the reader to consider that one can indeed put aside metaphysical pronouncements of absolute certainty. This is what he intends by showing that, in recounting the Myth of Er, Plato is not a mythmaker but rather one who re-presents myths as a condition for the possibility of an account of being that is organized via argumentation.<sup>58</sup> Heedful thinking is not a completely realized enactment of a new inception, but instead (in a revision of Plato’s use of myth within argument to show why metaphysics is needed in choosing myths), it is the use of argument to show its own groundlessness when it is without poetic wonderment. Heedful thinking requires that the thinker eventually gives way to what the investigation seems to indicate; it calls forth a different mode of thinking in contrast to the speech it analyzes and the kind of speech it is itself. Heedful thinking performs the same function as that of the herald. Thus, Heidegger’s thought is Platonic insofar as he abandons the role of philosopher-king or kingmaker and adopts the position of herald. To view him as a mythmaker is to confuse the herald with the demigod, the heedful with the one heeded.

One of the clear consequences of Plato’s dialogue on justice, however, is that arguing about and settling upon a conception of the whole is always-already tied up with determining the

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<sup>58</sup> See *Parmenides*, 171 and 185. See section 11. My comments there suggest what I claim here: Heidegger remains Platonic by staying within the bounds of assertion.



good. Ethics and ontology are inextricably linked. The examination of the Myth of Er in *Parmenides* points to this as the consequence of the prioritization of the metaphysics of presence.<sup>59</sup> If Heidegger's philosophy at the critical moment of World War II styles itself as a kind of Platonic heralding, as I claim here, then the real danger of his thought comes to light, and both Caputo and Bambach strike upon it. Caputo puts it best:

Heidegger's *Denkweg* is a sustained lesson in what happens when we try to surmount or transcend a concern with human well-being by reaching out for its transcendental conditions (*Being and Time*) or by stepping back from it in order to find a more originary *topos* (later works) [e.g. *Parmenides*, 140-2]. Once we cut the nerve of our obligations to one another, we can never repair it; once we neutralize it we can never reactivate it; once we try to gain the ground of a realm prior to such concern, it will never get back in.

The matter for thought must from the start be a matter of what matters to factual life.<sup>60</sup>

While I disagree with Caputo that Heidegger has achieved a myth all his own, the very aim of calling for a new inception, of heralding a poetic ontology, seems in danger of doing just what Caputo laments here: severing morality and human concern from the pursuit of its principles. As Heidegger himself notes regarding Plato's *Republic*, it is "a recollection of the essential and not a plan for the factual."<sup>61</sup> Insofar as Heidegger attempts to be a new Plato and herald-in a new inception, he also overlooks the factual in favor of the essential. Heidegger's new inception, insofar as its method requires a recollection of the first inception, overlooks the material reason for inquiring into the essential at all. People are, for Heidegger, of less importance than what is, for him, the essence of humanity, the confrontation with being. His heralding-in of a new

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<sup>59</sup> See *Parmenides*, 176 and section 10 of this dissertation.

<sup>60</sup> *Demythologizing Heidegger*, 168. Reference in brackets mine.

<sup>61</sup> *Parmenides* (English), 95; "eine Erinnerung ins Wesenhafte, aber nicht eine Planung ins Faktische," *Parmenides*, 141.

inception allows him to avoid evaluating day-to-day events within his thought during what is, daily, a disturbing time.

Heidegger's procedure of thoughtfully heeding a text like Parmenides's poem is a roundabout exercise in delimiting inceptive thinking. Such a delimiting must also recognize that to think heedfully means to not yet succeed at or engage in the kind of thought pointed at by the exercise. To think inceptively is to speak poetically, to yield to the mysteriousness of the divine—dyadic oppositions in particular—over and against one's mastery of language as a tool of argument. By contrast, to speak heedfully of *alētheia* is to provide a view of a dyadic principle that is given the stature of a goddess whose essence cannot be fully articulated in the form of disputation, but only indicated without certainty. Heidegger's conception of a primordial *alētheia*, the dyad of concealment and disclosure, is therefore presented as a *possibility*. Heedful thinking prepares the way for inceptive thinking. It uses logical argument as a means of showing its own inability to present the mysteriousness of ultimate grounds. These groundless grounds of thinking are called for by the method of heedful thinking: taking apart the logical prejudice as it appears throughout the history of philosophy. Seen in this way, Heidegger's thought shows itself to perform the function of a herald. Just as Plato is not the founder of Platonism, but the herald of its systematic metaphysics and all the responses of metaphysics which follow after it, Heidegger's heedful thinking is the herald of inceptive thinking.

This heraldry, because it seeks to avoid enacting another instantiation of the metaphysics of presence, is performatively similar to one of the steps of Descartes' method for acquiring certainty in the sciences. While Heidegger's goal is clearly opposed to Descartes' logical

certitude, the reticent disposition required in heedful thinking is very much like Descartes' call for a provisional code of morality in *Discourse*, part III. I do not mean that Heidegger follows Descartes' four maxims for his own conduct—to follow the laws and customs obediently and emulate the moderate, to be firm and resolute in actions regardless of the dubitability of the opinions from which they sprang, to achieve self-control rather than control over worldly things, and to determine the best way in which to occupy one's life.<sup>62</sup> Rather, I mean that in order to be a heedful thinker, Heidegger must assume his day-to-day actions and opinions as merely conventional and provisional in worth. In order to attend to heedful thinking, Heidegger puts aside directly evaluating the political or ethical import of his opinions or those of his contemporaries within the scope of that heedful thinking. So Descartes puts it: "just as it is not enough, before beginning to rebuild the house where one lives, to pull it down, to make provisions for materials and architects, or to take a try at architecture for oneself, and also to have carefully worked out the floor plan; one must provide for something else in addition, namely where one can be conveniently sheltered while working on the other building."<sup>63</sup> So too, Heidegger's procedure of unearthing the foundations of the logical prejudice and calling for a new inception requires a retreat from evaluating day-to-day interactions in such a way that it would constantly recall a connection between them and those foundations.

As I have pointed out at several points within this dissertation, Heidegger is conscious of the difficulty of truly enacting a new inception because of the very fact that one's talk about

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<sup>62</sup> Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, third edition, transl. by Donald A. Cress, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 23-8. Page references are to the Adam and Tannery edition of Descartes' works.

<sup>63</sup> *Discourse*, 22.

being is inextricably linked with the history of that talk in metaphysics. But this is the very problem in calling for the inception and attempting it in a contrived way; the prioritization of being as presence gives way to certain, clear conceptions of the good and the just that follow from it. In uprooting the foundations of making clear moral distinctions, Heidegger's daily life must give way to what is currently held in his own time and place, just as Descartes indicates about his own attempt at regrounding metaphysics.

What is different about Descartes' approach in *Discourse*, part III is that he acknowledges the provisionality of his own behavior and his adherence to a mode of life and its attendant opinions during that period of re-investigating the foundations of his path of thought. However, this is not Heidegger's provisionality; Heidegger's provisionality is limited to particular ways in which he investigates the possibility of a new inception, as exemplified by his claims about the myth of Er in *Parmenides*. *Discourse* Part III draws attention to the fact that Descartes is not trying to undermine the moral and political order of his time, or at least wants to preserve the appearance that he is not undermining it. Contrarily, Heidegger's kind of provisional investigations show either a lack of self-consciousness or a lack of concern about what is at stake in putting aside metaphysical conclusions about the nature of truth and being and not reaffirming something of it at the end of the exercise. By acting as herald, Heidegger avoids seriously confronting political theories and their underlying ethics and, as a consequence, has no proposal that could even stand in as an alternative to the beliefs and policies inherent to Nazism. He stops at dismissing most any modern politics, Nazism included, by virtue of a connection to the metaphysics of presence. Such a dismissal leaves no practical choices except withdrawal,

which, as Agnes Heller seems to think, is exactly what Heidegger advocates.<sup>64</sup> This interpretation of Heidegger's thought asserts that it contains an inherent danger, though it also yields the benefit of showing philosophy its own limits. Heidegger's heralding of inceptive thinking cannot stand for long, since its very nature is to give way to what follows upon it. The insight of Heidegger's interpretation of myth is unsettling and designedly so, but is so unsettling that it upends even its own advancement. Just as Heidegger critiques the logical prejudice for forcing truth to fit too tightly within rigidly defined boundaries, others can critique his own inceptive thinking for its forced exclusivity. The highly scientific attitude of the modern logical prejudice is immoderate in Heidegger's eyes, but it may be that in striving to avoid it, Heidegger actually aims at the opposite extreme rather than the mean—as Aristotle says in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of the immoderate man.<sup>65</sup> Heidegger purposely aims away from the metaphysician's concern with particular truth as it is emphasized in scientific modernity. The clear opposition that the metaphysician sees between the one and the many is contrasted with the mysterious possibility of the two held together, with each acting as the ground for the other. Such is the goal of inceptive thinking. What might be gained, then, from Heidegger's thought is an opportunity for examining the practical implications of taking extreme stances that favor either the scientific or the poetic.

The student of Heidegger's thought must be prepared to reconcile the strict logic of scientific claims with the contemplative dimension of poetic thought and not conflate or blur the distinction between the two. This is an exercise in deliberation. Yet an outright rejection of

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<sup>64</sup> Heller, 257-9, and see Chapter 3, section 10 above.

<sup>65</sup> NE, 1109a30-1109b7.

Heidegger's thought is likely to slip back into prevailing claims and systems. Heidegger's account of myth as a mode of rational speech brings to the fore the incompleteness of any systematic metaphysics and, consequently, the need for deliberation within philosophy. The insufficiency of Heidegger's account of myth is that it presumes that only in a failed ethical system—by virtue of being a consequence of the metaphysics of presence—is the failure of living ethically a potential consequence. On the contrary, only where deliberation is discarded or avoided does philosophy itself become dangerous to everything; in such circumstances, truth becomes separated from life. Heidegger's heralding suggests resisting deliberation, if only for a limited period of time, in order to make room for the new inception. But by making too much of primordial *alētheia* and the access to it via *muthos* specifically and poetic speech in general, Heidegger pushes his own thought away from the commitments of ethics and politics.

The dangerous consequence of this heralding is that merely to follow Heidegger's thought is to cede ethics and deliberation to whatever comes after it. In attempting to rectify the "error" of the metaphysics of presence, Heidegger risks pushing aside any clear ethico-political claims that separate his own thought from that of contemporaneous thinkers. Like Descartes in his stove-heated room, Heidegger provisionally accepts the status quo in order to perform his method.<sup>66</sup> The benefit of such a stance is that it requires anyone who takes his thought seriously to become deliberative themselves, to respond to his method of thinking with practical steps. To do otherwise is to subject one's own thought and life to a risky position. In seeking the safety of the *poêle*, Heidegger does not deliberate about ethics and politics, but only asks to suspend

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<sup>66</sup> Compare my comments with the related arguments in Jean-François Courtine, "Les Méditations cartésiennes de Martin Heidegger," *Les Études Philosophiques* 88 (2009): 103-15; and, R. Matthew Shockey, "Heidegger's Descartes and Heidegger's Cartesianism," *European Journal of Philosophy* 20.2 (2012):285-311.

judgment about them. His own thought is left here during the critical years of his investigation of inceptive thinking. His thought is dangerous because it eventually yields to any ethics, including those it seeks to dismiss or deconstruct.

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