

On What Appears

Heidegger and Severino in *Concordia Discors*

(translated by Paolo Pitari)

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In this paper, I propose an analysis of the structural differences between Severino's and Heidegger's philosophies by addressing their two different answers to the question of what there is. The focus is thus on the characterisation of phenomenological immediacy, with particular attention to the problem of the plurality of subjects. I investigate the problem from both theoretical and historiographical perspectives, paying specific attention to the way in which Severino interpreted Heidegger's philosophy ever since his degree thesis *Heidegger and Metaphysics* (1950). The final aim is to understand – through comparison with Heidegger's position – how the language that testifies to the truth of Being should deal with the language of others and, above all, of other philosophies.

Keywords:

Phenomenology, Severino, Heidegger, Intersubjectivity, Interpretation, Originary truth

The history of philosophy must not be construed
as a battlefield but as the fertile soil from
which thinking must draw its nourishment
(Severino, 1994, p. 342).

Introduction

In line with the spirit of this issue of *Eternity & Contradiction*, this article refers directly to the presentation I gave at the *ASES* conference on *Heidegger in Severino's thought* (Brescia, June 2019). In that presentation, I used Severinian terminology to argue what I can summarise as follows: the gaze that knows how to read thinkers (or the languages of others in general) in light of the traces of the truth that appear even in the language of madness consists above all in *the ability to see other languages as the contrast between truth and error*, and therefore in refraining from ascribing any of them *exclusively* to the dimension of truth or (all the more so!) of error.

The presentation reached this conclusion by summoning Severino and Heidegger in dialogue. However, because of the schematic constrictions imposed by the limitations of congressional speech, Heidegger's contribution may have seemed extrinsic there. Therefore, in this present text, I want to clarify one of the many implications of that argument: specifically, that Heidegger's contribution is not extrinsic but indeed *intrinsic* and even fundamental to the argument itself. Accordingly, I want to argue once again in favour of the presentation's thesis, while also trying to show that the opening quotation above, which appears in Severino's degree thesis *Heidegger and Metaphysics (Heidegger e la metafisica)*, should be interpreted as a raw formulation of the same argument I'm making.

Specifically, I will argue that, in his subsequent works, Severino did not adequately respect his early attitude in conversing with *others* – that is, in the *Aus-einander-setzung* with the languages of others –, and that the dialogue with Heidegger – who here represents the backlight that is *essential*

to the enlightened – brings to light the meaning of this Severinian shortcoming. Therefore, what follows runs the risk of seeming like an objection to Severino’s thought. As for me, I prefer to consider it a contribution to its proper understanding. In light of the magnificent volume of Severino’s works, I trust that the reader will be so kind as to accept this preference.

The relationship between Heidegger and Severino is the focus of my doctoral research, and here I present a segment of its results. I align (to a certain extent) with the hermeneutic perspective adopted by M. Donà (2020): beyond the evident distance between Heidegger and Severino, what is truly at stake resides in their deeper consonance in thinking, and from this consonance must our thoughts draw nourishment. Yet, I think that perhaps we should speak of *complementarity* rather than consonance. I must properly determine these terms and the reasoning behind them, and I can begin by specifying this: to know how to look at the complementarity of these two philosophies is to know how to tame their radical distance. The terrain is slipper and steep here. These are dark times for dialogue. If we stay with the image of the battlefield, Heidegger and Severino – and even more so the scholars who studied in their respective *schools* – are two brothers who meet on the street wearing the uniforms of two enemy armies. They therefore fail to recognize each other as brothers. Not only that: they also believe to be the founders of the two enemy armies, and even the producers of their uniforms. Then they each claim to be the only one who’s capable of indicating the terrain on which we can *distinguish* between creator of uniforms, uniforms, brothers...*et sic in indefinitum*. Neither of them ever takes the appropriate first step towards *another* beginning: the recognition of their bond of brotherhood.

In introducing this metaphor, I must make it clear that – even if the aim here is to shine light on the essential role of Heidegger’s thought – these pages develop by following Severino’s language and intent (in line with the context of publication). To use Severino’s words from *The Originary Structure (La struttura originaria)*, these pages attempt to highlight the “elements that are considered significant or in any case more suitable for establishing an agreement,” even in the full awareness that choosing these elements “is one of the primary sources of misunderstanding and dissent” (Severino, 1981, p. 121).

Having said that, let us now focus on the problem at hand.

1.

I will spare the reader a long historiographical introduction and address the theoretical point directly by referring to a passage from Severino that, in its concision and explicitness, demonstrates the differences between his and Heidegger's philosophy in the most clear and meaningful way. Non-coincidentally, this passage appears at a crucial point in Severino's oeuvre: paragraph VI of "Returning to Parmenides" (in *The Essence of Nihilism*). The first words of the paragraph are notoriously dedicated to Severino's *apology* of philosophy as absolute and incontrovertible knowledge, as the guardian of truth and of its originary meaning upon which all other meanings of truth depend (or *within* which they can be what they are). This status obliges philosophy to take on the further task of establishing "what relation all the other activities of human beings bear to Being" (Severino, 2016, p. 60). In this context, Severino mentions Heidegger: "Truth as *simple adaequatio intellectus et rei* refers back to truth as the incontrovertible manifestation of the *res*. This, however, is not simple phenomenological manifestation (as Heidegger would have it), but is that Appearing in which Being submits itself to the law that opposes it to not-Being" (ibid.).

English-speaking readers, especially Heideggerians, should know that the translation of this passage as "Being submits itself to the law" is somewhat misleading. The original Italian (*«l'essere viene incontro dominato dalla legge»*) makes it clear that Severino's Being does not submit itself to anything. Rather, it "comes forward" (*«viene incontro»*), in the sense that it *appears* as dominated by the law that is itself Being's own meaning. Therefore, we must understand this passage in light of the one preceding it: "'Being is, while Nothing is-not.' Here, what is indicated is not simply a property of Being – albeit the fundamental one – but rather its very meaning: Being is that which is opposed to Nothing, it is this very opposition" (ibid., p. 35).

We can readily grasp how the same overt theoretical structure unites the two philosophers and accompanies Severino ever since his degree thesis, where the exegesis of Heidegger's delineation of a "concept of truth prior to and more originary than *correspondence* (*Übereinstimmung, adaequatio*)" (Severino, 1994, p. 130) plays a central role. When the two authors refer to science's *constitutive disinterest* for the originary dimension of appearance, they always have the same structure in mind. To give just one of many examples from Severino: "There would indeed be no knowledge, and therefore no scientific knowledge, if the world were not manifest, if it did not show itself, if it did not appear: if there was no experiencing it. [...

] However, science is not interested in that background that is experience itself and from which science itself begins” (Severino 2016b, p. 11, ff.).

Neither science nor other human activities are interested in the appearance of the originary. They see things but they do not look at the seeing itself; that is, they do not respond to the great invitation that guides philosophy, the invitation to know thyself. Heidegger and Severino, on the contrary, want to look at the originary, in the shared conviction that its sight will then illuminate the dimension *wherein* human life itself appears. The originary is the dimension that can be questioned only by having already affirmed it, only by *having always already been within it*.

But on the understanding of the originary, Severino and Heidegger’s paths fork. Severino sees the *originary structure of truth* as the place where the being-itself of every being appears. Heidegger sees the “*Da*” (the “there”) of *Da-sein* (being-there) as the place that preserves the truth of Being. Both the proximity and extreme distance between Severino and Heidegger reside entirely in this first step. We must learn how to interpret it. We must understand their two different responses to the question concerning what *there is*. There is Being, but what does this mean? Let us take a closer look.

2.

For a more detailed analysis of the concepts that compose the originary structure see past contributions in this journal (Marassi, 2019, pp. 34-39; Goggi, 2019, pp. 44-50; Messinese, 2020, pp. 24-26). Here, it suffices to quickly recall the very general meaning of the two concepts presented in the above quotation from “Returning to Parmenides”: the phenomenological manifestation and the law that opposes Being to not-Being. These two concepts directly refer to the two immediacies whose intertwining constitutes the originary structure, which realises itself in the following judgment: “All that which is immediately known, in accordance with the kind of knowledge that is appropriate to it, is what is immediate” (Severino, 1981, p. 114).

The originary structure affirms the immediate appearance of Being (Ph-imm): its being immediately *per se notum*. “Being” means everything that appears and therefore is; or, in Severino’s words, the “synthesis...between the meaning ‘to be’ (*formal Being*) and the meanings constituted by the *determinations* that indeed are” (*ibid.*, p. 143). Also, the originary structure affirms that Being appears immediately as non-contradictory:

“the non-contradictory is the immediate (logical immediacy)” (*ibid.*, p. 175). This means that Being appears immediately – all things do! – as what is nothing other than itself: that is, as what is not-nothing. No thing, no meaning, *no being* is other than itself (not even the meaning “nothing”).

Severino writes that the originary structure possesses the character of incontrovertibility: whoever wants to deny it must presuppose it. Every negation of this structure is based upon – and takes place within – this structure. The development of the analysis of the originary structure notoriously led Severino to affirm the eternity – the being-itself – of every being. In particular, Severino demonstrated the impossibility of the deepest conviction of our historical culture regarding the experience of any object: that is, that “it *appear[s]* that the object *is nothing*” (Severino, 2016, p. 108) before it appears and after it ceases to appear.

If Being (the positive) is every single thing, every determined being-itself, and not-Being is every negation of this immediate being-itself – if, therefore, “the negative is not simply the pure Nothing (Parmenides), but is also the *other* positive (Plato)” (*ibid.*, p. 58) –, then it is necessary to say that it does not appear that beings are their own negation and, therefore, that the gaze that believes to be witnessing this appearance deserves to be called *nihilism*. For Severino, nihilism is the fundamental error concerning what *there is*. By isolating the earth (that is, the entire content of appearance, what there is) from its own *structural truth*, the gaze of nihilism – which is ultimately the gaze of mortals: our gaze, our life – constitutes the foundation of the boundless wealth of our languages, cultures, meanings, activities, etc. That is, it constitutes the foundation of the entire history of humankind.

Even the language that testifies to the *originary structure of truth*, precisely because it confers meaning to the series of signs (words, sounds, etc.) that constitute its testimony, belongs to the gaze of nihilism. But when nihilism speaks of the originary structure of truth, it looks beyond itself, and indeed *beyond language*, through language. To this we shall return shortly. As far as Severino is concerned, these brief remarks should suffice for now.

3

I should say a bit more about Heidegger. According to the above quotation from Severino’s “Returning to Parmenides,” in Heidegger we encounter only the phenomenological description of what there is. Yet, one thing must be clear: if we begin by establishing that “Being” means “beings”

themselves, then Heidegger too thinks that what immediately appears is Being; that is, things (even though common readings think it is well-known that Heidegger sees in the synonymy between Being and beings the origin of the oblivion of truth).

What is there appears. Yes, but what is there? The young Heidegger already tells us that this question is of fundamental importance because, when we reflect on *what there is*, we find ourselves “at the methodological cross-road which will decide on the very life or death of philosophy. [...] Either into nothingness, that is, absolute reification, pure thingness, or we somehow leap into another world, more precisely, we manage for the first time to make the leap [*Sprung*] into the world as such” (Heidegger, 2002, p. 53). In this 1919 Freiburg course entitled “Phenomenology as Pre-Theoretical Primordial Science,” a cross-road of this kind presents to us the cornerstone of Heidegger’s thinking—albeit germinal and not-yet-fully-self-aware: this is the idea that will turn Heidegger’s philosophy into a transformation of Husserlian phenomenology, an analytic of *Da-sein* as a fundamental ontology, a critique of Western onto-theology, an attempt to overcome metaphysics and to establish a new beginning in thinking. Here, Heidegger dwells on the question concerning *what there is*, on the content of appearance, as he describes what he sees when he enters the classroom. In doing so, he offers us a concrete sample of his point of view:

What do “I” see? Brown surfaces, at right angles to one another? No, I see something else. A largish box with another one set upon it? Not at all. I see the lectern at which I am to speak. You see the lectern, from which you are to be addressed, and from where I have spoken to you previously. In pure experience there is no “founding” interconnection, as if I first of all see intersecting brown surfaces, which then reveal themselves to me as a box, then a desk, then as an academic lecturing desk, a lectern, so that I attach lecternhood to the box like a label. All that is simply bad and misguided interpretation, diversion from a pure seeing into the experience. I see the lectern in one fell swoop, so to speak, and not in isolation, but as adjusted a bit too high for me. I see – and immediately so – a book lying upon it as annoying me (*ibid.*, p. 60).

Heidegger indicates a very clear and simple position: the immediate content of experience consists in the *immediate* appearance of the meanings that make up our concrete, daily lives: our *existence*. In the originary disclosedness of truth, we do not deal with elements of a theory, nor with

the variables of a logic, nor with the *beings* of traditional metaphysics: we deal with the *significance of the World*, the complex network of concrete meanings that make up our existence: books, bridges, hopes, tweets, vaccines, etc.

Let us try to define this point. In the 1925-26 course on *Logic: The Question of Truth*, Heidegger engages in dialogue with Aristotle to find a determination of the *lógos* appropriate to his renewed phenomenological attention to the concept of intentionality. He describes the originary disclosedness of the world of *Da-sein* as “the hermeneutical ‘as’”: every experience of the world, every appearance that makes the elements of predicative determination accessible, “is in and of itself a matter of ‘having’ something as something. [...] In short, it has the as-structure” (Heidegger, 2010, p. 121). In a footnote, he adds that “this ‘having’ is not a matter of merely observing. It is meant entirely in the sense of our everyday dealing with things” (*ibid.*). Once again, he sees the appearance of Being as not *immediately* composed of abstract objects (of elements of a theory) but of the meanings that make up our world, our concrete existence. In his own words: “more precisely, as existing [*Dasein*, P.M.B.] – whether in speaking, entering/exiting, or understanding – I am an act of intelligently [*verstehender*, P.M.B.] dealing-with” (*ibid.*, p. 123).

What there is is there only insofar as it appears *as* an appearance in the originary dimension of *Da-sein*. For Heidegger, on the basis of the structure of the horizon of the appearance of things, one must say that an appearance that is free from the hermeneutical “as” is obtainable only through the overturning of the immediate, through its reduction. Every other way of determining things can be understood only from the starting point of this originary structure of our *Being-in-the-World*. This is why Heidegger says that only through the modification of the originary *hermeneutic “as”* one can arrive at the derived disclosedness of “the apophantic ‘as,’” where the *derived* element of determination and theory appears.

In this *modification* of immediate appearance, the being as “subject-matter-about-which ([...] as the thematic *means-whereby*) gets covered-over to a certain extent as regards that-as-which it was properly understood” (*ibid.*, p. 132). The being thus becomes an object (a *Gegen-stand*) that is simply represented and that is present there as an element of determination-via-statements. The problem is that, precisely because of this flattening, this kind of *lógos* can never guide our inquiry into the question concerning the Being of beings. For Heidegger, *this* is the point: “In the

logic and doctrine of being of the Greeks, and in the tradition up to Husserl, λόγος as determination-via-statements has in fact been the guide for pursuing the inquiry into being” (*ibid.*, p. 134). Here, albeit obliquely, Heidegger’s great criticism of metaphysics and his invitation towards its overcoming in favour of a new beginning of thinking make their appearance. Of course, I only sketched the core of the systematic development of Heidegger’s thought. Nevertheless, I think that this suffices to indicate the great distance between Heidegger and Severino.

4.

If we look at their characterisation of the pure dimension of appearance, of the phenomeno-logical immediacy that underlies every *adaequatio*, we immediately grasp the radical irreconcilability between Heidegger and Severino. On Severino’s side, we have the immediate appearance of *beings* as originally connected to logical immediacy (their being-itself = not-other-than-itself), not because they are subjects to a “principle of logic” but because their being-itself is the very “breath of thought” (Severino, 2016, p. 79: this structural foundation leads to see the human world as *error*, i.e. as other than the incontrovertible truth). On Heidegger’s side, we have *simple* phenomenological immediacy, an immediacy that is not equal to the one appearing in Severino’s binomial: Heidegger’s immediacy is the originary dimension of the *significance of the World wherein Da-sein is thrown*.

From Severino’s point of view, then, the content of immediate appearance to which Heidegger refers – that is, the nucleus upon which Heidegger’s thought develops – is *error*. This is clear in the passage from *Future Philosophy (La filosofia futura)* in which Severino addresses Heideggerian phenomenology: “It is impossible to discern the authentic meaning of appearance and disappearance when appearance is concurrently thought of as the creation of beings and disappearance is concurrently thought of as their annihilation. [...] From the Greeks up to phenomenology, appearance has failed to appear as appearance – and this is one of the reasons why appearance has inevitably failed to show what authentically manifests itself and has instead altered it and ultimately *hidden it*” (Severino, 2006, p. 334).

The purity of Heidegger’s appearance is error, but there is nothing wrong with that. Severino never said that one cannot speak of error. In fact, he said that people have never spoken of anything but error: they

have never spoken of *what is not error*. We must also remember that, in Severino, *error* has no negative nor diminishing meaning, there is no component of psychological *diminutio* in his determination of *error* (or madness, alienation, etc.). Severino often iterated that error – isolation – is something grand and, in this sense, he used the words “error” and “truth” as one would use “yellow” and “red”: to indicate the *difference of what is different*.

In any case, Heidegger and Severino are certainly irreconcilable here. Severino’s well-known accusations about Heidegger’s oblivion of the *nihil absolutum* give further substance to this certainty. But can we just stop here and go back to our daily lives? Not exactly. We have made it clear that Severino sees the originary in the connection between phenomenological and logical immediacies while Heidegger sees it in phenomenological immediacy alone. Yet (as the above quote testified), Severino thinks that phenomenological immediacy is in both cases the same: the appearance of beings. But we have just begun to note that the distance between Heidegger and Severino consists above all in that *even simple phenomenological immediacy is not the same*. What fertile ground could be hidden beneath this Severinian “oversight”? (The objection that *Severino himself* sees that phenomenological immediacy is not the same – because in Heidegger it is separate from logical immediacy – is in-itself opportune but here beside the point.)

We must pay attention to this crucial problem. We must plunge fully into its depths. This won’t be possible if we limit ourselves to *affirming* the distance between Heidegger and Severino, reconstructing their arguments *every single time*, representing (*vor-stellen!*) their positions against one another. Doing so will only force us to recognize their radical difference. Instead, we must aim to see their difference in action. We must catch it red-handed, so to speak.

5.

The question concerning others, or intersubjectivity, is the privileged point of entry into this difference: it allows us to unearth the difference in its concrete manifestation. The problem of intersubjectivity is central in Severino’s thought, even if this centrality is in a certain sense hidden (see Bortoluzzi, 2018). In his first unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate the horizon of intersubjectivity, the young Severino (1951) – referring to his just-published book on Heidegger – already deems “unsatisfying the solu-

tion of the problem proposed by Heideggerian philosophy, notwithstanding its notable contributions in other areas of philosophical inquiry” (Severino, 1994, p. 510).

For Severino, the question concerning others is central but not decisive for the determination of the content of the originary (the two immediacies). Something appears (Being!) even without the *appearance of other* “appearances.” Concerning logical immediacy, this may be less intuitive, but it is nonetheless the case: to inquire into the *elenctic* value of the originary (that is, to testify to the foundation that denies its negation), one doesn’t need (*methodologically*, so to speak) to confront the “existing negations” that have been “the object of care, interest, or passion” of others: it is enough to consider “the concrete system of the possible negations of the foundation” (Severino, 1981, p. 110, ff.). In other words, despite the “dialogic framework of the *élenchos*, Aristotelian thought is capable of redeeming itself from the unfounded assumption of the existence of others” (Severino, 2005, p. 71 – see also the chapter entitled “Élenchos” in Severino, 1988). That is, it is enough that *pure consciousness* now – i.e. the consciousness of the “philosopher,” the originary circle – expresses the negation of the foundation, for the negation to manifestly appear as negated. It is the foundation itself that shows (= poses) its ability to remove its negation.

Thus, the problem of intersubjectivity isn’t essential to the *structural* testimony of the foundation, but it does provide the privileged point of entry into the difference between Heidegger and Severino, giving us the chance to see it in action. The “demonstration of intersubjectivity” appears in Severino’s oeuvre only when the theorem bearing the name of *Glory* (*Gloria*) – according to which every appearance must cease to appear – is applied to the *present* appearance of any configuration of the earth. The result of the theorem is the affirmation of an infinite constellation of finite circles of the appearance of destiny. This is a necessary feature of the syntax of the originary truth. Here necessity appears (the language that testifies to destiny possesses necessity), and with it so does the need to differentiate this affirmation of the existence of “others” from the analogous phenomenological affirmation based on faith (i.e. on the interpretation of the languages of “others”). The references of this criticism are sections 26 and 34 of *Being and Time*.

Specifically, Severino wants to show that the *interpretation* of the content of appearance is the institution of connections, not of isolated meanings. For example, “the squeaking wheel” is a connection between the

noise and its meaning, it is the being the squeaking of a wheel. But within the faith in becoming-other of the isolated earth no necessary connection can be affirmed (indeed, every necessary connection must be negated, as the coherence of nihilism teaches). Therefore, when a phenomenologist like Heidegger affirms as a *necessary* determination of *Da-sein* his being-*with-others* – that is, his being *originarily Mitdasein* –, for Severino, he performs an inappropriate move. Phenomenology – by itself! – *cannot* affirm necessary connections.

Ok, but what is phenomenology? What does *immediately appear*? Severino quotes the following passage from *Being and Time*: “Even when speaking is unclear or the language is foreign, we initially hear unintelligible words, and not a multiplicity of tone data” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 153). Severino’s comment is what interests us here: “But this proposition cannot mean that, when we hear the other speak, sounds are not heard and do not exist: this proposition must mean that sounds are originarily *united* with the dimension of meaning (that is, with the dimension of being-a-sign, which, as such, refers to meaning itself) and, again, that they are united non-contingently” (Severino, 2001, p. 207).

This is where we catch red-handed the radical distance between these two philosophers. Let me explain. Here, Severino writes that Heidegger “*cannot mean* that, when we hear the other speak, sounds are not heard and do not exist.” Here’s exactly where the abyss separates the two because *this is exactly what Heidegger means*. According to Heidegger, *this* is phenomenological immediacy, the *significance of the World*. Shortly above the quoted passage, Heidegger writes that “It requires a very artificial and complicated attitude in order to ‘hear’ a ‘pure noise.’ The fact that we initially hear motorcycles and wagons is, however, the phenomenal proof that *Da-sein*, as being-in-the-world, always already [*je schon*] maintains itself *together with* innerworldly things at hand and initially not at all with ‘sensations’” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 153). For Heidegger, only within *this* immediacy can we reach, through its reduction, the theoretical level (the apophantic “as”) in which we speak of connections between sounds and meanings, in which we begin to dissect what in truth appears to us immediately *in one fell swoop*.

This is where the irreconcilability between the two authors is clear and *concrete*. For Severino, Heidegger describes something that takes place *within the originary dimension* that Severino testifies to. For Heidegger, Severino describes what takes place *within the originary dimension* that he, Heidegger, testifies to. This is radical incommunicability and, in my

opinion, here readers are called to overcome these respectively isolating gazes, this *battle* between antithetical positions. We must begin to *recognise what is united*, to see that such divergent visions on the same question depend merely on a *different object* of attention, on a different problem that the authors intend to confront. Should we not perhaps come to realise that these two philosophers illuminate the two sides of the originary, its two *souls*?

6.

The problem concerns the different meanings of phenomenology, or of phenomenological immediacy. Severino always characterized phenomenological immediacy as outlined above, ever since his thesis on Heidegger. From a historiographical point of view, we can understand the diversity of views between Heidegger and Severino in the light of a certain *methodological contradiction*, so to speak, that characterises the interpretation that Severino proposes in *Heidegger and Metaphysics*. On the one hand, this study presents its own interpretative structure with its own *aim*: that is, an *already endorsed* thesis which it must prove and whose goal is “to bring to light the *essence*, beyond its extrinsic and accidental configuration” (Severino, 1994 p. 18), of Heidegger’s thinking. This is why the first part of the work focuses on Heidegger’s re-elaboration of Kantian philosophy as an introduction to *Being and Time*. This part admirably introduces the interpretative structure that will remain decisive throughout the entire analysis (it even manages to “anticipate” Heidegger’s own considerations about the *Kantbook* in his 1950 and 1973 prefaces to it – cf. Heidegger, 1997). On the other hand, though, Severino’s methodological intent is also to “abandon all predetermined frameworks and follow the natural course of the philosophy in question” (Severino, 1994, p. 127).

Now, although these two sides do not necessarily constitute an antinomy, it seems to me that their coexistence is the origin of the oversight indicated above. As is well known, Severino, following Bontadini, wanted to see in Heidegger what his mentor saw in Gentile: that is, the end and definitive overcoming of gnoseological dualism (Being-thought) that characterised modern philosophy since the dualism of the Cartesian *cogito*. This overcoming would constitute the solid foundation for the revival of the edifice of classical metaphysics. Only then would the purity of the appearance of Being, the uncontaminated unity of experience, be regained. *Here* is precisely where the problem lies: Severino sees Heidegger’s phe-

nomenological immediacy as the pure immediacy of beings (that is, of Being itself, or of the unity of Being and not-Being that makes the edifice of metaphysics not only possible but necessary).

I am here alluding to the fact that, in this grand study on Heidegger – these pages do not do justice to its greatness –, in a certain sense the German thinker *isn't there at all*. This is a failed study, but not for the reasons that Bontadini had in mind. Severino wanted to outline the structure (the essence!) of Heidegger's thought, stripping it of its extrinsic guise. This procedure hit the mark in its reproach of Heidegger for his too-polemical (sometimes admittedly distasteful) attitude towards traditional structures of thinking, but it also completely flattened Heidegger's philosophy to its own guiding interpretative structure and practiced a radical expunction of the peculiar features of the philosophy under analysis. This is apparent, for example, when Severino speaks – alluding to the *phenomenological method* that he would analyse thereafter – of the fact that, “in Heidegger, the methodological foundation [that is, the unity of experience, phenomenological immediacy, P.M.B] is gained, so to speak, from the very beginning” (Severino, 1994, p. 119). Similarly, in “Returning to Parmenides,” Severino writes: “Yet that which is a result for the idealist is, for Heidegger, the beginning” (Severino, 2016, p. 35).

The young Severino knew that, in Heidegger, “method” does not indicate a way towards the truth that begins in non-truth but, rather, “the appeal to the originary truth” (Severino, 1994, p. 128). Therefore, one cannot help but wonder why, over the years, Severino kept denying what he had already clarified and kept emphasising that Heidegger's philosophy is a *seeking* that begins in non-truth. In doing so, he systematically forgot that Heidegger conceived the method exactly as he himself did; see e.g. Heidegger's *Contributions*: “*The one who seeks has already found! And the original seeking is this grasping of what has already been found, namely, the grasping of what is self-concealing as such. Whereas ordinary seeking finds in the first place, and has found, when it stops seeking*” (Heidegger, 2012, p. 64).

The *phenomenological method* is the central problem of our investigation. Phenomenology must go to *the things themselves* “beyond every presupposition and every unjustified problem” (Severino, 1994, p. 129). It must look at the phenomenon “as what shows itself in itself, what is manifest” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 25). But what does show itself? What is immediate *phenomenologically*? We have already explained the answers of Heidegger and Severino. But in a Severinian paragraph on the Heideggerian

method – where Severino believes to not “alter Heidegger’s intent by affirming that the phenomenological method attests the radical objectivity of *thinking* as thinking of something that shows itself in-itself” (Severino, 1994, p. 132) –, the word *hermeneutics* appears only once, in a footnote (fn 2, p. 131), and is then forgotten. And yet, this word is fundamental to Heidegger’s response to the phenomenological question:

The idea of an “originary” and “intuitive” grasp and explication of phenomena must be opposed to the naïveté of an accidental, “immediate” and unreflective “beholding.” [...] From the investigation itself we shall see that the methodological meaning of phenomenological description is *interpretation* [*Auslegung*, P.M.B.]. The *logos* of the phenomenology of Da-sein has the character of *hermēneuin*, through which the proper meaning of being and the basic structures of the very being of Da-sein are *made known* to the understanding of being that belongs to Da-sein itself. Phenomenology of Da-sein is *hermeneutics* in the original signification of the word, which designates the work of interpretation. But since discovery of the meaning of being and of the basic structures of Da-sein in general exhibits the horizon for every further ontological research into beings unlike Da-sein, the present hermeneutic is at the same time “hermeneutics” in the sense that it works out the conditions of the possibility of every ontological investigation (Heidegger, 1996, p. 32 sg.).

In German, “interpretation” can be *Interpretation*, *Deutung*, *Sinngebung*, *Auslegung*, etc. In the passage above, we read *Auslegung*. *Auslegung* is certainly used sometimes in the sense in which one may say: “I am interpreting (giving a possible interpretation of) the two authors”. However, Heidegger uses this term in the sense of exhibiting (*Aus-legen*), of showing the phenomenon as what shows itself in-itself. The phenomenon in-itself always shows itself immediately in the structure of the hermeneutic “as” and never in a presuppositionless grasping of something previously given: “Interpretation does not, so to speak, throw a ‘significance’ over what is nakedly objectively present [...], but what is encountered in the world is always already in a relevance which is disclosed in the understanding of world, a relevance which is made explicit by interpretation” (*ibid.*, p. 140).

In light of these considerations, we must say that Severino – starting from his degree thesis and throughout his *Denkweg* – sees in Heidegger only what the latter would call the formal meaning of phenomenology (the

formal meaning of the immediate phenomenological content), thus *de facto* relegating the analyses of “*the way in which* the content presents itself” (Severino, 1994, p. 132) to extrinsic and accidental questions, when – for Heidegger – these actually constitute the concrete truth of immediacy. From here on out, avoiding the true content of Heidegger’s thought becomes the methodical feature of Severino’s interpretation. Again, we can think, e.g., of chapter IV of *The Originary Structure*, where Severino praises Heidegger for having drawn attention to the opposition of Being and Nothingness (see also Severino, 2016, p. 79: we won’t dwell on this question here) and argues that “psychological contaminations – centred around the concept of *Angst* – and Heidegger’s anti-intellectual position, remain outside that essential drawing of attention” (Severino, 1981, p. 226).

These contaminations and position are actually *what constitutes the core of Heidegger’s investigation*. But Severino is right, and *this is the problem*, that he praises Heidegger for merits that Heidegger doesn’t care about just as Severino doesn’t care about what he considers contaminations. Another example is when Severino *rightly* focuses on the reasons why Heidegger doesn’t realise that he’s inheriting the Greek sense of becoming: “focused as he is on the need to highlight his concept of ‘phenomenology’ – which Husserl had already elaborated (I don’t see substantial progress here) –, and on the desire to ontologise the Husserlian phenomenological method (thus, ultimately, on the identification of “Being” with that method), Heidegger doesn’t pay attention to what he inherits” (Severino, 2006, p. 159). Here too Severino is right in his description of Heidegger’s relationship with Husserl (in terms of the ontologising of the phenomenological method) and in the conclusion that, for Heidegger, Being is “appearance” itself (see Severino, 2006, p. 316 ff.). Yet, this appearance is not *appearance* as Severino understands it; rather, it is the coming-forward of the concrete *significance of the World*, of the *significance* that shows itself in its self-concealing, in its withdrawing, in its oblivion that favours attention to particular meanings, to beings (see Heidegger, 2009, sections 10-13, for his criticism of Husserl).

Now, on closer inspection, this Severinian “oversight” is not really an oversight but the emergence of the essential trait of Severino’s interest in reading other authors or *other discourses* in general. Severino wants, on the one hand (*a*) to show the logic (which is always immediately onto-logic) intrinsic to every human language, philosophical or not, and on the other hand (*b*) to bring the discourses of others onto his own “chessboard” and position them within what (in recent writings) he calls the *authentic history*

of mortals. This is what language must focus on when it intends to testify to destiny—destiny being “the semantic structure of identities whose denial is self-denial” (Severino, 1992, p. 159). The result of this interest, of this *argumentative aim*, in relation to Heidegger, is the complete expulsion – one could say, the *oblivion* – of the hermeneutic: that is, of the *significance of the World* as phenomenological immediacy.

If we return to the early thesis on Heidegger, we can now better understand why this work is a grandiose two-faced Janus. It perfectly hits the mark and yet at the same time completely misses it. We do certainly find here the overcoming of the gnoseological presupposition in the illumination of the methodological foundation of the unity of experience. This allows the content of the philosophical edifice to be founded and not to remain unfounded (including traditional content, as Severino *rightly* reproaches Heidegger for overlooking). In this sense, as Severino writes: “The criticism that Heidegger moves to every gnoseological conception that *presupposes* the subject on one side and the object on the other is perfectly consistent with the (founded) conception of the originary unity of the manifestation of beings. The *world*, instead, is the *founded* presupposition of every gnoseological relationship, because the world, in *being-in-the-world*, is the originary truth, the *letting-come-forward*, the condition of every knowledge of beings” (Severino, 1994, p. 138).

Indeed, the *world!* The world that allows to *come forward* not naked beings but the immediate *significance of the World*, the concrete meanings of human life. Of course, to use the words of Severino’s mentor: philosophy is born from life and returns to life, but not to remain, in the meantime, *out of life*, and not to limit itself to a “rigorous observation of the facts” where “the vital impulse is somewhat cooled” (Bontadini, 1995, p. 6). But this is exactly what Heidegger tried to teach throughout his entire life: that it is impossible to leave life, that this leaving can only be abstract.

In this sense, Severino’s journey seems to begin from the originary (of phenomenological immediacy!) and to develop entirely within this abstraction. But is that really so? The answer must be: of course not! Life is always there, from the very beginning of the path. *Others* are always there from the beginning. Indeed, all of Severino’s work is a language, a discourse. It is the *language* that testifies to destiny. Everything happens in language, in interpretation, in life. No one can leave.

7.

We must strive to understand each other! The attentive reader of Severino will surely want to point out that, in the last few paragraphs, I've been treating destiny as a designation, thus denying its incontrovertibility. Yet, I'm aware of Severino's resolution of the *aporia* according to which, because one cannot escape from the historicity of language, then it follows (*it would seem to follow*) that all definitive and incontrovertible knowledge is impossible. As far as I'm concerned – and for what it's worth –, Severino's resolution is completely valid, but we must grasp its implications.

Severino shows in part III of *Beyond Language* (*Oltre il linguaggio*) that the differentiations in language ultimately – and necessarily – refer to a deeper identity that *underlies* these differences. This is the identity without which these differences could not be differences, the identity “implicitly recognised by the negation of identity” itself, and which is therefore necessarily present “in the multiple ways of being a sign of something” (Severino, 1992, p. 148). Naturally, this entire discourse is itself *enveloped in difference*, but this cannot mean that identity doesn't appear – because again this would deny the originary embrace of difference.

(*En passant* I should observe that, on the one hand, Severino's fundamental critique of the philosophies of the linguistic turn is certainly valid: these philosophies don't realise that their affirmation of the impossibility of transcending language ultimately rests on the *coherence of nihilism*. Therefore, they remain one step behind Leopardi, Nietzsche and Gentile, just as the latter's pupils remain one step behind him. On the other hand, though, the point here is that Severino considers Heidegger's judgment that the originary is “hearing-language” only in abstract terms, and that this *abstracting* is just another facet of Severino's oversight).

The identity that “*remains* undeniable in the infinite differentiations of language” is of course and above all *destiny* itself. Destiny is the originary syntax of the occurrence of the embrace of difference, the dimension within which “that this set of empirical events is a lamp is a problem, but that this set is a thisness, or a being, or other than the other: this is not a problem but a necessary connection” (*ibid.*, p. 156). Therefore, destiny is what lies beyond language, but we must pay close attention to the meaning of this expression. *Beyond language* can (must!) certainly indicate that the identity of destiny lies beyond the differences of the language that indicates it (just as the moon is not the finger that indicates it). But this expression can also indicate what awaits beyond the era of language, after the *sunset of the isolated earth*. It thus becomes necessary to say that destiny *does*

not lie beyond language in this second sense (it still does in the first, though). Why? Because I am speaking (writing!), because I am in the “situation in which identity never presents itself outside of difference” (*ibid.*, p. 151), because I want to speak, because I originally am (also) will, because “the human being finds himself to be will: to always [*je schon, always already!*, P.M.B.] be in language is to always be will” (*ibid.*, p. 155).

When Severino talks about this situation – about the will! –, he alludes to the fact that the will is “thrown by destiny into willing,” that the will does not decide to will “but is necessarily thrown into its own willing” (Severino, 2013, p. 199, emphasis P.M.B.). As Severino explains ever since *Destiny of Necessity* (*Destino della necessità*), mortals – the ones who want, who speak! – are necessarily the place wherein the dispute between “the isolation of the earth” (the isolated earth, the will!) and “the pure earth” (the non-isolated earth which itself remains in contrast with the isolated earth because it too belongs to the dispute that mortals are) appears.

Like destiny itself, the pure earth is “free from will and language, [...] unspeakable” (*ibid.*, p. 200). *Beyond Language* explores the necessity that the identity of destiny cannot be denied by the difference in its being spoken. This necessity entails the presence of a common dimension between the two earths: otherwise, they couldn’t differ from each other, and isolation couldn’t isolate anything. In Severino’s last book, *Witnessing Destiny* (*Testimoniando il destino*), the language of destiny goes as far as to call this common dimension the “non-apophantic semantic dimension” (Severino, 2019, p. 117). By virtue of the necessary existence of this dimension, which is irreducible to truth or error because it is the condition (identity!) of their difference, Severino can (or rather: *is forced to*) introduce the concept of *similarity* between the isolated and pure earths. In the introduction of this powerfully – originally! – ambiguous and amphibious (*amphi-bios*) concept of *similarity*, we entirely feel the weight and difficulty of Severino’s works from *Beyond Language* onwards. In these works, language speaks of destiny beyond language. In *Witnessing Destiny*, we read that “the language that testifies to destiny does not yet know how to decipher the correspondences” (*ibid.*, p. 119) between the traits of the isolated and pure earths. This specifically means that the language of destiny doesn’t yet know how to decipher the traces of truth in the isolated earth. But what can it mean to decipher the traces of the truth? Can it really mean something that *is not also interpretation?*

At the 2019 conference, I took the liberty of pointing out that, as *Witnessing Destiny* states, “the ultimate content of the non-truth of interpre-

tation is the destiny of truth” (*ibid.*, p. 30). It thus seems that we should exclude that “interpretation is a *regressus in indefinitum*” (*ibid.*). But it also seems necessary that between any interpretation and the ultimate interpreted (destiny) there be an infinite set of interpretations and interpreteds, because “every meaning of the isolated earth is complex and, therefore, the set of meanings that constitute it is infinite. Yet, every meaning of the isolated earth is precisely an interpreted-interpreter” (*ibid.*, p. 30). This means that, certainly, identity is beyond difference, but it is so because it remains completely enveloped in difference. Therefore, the problem of deciphering the traces of the truth in the traits of the isolated earth (of the hyposyntax!) *is an authentic problem destined to remain so in the age of language* (for clarification see Bortoluzzi, 2019). The deciphering of the hyposyntax *cannot* reach a conclusion. One cannot escape interpretation (language!). Mortals are *originarily, immediately* contrast. Accordingly, we begin to grasp that, in the language that testifies to destiny (that is, in the will to witness destiny), language *is the originary*: that is, it is what is phenomenologically immediate. In the diaporetic angst of the witnessing of the *syntax of destiny*, the human being begins to know himself for who he is: error, mortal, the contrast between truth and error. The originary truth is that truth stands in dispute with non-truth. The hyposyntax (the earth!) does nothing but incessantly remind – never tired of plying the eternal byways (Leopardi) – to the mortal his truth, the originary contrast that he is.

But do all hyposyntactic determinations tell this to mortals? Yes and no. Certainly, the foundation manages to testify to itself in the silent *diánoia* of the originary circle, thus freeing the “dialogic framework of the *élenchos*... from the unfounded assumption of the existence of others”. Certainly, even a leaf on the road – precisely as *content of the non-truth of the isolated earth* – can be part of the possible system of negations of the foundation. Yet not all hyposyntactic determinations can *truly tell* mortals the truth of their being contrast, interpretation. In fact, only those determinations that come forward as *languages of others* – i.e. the actual historical negations – can. Paraphrasing Aristotle, a plant cannot deny destiny.

For these reasons, in my conference presentation I said that the authentic linguistic problem (destined to remain a problem) is above all whether destiny in other circles is “hidden wisdom – or is rather manifest wisdom, as it is in the originary circle or maybe even wider; and, in fact, whether it is the language that testifies to destiny in the originary circle that is unable to decipher what in others or in some other circles is already deciphered”

(Severino, 2011, p. 334). This problem is in-itself already solved and nevertheless unavoidable, because language is will and, therefore, this problem tells mortals their truth. The abyss of otherness, the *significant and non-naively-behaviourist presence* of others (in opposition to neo-positivist belief), is the bearer of this message.

In light of this problem, the task becomes to learn how to speak of other languages as themselves the true contrast: not truth, not error, but *both!* The task is to learn how to listen to the language of others and hear in the song of the isolated earth the resounding of the contrast, the song of destiny. The task is to “*accept* conversation” when we meet others, even if this meeting is a “bijective relationship between two semantic planes” (Severino, 1981, p. 138), and to thereby “*make* the human being a philosopher: the establishment of the logos and therefore the transformation of the world” (ibid.). Indeed, of the *world!*

8.

So we must ask: is the *world* truly absent, are *others* truly absent, when Severino’s journey begins? Does phenomenological immediacy really only regard beings and not also the *significance of the World*? The answer must be no. The world and others are there, present from the beginning, in disguise; that is, wearing the *impossible* (yet positively significant) mask of an error that, when spoken (*an-gesprochen*), is only error and not also truth, the impossible mask of an appearance that is not also the appearance of the truth. Their presence-in-disguise is necessary to the adequate development of the testimony of the syntax, but then we must remind ourselves that they’ve always been there, *immediately*, because one cannot escape life. Otherwise, there’s a real risk of considering Severino’s works “simply an exercise in theoretical manoeuvres through which to expose the ‘falling into contradictions’ of the adversaries” (Berutti, 2015, p. 15).

Yes, many do read Severino in just that way, but this is to confuse the moon with the finger that indicates it, to confuse destiny with the language that testifies to it. This is to fail to understand that discursivity, in order to testify to the logical core that constitutes the identity of destiny, needs to *pretend* that time is not “the destiny of language” (Severino, 1981, p. 154). On the contrary, we must understand the *argumentative intent*, what language *wants to say*. When Severino says that only beings, without their historical-linguistic situations, constitute the originary phenomenological immediacy, he considers language – itself originary, unavoidable,

because he's speaking! – only in abstraction. He considers time as the destiny of discursiveness, of the relationship with the languages of others, only in abstraction. This is the correct approach because he must (wants to) testify to the syntax of destiny, he wants to free language from the nihilism that corrodes it. But we must not forget the meaning of the originary appearance of the *significance of the World*. Severino's slow diaporetic *didnoia* finally allows us to say: God + World = World. Indeed, the *world!* Severino's method must, *rightly*, abstract completely from mortal life, and therefore from *others*. But we must not forget, again, that this abstraction cannot erase the fact that phenomenological immediacy is the immediacy of mortal life. It *cannot*, in the strong sense: that is, it is impossible.

9

Severino's phenomenological "oversight" shows us how, when he speaks of the originary dimension of meaning – even though he refers (rightly, given his purpose!) to a pure phenomenology –, he *cannot but* intend the *immediate* concreteness of the *significance of the World* (*Weltbedeutsamkeit*) of which Heidegger speaks. From the historiographical point of view, therefore, we can say that Severino's oversight regarding the *core* of Heidegger's thought constitutes the paradigmatic matrix of his oblivion of the further undeniable meaning of phenomenological immediacy. To show this is not just to say that Heidegger too got something right, it is to begin to equip oneself with the tools that can enable one to adequately, *truthfully*, illuminate the meaning of the task that the truth of Being, once brought into language, confers upon mortals in their relationship with *others*. This task cannot say anything that is *practical-concrete* to mortals, it cannot tell them what to do, it "cannot define any concrete individual possibility" (Heidegger, 1996, p. 258). This task is the very coming-forward of the awareness of error; that is, of the contrast that mortals are, and therefore of the awareness that in the languages of others, even in the greatest distance from the testimony of eternity, eternity must always resonate (*An-klang*).

The refutation of error necessarily leads to its opposite. Ultimately, the greatest refuter of mortal history tells us nothing except this: there's no one to refute, there's only the task of listening, we must give birth to the true listening of the song of the isolated earth so that this song can manifest itself as "the song of the truth" (Severino, 2007, p. 374). We must give shape to words and actions capable of creating such listening. As Heidegger puts it: "All saying must allow the co-emergence of a capacity to hear it. Both

saying and hearing must be of the same origin” (Heidegger, 2012, p. 62). Again paraphrasing Aristotle, we must learn to distinguish, to have the patience to give each *lógos* its own name.

Let me give you an example as a first conclusion. In *Heidegger and Metaphysics*, the young Severino rightly condemns Heidegger’s polemic against logic on the question concerning nothingness. Heidegger here fails to distinguish different philosophical problems: “To ask ‘What is nothingness?’ is to inaugurate a new problem, clearly distinct from the traditional one, *which therefore cannot be accused of not satisfying the needs of the new one*” (Severino, 1994, p. 316 ff.). For Severino, Heidegger’s (historical) confusion lies precisely in this accusation: “Heidegger’s confusion consists in considering ‘logic’ and, in general, traditional philosophy, as an investigation that claims to *replace*, in the elaboration of the question concerning nothingness, the investigation that he himself conducts” (Severino, 1994, p. 316 ff.).

In my opinion, the analysis developed above regarding the meaning of phenomenological immediacy allows us to see that the language of destiny – the philosophy that develops by denying the system of possible negations of the foundation – leads the philosopher (the human being!) to becoming-aware that no historic language, no language of others *in general*, testifies only to error. Thus, if the testimony of destiny wants to remain firm in its refutation, then we *must* say that to witness the eternity of beings is to inaugurate a new problem, clearly distinct from the traditional one, *which therefore cannot be accused of not satisfying the needs of the new*.

This is the only way to show the concreteness of a thought that appears in originary unity with the history of negation, with concrete occurrences, with life! For this reason, we must say that the meaning of phenomenological-hermeneutic immediacy that Heidegger takes care of is immanent in the entire development of Severino’s thought. This meaning constitutes the true, inalienable unsaid that hides between the lines of what is said, even in its apparent antitheticality, even in the apparent superficial *either-or*. This meaning is the doctrine of Severino’s thought, the *doctrine* “to which we are exposed so that we might expend ourselves on it” (Heidegger, 1998, p. 155). As I said in the beginning, this indicates only a segment of the relationship between the two authors as I understand it. There’s still a lot to say. A lot of work to be done to remove our gaze from the inability to distinguish without “drawing too sharp a distinction” (Rilke, “The First Elegy”).

10.

A second, provocative conclusion: the foundation's wound. The expression *the foundation's wound* is used by A. Dal Sasso (2015) in a sense that we cannot delve into here. But the problem that may afflict Severino's thought can perhaps be indicated as another, related, foundation's wound. When Severino denies that *Heideggerian phenomenology* could ever establish necessary connections (see the above quote from *La Gloria*), he shows that he sees *only* error in the other, that he remains within a *mere* refuting attitude. He is thus forced to deny the necessity of a connection – e.g. between the wheel and its squeaking – that the testimony of destiny affirms with truth. In this gaze, it's as if the youthful request for an absolute foundation *beyond* the originary, beyond immediacy, still lingers on in Severino. That is, it's as if Severino never overcame his younger self, convinced of the validity of classical metaphysics, who wondered about the thrown ontic non-power of Heidegger's ontology: "How can an ontic non-power on beings have in itself the absolute conditions of its own *Being*?" (Severino, 1994, p. 260).

It is clear that the purpose of Severino's subsequent journey consists in the *demonstration* of the meaninglessness of this question; that is, in the demonstration of the *immediate necessity* of the appearance of this ontic non-power on beings, on every connection. Severino teaches us that human beings are not what they believe to be, they are not the lords of beings. He teaches us that the appearance of every semantic connection, of every wheel that squeaks, every flute that plays, every person who cries, is the appearance of an immediately necessary being whose negation – whose not-being – is impossible. Therefore, if we remain in an exclusively refuting attitude, we deprive ourselves of the possibility of understanding why Heidegger maintained – even though he did continually criticise the principle of non-contradiction –, in relation to its elenctic strength, that "the truth that pertains to this principle is a primally distinctive [*ureigene*] one" (Heidegger, 2010b, p. 47). Or why he spoke of *apaideiustian* (*uneducation!*) when – in the *annus mirabilis* 1964! – he wanted to hint at the meaning of the new task of thinking in the age of the end of philosophy.

According to Aristotle, *apaideiustian* (uneducation) is what characterises those who demand that everything be demonstrated (cf. Heidegger, 1972, p. 72). On closer inspection, Severino is the great Western *paidéia* – the supreme loyalty to the language of tradition – engaging in this grandiose work of *apaideiustian*: the demonstration of destiny.

11.

Third conclusion: mathematics. In his autobiography, Severino recounts that Gadamer used to characterise his philosophy as mathematics. Severino would reply that he preferred “mathematics to philosophy” (Severino, 2011b, p. 131). Linguistic misunderstanding can provide fertile opportunities for thinking. Many decades earlier, introducing the theme of the plurality of philosophies (of the languages of others), Severino wrote that, according to Kant, to be a field of endless struggles is to be the object of scandal, but “mathematics and physics are not scandalous” (Severino, 1982, p. 73). People engage in dialogue when they don’t get along, when they don’t have the same opinion.

Above, I tried to argue that Severino allows us to illuminate the structure of a *dialogue in accordance with the truth* in which every speaker “specifies, deepens, places in new perspectives what he hears from the other” (*ibid.*, p. 74). I tried to do this by showing that Severino’s thought forces us to see the history of philosophy (and the entire plurality of languages) as *not* a battlefield. Severino succeeds in doing this precisely because his philosophy is the new mathematics, the philosophy that escapes scandal (in the paradox of the most striking scandal). Indeed, if “the ‘sciences’ are not the truth but techniques of transformation of the world, and if mathematics is their syntax” (*ibid.*, p. 73), then the new mathematics is what establishes the *lógos* and thus truly transforms the world. It transforms the world by causing us to leap *into another world* (the world!) when it shows that every transformability has always been surrounded by the eternal non-transformability of the whole.

12

Fourth conclusion: poetry. At the end of this analysis on Heidegger and Severino, the presence of the other shows itself as the most genuine source of truth for humanity. Today’s language of philosophy struggles to tell this simple truth and its consequences. When it speaks of the truth of the self in the other, philosophy is still too fraught with negation, refutation, rejection, *pólemos*. In short, with the annihilation of the other (these pages have not argued that life is not *pólemos* too). Yet, philosophy is not alone, not even today. Where philosophy fails or becomes unable to progress, poetry (singing!) can come to its aid, provided that one is willing to listen to its language. Poetry can remind us that the other constitutes the most con-

crete meaning of the I, the most concrete meaning of the we, and that the other's presence determines the truth of my presence. Thus, the poet sings:

Your presence
Enters through the seven holes in my head
Your presence
Through the eyes, mouth, nares and ears
Your presence
Paralyzes my moment in which everything begins
Your presence
Disintegrates and actualizes my presence
(Veloso, 1975)

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