

POETIC PROJECTION

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For Martin Heidegger the poet and the work of art are a co-constituted structure of Being. The poet and the work of art are one expression. Heidegger presents two forms of creativity by distinguishing poetic imagination from imagination. Poetic imagination expresses horizons of the unknown revealed as new dimensions of Being. The poetic image is dynamic and expands consciousness by revealing something new. In this revealing there is a conserving. Heidegger's way of looking at the work of the poet is revelation. Truth is revealed by the poet in the work of art. The work of art is a-live in its symbol. Poetic images are charged with power, gathering meaning through time. In expression, comes a stepping down of its moment of origin. Imagination is simply poesy, the words and language of the poet. There is in the creative process this stepping down of the creative urge in expression. Imagination that is contained in the work of art as poesy is not the a-live, dynamic poetic work of the image that founded a possibility by lighting up Being.

Poetic imagination is dynamic. The poetic image that works in the work of art evokes a sense of truth for those who read it. Other people are caught by the image's effectiveness in lighting up new aspects of living. Poetic imagination is a great downpouring of light. It channels this light. The poet is one who stands in the clearing that is lit by Being. The poet stands facing this Open, this unknown, waiting on that which is to be revealed as Being. This process of revelation demands a self-sacrifice by the poet. The poet must sacrifice the smallness of the personal self by standing open for truth. This is self-abandonment.

Heidegger speaks of nothing other than consciousness, nothing above, below or beyond. Emphasis is upon facing the unknown of a future yet to be given expression, turning toward that unknown in self-abandonment waiting revelation of Being. It should be remembered that we are speaking about the contrast of poetic action. The poetic, the unknown, is a timeless dimension. That timeless dimension is not a structure of human existence. Turning toward the Open means that the poet is also open, receptive, to that which is revealed in the poetic moment.

The poet waits patiently, empty of self. The poet becomes a vessel for the light of Being. In this way of thinking the poet sacrifices the self to be filled anew, to dwell *Inbetween* different worlds, the worlds of mortals and the worlds of gods. Truth is revealed in the work by the poet's moment of facing an unknown. The work of art is not as important as the work of the poetic image it expresses. The poet moves toward expanding consciousness through turning away from the known. This way of thinking shows that in

these moments something new emerges. A poetic image in the work of art expands horizons of the known (conscious) by inclusion of the alien in the familiar. This is the work of the poetic image:

This is why poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar.¹

This means that the truly poetic image is a founding, an originaive kind of work in the language of the poet. Poetic images are primordial structures of human experience. Images that are poetic bring things to awareness. The poet languages the truth of Being in the work of art. As truth is revealed, horizons of the known retire even further into the beyond of an unknown. In a poetic work truth is not only revealed but is at the same time conserved by its revelation. It is conserved in the work of art. Being is gathered up in the poet's work. The impact of the work of art upon others shows to them the meaning of standing in truth or standing open for truth, letting-things-be-as-they-are. For Heidegger, this is *Dasein's* essence, revealing things as they are.

Poetic projection is the opening onto the plentitude of being, renewing in a fresh way another mode into which the human being as historical is already cast. The new, the original, the initiating word, discloses the world as it exists. It is *naming* beings for the first time which first brings beings to word, says Heidegger, "Only this naming nominates beings *to* their being *from out of* their being."² It is this opening onto the plentitude of being which calls into being that which is named, calling it into the world through the linguistic powers of the human being. Originating pronouncements are poetic. Language of the everyday is what is left behind when the poetic of expression has been used up.

For Heidegger, "Projecting is the release of a throw by which unconcealedness submits and infuses itself into what is as such."³ It unveils the mode of origination in founding. This founding, for Heidegger is, "founding as bestowing, founding as grounding, and founding as beginning."⁴ Heidegger sees founding as an overflow, an endowing, a bestowal or originaive words in the poetic sense, this is a *saying*, a pronouncement that *shows* what has been absent through *appropriation* or owning:

The appropriating event is not the outcome (result) of something else, but the giving yield whose giving reach alone is what gives us such things as a "there is," a "there is" of which even Being itself stands in need to come into its own as presence.⁵

In this pronouncement or saying, the owning of that event, the appropriating, in turn is what fosters a coming to presence of what has been shown. This owning not only allows or calls the expressed into its presence but also makes it mine.

Notes

- 1) Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 226.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- 5) Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 127.