

# *Heidegger on Poetry and Thought. From Metaphor to Dialogue*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze Heidegger's critique for which the metaphysical conception of art is necessarily "metaphorical", meaning a view that separates the spiritual and truthful content of art from the sensible and linguistic level in which it is expressed. The first part of this paper will analyze Heidegger's critique of aesthetics with a particular focus on its metaphorical consideration of language. I will show how Heidegger considers Hegel to be the ultimate example of this view of art and language, I will try to trace the reasons for it, and I will emphasize the connection between metaphor and the end of art. In the second part, I will instead show Heidegger's contrasting view of the relationship between poetry and language, which will be seen as two autonomous and equal responses to the event of the truth of being.

## KEYWORDS

Language, Poetry, Thought, Metaphor, Dialogue

## *Introduction*

The purpose of this paper is to analyze one of Heidegger's lesser-known critiques of the metaphysical conception of art: that for which aesthetics is necessarily "metaphorical". By metaphorical, Heidegger means a view that separates the spiritual and truthful content of art from the sensible and linguistic level in which it is expressed. According to Heidegger, this structure is particularly evident in the case of the relationship between poetry and thought, and Heidegger himself singles out Hegel as the best example of this metaphorical treatment of poetic language. For Heidegger, because of the systematic character of his aesthetics, Hegel cannot consider poetic language autonomously, or from a point of view equal to conceptual thought, but the language of poetry is to be necessarily overcome in the language of aesthetics, of the *philosophy* of art. Against Hegel's approach, Heidegger wants instead to propose a different conception of the relationship

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between poetry and thought: one that sees poetry as something qualitatively different, autonomous but equal to thought, in which it does not need to be resolved.

While the relationship between Hegel and Heidegger's aesthetics is now a classic theme in the secondary literature, especially with regard to the problem of the end of art, the aspect of Heidegger's critique that concerns Hegel's metaphorical conception of art has received far less attention.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, together with the analysis of Heidegger's statements on metaphor, the other aim of this paper is to explicit what Heidegger only hints: that the metaphorical conception of art, which pertains to metaphysical aesthetics, is linked to the end of art. For this reason, I will argue that Heidegger's attempt to overcome aesthetics must go through a new conceptualization of the relationship between poetry and thought, opposite to the metaphorical one of aesthetics as typified by Hegel.

The first part of this paper will analyse Heidegger's critique of aesthetics with particular focus on its metaphorical consideration of language. I will show how Heidegger considers Hegel to be the ultimate example of this view of art and language, I will try to trace the reasons for it, and I will emphasize the connection between metaphor and the end of art. In the second part, I will instead show Heidegger's contrasting view of the relationship between poetry and language, which will be seen as two autonomous and equal responses to the event of the truth of being.

### *Aesthetics and the Metaphor of the End of Art*

As is well known, for Heidegger aesthetics is not a neutral science whose task is to analyse art. On the contrary, aesthetics is an essentially modern phenomenon whose origin and purpose are dictated by the framework from which it emerges: modern metaphysics and its project of transforming the world.<sup>2</sup> Aesthetics means, therefore, something more than just one philosophical dis-

<sup>1</sup> On the relationship between Hegel and Heidegger on aesthetics in general, see (Grossmann 1996); (Frischmann 2010); and (Pöggeler 1984). On the theme of the "end" of art, see (Geulen 2002); (Pippin 2014); (Schwenzfeuer 2011); and (Siani 2020). Among the works who deal explicitly with Hegel and Heidegger's different considerations on poetic language are (Nuzzo 2015) and (Ramazzotto 2022). The use of these secondary sources for this paper will be discussed as it becomes relevant. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> In his essay *The Age of the World Picture*, Heidegger lists aesthetics, along with modern science, machine technology, culture, and the loss of the gods, as one of the phenomena of the essential ground ruling over modernity. For a recent account of Heidegger's path into modernity, see (Gander & Striet 2017).

cipline among others. Aesthetics is primarily an attitude as much philosophical as practical and institutional.<sup>3</sup> Heidegger describes it thusly:

“The study of the emotional state of man, insofar as the ‘beautiful’ is related to it; i.e. the study of the beautiful (of art) in its relation to the emotional state (as producing and enjoying).

The work in its surface – relation to the state as object.

The work of art as an object for a subject. Fundamental is the subject-object relation as a feeling relation (about truth and being and the like a decision has already been made)” (Heidegger 1990, 2)

This definition already reveals some of Heidegger’s most famous criticisms of the aesthetic conception of art. The first and most well-known is that against which Heidegger rails in the first part of the essay on *The Origin of the Work of Art* (Heidegger 2002, 5-14), for which aesthetics regards the work of art as an object, albeit of a peculiar class.<sup>4</sup> The definition of the work as an object is, in fact, a reflection of the fundamental dichotomy of metaphysics, that between subject and object, and is therefore incapable of capturing the originating and event-like character of the work of art. On the contrary, the subject-object dichotomy not only deprives the work of its capacity to originate, but also determines the horizon of its possible fruition, which is reduced to mere lived experience (*Erlebnis*).<sup>5</sup> If art can be nothing more than the distracted enjoyment of the individual, then art loses its most important task: that of establishing the event of being and thus constructing a horizon of shared meanings by which a historical people can dwell. Heidegger is not shy with words on this point, going so far as to say: “Experience (*Erlebnis*) is the standard-giving source not only for the appreciation and enjoyment of art but also for its creation. Everything is experience. But perhaps experience is the element in which art dies” (Heidegger 2002, 50).<sup>6</sup>

These two critiques, encapsulated in the above definition of aesthetics, are the two most famous, but they are not the ones I

<sup>3</sup> See on this (Bernasconi 1985, 32).

<sup>4</sup> On this topic von Herrmann’s commentary remains unparalleled (Von Herrmann 1994, 1-104), but see also (Harries 2009, 69-82) and (Kockelmans 1985, 110-137).

<sup>5</sup> On the notion of *Erlebnis* in Heidegger see (Farin 2021, 467), for whom “lived experience itself is nothing other than a product, the skilfully prepared, organized, and procured and provided content for the subject, i.e., the thrills and sensations, the endless novelties and titillating scandals, the exciting and exotic adventures, the intoxication and relief from the boredom of an ever more regimented existence within the ‘total unquestionableness of the age’ (*Zeitalter der völligen Fraglosigkeit*) (GA65:107). The ‘hunt after exciting experiences’ (*Jagd nach Erlebnissen*) is supported and showcased by the machinery of the culture industry (*Kulturbetrieb*) (GA65:124)”.

<sup>6</sup> For a broader interpretation of this provocative sentence, see (Amoroso 2015).

will focus on. I will instead discuss a third critique of the modern conception of art: that, already mentioned, by which aesthetics is inherently ‘metaphorical’.<sup>7</sup> According to this view, the work of art consists of two parts: a sensible part, which conveys the content, and a supersensible part, which is the actual content of art. This is particularly evident in the case of poetry. In the context of one of his courses on Hölderlin, Heidegger puts it thusly:

In the poetic work, however, these things of nature assume the role of appearances that can be grasped as something sensuous [*sinnlich*], as something that offers a view and thus provides an ‘image’. Yet in the poetic work such images present not only themselves, but also a nonsensuous meaning. They ‘mean’ something. The sensuous image points toward a ‘spiritual’ content, a ‘sense’ [*Sinn*]. The river that is named and that appears in the image [*Bild*] is a ‘symbolic image’ [*Sinnbild*] (Heidegger 1996, 16).

The separation of the two realms of the sensible and the supersensible is not merely a distinction, but has an overtly hierarchical character: the true meaning of art lies in the supersensible message, and the sensible has the mere task of being its vessel. Heidegger indeed links this ‘transportation’ of meaning from the sensible to the supersensible to the etymology of metaphor as μεταφορά.<sup>8</sup> The aesthetic conception of art is then metaphorical in the sense that it separates sensible and supersensible aspects and orders them hierarchically, giving priority to the spiritual meaning that is contained in the work. Since the metaphorical conception of art is an essential feature of aesthetics, for Heidegger it too has its roots in metaphysics, from which aesthetics inevitably derives:

“The idea of ‘transposing’ and of metaphor is based upon the distinguishing, if not complete separation, of the sensible and the nonsensible as two realms that subsist on their own. The setting up of this partition between the sensible and nonsensible, between the physical and nonphysical is a basic trait of what is called metaphysics and which nonnatively determines Western thinking. [...] When one gains the insight into the limitations of metaphysics, ‘metaphor’ as a normative conception also becomes untenable [...]. The metaphorical exists only within metaphysics” (Heidegger 1991, 48)

<sup>7</sup> Heidegger’s theory of metaphor provoked a great deal of debate in the 1970s, animated above all by a series of exchanges between Ricoeur and Derrida. Although both approach the problem of metaphor from the perspective of the history of metaphysics, both Derrida and Ricoeur offer critical readings designed to support their own basic thesis of a possible rehabilitation of metaphor in a post-metaphysical perspective. On this debate, see (Amalric 2006). Much less interest has been shown in a more faithful reconstruction of the role metaphor in Heidegger. Indeed, apart from an article by Greisch (Greisch 1973), and parts of books by de Bestegui (de Bestegui 2012), Resta (Resta 1988) and Martinengo (Martinengo 2016), the question of metaphor has tended to be situated within the broader – but certainly related, as we shall see – problem of translation. Example of this tendency are (Nardelli 2021); (Giometti 1995); and (Gondek 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Heidegger also identifies similar etymologies for symbol (σύμβολον) and allegory (ἄλλοις ἄγορεύω), bringing together metaphor, symbol, and allegory in the macro-category of the sense-image [*Sinnbild*].

This passage shows that there is a close relationship between metaphor, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Indeed, metaphor presupposes in its structure the separation of the two domains of the sensible vehicle and the spiritual message. These two domains, in turn, are the result of the more general separation within reality between what is physical, and therefore sensible, and what is metaphysical, and therefore super-sensible. This separation is a rank distinction: the entity, as sensible, is subject to the being of the entity, to the suprasensible, stable, true, and certain, on which it depends ontologically, epistemologically, and evaluatively. Here lies the foundation of the structure of metaphor as transposing: in the broader ontological distinction typical of modern metaphysics, of which metaphor, like aesthetics, is nothing but a phenomenon.

The quoted passage offers a clue concerning the way in which the metaphorical conception of art typical of aesthetics can be overcome. Because of the deep ontological roots that the metaphorical has proven to have, to consider it a mere rhetorical tool that can be easily discarded would be like treating the symptoms while ignoring the disease. On the contrary, for metaphor as a conception to become truly untenable, Heidegger says, it is necessary to “gain insight into the limitations of metaphysics” (*ibidem*). In doing so, one removes the ground on which metaphorical conception feeds, and one discovers, as Heidegger concludes, that the metaphorical is not something natural and intrinsic to art, but “exists only within metaphysics” (*ibidem*).

Overcoming the metaphorical means overcoming the metaphysical concept of art. In turn, however, overcoming the metaphysics of art “does not mean thrusting aside a discipline” (Heidegger 2003, 85), as if it were simply an error to be corrected. It rather means engaging in a thinking confrontation with it, especially with that moment that constitutes its most successful formulation. Heidegger confirms this in another passage where he reiterates his own interpretation of aesthetics as metaphorical:

“In all metaphysics, the work of art counts as something sensuous that does not exist just for itself; rather, what is sensuous about the artwork is as it is in the artwork: it exists for the nonsensuous and suprasensuous, for that which is also named the spiritual or spirit. Given this, we can understand a statement made by that thinker who, in the first half of the previous century, created the most comprehensive metaphysics of art. Hegel says in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* (*Werke* X, I, 48): ‘What is sensuous in the work of art is meant to have existence only insofar as it exists for the human spirit, and not insofar as it itself exists for itself as something sensuous’ (Heidegger 1996, 17)

Heidegger names Hegel as the best example of a metaphorical conception of art. The reason for this choice is explicit: the choice falls on Hegel because he is the ultimate example of a metaphysics

of art, again reiterating the link between metaphor and metaphysics.<sup>9</sup> If Heidegger's goal is then to overcome the metaphorical conception of art, it will be necessary to understand what makes Hegel the apogee of metaphysical aesthetics, and then how this aspect is reflected in the question of metaphor.

The first side is simpler, especially since Heidegger confirms it in several texts: the fundamental thought that sets Hegel apart as the culmination of the metaphysical conception of art is the thesis of the end of art. Speaking of Hegel as one of the "basic developments in the history of aesthetics" (Heidegger 1979, 77), Heidegger makes it clear: "the achievement of aesthetics derives its greatness from the fact that it recognizes and gives utterance to the end of great art as such" (Heidegger 1979, 84). What then is the connection between the end of art and metaphor? Heidegger does not explicitly answer the question, but it is not difficult to infer something from the preceding quotation in which Heidegger cites Hegel as the best example of the metaphorical conception of art. On the one hand, in Heidegger's eyes, Hegel has a metaphorical conception of poetic language, in which the sensitive and imaginative aspect of poetic language is always already overcome in the conceptual aspect into which poetry must be translatable.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, not only is the individual work of art metaphorical, but art itself as a form of spirit seems to have a metaphorical structure. Taking up Hegel's quote chosen by Heidegger, in fact, "what is sensuous in the work of art is meant to have existence only insofar as it exists for the human spirit, and not insofar as it itself exists for itself as something sensuous" (Heidegger 1996, 17). The meaning of art is thus metaphorically transposed from the sensible level to the spiritual level, which in the modern world is the only one capable of conveying the fullness of the truth of the spirit. This last thesis is precisely the thesis of the end of art, or the past character of art in

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger is consistent with this determination of Hegel's position as the fulfilment of aesthetics, as can be seen both in the *Afterword to The Origin of the Work of Art*, where Hegel's aesthetics is referred to as "the most comprehensive reflections on the nature of art possessed by the West – comprehensive because thought out of metaphysics" (Heidegger 2002, 51), as well as in the sketch of a history of aesthetics, titled *Six Basic Developments in the History of Aesthetics*, to be found in his *Nietzsche*. Here, Hegel's aesthetics is said to be "the historical moment when aesthetics reaches its greatest possible height, breadth, and rigor of form" and "the final and greatest aesthetics in the Western tradition" (Heidegger 1979, 84). On Hegel and Heidegger's history of aesthetics, see (Amoroso 2017, 133-146). The reason for this consistency comes from the fact that Hegel is the fulfilment of aesthetics because he is also the fulfilment of metaphysics: "The completion of metaphysics begins with Hegel's metaphysics of absolute knowledge as the Spirit of will" (Heidegger 2003, 89).

<sup>10</sup> For reasons of brevity, it is not possible to present this argument in full here, for which refer to (Ramazzotto 2022).

the modern world.<sup>11</sup> The thesis of the end of art, then, insofar as it affirms the inability of art to be an autonomous and full expression of truth, and insofar as it makes truth reside in the supersensible of the spirit, is inherently metaphorical. Metaphor and the end of art are two sides of the same coin: art ends insofar as its metaphorical conception is established, and conversely, modernity advances a metaphorical conception because of the end of art, unable to fulfill its role as an expression of truth.

If all of this is true, then Heidegger's attempt to overcome aesthetics must start from a new way of understanding the relationship between poetry, art, and philosophy, one that does not see art as a "not-yet" that must be metaphorically transposed into the concept.<sup>12</sup> This new way of understanding this relationship, one that does not separate and order two levels, physical and metaphysical, but shows the difference and equality between poetry and thought, will be argued to hinge on the notion of dialogue.

### *Heidegger and the Dialogue Between Poetry and Thought*

For obvious reasons of brevity, it is not possible to give a comprehensive overview of the relationship between philosophy, poetry, and language in Heidegger. For the purposes of this article, it will suffice to point out the differences with Hegel and to offer some general considerations.<sup>13</sup>

First, in opposition to Hegel and in opposition to the entire history of metaphysics, especially modern metaphysics, Heidegger

<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that my attempt here is not to reconstruct Hegel's complicated, multifaceted, and controversial thesis of the end of art, but to follow Heidegger's interpretation of it. There is no doubt that Heidegger isolates Hegel's quotation and bends it to better serve his own purposes, but the goal of this paper is not to see whether Heidegger is right in his interpretation of Hegel or not, but rather to make it explicit and to elaborate on it.

<sup>12</sup> The formulation comes from (Menke 2009).

<sup>13</sup> Also from a textual point of view, we will limit ourselves here to the texts after the *Kehre*, and in particular to what Vallega-Neu rightly calls Heidegger's "poietic texts" (Vallega-Neu 2018). For a general framework and a more comprehensive analysis of the themes of poetry, language, and their relationship to thought, see the following texts: (White 1979); (Gethmann-Siefert 1990); (De Alessi 1991); (Travers 2012) (Denker e Zaborowski 2014); (Balazut 2017); and (Bambach e Theodore 2019). An interesting theme for the Heidegger-Hegel comparison on poetry, which we will not touch on, is that of agency and subjectivity, which also has inevitable political implications. On the comparison between Hegel and Heidegger see (Siani 2020). For a more general discussion of poetic agency and its political implications in Heidegger, see (Cooper 2020) and (Gosetti-Ferencei 2009). Many texts have also attempted to reconstruct Heidegger's dialogues with individual poets, such as Rilke, Hölderlin and Celan. See for example (Mariafioti 2015); (Allen 2017); and (Siani 2019).

reiterates his critique of the 'metaphorical' conception of language. According to Heidegger, already in Aristotle there is the beginning of a conception of language for which words are nothing more than phonic signs of a meaning that will be interpreted as spiritual (Heidegger 1982, 96-97). In the course of the history of metaphysics, then, spiritual meaning, as a supersensible moment, will acquire the primacy that will later be expressed in Hegel. The fulfilment of this vision of language occurs for Heidegger in the world of accomplished technology, in which language becomes nothing more than the 'expression' of subjectivity and the 'communication' between two subjects. Against this techno-metaphysical conception of language, Heidegger instead asserts that language is not simply the vehicle of a predetermined content. As Travers puts it, "Heidegger, then, aspires to a union of thought and language where the latter is not simply a vehicle for the former: it is the former grasped as the presence of being" (Travers 2012, 14). In other words, the word is not an arbitrary construct resulting from a prefigured thought, but rather it is what names and gives being to thought. The contrast with Hegel could not be clearer: whereas for Hegel language is indeed the principal instrument of thought, but nevertheless a manifestation of it, for Heidegger, as Amoroso says, "it is thought that is at the service of language, not language at the service of thought" (Amoroso 1993, 130). This opposition is most evident in the case of poetic language and its use of 'metaphors'. If for Hegel the imaginative aspect of language was still a metaphor for the concept, i.e., a deficient aspect that must aspire to resolve itself in the clarity of philosophy, this is not the case for Heidegger. Referring to Hölderlin's river poems, for example, Heidegger states that "the rivers in Holderlin's poetry are, however, in no way sense-images [*Sinnbilder*]" (Heidegger 1996, 18, tr. modified). Since they are not sense-images, they also do not reflect their metaphorical structure and "the 'rivers' are therefore not to count as symbols of a higher level or of 'deeper'" (Heidegger 1996, 18). There is no further, transcendent meaning beyond the poetic wording, but the event of meaning occurs *in* the poem itself: it is *in* the poem that, for Heidegger, the place of human dwelling on earth is founded.

This point needs to be explored further. Heidegger's idea of an event of meaning within the poetic act also inevitably entails a re-evaluation of the two aspects of poetic language which for Hegel were instead two limits to the freedom of thought: the sensitive aspect and the ambiguity of poetry.<sup>14</sup> Beginning with the former,

<sup>14</sup> As is so often the case, Heidegger is much more informative and meticulous in his critique of the metaphysical conception of language, and much vaguer when it comes to



Heidegger always shows in his interpretative practice that he gives deep significance to the rhythm, sound, and harmony of poetic language, considering them essential parts of the poetic act. Even from a theoretical point of view, Heidegger comes to find in the sensitive aspect of poetic language its “earthiness”.<sup>15</sup> The sound of language is its belonging to the earth, and thus to the principle of beyondness that it entails with respect to any project of meaning as a world. The language of poetry is always beyond any single explanation, it is superabundant and always rich in new meanings. This earthly aspect of language is thus connected to Heidegger’s second revaluation: that of the polysemy of poetry. In Heidegger’s words: “This language is essentially ambiguous, in its own fashion. We shall hear nothing of what the poem says as long as bring it only this or that dull sense of unambiguous meaning” (Heidegger 1982, 192). To listen to poetry is to understand its ambiguous character. Ambiguous, however, does not mean vague or indefinite, but rather that the poem is always further and always new, that it cannot be reduced to any single configuration of meaning, but that it is always open to new horizons.<sup>16</sup> The revaluation of this polysemic richness of poetry also involves the rejection of a continuity between poetry and thought, whereby thought is given the task of conceptually ‘explaining’ poetry. This kind of explanation belongs to metaphysical aesthetics. For Heidegger, instead, there is no “truthful element” in art that philosophy should extract, nor is poetry simply unfulfilled thought (as in Hegel).<sup>17</sup> This is why, in the preface to his *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, Heidegger states emphatically that “the present *Elucidations* do not claim to be contributions to research in the history of literature or to aesthetics” (Heidegger 2000, 21).<sup>18</sup> They do not belong to aesthetics because they do not seek to resolve poetry through philosophy, nor, as Heidegger says elsewhere, to “subject [...] the poetizing to the torture rack of concepts” (Heidegger 2018, 4). On the other hand, contrary to how some of the more critical commentators have interpreted it, Heidegger’s claim to the autonomy of poetry does not

detailing the new conception of which he wants to be the promoter. This is why Heidegger never goes so far as to write a ‘poetics’ – a task that would still sound too metaphysical for him. On Heidegger’s unwritten poetics, see (Appelhans 2002).

<sup>15</sup> “The sound of language, its earthiness, is held with the harmony that attunes the regions of the world’s structure, playing them in chorus” (Heidegger 1982, 101).

<sup>16</sup> For Heidegger, art is therefore always a sign (*Zeichen*), but not in the sense of Hegel, for whom the sign is the lowering of the sensible, but rather a sign in the sense of indicating (*zeichnen*), of a hinting (*winken*), of a constant foreshadowing of new possibilities for human dwelling, of which poetic song is the institution. See (Heidegger 2000, 186).

<sup>17</sup> “Thinking is not simply the interpretation of poetry, which, as art in the sense of Hegel’s absolute metaphysics, has been completed and has come to an end” (Heidegger 2013, 267).

<sup>18</sup> On this preface, see the commentary by (Amoroso 1993, 117-118).

imply the abandonment of any form of rigour or conceptuality in interpretation. As Riedel puts it: “For Heidegger, the step towards poetry does not mean an escape from philosophy, for example in the manner of Romantic thought [...] Poetry, in the sense that Heidegger and Hölderlin retain, does not entail a ‘poetisation’ of the world” (Riedel 2000, 26). If, for Heidegger, the language of aesthetics is to be overcome, and if this does not lead to a romantic or mystical escapism, a final question remains: what is the actual relationship between philosophy and poetry, and how is this relationship related to language?

Heidegger’s answer can be summed up in a phrase that appears several times in his work: “We may know much about the relation between philosophy and poetry. Yet we know nothing of the dialogue between poets and thinkers, who dwell near one another on mountains most separate” (Heidegger 1998, 237).<sup>19</sup> Heidegger’s formula shows a profound commonality between poetry and thought, but it does not declare their identity. What binds thought and poetry together is their common belonging to the domain of language: “Both poetry and thinking are distinctive Saying in that they remain delivered over to the mystery of the word as that which is most worthy of their thinking, and thus ever structured in their kinship” (Heidegger 1982, 155-156). The closeness of poetry and thought does not come from a posterior and arbitrary juxtaposition, but from their common belonging to a domain that surmounts them and gives them their essence: this is the event of saying as an institution of meanings in which humans dwell (Heidegger 1982, 90). Poetry and thought, however, relate to this event in different ways.<sup>20</sup> Heidegger summarizes this difference thusly: “The disparity in the extreme equality is nevertheless manifest in the fact that the poetical is grounded in becoming at home, whereas the thoughtful leads away into the un-homelike of question-worthiness” (Heidegger 2013, 283).<sup>21</sup> Concretely, for Heidegger this means that the poet has the task of establishing a people’s becoming at home in the world, that is, of naming things and giving them meaning, of reveal-

<sup>19</sup> For a more thorough comment on this sentence, see (Amoroso 1993, 126-136) and (Cattaneo 2022).

<sup>20</sup> Not that this means a clear separation, as Heidegger reiterates for example in (Heidegger 1982, 69-70). Heidegger himself, however, sometimes seems to fall back on these somewhat sharp distinctions, especially in his unpublished texts, where the need to make the distinction between thought and poetry clear first of all to himself sometimes leads to an almost dualistic differentiation. See, for example, the tables in (Heidegger 2013, 285-286).

<sup>21</sup> The problem of the becoming-at-home and of the un-homelike is at the centre of O’Donoghue’s book, which also contains a chapter on thinking and thought (O’Donoghue 2012).

ing them and bringing them into being, and thus of constructing a horizon of meanings by which people can dwell.<sup>22</sup> Poets are given the task of establishing the poetic habitation of humans on earth, as Hölderlin's famous lines states: "*Voll Verdienst, doch dichterisch wohnet / Der Mensch auf dieser Erde*".<sup>23</sup> If poets must found by naming, philosophers are given the opposite and complementary task: "Thinking is poetizing away from [*Weg-dichten*], *de-founding*" (Heidegger 2013, 284). This means that philosophers have the task of ensuring that any horizon of meaning never lapses into staleness, but that the generative force of the poetic is always preserved from the risk of erosion that it inevitably runs. In other words, philosophers must keep open the difference between being and beings in the form of the ulteriority of being from any institution of the meaning of beings, reaffirming its character of an event.<sup>24</sup>

The relationship between art and thought is one of autonomous proximity or intimate distance. Nevertheless, the boundaries between poetry and philosophy in terms of language are never static, but historical, just as the institutive and destitutive acts that characterise them are historical:

"Because philosophy *says* be-ing and is, therefore, only as word in word, and because its word never merely means or designates what is to be said but precisely in saying is be-ing itself, philosophy might hurriedly try to cross directly over into *poetry* as help in need and especially as receptacle. And yet this always remains an entanglement at the roots of what is of equal rank to philosophy and which on account of its most ownmost sways by itself, and from time immemorial incessantly avoids the thinking of be-ing. For, the ownmost of poetry also grounds history but differently; poetry's 'times' do not coincide with those of thinking" (Heidegger 2006, 42)

For Heidegger, in the age of fulfilled metaphysics, it is not yet possible to accept the institution of the event of being in poetry. On the contrary, "now thinking must think *in advance* of poetiz-

<sup>22</sup> On the role of poetry in the becoming-at-home, see (Heidegger 1996, 146-148). On the naming, see (Heidegger 1996, 21): "Naming' means: to call to its essence that which is named in the word of poetizing, and to ground this essence as poetic word. Here, 'naming' is the name for poetic telling". On the "saying" as "making appear" and "setting free" of a world, see (Heidegger 1982, 93).

<sup>23</sup> Heidegger interprets this quote in many texts, among which see at least (Heidegger 2000, 51-66) and (Heidegger 2001, 205-227). This quote also constitutes the title of an important collection of essays on Heidegger and Hölderlin by the Heidegger-Gesellschaft (Trawny 2000).

<sup>24</sup> The de-founding character of philosophy, as opposed to the founding character of poetry, also leads to a different relationship with immediacy: while poetry can and must institute the immediacy of things by naming them and can therefore also make use of images and must present itself as persuasive, philosophy must work in the extreme mediation of the separation between being and beings, and therefore be without images and appear as destructive. See (Heidegger 2013, 278).

ing” (Heidegger 2013, 278).<sup>25</sup> It is first of all necessary to reaffirm and reopen the difference between being and beings, in order to be ready to listen to the word of poetry that will establish the new event of being, which in turn will open the horizon of meanings where future humanity will dwell.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we can try to summarise how Heidegger formulates the relationship between poetry and thought with respect to language and how this differs from Hegel’s metaphorical and aesthetical consideration of poetic language. If for Hegel the language of poetry, from a systematic point of view, was simply a stage to be passed through in order to arrive at the true language of the spirit, which is the prose of the concept, in Heidegger there is no such hierarchical relationship. On the contrary, poetry and thought arise from the same event of being to which they correspond in different but equal and complementary ways. To use a term dear to Heidegger, it can be said that, unlike Hegel, in Heidegger that between poetry and thought is truly a *Gespräch*, a conversation. Poetry and thought can listen to each other, they can talk to each other as equals and, as in any authentic dialogue, their coming into dialogue originates from a distance that is not overcome, but rather determined by the mutual emergence of the same (*selbe*) that is never the identical (*gleiche*).<sup>27</sup> To speak of the relationship between poetry and thought, the words of Hölderlin’s poetical thought still stand out:

<sup>25</sup> On this *Vor-denken*, see (Jamme 1984).

<sup>26</sup> In this manner is to be interpreted Heidegger’s famous and provocative claim by which: “Philosophy is now in the first place preparation for philosophy by way of the construction of the most proximate foyers in whose spatial structure the words of Hölderlin can be heard, be answered by Da-sein, and in this answer be grounded for the language of the future human being” (Heidegger 2012, 333).

<sup>27</sup> “Poetry and thinking meet each other in one and the same only when, and only as long as, they remain distinctly in the distinctness of their nature. The same never coincides with the equal, not even in the empty indifferent oneness of what is merely identical. The equal or identical always moves toward the absence of difference, so that everything may be reduced to a common denominator. The same, by contrast, is the belonging together of what differs, through a gathering by way of the difference. We can only say ‘the same’ if we think difference. It is in the carrying out and settling of differences that the gathering nature of sameness comes to light” (Heidegger 2001, 216). On Heidegger’s notion of dialogue, see (Amoroso 1993, 195-224). On the possibility of determining that between poetry and thinking as a dialogue, see (Heidegger 1982, 160-161): “Only a poetic dialogue with a poet’s poetic statement is a true dialogue – the poetic conversation between poets. But it is also possible, and at times indeed necessary, that there be a dialogue between thinking and poetry, for this reason: because a distinctive, though in each case different, relation to language is proper to them both. The dialogue of thinking with poetry aims to call forth the nature of language, so that mortals may learn again to live within language”.

“Viel hat erfahren der Mensch.  
Der Himmlischer viele genannt.  
Seit ein Gespräch wir sind  
Und hören können voneinander”

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