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The Concept of Poiesis in Heidegger's An Introduction to Metaphysics¹

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In a lecture delivered in 1935 entitled *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger forges what appears to be an un-Platonic link between poetry and philosophical thinking. This lecture offers the first extensive treatment of these two topics, to which Heidegger will dedicate a great deal of attention in the years to follow. This apparently un-Platonic link is, in fact, *only* apparent, since the very concepts of thinking (*noein*) and poetry (*poiesis*) to which Heidegger refers in this lecture are themselves un-Platonic. To be precise: they are pre-Platonic. Turning to the Pre-Socratic thinkers— in this case Parmenides and Heraclitus— Heidegger retrieves a notion of philosophical thinking supposedly more original than that of the tradition beginning with Plato and Aristotle, for whom thinking was adapted to the

¹ All references to *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Ralph Manheim (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987), will be indicated in the body of this discussion by the abbreviation *IM*; *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1962), will be indicated by *BT*; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), will be indicated by *BPP*. The theme of this paper fits into my larger project of examining the place of art in the development of Heidegger's thought.

model of seeing. Heidegger furthermore retrieves in Sophoclean tragedy a concept of *techne*, or the 'know-how' corresponding to the activity of *poiesis* (*Herstellen*/Fabrication), that is more original than the Platonic-Aristotelian interpretation of this concept understood as a form of *mimesis*. By way of synthesis, Heidegger then tries to demonstrate the original kinship between the notions of *poiesis* and *noein* as they were originally conceived but which, with Plato and Aristotle, become no longer accessible.

What this kinship consists in, however, is not immediately clear.² Heidegger insists upon the difference between poetry and philosophical thinking, yet he also maintains that they occupy 'the same order.' (*IM*, 26) To complicate matters further, Heidegger claims that the thinking of the Presocratics distinguishes itself by the fact that it was still *poetical* and, reciprocally, the poetry of Sophocles is distinguished by the fact that it was still *thoughtful*. (*IM*, 144) Anyone familiar with Hegelian dialectic cannot help but call into question, at least at first, the substance of this alleged distinction between poetry and philosophical thinking on the basis that the one appears to depend on the other in order to be what it is. We might begin to clarify this almost purposeful obscurity as follows. Whereas philosophical thinking is *explicitly* concerned with the sense of Being, original poetry, while *implicitly* concerned with the sense of Being, does not make this issue thematic. Thus, the language of the philosopher and the poet reflects this difference, even though the Presocratic philosophers oftentimes borrow from poetical discourse in the expression of their thinking. Still, this explanation is obviously one-sided. It only helps clarify how original poetry was thoughtful, but does not reckon with how philosophical thinking at the inception of the tradition was poetical. To answer that the thinking of the Presocratic philosophers was poetical to the extent

² This relation between poetry and philosophy remains unclear even after *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. At times Heidegger maintains their difference and at other times, for example, in 'The Nature of Language' he identifies the two as the same. See Joseph Kockelmans, *Heidegger on Art and Art Works* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1985), pp. 194-202. Thinking and original poetizing become increasingly difficult for Heidegger to distinguish, and we might add the same applies to the distinction between thinking and *praxis* as well. Hence Heidegger's important statement in the 'Letter on Humanism'. Responding to the question concerning when he planned to write an ethics, Heidegger explains that first we need to clarify the distinction between ethics and ontology. He tries to show how this distinction is derivative of a more original notion of thinking which is 'the original ethics'. See 'Letter on Humanism' in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), especially pp. 255-265.

that these thinkers often borrowed certain formal elements from poetical discourse to express the content of their thinking is unsatisfactory because it overlooks the ontological significance that Heidegger attributes to original poetry. The poetry of the early Greek poets is, *with respect to its content*, characterized by its thoughtfulness. This means that the poetry of the Greek poets is not poetical simply because of the language they employ and, correlatively, the thinking of the Presocratic philosophers remains poetical even when their thinking is expressed in the language of the poets. The alternative which resolves this aporia, and at the same time points to a deeper understanding of poetry as well as philosophical thinking, is that *poiesis* is a mode of disclosure (*a-letheia*) of Being which is conceptually broader than, and so can assume the modality of, either philosophical or poetical discourse. Otherwise put: the concept of *poiesis* furnishes the analogical unity of the poet and philosopher. *Poiesis* becomes the original site of Being's disclosure, whether this becomes thematic in the case of the philosopher or unthematic in the case of the poet. So construed, this enables us to understand how Heidegger can explicate (*aus-legen*) what is implicit in early Greek poetry to illuminate his interpretations of the early Greek philosophers.

In this paper I shall examine the concept of *poiesis* articulated in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* and attempt to clarify the sense in which, according to Heidegger, it is an original site of truth. To this end, I will first examine why the issue of artistic production moves into the foreground of Heidegger's concerns in the 1930s. Since this concern is animated by Heidegger's retrieval of an original concept of *poiesis*, I shall endeavor to reconstruct the conceptual basis of this discovery. Here I hope to show how Heidegger's discovery of an original concept of *poiesis* was in large measure made possible through his turn to the Presocratics.

Let me emphasize at the start that this last claim does not imply either that Heidegger completely neglects the Presocratics before the 1930s or that the concept of *poiesis* had no role in the project of *Fundamental Ontology*. On the contrary, we can find plenty of references to the Presocratics in *Being and Time* and other Marburg writings, and during this same period Heidegger's interpretation of *poiesis* plays an indispensable role in both his 'Existential-Analytic' of *Dasein* and his destructive retrieve of Greek ontology. However, the role Heidegger assigns to the Presocratics and his interpretation of *poiesis* have an altogether different complexion in the 1930s.

First, in his Marburg period (1923-8) Heidegger discerns no discontinuity between, on the one hand, Plato and Aristotle and, on the other hand, the Presocratic thinkers.³ Indeed, it is clear that during this time Heidegger views the Presocratics as the source of certain prejudices that the tradition commencing with Plato and Aristotle simply takes over.⁴ The failure to distinguish the two groups of

³ Cf. Jacques Taminiaux's "The Interpretation of Greek Philosophy in Heidegger's *Fundamental Ontology*" in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 19 (1988), pp. 3-13; Marlène Zarader, "The Mirror with the Triple Reflection" in *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, Vol. II, edited by Christopher Macann (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 17-36; & Jean-François Courtine, "The Destruction of Logic: From *Logos* to Language", translated by Kristin Switala and Rebekah Sterling, in *The Presocratics after Heidegger*, ed. David C. Jacobs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 25-53. All three of these scholars share this view.

⁴ In *Being and Time*, we find five explicit references to Parmenides and one to Heraclitus. There are two in particular, concerning Parmenides, which demonstrate that Heidegger did not detect a discontinuity between the Presocratics and Plato and Aristotle. Both concern the privileging of intuition as the mode of cognitive apprehension proper to philosophy. i) "*Legein* itself- or rather *noein*, that simple awareness of something present-at-hand in its sheer presence-at-hand, which Parmenides had already taken to guide him in his interpretation- has the temporal structure of a pure 'making present' of something." (48); ii) In reference to Aristotle's account of the genesis of science, Heidegger writes: "This Greek interpretation of the existential genesis of science is not accidental. It brings to explicit understanding what has already been sketched out before hand in the principle of Parmenides: to gar auto noein estin te kai einai. Being is that which shows itself in the pure perception which belongs to beholding, and only by such seeing does Being get discovered. Primordial and genuine truth lies in pure beholding. This thesis has remained the foundation of Western philosophy ever since." (215) Furthermore, in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger not only claims that Parmenides is 'the true founder of the West', but also that the thesis of Parmenides just indicated, which he translates as "noein, perceiving, simple ap-prehension, intuiting, and being, actuality are the same", anticipates the Kantian identification of Being and thinking and, by implication, German Idealism as a whole. (110) This is striking when we compare this passage with the one found in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* in which Heidegger criticizes Kant and the other German Idealists for tracing back their epistemological position to Parmenides. Heidegger explains that translating Parmenides' fragment to read "Thinking and Being are the same"- note: this is precisely how Heidegger himself translated it in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*- is entirely "un-Greek". This is a projection of German Idealism on to Parmenides. Since for the German Idealists, Heidegger writes, "thinking and being are supposed to be the same according to Parmenides, everything becomes subjective. Nothing is in itself. But such a doctrine, we are told, is found in Kant and the German Idealists. Essentially Parmenides anticipated their teachings [we are told]... This familiar view requires special mention here...because the dominance of these views has made it difficult to understand the authentic truth of the primordially Greek words spoken by Parmenides." (136-137)

thinkers results from the fact that in this period Heidegger primarily focuses on Plato and Aristotle and, therefore, merely assimilates the Presocratics into this interpretation. So, when I claim that Heidegger 'turns' to the Presocratics we can understand this as a 're-turn' provided we keep in mind that a decisive reconfiguration takes place. While in his Marburg period Heidegger viewed the Presocratics, Plato, and Aristotle collectively as the founders of Western philosophy, in the 1930s he introduces a division into what was previously a unity. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, where this new constellation emerges for the first time, Heidegger argues that the Presocratics represent the 'Original or First Beginning,' whereas Plato and Aristotle represent the 'End of the First Beginning' or, alternatively, the 'Beginning of the Second Beginning.' (*IM*, 179)

Second, the transformation which Heidegger's interpretation of *poiesis* undergoes in the 1930s is a complex issue which I will try to elaborate in some detail below. In brief, though, Heidegger's understanding of *poiesis* during his Marburg period is not conceived as an *original* site of the disclosure of Being as it is in the early 1930s. This early interpretation is limited by both the transcendental framework within which Heidegger is working and, relatedly, by the fact that Heidegger's understanding of *poiesis* at this time is mediated primarily through Aristotle. The path that Heidegger's thinking later takes, in which he attempts to free himself from this transcendental framework, opens up an even deeper horizon against which the Being-question is examined. It is this deeper horizon which also paves the way, I think, towards a more comprehensive interpretation of *poiesis*.

I have organized the following discussion into three main parts. First, I will try to clarify Heidegger's interpretation of *poiesis* in the Marburg period. Second, I will consider some of the developments which contribute to the discovery of a more original concept of *poiesis* in the 1930s. Lastly, I will examine Heidegger's retrieval of this concept of *poiesis* as it is concretely worked out in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*.

I

In order to establish the context for Heidegger's interpretation of *poiesis* in his Marburg period, we must first briefly recall the basic contours of Heidegger's project during this time which he calls Fundamental Ontology. This background sketch will also prove helpful later when we examine the motivation behind Heidegger's reappropriation of this concept in the 1930s. Fundamental Ontology represents an attempt to clarify the sense or meaning of Being (*Sinn des Seins*) which can then serve as a basis for all regional ontologies. A regional ontology concerns itself with a particular being and, in so doing, presupposes a certain determinate interpretation of the sense of this being. The sense of a particular being furnishes the horizon in which a particular being becomes intelligible. Heidegger thus wishes to exhibit the sense of Being in general that provides the ground for the possible interpretations of the Being of any particular being whatsoever.

Heidegger's project is qualified as *Fundamental* Ontology because of its propaedeutic nature. (*BPP*, 224) Before attempting to elucidate the sense of Being in general, Heidegger begins by clarifying the sense of a particular being, namely, ourselves. The operative assumption is that the clarification of the Being-sense of this being will open up the horizon, hitherto concealed, for an interpretation of the sense of Being as such. This procedure is justified and promises to be a fruitful one, Heidegger believes, because of the unique character of our Being. We always already live in a pre-thematic understanding of the sense the Being of beings *in general*. (Thus including both the Being-sense of ourselves and that of beings other than ourselves.) We are Da-sein: the 'there' or 'here' (*Da*) for whom an understanding of 'Being' (*Sein*) is disclosed. To state the same point again, Da-sein is the site where this transcending of beings to Being has (always already) occurred. This intentional structure of transcendence which belongs intrinsically to the Being of Da-sein is indeed the condition that makes raising the Being-question in an explicit manner possible in the first place, and so working it out assumes the form of an immanent clarification as it does in Hegel. Such is required because, although Dasein is constituted by an understanding of the sense of Being in general, Dasein has not made it transparent to itself. It has not been clarified by the tradition, according to Heidegger, because a certain interpretation of Being has predominated. Being has been interpreted in terms of a being static and present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*) constitutive of things and Heidegger maintains that the tradition beginning in Greek ontology comprises but reinscriptions of this interpretation.

This interpretation not only erases, first, the irreducible difference between Being and beings— what Heidegger in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* for the first time refers to as ‘The Ontological Difference’— but also, second, the difference between the Being of the present-at-hand and that of Da-sein. For Heidegger the first problem has its source in the second. The interpretation of Dasein's Being in terms of the present-at-hand of things results in a subject-object dualism from which insoluble epistemological problems concerning the relation of the sensible and the intelligible emerge. Construing the Being of Da-sein in this way covers over the fact that transcendence, or an understanding of Being which is irreducible to beings, belongs to the very Being of Da-sein itself.⁵ Thus, the orientation of the tradition to the present-at-hand has its roots in the failure to clarify the Being of Dasein in its own authentic (*eigentlich*) character.

The preceding remarks enable us to view Heidegger's privileging of Dasein more convincingly. Since i) Dasein exists in an understanding of Being in general and ii) the traditional standard of Being is the present-at-hand, yet iii) the Being of Dasein is not reducible to this traditional interpretation of Being, this traditional interpretation needs to be supplemented such that it takes into account the Being of Dasein. Furthermore, since Dasein exists in an understanding of Being in general, the clarification of the Being of Dasein will thereby reveal the horizon in which an understanding of beings other than Dasein is possible. It will, in other words, reveal the conditions which underwrite the Being-sense of the present-at-hand and place it within a more comprehensive framework of intelligibility.

⁵ Husserl, of course, saw this already with his notion of 'intentionality' and Heidegger is deeply indebted to him. However, Heidegger is also critical of his teacher because Husserl does not clarify radically enough the Being of subjectivity. As a result, Husserl still works within the Cartesian framework, albeit one which is radically modified by his notion of intentionality. See Heidegger's 1925 lecture course *The History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, translated by Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), especially pp. 27-131 for the most detailed treatment and critique of Husserl in Heidegger's writings. See also Marion Tapper, "The Priority of Being or Consciousness for Phenomenology: Heidegger and Husserl" in *Metaphilosophy* 17 (1986), pp. 153-161, & John D. Caputo's "Husserl, Heidegger and the Question of a 'Hermeneutic' Phenomenology" in *Husserl Studies* 1 (1984), pp. 157-178. We should add that Hegel also, I believe, maintains a proto-Husserlian notion of intentionality. According to Hegel, in response to Kant, we already are open to Being (as it is in itself). The problem is that this has not yet become for consciousness. Still, Hegel too, whom Heidegger maintains, thought the tradition through to its logical end and achieved an epistemological closure, is, like Husserl, operating in the Cartesian framework which understands truth as (self) certainty.

Heidegger's analysis of Da-sein demonstrates that temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) is the horizon of sense in which its Being must be comprehended. The published sections of *Being and Time* unfold this argument. Heidegger begins with a very broad characterization, or 'formal indication,' of Da-sein as Being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Sein*), which is then gradually, by way of regressive analysis, given a more concrete filling. The provisional expression of Being-in-the-world is just another way of articulating the complex structure of Da-sein's transcendence indicated above and is an alternative to the subject-object dualism of modern philosophy. Dasein is not a 'subject' which is externally related to an 'object.' This dualism, which can be traced back to Descartes, abstracts from Dasein's original situation as is revealed in its everyday concerned dealings in which finding itself already in a world belongs to its Being. The world is not the sum-total of objects that a subject encounters. Nor is it something that contains them. Characterizing the world in this way already imports the traditional interpretation of Being into an understanding of world. World is rather the space of significance (*Bedeutsamskeit*) by which Dasein orients itself in its concerned dealings. There only *is* a world (*Welt*) because Dasein, in its basic constitution, is *worldly* (*weltlich*). Thus, the unitary phenomenon belonging to the worldliness of Dasein's Self displaces a subject-object dualism. We should emphasize that Heidegger is not denying a fundamental experience of Otherness or an ineliminable givenness which is perhaps the most compelling impetus of such a dualism. The problem, however, is that the categories of being that sustain such a dualism derive from the traditional interpretation of Being and so do not appropriately apply to the incommensurate Being of Da-sein. Da-sein does not constitute other beings but beings are always already understood in a projected horizon of significance, i.e. world, and the experience of givenness or Otherness is, for Heidegger, incorporated within the Being-structure of Da-sein. Da-sein's transcendence is constituted as a *finite* transcendence which means that it is a thrown transcendence: Da-sein is not the ground of its transcendence. Heidegger refers to this aspect of opacity belonging to Da-sein's transcendence as Da-sein's *facticity*. The important point is that Da-sein is not factual because it encounters an opaque givenness of entities ("thatness", to use Aristotelian terminology) but instead Da-sein encounters this givenness because the Being of Da-sein is inherently factual or finite.⁶ Further-

⁶ This is an important element of Heidegger's critique of Kant. Cf. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, translated by Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 17-23. Also see William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963), pp. 106-158.

more, Da-sein's facticity and transcendence are co-original. Whereas Da-sein's transcendence implies that any given being is already understood against a background of projected possibilities of interpretation, Da-sein's facticity accounts not only for the inherent limitedness of such an understanding but also for the fact that interpretation (*hermeneuein*) is a fundamental need or concern of Da-sein's Being. As early as 1923 in a lecture entitled *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, Heidegger explains that "Hermeneutics is not an artificially devised mode of analysis which is imposed on Dasein and pursued out of curiosity...Rather, interpreting is itself a possible and distinctive how of the character of Being of facticity. Interpreting is a being which belongs to the Being of factual life itself."⁷

This last point is crucial. Da-sein's finitude, which according to Heidegger is disclosed through the existential mood of anxiety and the recognition of Da-sein's own Being-towards-death, functions as the ontological source of Da-sein's projection of possibility and so worldliness. While the world is always constituted as a space of already determinate meaning, Dasein's thrownness is what makes Da-sein's understanding of Being intrinsically questionable or an issue for it. Da-sein always already projects a horizon of meaning and is, therefore, open to a world because Da-sein exists as 'to be': something still to be attained rather than as something already completed. While anxiety discloses Da-sein's thrownness, a recognition of this thrownness is simultaneously the disclosure of Da-sein's own indeterminate 'Being-able' (*Sein-können*). Hence Heidegger's statement, which implies a reversal of the traditional view, that "higher than actuality stands *possibility*." (*BT*, 63) Note that Dasein's finite transcendence, while complexified into elements of facticity and transcendence through conceptual analysis, is still a unitary phenomenon. The one is not the ground of the other but both are aspects of a more primordial whole. Heidegger tries to articulate a single concept, he terms 'Care' (*Sorge*), that encompasses both aspects. Insofar as Dasein transcends beings to Being, Da-sein is 'Being-ahead-of-itself.' Inasmuch as Da-sein is factual, it is 'Being-already-thrown-into-a-world.' The interplay of these two aspects accounts for its already being fallen among entities in a horizon of determinate sense. Thus, Heidegger defines 'Care', which is the primordial articulation of Da-sein's Being, as follows: "The Being of Dasein means ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in-(the world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within the world)." (*BT*, 235-241)

⁷ *Ontology: A Hermeneutics of Facticity*, translated by John van Buren (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1999) pg. 15.

Having clarified the Being of Da-sein as 'Care', Heidegger finally reinterprets this complex though unified structure in terms of an *original* interpretation of temporality. This notion of temporality is to be distinguished from the concept of time developed by Aristotle, who offers the earliest systematic analysis of this concept, and which has since remained, *mutatus mutandis*, the dominant view of the tradition. For Aristotle, time is conceived as a linear sequence of 'Nows' and so the whole of time, including future and past, is determined by one of its parts, namely the present.⁸ According to Heidegger this privileging of the present is not accidental; it reflects the traditional interpretation of Being as present-at-hand. Since this ontological bias is derivative of a more comprehensive understanding of Being accessed through an analysis of Da-sein's Being, so is the Aristotelian concept of time. It is derivative, in other words, of the original temporal sense of Da-sein. Original temporality is a unified phenomenon from which the present emerges out of the interplay of future and present. The temporal moments, or *ecstases*, correspond to and reinscribe temporally the moments constituting the complex structure of Da-sein's Being interpreted as 'Care'. Only via an analysis of Da-sein's Being which reveals itself as 'Care' could this horizon of original temporality open up. And having been opened up, temporality furnishes the unity of the sense of Da-sein's Being that Heidegger seeks to exhibit. The unified process of temporality establishes the unity of 'Care' and so serves as a more foundational concept with, therefore, more explanatory power.

During his Marburg period, Heidegger characterized his project as a *primordial science* of Being.⁹ (*BPP*, 11-15, 320-324/*BT*, 21-63) As we have already noted, his intention was to next work out the temporality (*Temporalität*) of Being in general based on this analytic of Da-sein. However, in *Being and Time* (1927), his *magnum opus*, as well as the other relevant lectures during this time— *The History of the Concept of Time* (1925-26), which was delivered shortly before *Being and Time*, and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), given six months after— this project is not brought to completion.¹⁰ We shall return to this issue in the next section since

⁸ Although Heidegger does not deal with Aristotle's concept of time in *Being and Time*, as promised, he does develop this analysis in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, pp. 229-274.

⁹ Let us note that as early as his 1919 KNS course, given while still in Freiburg and working under the tutelage of Husserl, Heidegger calls his project at the time a primordial and pre-theoretical science.

¹⁰ Thomas Sheehan, "Time and Being, 1925-1927" in *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, Vol. 1, ed. Christopher Macann (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 29-67.

it serves as the background for understanding Heidegger's interpretation of *poiesis* in the 1930s and we will now consider the role *poiesis* plays in Heidegger's *Fundamental Ontology*. To this end, we will focus on two texts: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* and *Being and Time*. In the first, the concept of *poiesis* functions explicitly as the linchpin of Heidegger's destruction of the Western philosophical tradition. In the second, the role of *poiesis* is not made explicit but nevertheless implicitly governs his analysis of Dasein's everyday Being-in-the-world.¹¹

In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger tries to demonstrate that the interpretation of Being as present-at-hand, which originates in Greek ontology, has its source in an understanding of Da-sein oriented by the horizon of production. As a result of this orientation, the metaphysical categories of Greek ontology are modeled on the experience of productive behavior, i.e. *poiesis*. The clue which, according to Heidegger, demonstrates this orientation to production is that the concept of *eidōs*, the 'look' that indicates the identity of a thing, is taken to be ontologically prior to the *morphe*, the shape of figure of a thing. If Greek ontology took as its guide ordinary perception, then the *eidōs* or look of something, i.e. the determination of what something is, would be read off the figure of the thing that perception furnishes.

For *Greek ontology*, however, the founding connection between *eidōs* and *morphe*, look and form, is exactly the reverse. The look is not grounded in the form but the form, the *morphe*, is grounded in the look. This founding relationship can be explained only by the fact that the two determinations for thingness, the look and the form of a thing, are not understood in antiquity primarily in the order of perception of something. In the order of apprehension I penetrate through the look of the thing to its form. The latter is essentially the first in the order of perception. But, if the relationship between look and form is reversed in ancient thought, the guiding clue for their interpretation cannot be the order of perception and perception itself. We must rather interpret them *with a view to production*. (*BPP*, 106)

¹¹ Jacques Taminiaux, "The Reappropriation of the Nicomachean Ethics: *Poiesis* and *Praxis* in the Articulation of Fundamental Ontology" in *Heidegger and the Project of Fundamental Ontology* translated by Michael Gendre (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 111-143; Robert E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 137-165.

Why production? Because in production, the artist projects an image of the thing, i.e. its intended look, before the thing worked upon comes to embody this image. The product, insofar as it eventually fulfills this intention, becomes a likeness or imitation of this projected model. This also explains, Heidegger notes, why the *eidos* is also referred to (by Aristotle) as *ti en einai* : what a thing already was (before it actualized 'this'). (ibid, 107) Heidegger then demonstrates how the other Greek categories are also modeled on productive behavior, and this orientation towards production proves formative for all subsequent metaphysical categories of Medieval and Modern ontology as well. The concept of created versus uncreated beings becomes foundational for Medieval ontology, which is carried over by Descartes. Even Kant, as Heidegger later shows, adopted the same orientation, since the discursive intellect is defined in contrast to the notion of a creative intellect and so does not construct its objects but must be given them via the faculty of sensibility. (ibid, 147-154)

How does this orientation to production imply an ontology of presence? Heidegger demonstrates this through a closer analysis of the telic nature of production. In production, the artisan not only shapes his or her material such that it embodies the projected model, but in so doing liberates this material from its dependence on the artisan until, when it eventually achieves this likeness, it obtains an independent *being-in-itself*. Until this fulfillment obtains the object is not fully present to itself. Since achieving this presence is the *telos* of production, presence-at-handness (*Vorhandensein*) is not only an integral component of the production process but it is also the productive intention. Heidegger explains that "In the intentional structure of production there is an implicit reference to something, by which this something is understood as not bound or dependent on the subject but, inversely, as released and independent." (ibid, 114) This also helps explain why the cognitive apprehension of Greek ontology is construed as ocular and so theoretical, which implies a detached comportment to an object and so an attitude *Da-sein* can adopt only when it has disengaged itself from the activity of production. This detached form of seeing or pure intuition (*noein*) is a modification of the horizontal seeing involved in the activity of production. (ibid, 109-110)

Heidegger's analysis of course raises a deeper question that he must also address: Why is Greek ontology oriented by production in the first place? In response to this question, Heidegger explains that Greek ontology is 'naive.' (ibid, 110) On the one hand, Greek ontology is self-reflective and endeavors to transcend an everyday understanding of Being-in-the-world in which *Da-sein* is non-reflectively immersed in order to lay bare the structure of intelligibility underlying it. On the other hand,

Greek ontology still remains within everydayness and takes its bearings from it. Consequently, it is not reflective enough. By remaining within the ambit of common everydayness, it does not succeed in clarifying the Being of Da-sein in a way that can interpret more deeply the conditions underlying the sense of its everyday Being-in-the-world. For this reason, Heidegger, at least at this time, saw the modern turn to the subject as a step in the right direction since it expressed the need to clarify the Being of Dasein, even though this modern attempt was still deeply misguided by the traditional ontological assumptions it uncritically retains. (ibid, 313) This in itself, however, does not sufficiently explain why remaining in an everyday understanding of phenomena implies an orientation to production. Heidegger explicitly acknowledges that an adequate account must demonstrate the necessity of this orientation to production, but he does not satisfy this requirement. (ibid, 116) Of course, he later shows how the activity of production presupposes original temporality and must be understood in terms of it, yet he fails to exhibit the inner necessity of this orientation in the first place. I think that this omission is significant. It perhaps suggests that Heidegger is not entirely clear himself at this time about the scope of his own insight. This lacuna in his argument indicates, if it does not anticipate, the possibility that *poiesis* might have a deeper source than Heidegger perceives at this time. This does not undermine Heidegger's analysis *tout court*. He can still maintain that Greek ontology is oriented towards an *everyday* understanding of production, i.e., one which fails to reflect more profoundly on the phenomenon of production. But then we would have to add that a deeper sense of production is overlooked by Heidegger as well.

Both Jacques Taminiaux and Franco Volpi, who work out the details of Gadamer's contention, have examined extensively how Heidegger's 'Dasein-Analytic' in *Being and Time* is an appropriation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹² Indeed, we know that *Being and Time* emerged out of a projected work consisting of a phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle for which he was offered a position at the University of Marburg.¹³ It is Taminiaux, though, who treats in depth

¹² Jacques Taminiaux, "The Reappropriation of the Nicomachean Ethics: *Poiesis* and *Praxis* in the Articulation of Fundamental Ontology", especially pp. 122-137.; Franco Volpi, "Dasein as *praxis* : the Heideggerian Assimilation and Radicalization of the Practical Philosophy of Aristotle", especially pp. 102-129.

¹³ Thomas Sheehan, "Time and Being, 1925-27", pp. 31-34. The introduction to this planned work on Aristotle, which resurfaced in 1989, was published that same year under the title

Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle's concept of *poiesis*, mainly by drawing on Heidegger's 1924 lecture course *Plato's Sophist*.¹⁴ He shows how Aristotle's concept becomes ontologized to fit the problematic of Fundamental Ontology and, specifically, serves as the paradigm for Heidegger's analysis of Dasein in its inauthentic everyday mode of Being-in-the-world. In its everyday mode of Being-in-the-world, Da-sein does not encounter entities as things present-at-hand (*vorhanden*), but as equipment ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*), and so to be used rather than to be brought under theoretical scrutiny. Entities only become present-at-hand when there occurs a rupture in the context of significance, i.e. the world, in which the equipmental entities are assigned their proper function. Thus, the present-at-hand interpretation of entities is derivative of the ready-to-hand, since the sense of the former is understood as a modification of the latter. The encountering of the ready-to-hand, while characterized by an immediate absorption in contrast to the detachment characterizing the encounter with the present-at-hand, nonetheless involves a sort of seeing. Yet, it is one with a peculiar intentional structure. It involves a peripheral or circumspensive seeing (*Umsicht*) of the context which lets the particular entity to be taken as this particular piece of equipment with this particular function. In other words, it involves a dynamic interplay of protension and retention, which gives precedence to the former. By contrast, the seeing involved in the encounter with the present-at-hand gives precedence to the entity and does so precisely because it detaches itself from the background context. According to Taminaux, Aristotle's analysis of *poiesis* serves as the model for Heidegger's own. When the artisan produces an artifact, he or she constantly, though only peripherally, keeps in sight the model towards which working on the material aims. Note: not raising this model to explicit awareness is the very condition for working on the material. In parallel fashion, not raising the context of significance, i.e. the world, to explicit awareness is the condition for Da-sein's finding something ready-to-hand.

What is significant here, and should be underscored, is the connection between everydayness and inauthenticity. Everydayness is inauthentic for Heidegger because it is not an original disclosure of Da-sein's own Being. In its everyday mode of Being-in-the world Da-sein dwells in a way that conceals its own possibilities and

"Aristoteles-Einleitung" in *Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften* and more recently was published in English in *Man and World* (1992).

¹⁴ Jacques Taminaux, "The Reappropriation of the Nicomachean Ethics: *Poiesis and Praxis* in the Articulation of Fundamental Ontology".

takes over the public already defined interpretations. According to Heidegger, absorption in the everyday world of concerned dealings is a retreat from the disclosure of Da-sein's own indeterminate 'Being-able' and finitude, or 'Being-towards-death'. In addition to demonstrating the Aristotelian heritage of Heidegger's concept of inauthentic Being-in-the-world, Taminiaux as well as Volpi demonstrate how Heidegger's concept of anticipatory resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*), according to which Da-sein accepts its finite Being-towards-death and thereby becomes open to its own existential possibility, is an appropriation of Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*, which is the knowledge corresponding to the activity of *praxis*.¹⁵ Only on the basis of this original disclosure of Da-sein's own possibilities is the fleeing from it, i.e. losing one's self, possible. The everyday, therefore, does not disclose the Being of Da-sein in an originary way but only reveals one mode of its Being. Moreover, insofar as it conceals the basis or ground of intelligibility of its everyday concerned dealings it is not authentic (*eigent-lich*): it does not reveal the Being of Da-sein that is its ownmost. If Heidegger's concept of inauthentic Being-in-the-world is, as Taminiaux cogently argues, an appropriation of Aristotle's notion of *poiesis*, then the latter constitutes the conceptual basis of a non-originary, hence derivative, disclosure of the sense of Da-sein's being and, in the framework of Fundamental Ontology, the sense of Being in general. Stated otherwise: *poiesis*, ontologically transformed by Heidegger, is not an original site of truth.

Before concluding this section we should call attention to a seeming inconsistency between the two texts examined above. On the one hand, Aristotle's concept of *poiesis* serves as the model of Heidegger's notion of Da-sein's inauthentic Being-in-the-world. On the other hand, the concept of *poiesis* becomes the Archimedean point of his critical deconstruction of Greek ontology and the metaphysics of presence that determines the former. *Prima facie*, we might tend to conclude that Heidegger's Da-sein analytic is, in conformity with the tradition, overdetermined by the notion of production as well. However, in defense of Heidegger we can reply

¹⁵ Jacques Taminiaux, "The Reappropriation of the Nicomachean Ethics: *Poiesis and Praxis* in the Articulation of Fundamental Ontology". Franco Volpi, "Dasein as *Praxis*: the Heideggerian Assimilation and Radicalization of the Practical Philosophy of Aristotle". Taminiaux's and Volpi's accounts must, though, be supplemented by a consideration of the influence that St. Paul, Luther, and Kierkegaard exercised upon the development of Heidegger's concept of resoluteness. For a fine discussion of this issue, see John van Buren's "Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther" in *Reading Heidegger from the Start*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 159-174; *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 157-202.

that although his starting point is so determined, the direction his inquiry takes does not so much as build itself up from this foundation as it bores through by way of deconstruction to something more fundamental underlying it and which it presupposes. Still, we must not overlook the fact that Heidegger does after all take his methodological bearings from this concept of production, and this invites us to consider how the role assigned to it in the economy of the Da-sein analytic sets up certain internal limitations that bar a deeper understanding of the concept. Heidegger's modeling the inauthentic and authentic of Da-sein on Aristotle's concept of poiesis and praxis, respectively, entails a disunity of poiesis and praxis which, in turn, prevents the incorporation of poiesis into the authentic Being-in-the-world of Da-sein. At the same time, there seems to be a sharp tension between this background conceptual configuration of poiesis and praxis, on the one hand, and the conceptual configuration that gets played out on the surface of the Da-sein Analytic. Heidegger's analysis of authentic resoluteness is elaborated (purposely and with justification) on such a formal level that he is relieved of the ontic issue concerning the concrete ways in which Da-sein's ownmost possibilities are actualized in its world. Yet, this does not attenuate the ontological problem still remaining on the formal level that Da-sein must actualize its ownmost possibilities in the world which it never leaves. Indeed, Heidegger himself states this in no uncertain terms: "Resoluteness, as *authentic Being-one's-Self*, does not detach dasein from its world...And how should it, when resoluteness as authentic disclosedness, is *authentically* nothing else than *Being-in-the-world*? Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with others." (*BT*, 344)¹⁶ In other words, there appears to be built into the fabric of the Da-sein Analytic the possibility of a notion of production which is the actualization of Da-sein's ownmost possibilities. It is my opinion that the contrapuntal, dichotomous configuration of poiesis and praxis that Heidegger appropriates from Aristotle during this time prevents a deeper understanding of production that could be reconciled with the authenticity of Da-sein, and it is this overlooked possibility which Heidegger retrieves in his later thinking in the 1930s. Moreover, it is my contention that Heidegger's failure to see this owes to dogmatically retaining Aristotle's privileging of *praxis* over *poiesis*. For

¹⁶ Paul Farwell, "Can Heidegger's Craftsman be Authentic?" in *International Philosophical Quarterly* 29 (1989), pp. 77-90. In this article Farwell develops a fine analysis of this particular problem with respect to the issue of artistic production.

Aristotle, *praxis* is a more perfect mode of Being's disclosure because it is an *energeia* : it does not refer to an end outside itself. *Poiesis*, by contrast, is a *dunamis* : it does refer to an end outside of itself and so is inherently incomplete until this end is fulfilled. Whereas *praxis* is completely present to itself, *poiesis* is not. This priority Aristotle accords to *praxis* over *poiesis* follows from his ontological commitment to a metaphysics of presence. What is striking about Heidegger's appropriation of this ranking is that what underlies it for Aristotle is the same thing Heidegger is set out to deconstruct.

II

Thus far I have attempted to show how during Heidegger's Marburg period *poiesis* is not taken to be the site of an original disclosure of truth. I have also suggested the inherent possibility of an authentic notion of *poiesis* and advanced a reasonable explanation as to why Heidegger is prevented from seeing this. In this section I want to clarify the basis of Heidegger's reinterpretation of *poiesis* which emerges in the 1930s. In my introductory remarks, I claimed that the horizon of this reinterpretation is opened up through Heidegger's turn, or re-turn, to the Presocratics. Let me first elaborate this hypothesis before I unpack the complex of details which, I shall try to demonstrate, support it. My *first* claim is that Heidegger's discovery of a more original sense of *poiesis* is situated against the backdrop of the discovery of an original sense of *phusis* that he traces back to the Presocratics. Heidegger discovers that for the Presocratics *phusis* was an interchangeable term for Being. *Phusis* names the sense of Being as such and not merely one specific mode of Being, or a part of the whole as it was for Plato and Aristotle. This Presocratic notion of *phusis* moreover contains an intrinsic absencing dimension which, therefore, is not reducible to pure presence. This is to be contrasted with the notion of *phusis* that Heidegger ascribes to Greek ontology in general which, it bears emphasizing, during his Marburg period *includes* the Presocratic philosophers. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, and within the context of the discussion we have already examined, Heidegger clearly equates *phusis* with an immutable essence. "The determination phusis also points toward the same direction of interpretation of the what...The actual thing arises out of phusis, the nature of the thing. Everything earlier than what is actualized is still free from the imperfection, one-sidedness, and sensibilization given necessarily with all actualization. The what that precedes all actualization, the look that provides the standard, is not yet subject to change like

the actual, to coming-to-be and passing-away." (*BPP*,107) Furthermore, Heidegger maintains that this notion of *phusis* is oriented to the horizon of production. "Phuein means to let grow, procreate, engender, produce, primarily to produce itself. What makes products or the produced product possible is again the look of what the product is supposed to become and be."(ibid) Now my *second* claim is that since *phusis* is ultimately determined by production according to Heidegger's early thinking, and yet Heidegger later sees that a more original sense of *phusis* he discovers in the Presocratics is no longer compatible with this account, Heidegger is led to rethink the sense of production or *poiesis*. It compels him to re-examine, that is, the ancient quarrel between the poets and philosophers famously noted by Plato in the *Republic*.

The question concerning the genesis of Heidegger's revised interpretation of *poiesis* must be answered by setting our sight, then, on a deeper question: What motivates Heidegger's turn to the Presocratics and the discovery of a more original notion of *phusis*? The details which lead to both are difficult to reconstruct in a strictly linear fashion since the path is carved out by a confluence of different inter-playing sources. Indeed, the early 1930s constitute one of the most intricate and eclectic periods of Heidegger's intellectual formation. It can scarcely be denied that Heidegger's intensive reading of Hölderlin and Nietzsche at the time which he presents in a series of lectures between 1934-1936, as well as his ongoing dialogue with Hegel and his confrontation with Jünger are all important contributing factors.¹⁷ Nietzsche should perhaps be singled out especially. Already in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), Nietzsche is everywhere present in the first chapter and in chapter four we find an explicit critique of Nietzsche's interpretation of the traditional and, according to Heidegger, misguided polarization of Parmenides and Heraclitus. (*IM*,126) In fact, in an earlier lecture given in 1931 on Aristotle, Heidegger cites a passage from Nietzsche's essay *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*.¹⁸ This is especially significant because in this essay to which Heidegger refers not only does Nietzsche exalt the Presocratic philosophers but he also draws a sharp distinction between them and the tradition beginning with Plato and Aristotle. Nietzsche views this transition as a decline, which is a view Heidegger

¹⁷ See Michael Zimmerman's *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990) for a detailed treatment of the Heidegger-Jünger dialogue.

¹⁸ *Aristotle's Metaphysics: ETA 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, translated by Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pg. 15.

himself endorses in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Still, without downplaying the influence of Nietzsche (and Hölderlin) on Heidegger's interpretation of the Presocratics, I believe it is incomplete. Not only had Heidegger been reading these two poetic thinkers since his early youth¹⁹ but it does not in itself explain the emphasized theme of *phusis* that is so central to Heidegger's appropriation of the Presocratics. I believe, in other words, that there lies a deeper motivation behind Heidegger's turn to the Presocratics which Nietzsche and Hölderlin help him articulate. This consists in a discovery of a more original notion of *phusis*.

But what led Heidegger to rethink the concept of *phusis*? Here I want to show that, first, Heidegger's re-interpretation of this concept turns on certain developments *internal* to Heidegger's project involving his so-called *Kehre* and which seem to become first apparent in his Freiburg inaugural lecture entitled 'What is Metaphysics?' and become explicit in a lecture given the following year called 'On the Essence of Truth'; second, this prompts Heidegger to re-examine Aristotle's notion of *phusis*; lastly, this second concern leads Heidegger to a reassessment of the Presocratics.

We noted earlier that *Being and Time* was never completed. The subsequent lecture, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, which, as Heidegger indicates in a footnote to the introduction to this lecture was supposed to complete *Being and Time*, is likewise incomplete.²⁰ The unpublished Third division of *Being and Time* was to demonstrate how the temporal sense of Da-sein's Being opens the fundamental horizon for an interpretation of all beings. Now, Heidegger did not fail to meet a deadline; he purposely withdrew this third division from publication, and much of Heideggerian scholarship has tried to understand why. One of the most prominent responses offered by Heideggerians is that Heidegger's earlier thinking during his Marburg period still remained entangled in the paradigm of transcendental subjectivity.²¹ The fact that Heidegger chose not to publish the remaining sections of *Being and Time* seems to lend support to this assessment, and this view is further strengthened by the fact that there appears to be a decentering of Da-sein in his later writings. But there are other factors which militate against this conclusion if

¹⁹ John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King*, pp. 62-64.

²⁰ Thomas Sheehan, "Time and Being, 1925-1927".

²¹ Otto Pöggeler, "Metaphysics and the Topology of Being in Heidegger" in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, Inc., 1981), pp. 171-183.

left unqualified. First, Dasein is not a subject but is Being-in-the-world. Second, Da-sein is *thrown*, which eliminates a notion of self-grounding. Third, while Heidegger claims in section 44 that without Da-sein there would be no truth (disclosure), he also makes clear that Da-sein is not the sufficient condition for truth: Da-sein "lives *in* truth...It is not we who presuppose 'truth'; but it is '*truth*' that makes it at all possible ontologically for us to be able to *be* such that we 'presuppose' anything at all." (*BT*, 270) Perhaps the main difficulty is that, on the one hand, Heidegger himself is critical of this first attempt, and yet, on the other hand, his self-criticism is obscured by his simultaneous insistence upon the continuity between this early attempt and his later thinking. This ambiguity does not owe to mere equivocation but is symptomatic of a deep tension in Heidegger's early project. This tension is clearly evident in his 'Letter on Humanism' (1943). There Heidegger strenuously denies that Dasein is a transcendental subjectivity, but also explains that the third division of *Being and Time* "was held back because [this earlier] thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning (*Kehre*) and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics."²²

Da-sein is not reducible to transcendental subjectivity. Yet, the fact that Heidegger strains so hard to disentangle an understanding of Da-sein from Husserlian transcendental subjectivity in *Being and Time* is one indication that he still retains a residual element associated with transcendental subjectivity, namely, a *voluntarism*. This in part helps explain, I think, why Nietzsche, among others, becomes so important for Heidegger to enter into dialogue with in the 1930s.²³ This element of voluntarism manifests itself, I believe, as a tension in Heidegger's systematic intentions. On the one hand, Heidegger characterizes his project as a primordial Ur-science. The aim is to show how temporality (*Temporalität*) serves as the *foundation* for all regional ontologies. Thus, he refers to his project as a transcendental 'Temporal Science'. (*BPP*, 460) At this time, Heidegger is trying to establish, like Kant, a *metaphysica transcendentalis* while moving beyond Kant who still did not arrive at— or, as Heidegger more dramatically puts it, shrank back from— a notion of original temporality. On the other hand, according to Heidegger Da-sein is characterized by its historicity, which is a corollary of its finite factual

²² 'Letter on Humanism' in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, pg. 231.

²³ Heidegger's essay "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'", translated by William Lovitt in *The Question Concerning Technology and other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977), pp. 53-112. In this essay, Heidegger argues that despite Nietzsche's attempt to overcome metaphysics, he continues this tradition by making the will a metaphysical *arche*.

transcendence. It is thus difficult to see how this feature of Da-sein's temporality can be reconciled with the systematic intentions of *Being and Time*.²⁴ I do not want to suggest that Heidegger is unaware of this seeming inconsistency, but only that at the time he thinks that the historicity of Da-sein is compatible with a primordial science provided his ontological inquiry is mediated by a destructive retrieve. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger acknowledges that "Because the Dasein is historical in its own existence, possibilities of access and modes of interpretation of beings are themselves diverse, varying in different historical circumstances." But he adds that "it is for this reason that there necessarily belongs to the conceptual determination of being and its structures...a *destruction*— a critical process in which the traditional concepts...are destructed down to the sources from which they were drawn. Only by means of this destruction can ontology fully assure itself in a phenomenological way of the genuine character of its concepts." (*BPP*, 21-23)

The fact that in the 1930s Heidegger replaces the question of the sense of Being with an examination of the History of (the sense of) Being (*Seinsgeschick*) and the notion of a ground (*Grund*) is replaced by an abyss (*Ab-grund*) demonstrates a recognition of this problem. At the same time, this immanent criticism does not imply a discontinuity between Heidegger's early and later thinking. Heidegger maintains that the shift in approach his thinking undergoes after *Being and Time* is merely a deeper penetration of the issue with which his earlier thinking engages and so it, in fact, gets incorporated into his later thinking. What does this deepening of approach, i.e. Heidegger's *Kehre*, consist in? In the period after *Being and Time* Heidegger attempts to overcome what I have called the voluntaristic tendency of this project. In so doing, he assumes a different perspective though does not go in a different direction. In *Being and Time* Da-sein is clearly no Cartesian *Cogito*, but still Heidegger attempts to gain access to the horizon of Being in general through it and, as such, Da-sein serves as the ground for opening up this horizon. Now, we can see, I think, how Heidegger's analysis of Da-sein simultaneously is fundamentally at odds with and works internally against this tendency, and so helps us better understand why Heidegger in hindsight maintains that what he was trying to show was constrained by the conceptual language in which he tried to express it. Without

²⁴ Joseph Kocklemans, "Heidegger on Time and Being" in *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, Vol. 1, edited by Christopher Macann (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.150-154; Thomas Sheehan, "Time and Being, 1925-1927", pp. 47-50.

the Da— the *topos* in which Da-sein transcends beings to Being— the sense of Being would not be disclosable. Yet, Da-sein is *thrown* transcendence which means it does not constitute this *topos* but finds this *topos* revealed to it and itself as the site of this *topos*. Otherwise expressed: without Da-sein the unconcealment of beings in their being would not occur but the *possibility* of this disclosure, i.e. this disclos-ability, is not grounded in Da-sein. Heidegger's later thinking consists in probing this primordial *event* (*Ereignis*) which first opens up the space in which there can be a Da of Sein.

Typically, Heidegger's *Kehre* is described as a reversal from an analysis of the Being-sense of Da-sein to the sense of Being in general.²⁵ The problem with characterizing it in this way is that it can be misleading. It could imply a shift in ground: from the ground in Da-sein to the ground in Being. Yet, Heidegger is forced to give up the notion of ground altogether. If temporality provides the sense of Being, the question is whether temporality can be conceived as a ground at all. The very notion of a ground itself would not seem ascribable to temporality which intrinsically contains an absencing dimension of future and past. Original temporality is a temporalizing process, or event, which dynamically discloses the sense of Being. As an event it does not merely conceal its ground, but rather is essentially *groundless*. For this reason, Heidegger begins to focus not on the sense of Being but the truth of Being: the dynamic process of unconcealment itself. In so doing, the issue of the *concealment* inherent in the process of unconcealment becomes thematized. Concealment is not only equiprimordial with unconcealment as he argued in section 44 of *Being and Time*. He now understands it as *prior* to unconcealment. In his 1930 essay 'On the Essence of Truth', Heidegger claims that "The concealment of beings as a whole, untruth proper, is *older* than every openedness of this or that being. It is also *older* than letting-be itself, which in disclosing already holds concealed and comports itself towards concealing [my

²⁵ This characterization of Heidegger's 'Turn' has been justifiably seen as vastly oversimplified in recent years due to the publication of a host of Heidegger's early Freiburg lecture courses. Kisiel's as well as van Buren's ground-breaking work has demonstrated that Heidegger's 'Turn' in the late 1920's should in fact be seen as a return or resumption of his earlier project begun in Freiburg in 1919. This displaces the shema introduced by Richardson between 'Heidegger I' and 'Heidegger II'. See Kisiel's *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) and van Buren's *The Young Heidegger* for a detailed development of this more encompassing perspective as well as helpful commentaries on many of Heidegger's early lecture courses.

emphasis]."²⁶ Simply put: the Being-question emerges as the non-Being-question. Heidegger's analysis revealed that Temporality is the sense of Being, and this revealed, in turn, another question: How *is* time? Although he does not explicitly return to the question concerning Being and Temporality until a lecture given in 1962, this question about temporality implicitly guides all of his reflections on the unconcealment/concealment of Being in the interim. As early as 1929 in the aforementioned inaugural lecture 'What is Metaphysics?' we clearly see that this reconfiguration in Heidegger's thinking has already taken place. There Heidegger gives up describing his project as a science and it becomes clear that the question of Being points to a more primordial question: the Nothing. He writes that "For human existence, the nothing makes possible the openedness of beings as such. The nothing does not merely serve as the counterconcept of beings; rather, it originally belongs to their essential unfolding as such."²⁷

Now, in a 1928 unpublished lecture course ('Phenomenological Exercises: Interpretation of Aristotle's *Physics* II') Heidegger re-examines Aristotle's concept of *phusis*.²⁸ Fortunately, we have a modified version of this in the form of an essay first published in *Wegmarken* entitled 'On the Being and Conception of *Phusis* in Aristotle's *Physics* B, 1'. Moreover, Heidegger offered a lecture course in 1931 concerning Aristotle's concept of *dunamis* (potentiality), which defines the mode of Being belonging to *phusis*.²⁹ This indicates that this concept of *phusis* became very important for Heidegger's problematic.³⁰ In the *Physics*, Aristotle examines the Being of *phusis*. *Phusis* is the term Aristotle uses to refer to those beings that have an internal

²⁶ 'On the Essence of Truth', translated by John Sallis in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), pg. 130.

²⁷ 'What is Metaphysics?', translated by David Farrell Krell in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, pg. 104.

²⁸ Thomas Sheehan, "Time and Being" pp. 62-63.

²⁹ *Aristotle's Metaphysics: ETA 1-3: On the Essence and Actuality of Force*, translated by Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³⁰ My analysis here is greatly indebted to Thomas Sheehan, who is, to the best of my knowledge, the only Heidegger scholar who has seriously examined Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle's concept of *phusis*. For a much more detailed analysis of this issue see "On the Way to *Ereignis*: Heidegger's interpretation of *Phusis*" in *Continental Philosophy in America*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman, John Sallis, and Thomas M. Seebohm (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983), pp. 131-164; "Getting to the Topic: The New Edition of *Wegmarken*" in *Radical Phenomenology*, ed. John Sallis (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities, 1978), pp. 299-316.

principle (*arche*) of movement (*kinesis*). As essentially kinetic, such beings while still undergoing change are always incomplete and refer to an absent *telos* in order to be what they are. In order to examine the Being of *phusis* Aristotle must first show that it is intelligible to talk about *kinesis*, the principle of *phusis*, and so must address the Parmenidian notion of Being that excludes *kinesis* on the basis that it implies non-Being. Because Aristotle is able to define *kinesis*, i.e. give a *logos* of this mercurial phenomenon by means of the concepts of *dunamis* and *energeia*, he is able to incorporate motion into Being. He is able to demonstrate that, in spite of its essential incompleteness, *kinesis*, and therefore *phusis*, nonetheless *is*. Still, for Aristotle *phusis* is only one mode of Being. Being is a polysemic concept of which, for Aristotle, *ousia* constitutes the focal or unified sense because all the others ultimately presuppose it. *Phusis* is oriented towards the stable presence of *ousia* because the former is a privative modality of the latter. Drawing on his 1939 essay Heidegger develops a critique of Aristotle by reversing this priority. In fact, Heidegger assembles evidence for what he takes to be an equivocation on Aristotle's part. "In the *Physics*", he writes, "Aristotle conceives of *phusis* as the beingness (*ousia*) of a particular (and in itself delimited) region of beings: things that grow as distinguished from things that are made...But this same treatise of the *Metaphysics* [I, 1003a27] says exactly the opposite: *ousia* (of the Being of beings as such in totality) is something like *phusis*."³¹ I shall not consider whether Heidegger is doing violence to Aristotle's text and instead elaborate on its significance.

First, Heidegger finds in the concept of *phusis* a structural analogue to the disclosive event of Being. The disclosive intelligibility of *phusis* is made possible by that which remains concealed and must remain concealed as long as the intelligibility of *phusis* is disclosed. A dimension of absence (*steresis*) makes possible this presencing, which re-expresses the temporalizing of temporality out of which the presence is made possible through the interplay of future and past. Absence is prior to presence; possibility is higher than actuality.

Second, Heidegger discerns in Aristotle's alleged equivocation a vestigial indication of an earlier thinking in which *phusis* was not a mode of *ousia* but the name of the Being-process itself. "This barely adequately expressed assertion [of Aristotle] that *ousia* is *phusis* is an *echo* of the great beginning of Greek philosophy, the first

³¹ 'On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis* in Aristotle's *Physics*, BI', translated by Thomas Sheehan in *Pathmarks* ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 228-229.

beginning of Greek philosophy. In this beginning Being was *phusis*, such that the *phusis* that Aristotle conceptualized can be only a later derivative of originary *phusis*.³² The "great beginning" refers to the Presocratics, and Heidegger closes his essay by citing a well-known fragment of Heraclitus: *phusis kruptesthai philei* (Nature loves to hide itself). According to Heidegger, this fragment does not merely claim that *phusis* is difficult to comprehend, which is how it is usually understood. Instead, it says, he contends, that "Self-hiding belongs to the predilection of Being. And the essence of Being is to conceal itself, to emerge, to come out of the unhidden. Only what in its essence unconceals and must unconceal itself can love to conceal itself. Only what is unconcealing can be concealing. And therefore the concealment of *phusis* is not to be overcome, not to be stripped from *phusis*."³³

To sum up, then, whereas in *Being and Time* *Da-sein* is taken to be the ground of ontology whose ultimate sense is temporality, Heidegger later penetrates more deeply into the event which first appropriates *Da-sein*. He inquires into the prior conditions of *Da-sein*'s finite transcendence. Since Temporality is constituted by an intrinsic absencing dimension, he must abandon the notion of ground altogether. Heidegger finds in Aristotle's concept of *phusis* a way to articulate this notion but, in so doing, reverses Aristotle's prioritizing of stable *ousia* over the ambiguous concept of *phusis*. This privileging owes to Aristotle's ontological commitment to a metaphysics of presence. This simultaneously opens the horizon for Heidegger's turn to the Presocratics for whom *phusis* named the event of Being itself. This discovery disrupts his earlier view of Greek ontology. No longer can the Presocratics be grouped together with Plato and Aristotle but rather a decisive transformation occurs in the latter. Finally, this discovery of 'two beginnings' also forces Heidegger to re-think the concept of *poiesis*. No longer can the understanding of production provide the sense of *phusis* for Greek ontology as a whole, because the notion of *phusis* itself underwent a transformation in Greek ontology. With this more original notion of *phusis* Heidegger attributes to the Presocratics the question arises: Is there a more original sense of *poiesis* ?

³² *ibid* 229.

³³ *ibid* 229-230.

III

Earlier we examined how the understanding of *phusis* in Greek ontology was, according to Heidegger in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, oriented to the horizon of production and this orientation to production was, moreover, taken to be symptomatic of the entrenchment of Greek ontology within the everyday. We also remarked that Heidegger fails to explain precisely *why* remaining in the everyday entails an orientation to production and suggested, first, this gap in his argument indicates that perhaps the phenomenon of production had a deeper origin than Heidegger was aware of at the time and, second, his failure to consider how anticipatory resoluteness might become the basis of an authentic form of production seems to reveal a dogmatic acceptance of the Aristotelian hierarchical ordering of *praxis* over *poiesis*. Now, in the 1930s *poiesis* becomes integrated into what belongs authentically to the Being of Da-sein. *Poiesis* becomes a constitutive feature of Da-sein's Being.³⁴ As a result, Heidegger must broaden his earlier position. Greek ontology, which now *excludes* the Presocratics, was oriented towards a distorted understanding of production, i.e. one which fails to grasp its true ontological significance.³⁵ The reason why Plato and Aristotle overlooked the original sense of *poiesis*, dovetails with the reason why Heidegger now distinguishes the Presocratics in this conceptual-historical revision. It is not *simply* the case that the Presocratics had comprehended this more original sense of *poiesis*. Rather, Plato and Aristotle failed to grasp this Presocratic understanding of *poiesis*, because they covered over the Presocratic understanding of *phusis*. Losing the sense of the Presocratic understanding of *phusis* prevented a deeper understanding of the sense of *poiesis*. Their orientation towards an inadequate understanding of the nature of production did provide a conceptual scheme to articulate *phusis* in an intelligible way. Yet, their understanding of production was, in turn, determined by an inadequate interpretation of *phusis* which covered over its original sense that we find in the Presocratics. In this last section, we will clarify this Presocratic understanding of *poiesis* and try to discern how it is informed by their understanding of *phusis*. In so doing, we will also consider how the Presocratic

³⁴ Michael E. Zimmerman's, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity*, pg. 223.

³⁵ Jacques Taminiaux draws this distinction between what he terms a higher and lower form of *techne* in his article "The Origin of 'The Origin of the Work of Art'" in *Reading Heidegger*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 395-397.

concept of *phusis* is transformed in Plato and Aristotle and, furthermore, how this metamorphosis determines their understanding of *poiesis* as a *mimesis*.

In his 1931-32 lecture course on Plato (*Vom Wesen der Wahrheit/Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*) we encounter a first indication of Heidegger's reappropriation, or better rehabilitation, of *poiesis*. This theme is later reiterated in his 1933 Rectoral address.³⁶ In both Heidegger assigns to art the power of an original ontological disclosure. However, it is not until the 1935 lecture *An Introduction to Metaphysics* that Heidegger really develops this theme in any great detail.

This lecture begins with a question first formulated by Leibniz and already raised in 'What is Metaphysics?': Why are there beings rather than nothing? Expressing the leading question in this way, Heidegger tells us, "prevents us in our questioning from beginning with an unquestionably given [being] and...from continuing on to another expected [being] as a ground. Instead, this [being], through questioning, is held out into the possibility of nonbeing. Thereby the why takes on a very different power and penetration. Why is the [being] torn away from the possibility of nonbeing? Why does it not simply keep falling back into nonbeing?...Now a ground is sought which will explain the emergence of the [being] as an overcoming of nothingness." (*IM*, 28) In fact, Heidegger calls into question whether this sought after 'ground' which first makes possible the unconcealment of beings should be conceived as a 'ground' at all. "Since this question is a question, it remains to be seen whether the ground arrived at is really a ground, that is, whether it provides a foundation; whether it is a primal ground (*Ur-grund*); or whether it fails to provide a foundation and is an abyss (*Ab-grund*); or whether the ground is neither one nor the other but presents only a perhaps necessary appearance of foundation— in other words, it is a non-ground (*Un-grund*)." (*IM*, 3) That Heidegger should begin with *this* question is quite significant. In *Being and Time* Heidegger begins by citing a passage from Plato's *Sophist* which he translates: "For manifestly you have long been aware of that you mean when you use the expression 'Being'. We, however, who used to think we understood it, have become perplexed." (*BT*, 19) There is no reference to non-Being in this passage Heidegger selects, yet the dialogue from which it is extracted is above all concerned with the problem of non-Being first articulated by Parmenides. In fact, much of the dialogue engages with this Eleatic problem— indeed the 'Stranger' who undertakes this examination is himself from

³⁶ Jacques Taminiaux, *Le théâtre des philosophes* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1995), pp. 175-182 for an analysis of the transformation in Heidegger's interpretation of art in these two texts.

Elea— and attempts to carve out a space for the meaningful reference to non-Being in a qualified sense. Thus, the leading question of *An Introduction to Metaphysics* no longer takes its bearings from Plato, the Post-Socratic, but rather implicitly refers to Parmenides, the Presocratic.³⁷

Although non-Being is impenetrable to the thought of Da-sein according to Parmenides, Heidegger explains that the experience of its impenetrability— its essential concealment— is the juncture at which thinking begins. Da-sein is overpowered by this primordial experience and thrown into question. Indeed, it is this experience of concealment which, in the language of *Being and Time*, accounts for Da-sein's thrownness. The insoluble question, "Why are there beings rather than nothing?" first opens the space for the Being-question. Heidegger explains that Parmenides' fragment in which he outlines the three paths of non-Being, Being, and appearance, "provides perhaps the oldest philosophical statement to the effect that along with the way of Being the way of non-Being must be specially *considered*, that it is therefore misunderstanding of the question of Being to turn one's back on nothing with the assurance that nothing is not. (For that nothing is not an essent does not prevent it from belonging to Being in its own way)." (*IM*, 111) This is just another way of expressing that the Presocratics experienced (the event of) Being as *phusis*. *Phusis* names the event of the un-concealment of beings out of concealment. For his part, Heraclitus referred to this event as a *polemos*: the 'strife' between unconcealment and concealment. (*ibid*, 61-62)³⁸ This *polemos* is not a conflict that can be overcome by an Hegelian *aufhebung*. Rather, the emergence of an entity into presence, its self-blossoming into the space of unconcealment simultaneously conceals an aspect of itself which cannot *in principle* be disclosed. Therefore, appearance is not an aspect of an entity which is to be divorced from its real Being, but rather dis-closing an appearance of itself which does not exhaust its possibilities of appearing belongs intrinsically to the Being of an entity.³⁹ Heidegger writes: "Because Being, *phusis*, consists in appearing, in offering an appearance and views, it stands essentially and hence necessarily and permanently, in the possibility

³⁷ Jean-François Courtine, "The Destruction of Logic: From *Logos* to Language" in *The Presocratics After Heidegger*, pg. 34.

³⁸ Heidegger will later in the 'Origin of the Work of Art' refer to this primordial *polemos* as the strife between 'world' (unconcealment) and 'earth' (concealment).

³⁹ We are reminded here of Husserl's discussion of immanent and transcendental perception in the *Ideas*, in the context of which he attempts to show how it belongs intrinsically to the 'object' to give itself in shadings (*Abschattungen*).

of an appearance which precisely covers over and conceals what the [being] in truth, i.e. in unconcealment is." (ibid, 104) Inasmuch as the Presocratics named this event of Being *phusis* they remained faithful to this primordial and overpowering experience of concealment which at the same time opens up a space of disclosure. They lingered in the intrinsic instability of the concealing/disclosing event and so did not erase it.⁴⁰

The Presocratic understanding of *phusis*, Heidegger argues, is reflected in their understanding of the phenomenon of thinking (*noein*). Heidegger cites Parmenides' famous fragment: *to gar auto noein estin te kai einai*. This is usually translated—and we should note that Heidegger himself translated this fragment in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*⁴¹ — to read: 'Being and Thinking are the same'. He explains that translating it in this way misunderstands the sense intended by Parmenides and is a projection of modern epistemological convictions, specifically, those of German Idealism. (*IM*, 137). In particular, it assumes that Being (*einai*) and thinking (*noein*) enter into an external relation from which we might infer, by drawing on this fragment, that Being is something subjective, determined by the structure of thought.⁴² According to Heidegger, Parmenides is instead claiming that Being and thinking belong essentially together. Yet, this belonging-together is no Hegelian identity-in-difference. Whereas this relation does constitute a 'unity...of antagonisms' there is not a reconciliation since Being both discloses and conceals. It is this opening up which allows beings to appear that first claims Da-sein to think and thereby enables Da-sein to be the being it is. The event of Being overpowers

⁴⁰ Although Heidegger in this lecture focuses primarily on Heraclitus and Parmenides, in a later lecture he focuses on the one extant fragment attributed to Anaximander. In this fragment, Anaximander writes about the emergence of beings out of the *apeiron*, usually translated as 'the indefinite'. As 'indefinite' it is not reducible to that which emerges of it and so inherently conceals itself. Thus, Heidegger finds one of the earliest expressions of what he calls the 'Ontological Difference' in Anaximander.

⁴¹ See the second part of footnote #4.

⁴² We should note that in this lecture 'thinking' becomes thematized for the first time. (See William J. Richardson's *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* pp. 259-297) This is not to say the topic of thinking is absent in his writings before this lecture. Yet, there it takes the form purely of a negative critique of the traditional understanding and privileging of thought. Resoluteness is there the fundamental authentic mode of disclosure of Da-sein. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, a more original understanding of thinking is retrieved via the Presocratics and gets incorporated into resoluteness. In this lecture, Heidegger develops a detailed analysis and critique of the traditional understanding of thinking and the transformation it undergoes from the Presocratics to Plato and Aristotle (pp. 115-196).

and first calls Da-sein to think, so conceiving of thinking as a faculty that belongs to Da-sein prior to its appropriation misunderstands the nature of thinking. "[Thinking] is not a function that [Dasein] has as an attribute, but rather the other way around: [Thinking] is the happening that has [Dasein]." (*IM*, 141) Insofar as Da-sein thinks it wrests Being from concealment in an attempt to bring the unstable appearances to a stability. Still, Da-sein does not assume merely a passive role. While the concealing disclosure of appearances grants the site for Da-sein to Be, the event of Being needs Da-sein for these appearances to Be. The event of Being encompasses both Da-sein and this original concealing disclosure.

Now, in Plato and Aristotle this original understanding of *phusis* and, therefore, of thinking became lost. The *idea* or *eidos* replaced *phusis* as the name for Being. While the Presocratics never lost sight of the concealing dimension of the disclosive event of Being even in their attempt to stabilize the appearances, to bring the appearances into an eidetic structure of intelligibility, Plato and Aristotle, Heidegger contends, seized only upon the stability and not the concealment. Heidegger writes,

Actually it cannot be denied that the interpretation of being as *idea* results from the basic experience of Being as *phusis*. It is, as we say, a necessary consequence of the essence of Being as emerging Scheinen (seeming, appearing, radiance). And herein there is no departure, not to mention a falling-off from the beginning [of the Presocratics]...But if the essential *consequence* is exalted to the level of the essence itself and takes place of the essence, what then? Then we have a falling-off, which must produce strange consequences. And that is what happened [in Plato and Aristotle]. The crux of the matter is not that *phusis* should have been characterized as *idea* but that the *idea* should have become the sole and decisive interpretation of Being. (*IM*, 182)

In Plato the *eidos* or *idea* becomes the invariant structure of the appearances. It becomes the pure appearance in contrast to the mere variable appearance. As Heidegger puts it, "It was in the Sophists and Plato that appearance was declared to be mere appearance and thus degraded. At the same time being, as *idea*, was exalted to a supersensory realm. A chasm, *chorismos*, was created between the merely apparent essent here below and real being somewhere high." (*IM*, 106) Mere appearance only *is* insofar as it is a copy of the *eidos*. This means that appearance is entirely severed from the essence of Being, which is an implication ultimately of overlooking the concealment intrinsic to the disclosive event of Being. Moreover,

because the Being is identified exclusively with stable presence, the visible, thinking itself becomes understood as ocular.⁴³ It is easy, then, to see why productive behavior becomes an attractive model for the ontology of Plato and Aristotle: Just as the appearance *is* insofar as it is a copy of the *idea*, so the material upon which the artisan is working *is* inasmuch as it imitates the envisaged model.

If the metamorphosis of *phusis* into the *idea* explains the Platonic-Aristotelian orientation to a mimetic notion of *poiesis*, how does the Presocratic understanding of *phusis* determine a more original sense of *poiesis*? As we mentioned in our introductory remarks, Heidegger retrieves this sense of *poiesis* through an interpretative analysis of the first chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone*. To begin, he finds in Sophocles' description of human being as *to deinotaton*, which he translates as the most un-at-home (*unheimlich*), a poetic transcription of the Presocratic understanding of *Da-sein*. The term *deinon*, he further explains, is ambiguous: it denotes violent overpowering (*gewaltig*) in the sense of both being violently overpowered and the one who wields power and violence. (*IM*, 149-150) This word, he says, names the overpowering disclosure of Being that appropriates *Da-sein*, thereby casting it into the unfamiliar and also *Da-sein*'s attempt to master this power and find its home, a world, in this opened space. This primordial *polemos* is "represented with supreme purity in Greek tragedy", Heidegger notes, because it exposes the internal limits of *Da-sein* which, in contrast to Hegel's interpretation of the *Antigone*, does not achieve a higher reconciliation. *Da-sein* cannot achieve complete mastery because "its violence shatters against *one* thing. That is death." (*IM*, 158) That *Dasein*, to repeat the claim of *Being and Time*, is from the very beginning 'Being-towards-death' is that which *Da-sein* cannot overpower and so sustains its homelessness and is the mark of its thrownness. Now, it is in this context of an analysis of *Da-sein*'s violence, its power, that Heidegger articulates an original sense of *poiesis*. Heidegger points out that Sophocles names the knowledge of this mastery of the overpowering event of Being's disclosure *techne*. While *phusis* names the event of unconcealment

⁴³ We can compare this Platonic notion of thinking with the account of original thinking which is constituted by an internal negativity described in 'What Calls for Thinking' in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. There Heidegger writes: "Once we are so related and drawn to what withdraws, we are drawing into what withdraws, into the enigmatic and therefore mutable nearness of its appeal. Whenever man is properly drawing that way, he is thinking—even though he may still be far away from what withdraws. All through his life and right into his death, Socrates did nothing else than place himself into this draft, this current, and maintain himself in it. This is why he is the purest thinker of the West. This is why he wrote nothing." (pp. 381-382)

which overpowers Da-sein *Techne* is the knowledge constitutive of Da-sein to look beyond the given appearances which conceal themselves and bring Being to stand. *Techne*, therefore, names Da-sein's transcendence. Heidegger writes: "Knowledge is the ability to put into work the being of any particular [being]. The Greeks called art in the true sense and the work of art *techne*, because art is what most immediately brings Being (i.e. the appearing that stands there in itself) to stand, stabilizes it in something present (the work). The work of art is a work not primarily because it is wrought, made, but because it brings about Being in a being; it brings about the phenomenon in which the emerging power, *phusis*, comes to shine." (*IM*, 159) Thought in a more original sense, *poiesis* does not, then, consist in an imitation of a projected model of stable presence. Rather, *poiesis* is a response to an overpowering experience of absence and instability, i.e. the concealing disclosure of *phusis*, which it attempts to overcome by setting Being into work. In so doing, the artwork first opens up a world of stable intelligibility and so orients Da-sein.

Through this retrieve of *techne* in Sophocles' tragedy, Heidegger attempts to show how art, *poiesis*, is an original site of truth, i.e. the disclosure of Being to Da-sein. Here it is important to emphasize that inasmuch as *poiesis* is an original site of the disclosure of Being, *poiesis*, like *noein*, is not merely an expression of subjectivity; *poiesis* is a constitutive feature of Da-sein's Being-in-the-world. The *site* of *poiesis* is the open clearing, the 'Da' in which Da-sein dwells, but the *source* of *poiesis* is the overpowering event which first appropriates Da-sein into this clearing. This means that *techne* and *phusis* belong essentially together. In a later essay entitled "The Question Concerning Technology" (1953), Heidegger underlines this crucial point. He explains that the bringing-forth of Being involved in human production is ultimately grounded in the bringing forth of *phusis*. But he also goes further. Since *phusis* is a 'creative' event which first brings beings out of concealment it, too, is a *poiesis*.⁴⁴ It is through the experience of the *poiesis* of *phusis* that human production takes its bearings and distinguishes itself. Heidegger writes:

Not only handicraft manufacture, not only artistic and poetical bringing into appearance and concrete imagery, is a bringing forth, *poiesis*. *Phusis*, also, the rising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth. *Phusis* is indeed *poiesis* in the highest sense. For what presences by means of *phusis* has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, e.g.,

⁴⁴ Cf. Werner Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961) pp. 139-143.

the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself. In contrast, what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g. the silver chalice, has the irruption belonging to bringing-forth, not in itself, but in another, in the craftsman or artist.⁴⁵

Heidegger's claim that *phusis* is a *poiesis* in the original ("highest") sense carries a lot of weight. First, it helps clarify our remark at the beginning of this discussion that *poiesis* is the basis for the kinship between the poet and philosopher. For if *phusis* is a *poiesis* in the original ("highest") sense, then thinking, while qualitatively different from human production, is at bottom still a *poiesis*. Thinking "brings-forth" Being in the medium of language and human production brings-forth Being in the medium of the visible appearances. Both, though, open up a world and shape the way Da-sein understands itself in that world. Second, it provides the basis for explaining why Plato and Aristotle would draw on the experience of productive behavior to illuminate their understanding of *phusis*, even if they were not aware of the internal unity of these concepts. Indeed, their interpretation of *phusis* as *idea* prevented them from seeing the 'poietical' dimension of *phusis* and so the original unity of *poiesis* and *phusis*. As we have tried to show, Heidegger, in his Marburg period, also lacked this deeper understanding of *phusis* and, therefore, could not, or at least did not, see why Greek ontology was oriented to production. If he had, then he might have seen, as he later came to see, that the work-world of Da-sein's inauthentic everyday Being-in-the-world is a derivative mode of authentic Da-sein which first opens up a world through the resolute setting-into-work of Being. In other words, he might have seen that not only the *praxis* of the Aristotelian *phronimos* reveals the site of Being's original disclosure, but so does the *poiesis* of the 'Sophoclean' *technites*.

⁴⁵ 'The Question Concerning Technology' in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, pg. 317.