



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Poetic Language and World Disclosure: An Approach to Heidegger's Ontological Turn

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: Oct 22, 2024

Accepted: Dec 28, 2024

Keywords

Language

Poetry

Disclosure

Listening

Hermeneutics of Facticity

Ontological Understanding

House of Being

Artwork

Beautiful

Sublime

ABSTRACT

This study, adopting a hermeneutic perspective, seeks to explore and critically analyze the language of poetry and its connection to the disclosure and revelation of the world as conceptualized by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). It explores the connection between language—as the house of being inhabited by the entity and the cradle where the things of existence are born and symbols and signs proliferate—and the work of art, which is the world where the word is born, and its birth certificate is recorded as poetry. From Heidegger's perspective, the artwork, particularly poetry, serves as the ideal medium to express and convey the truth of being. Moreover, poetry, being the highest form of expression where the world is embodied, accepts nothing less than the beautiful or sublime as an everlasting quality of truth, keeping it perpetually elusive and concealed. The sublime or the beautiful is what makes the truth of being revealed, yet it remains merely a discloser or expositor of the hidden light of truth. The more this light is revealed, the more it becomes hidden. This disclosing nature of poetry at the heart of existence, by considering it the beautiful through which the empire of language appears with its captivating beauty and charm, makes language itself, in its essential meaning, poetry. According to this conception, then, humans are originally born as artists and poets.

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INTRODUCTION

1. HERMENEUTICS OF CONCRETE UNDERSTANDING AND THE REVELATION OF TRUTH

Understanding, from a hermeneutic perspective, becomes an essential feature for the completion of the human being's project; to achieve existence and openness to the other. Truth, then, which is known as Aletheia (ἀλήθεια) in its Greek origins, meaning the un-concealment¹ the un-hiddenness²,

¹Martin Heidegger, *Al Tiqniya – Al Haqiqa – Al Wujud* [Technology - Truth - Existence], trans. Mohammed Sabila and Abdelhadi Meftah (Casablanca: Arab Cultural Center, 1995), 24.

² Abdel Ghafar Mekawi, *Nida al-Haqiqa, maa Thalathat Nusous aan al Haqiqa li Heidegger* [The Call of Truth, with Three Texts on Truth by Heidegger] (Cairo: Dar Sharqiyat for Publishing and Distribution, 2002), 125.

or the disclosure (Unverborgenheit)³ of being, becomes a disclosure of what is hidden in a way that makes it an incomplete project of existence, or one that is in the process of completion. Heidegger's translation of the Greek word in this manner is not only because it is more literal, but because it prompts us to more authentically reconsider the conventional understanding of truth as the correspondence of the spoken word to the intended meaning, which remains ambiguous, and the sense of the disclosure of the entity. Disclosed does not mean being lost in it but rather stepping back before the entity so that it is revealed as it is, permitting the representational correspondence to define and understand it. Allowing such an entity to exist means presenting ourselves before the entity as it is and transferring all our behavior to the realm of the open⁴.

Thus, it is not so much a literal translation as it is a refined artistic expression. According to Mekawi, this is an attempt to penetrate the original experience that has been associated with this phenomenon since ancient times. Heidegger identifies this phenomenological aspect in the early poetic works of Greek philosophers. For Aristotle, the *logos* signifies the disclosure of being, transitioning from concealment to un-concealment through speech⁵.

The search for the truth of being-in-the-world, according to the concept of truth or un-concealment, supports the project of understanding. What is disclosed through speech, or what is allowed to be revealed as existence, is essentially the entity in its revelation, or the manner in which it is disclosed, as being-in-the-world (Dasein). This is what is considered by Heidegger as a path through which the human being opens up to other entities, as one's existence is only complete if it is being-with-others. In fact, truth, following Heidegger, is this very path or method that the being relies on to understand the meaning of existence⁶. Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology, in this ontological approach, transforms into a method of bringing forth things and entities or rescuing them from a state of concealment, absence, hiddenness, and non-existence to a state of revelation, presence, un-concealment, and existence. This is achieved through the process of interpretation, which is an action aimed at reaching understanding. This procedural approach is not limited to the entities surrounding the human being; rather, it begins with the interpretation of the self and its mode of existence through an ontological openness. Heidegger established his new vision of understanding based on this, which involves abolishing the authority of transcendence and establishing a mode of mutual dialogue between selves (intersubjectivity). In this context, the being, as one who exists in the world with others, seeks to realize its being through understanding, which goes beyond understanding existence itself to become existence. To understand something does not mean to possess or grasp it, as was the case with Dilthey; rather, it is our behavior that actualizes the possibility of acting skillfully, intelligently, and confidently in any situation. Understanding, from a reflective perspective, is one of our existential abilities; it is something we are, a form of being-in-the-world, or a possibility of being-here within the world in a mode of anxious understanding that moves ahead of things, much like mitigating the impact of a shock. Understanding goes beyond being mere knowledge or a specific science, as is the case with scientific interpretation; it is the possession of a skill, an art, or an ability to accomplish various tasks, interact with others, or love. It is the foundation of all practices to realize the being of the human entity in the world, and through it, the act of interpretation is realized⁷.

Understanding, from this ontological perspective, precedes every act of existence; it is through understanding that the being exists. The being's insistence or desire (anxious understanding) to disclose the hidden always places it before things, forming a future understanding linked to an existential stance that the being adopts at a given moment, based on the possibilities available within its own horizon in this existence. When Dasein anticipates itself to its utmost possibilities (i.e., when being-towards-death), it simultaneously returns to its elapsed time, i.e., to its past. It retains this

³ Martin Heidegger, *Asl al Aamal al Fanni: maa Muqaddima lil Faylasuf Gadamer* [The Origin of the Work of Art: with an Introduction by Philosopher Gadamer], trans. Abu Al Aid Dudu (Algiers: Al-Ikhtilaf Publications, 2001), 70.

⁴ Heidegger, *Al Tiqniya – Al Haqiqa – Al Wujud*, 24.

⁵ Mekawi, *Nida al-Haqiqa*, 105.

⁶ Paul Ricœur, *Le conflit des interprétations* [The Conflict of Interpretations] (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969), 13.

⁷ Jean Grondin, *L'universalité de l'herméneutique* [The Universality of Hermeneutics] (Paris: P.U.F, 1993), 133-134.

elapsed time, as it is the time that has passed and was. Dasein, then, can only truly be considered as having a past to the extent that it is oriented towards the future⁸.

Heidegger's emphasis on understanding being linked to Dasein's ability to be ahead of itself is due to the desire to retrieve the elapsed time or return to the moment. Death, as an anxiety or a sense of an end, becomes the primary motivator driving the being to recall past memories. However, this recalling is not something to be grasped; rather, it is a possibility of existence from which the being creates an image of its existence as it has accepted or understood it. Heidegger, supporting his ontological view, differentiates between elapsed time and the past. The past refers to entities that are not of the humankind. The human being, "being-there," has not "passed" but has "elapsed" or "was," meaning that his Being still remains, and what has been still truly exists. This calls for the concept of "facticity", as the fundamental element in the constitution of the human being. It is only possible because the human being, in his existence in time, does not leave behind what was or what has elapsed from his time, nor does he abandon it; rather, he continuously embodies it⁹.

As long as understanding is such, it is not a finished state that the being reaches its extremes or limits, but rather a continuous movement in time, always evolving and in a state of review and reconstruction. This is similar to the human being who is a being thrown into this world. In this state, he stands before things, in a continuous state of review and reconstruction, and remains so, as a possibility or capacity for existence without reaching a realized and final existence. The evidence for this is that Heidegger fundamentally opposes the notion of philosophical transcendence, which attributes absoluteness to the human self, thereby confining the things of the world within its consciousness or its supposedly objective intentions. According to Heidegger, understanding arises from the revelation of things and their disclosure at the moment of our encounter with them. The human being's understanding of the things of the world, which is a concept that opposes the notion of the self, although may seem in Heidegger's existentialism to be far from preconceived judgments or pre-understanding, does not form in a vacuum. As was stated earlier, the human being is an existential being that is continuously being formed historically or within time¹⁰. Therefore, understanding, as a form of existence, remains a continuous process, shaped by modification and reconstruction. This underscores the hermeneutic nature of Heidegger's phenomenology, as well as the ontological character of the hermeneutics he seeks to establish.

The process of understanding, as we have explained, can only be coherent within a relational system, similar to the hermeneutic circle, as an operational concept common in the interpretive practice of Heidegger's predecessors, Schleiermacher and Dilthey. These latter linked the project of understanding—the understanding of the life of the author—to this circle, which makes of meaning a set of relationships within a holistic context where parts are organized and formed. Besides, understanding within this circle does not stray from a structure of pre-understanding, but not in the old interpretive manner where objectivity is the goal of understanding, and the illusory separation between subject and object supports this objectivity. Pre-understanding, in fact, supports Heidegger's argument in emphasizing the continuous nature of understanding. Thus, we cannot conceive of an absolute understanding of things without prior or pre-understanding or without preconceived judgments about these things or phenomena that exist beforehand, even if this is within a non-fixed structure of understanding that does not succumb to the constraints of the self and its transcendence over the things of the world. The process of pre-understanding is, first and foremost, in the service of grasping our own situation or our preconceptions in understanding, which determine our anxious behavior and knowledge. The primary task of explicit and straightforward interpretation is to reflectively bring to consciousness the prior assumptions that organize every process of understanding¹¹.

This does not mean that understanding will be limited to mere explanation or interpretation, which, in most cases, nullifies the authority of the text, or turns it into a stage where the interpreter embodies various kinds of dreamy ideas and satisfies repressed desires and hidden emotions.

⁸ Mekawi, *Nida al-Haqiqa*, 97.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁰ Terry Eagleton, *Critique et théorie littéraires: Une introduction* [Literary Theory: An Introduction], trans. Maryse Souchard with Jean François Labouverie (Paris: P.U.F, 1994), 63.

¹¹ Grondin, *L'universalité de l'herméneutique*, 138-139.

Interpretation, which is originally an openness to the other, deviates from this origin and turns into a mere strange psychological monologue of the interpreter with their own pre-understanding. Therefore, Heidegger unequivocally asserts that if we want to interpret a text accurately, it becomes a priority to make our hermeneutic position transparent, so that the strangeness of the text or its nature of difference can reveal itself purely. In this way, we hope to monitor the implicit dominance that unspoken preconceptions may exert on understanding, which may prevent the text from achieving its own freedom. Although Gadamer, in emphasizing the value of Heidegger's new disclosure of the circular structure of understanding and its contribution to interpretive theory¹², sees that the interpreter, to avoid falling into the trap of assumed or supposed understanding—i.e., the insistence, to the point of extremism, on ungrounded spontaneous prior beliefs, and deafening their ears to hear only their own voice—should not deprive the text of its appearance or obscure its expression. Therefore, according to Gadamer, understanding a text, on the contrary, is to be ready to let it say something. A consciousness formed in interpretive practice is supposed to be completely open to the otherness of the text. However, this response does not imply that we must remain neutral, nor that we must eliminate our subjectivity or suppress it, but rather that we include the reader's preconceived notions and judgments, allowing him to re-present them. This, in fact, is a kind of awareness that allows the interpreter's prior subjective beliefs and judgments to be distinguished from the possibilities of the text, and to strip them of their excessive subjectivity, which may reach the point of extremism. Thus, we give the text itself the possibility to appear in its otherness and to disclose its pure truth against the reader's preconceived beliefs and judgments¹³.

From the vantage point of these disclosures, we cannot overlook the validity of Heidegger's proposition, or the phenomenological precision and perfection it has achieved, as Gadamer¹⁴ puts it. Particularly, Heidegger's acknowledgment of the value of the system of preconceptions foundational to every process of understanding within the hermeneutic circle, and the openness to the other or to the text through communication and listening, without negating the reader's subjectivity or their non-naive or extreme preconceptions and expectations. This maintains a temporal distance through which each party preserves the nature of difference and otherness inherent in them, allowing us to distinguish true judgments from false ones in the process of understanding¹⁵. Thus, our interpretive activity, according to the perspective of temporal distance, remains a continuous movement of cancellation, modification, and reconstruction, resulting in the discovery of different preconceptions that are neither subjective nor objective, but rather within a coherent context of guiding ideas foundational to a distinctive understanding in that interpretive context or situation. Instead of the interpreting self remaining transcendent over its subject, and the subject remaining merely imagined concepts and judgments imposed by the self, claiming to have transcended its individuality and removed the subjectivity inherent in its judgments, interaction or communication occurs between them within an existential experience that is neither subjective nor objective, but rather poetic and aesthetic, where the only authority is understanding as an existential goal that defines the human being and enriches their knowledge in this world. This procedural nature that Heidegger's approach relies on to grant the concepts of the hermeneutic circle, pre-understanding, and preconceptions a new aspect within his hermeneutic project, is nothing more than a critique of the understanding of the transcendent self and a correction of the naive historical understanding that believes it can embrace and capture things or phenomena purely as they were in their original state, as if it could simply restore the original through these distorted copies, which only obscure understanding and cloak it in falsehood. What is undeniable is that the circle exists between interpretation and understanding, or more precisely, between interpretation and the preconceptions that inform it. However, this circularity is, first and foremost, an alternative to the ontological foundation of existence, crystallized through the structure of anticipation inherent in anxiety and its continuous review and reconstruction of the capacity for understanding ahead of things¹⁶. Thus, for Heidegger,

¹² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Vérité et Méthode: Les grandes lignes d'une herméneutique philosophique* [Truth and Method: The Main Lines of a Philosophical Hermeneutics], ed. Pierre Fruchon, Jean Grondin, and Gilbert Merlio (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1996), 75.

¹³ Gadamer, *Vérité et Méthode*, 290.

¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *La philosophie herméneutique* [Hermeneutical Philosophy], trans. and annotated by Jean Grondin, 2nd ed. (Paris: P.U.F, 2001), 78.

¹⁵ Gadamer, *Vérité et Méthode*, 312 ff.

¹⁶ Jean Grondin, *L'universalité de l'herméneutique* [The Universality of Hermeneutics], 140.

the value of the circle should never be underestimated, as it is ultimately just a shadow of the system of preconceptions. Therefore, the crucial element is not to escape the circle, but to enter it correctly¹⁷. Entering the circle correctly means, according to Grondin, beginning with the acknowledgment that the primary and ongoing task of rigorous interpretation is to develop our preconceptions and incorporate them into interpretation, validated¹⁸ by explication¹⁹.

It is inevitable to say that understanding in Heidegger's project, specifically within the hermeneutic circle, does not deviate from its fundamental idea, which is the establishment of the art of questioning as the highest act performed by the human being in this existence. It is concerned only with insisting on the matters of existence, questioning and negotiating, without waiting to achieve a final or fixed understanding. Through questioning, it practices the movement of returning to the origins to disclose truth or untruth and interpret this infinite existence. It is constantly renewed and reshaped, remaining always a possible existence capable of understanding or interpretation. It is historically formed in a constant way and remains in a state of development, facing the matters of existence without ever being complete in truth, understanding, or interpretation. Paul Ricoeur considers that the question that remains in need of resolution for Heidegger, in his opinion, is how we understand a question in general within the framework of an original hermeneutics. It remains that this distance of return can be established and realized to confirm that the hermeneutic circle is founded on the system of pre-understanding at the original ontological level²⁰.

Not only that, but Ricoeur, in his critique of Heidegger's original ontology, clarified that no matter the strength of the proposition or the allure that this ontology might exert, we must take a different path. Through this path, we detail, in a different manner, the issue of hermeneutics with phenomenology. Ricoeur believes that the radical approach of Heidegger's questioning makes the issues that have stirred our research not without a solution, but rather, they have lost clarity. How is an organon for interpreting texts established, that is, for understanding the meaning of texts? How are historical sciences built in contrast to natural sciences? How are conflicts of inconsistent interpretations resolved? These issues were not explicitly considered in the original hermeneutics; therefore, this hermeneutics was not directed at finding solutions to these issues but at undermining them. Hence, Heidegger did not want to concern himself with any specific issue related to understanding this being or that. He wanted to reorient what we have not discovered and direct our gaze anew; he wanted to adapt historical knowledge to ontological understanding, a derivative image from an original image²¹.

However, this oversight does not imply a lack of methodological awareness or the conceptual framework to which he always resorts to review his tools and refine his propositions. He did not close the door to the invocation of the forgetting of Being. He did not propose a specific methodology to approach this stance. For him, interpretation is the liberation of methodology, the transcendence of traditional logic, and the justification of the circle as the highest form of understanding that encompasses the understanding of understanding without drowning in its scholastic determinations²². This alternative interpretation becomes evident in Heidegger's system when it grants the individual self the possibility of participating in the foundation of its own existence.

Thus, as previously shown, Heidegger considers the moment of truth's disclosure and revelation as a concealment or absence. The human being's ability to exist and the possibility of realizing that, and his existence, is always in a specific existential or historical position, determined in-the-world, *Da-Sein*. The scene of human being and the being in the world is not complete without being-with-others,

¹⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Être et Temps* [Being and Time], trans. François Vezin (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1986), 124.

¹⁸ For Heidegger, hermeneutics of explication (i.e., declarative—explicit meaning: clear, evident, and apparent, as opposed to implicit or hidden meaning) of a being no longer represents a subject, but an actual existence. Explication is a mode of existence prior to any view that distinguishes each existence as it is. See: Nabiha Qara, *Al Falsafa wa al Ta'wil* [Philosophy and Interpretation] (Beirut: Dar Al-Taliaa, 1998), 41.

¹⁹ Grondin, *L'universalité de l'herméneutique*, 141.

²⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *Du texte à l'action: Essais d'herméneutique II* [From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II] (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1986), 105.

²¹ Ricoeur, *Le conflit des interprétations*, 13.

²² Moutaa Safdi, *Naqd al 'Aql al Gharbi: A -Hadatha ma Baad al Hadatha* [Critique of Western Reason: Modernity and Postmodernity] (Beirut: Center for National Development, 1990).

Mit-Sein, and openness to the things of the world. It is, as it is, in a state of continuous and ongoing projection forward, and it is in a state of continuous and infinite review and re-establishment. All of this is nothing more than a possible existence that has not yet been realized. However, what is striking in all of this is that this postponement and suspension of understanding, in the language of deconstructionists, is the nature of the ongoing and uninterrupted dialogue between the human being and existence, embodying the characteristic of interrelation or interaction between them. This dialogue is only established by the principle of listening, as the ultimate perfection of dialogical activity in interpretive practice, and not by speech as a presence authority that displaces things or claims that their being is contingent upon its perception or discovery of them. This is what was known in Husserl's principle of returning to the things themselves, but the elimination of the individualistic aspect of the self, as a methodological procedure, obscured the value of this conceptual precedence and kept it captive to this pure formality and alleged scientificity.

Thus, from this perspective, we witness the birth of the hermeneutic project not merely as a theory of understanding, but as a theory of ontological revelation or disclosure. As long as human existence itself is an ontological disclosing process, Heidegger insists that we cannot view the problem of interpretation in isolation from human existence. Hermeneutics, for Heidegger, is therefore a fundamental theory of how understanding emerges in human existence²³.

In establishing his hermeneutic philosophy, Gadamer considers the artistic work as a world different from our own, in that it is a world lacking the sense of beauty. This is not because it is unworthy of it, as some aesthetic currents believe, but this lack of sense is due to the dominance of transcendental tendencies that view the things of existence as if they themselves created them or possess prior knowledge of them, and thus they own them entirely. This is the very illusion that made the artist view the world as a separate object or merely a collection of contents poured into an artistic form or mold²⁴. However, creativity, although it is a sense of the other or of existence and a contemplation of it, is an aesthetic experience that takes shape in the artistic work, as it is the world that casts its light on the self, making it see things, surrounded by this light, differently as if they were newly born. Thus, art becomes an existential knowledge in which the self discovers its subject, not as a fascination and enjoyment of a strange and wondrous world, but as an encounter with a world that illuminates both the self and the surrounding world. This is what Gadamer calls "aesthetic consciousness", which is an experience that takes shape, from a phenomenological perspective, within the artwork, as an aesthetic existence in which the self receives its aesthetic education. This can only be achieved by returning to the things themselves as intended, not by referring them to reality as if they were mere reproductions or simple imitations²⁵.

However, this does not mean, as Gadamer adds, that this aesthetic culture distinguishing this experience is devoid of the interpreter's awareness of his existence as a self with its own assumptions that ensure the authenticity of its vision. No matter how much the self strips away its prejudices and prior understanding, it cannot completely remove them. Instead, it engages in a process of cancellation and modification within this aesthetic experience, forming an aesthetic consciousness that is neither purely subjective nor objective, but rather something that arises purely from the artistic work upon our encounter with it. This all happens through the act of opening up to the world of this work as an existence we listen to and respond to its call. Thus, within our aesthetic experience, we move from the normativity of aesthetic distinction²⁶, where the artificial separation between self and object, or between form and content, exists, to the principle of aesthetic non-distinction²⁷, where this alleged duality between self and object dissolves through the process of mediation created by the form²⁸, as the place where our existential experience turns into beautiful art, which in turn is the fruit of this dialogue. Hence, the understanding of the artistic work becomes a dynamic

²³ Adel Moustafa, *Madkhal ila al Hermeniutiqa: Nadhariyat al Ta'wil min Aflatun ila Gadamer* [Introduction to Hermeneutics: Theory of Interpretation from Plato to Gadamer] (Beirut: Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabiya, 2003), 164.

²⁴ Gadamer, *La philosophie herméneutique*, 99-100.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Tajalli al Jamil* [The Manifestation of the Beautiful], trans. Said Tawfik (Cairo: Supreme Council of Culture, 1997), 288.

understanding enabled by the horizon of questioning in the aesthetic experience, where there is no distinction between self and object or form and content.

Therefore, no matter how narrow the boundaries set by aesthetic theory, the concept of literature is too vast to be confined within these boundaries or barriers. The existence of the artistic work is only completed by the reception it receives from the reader. Or rather, it can be said that texts, as such, resemble the process of replacing the trace of a dead meaning with a new meaning that is only produced in understanding. Therefore, we must ask if what has been established in the experience of art also equates to the meaning of all texts, including those that are not artistic works²⁹. If it is self-evident that there is no text without interpretation, then interpretation cannot occur without understanding. Texts are mediators between interpreters and their interpretive possibilities. The text does not offer itself except as a mediator that relinquishes its neutrality in favor of the relationship or dialogue with the reader or interpreter, thus becoming an open path to its implicit heritage in its fissures. Since understanding does not reach perfection³⁰ and is not an end in itself³¹, it becomes, through its openness to the other or receiver, a back-and-forth movement, the first step towards the movement of interpretation, which remains a dialectical dialogue based on questioning, where understanding fluctuates between explanation and interpretation³². This, in fact, is precisely what Gadamer's concept of the "game" entails. The artistic work, as he acknowledged, is only completed within the representation it receives. Therefore, we must conclude that all literary art works can only find completion in reading. Does this also apply to the understanding of all texts? The meaning of all texts is only realized in the reception by the one who understands. Understanding operates within the framework of realizing the meaning of the text, just as listening does in music. We can also speak of understanding when we achieve a degree of freedom with the meaning of the text interpreted by the artist, in relation to its model³³.

In the end, there is no art, even if it is closed in on itself, that is not directed towards the other or the reader. It is as if Gadamer aims to direct our attention to the fact that the lost humanity of humans can only be restored by changing our aesthetic consciousness in our relationship with the artistic work. With this unique vision, he brings contemporary humans out of the state of alienation imposed by the purely formalistic view, which sees artistic works as images or forms devoid of meaning or truth, leaving no room for the self to question itself, its history, or its heritage. Consequently, the ahistorical vision, as is prevalent, either calls for the destruction and burning of heritage texts or subjects them to the authority of the transcendental self as if they were texts of its own creation. This turns humans into ahistorical beings, rebelling against their history, denying the authenticity of heritage or of the other, and its right to exist as a self with the right to express its being and affirm its testimony to the era that rejected it.

Thus, Gadamer's question, as an ontological or dialectical question, is keen on setting the boundaries or constraints of understanding. Or rather, the question for him transforms into a horizon for questioning the limits of the interpreter's understanding of their heritage or history. In other words, how can we harmonize interpretively with our achieved horizons through the medium of language without excluding the voice of the other or the heritage residing within us? Reading the artistic work is, in fact, a unique reproduction and creation that makes heritage or history a text that emerges anew with each act of interpretation. The reader or interpreter's belonging to a historical moment or position in their present time does not negate their belonging, through the medium of language, to this text, not as a presence but as an absence embedded in the folds of texts or works of its kind or those critical texts that represent an interpretive history or archive of this text. Since this is the case, the act of interpretation represents a new mediation enabled by the linguistic nature of the events of heritage or history, as an old voice, to continue its journey of existence and influence in the present time, the interpretive time.

²⁹ Gadamer, *Vérité et Méthode*, 183.

³⁰ Mario Valdes, *De l'interprétation dans la théorie littéraire* [On Interpretation in Literary Theory] (Paris: P.U.F, 1989), 278.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 285

³² *Ibid.*, 275.

³³ Gadamer, *Vérité et Méthode*, 183.

2. THE ONTOLOGICAL TURN: THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY AND THE UNDERSTANDING OF BEING

As long as understanding, as mentioned earlier, is an unrealized existential possibility, an incomplete construction, a deferred meaning, and a pure existential disclosure over which the self has no authority, or rather, a state of surrender to the power of the things of this existence until they disclose themselves to us, it is no wonder, then, that this transformation occurs in the system of concepts, and the classical approach in Western metaphysics, which sees truth or understanding only as an essence or a complete entity without deficiency, and which is too evident to be hidden, is displaced. Speech is merely an embodiment of this metaphysical dream and a support for the centrality of presence, the presence of truth. The Heideggerian event, however, is an attempt to overturn these concepts or idols and to undermine the centrality of presence that Western thought has surrounded with the walls of truth in philosophical thinking. This transformation, then, occurs away from speech, or it is replaced by the language of listening, which is characterized more by silence than by expression or communication, as is common in linguistic communication, where priority is given to the act of speaking. Understanding, according to this perspective, is listening, or in other words, one's first interaction with speech is not to produce it, but to receive it. In Heidegger's words, Listening is a component of discourse. This priority of listening indicates the fundamental link between speech and openness to the world and to the other³⁴. These methodological results, in Ricoeur's view, are important as linguistics, semiology, and the philosophy of speech are necessarily related to the level of speaking and do not reach the level of saying. In this sense, original philosophy does not correct linguistics as much as it adds an interpretation. Speaking, then, is what returns the human being to its state as a speaker³⁵.

Thus, Heidegger's phenomenological project leads us to a highly significant vision, which we consider a new breakthrough in the philosophy of language, and even in the philosophy of art. This is perhaps why critics have described this transformation in philosophical thinking as "the turn", which Gadamer³⁶ has insisted on the necessity of highlighting it as it is a newly introduced methodological vision in hermeneutic practice. Gadamer has also considered this decisive ontological turn as an alternative that liberated the activity of transcendental thinking from the dominance of strict scientific methodological controls and the accompanying procedural frameworks in defining understanding.

What is new about this turn is that it made understanding an unstable existential possibility. This is by considering language as the field from which the truth of this existence comes from. Heidegger, within his existential view of the human being, looks at language not merely as a means of communication used by humans in their conversations for interaction and understanding, but as the home or House of Being³⁷ in which the human being dwells. That is, by depicting it as the existence in its revelation and emergence, and the truth or untruth in its disclosure or concealment. It is the truth by which the being exists and is found, transforming from its human being to its linguistic being (I speak/I say/I confess/I feel, therefore I am). It is the space where the things of existence sleep and through which the truth of this world is disclosed. Or rather, as Heidegger describes it, it does not convey the apparent and the hidden as something intended in words and sentences only. Rather, it carries, above all, the Being as being to the open. Where there is no language, as in the case of stones, plants, and animals, there is also no openness of being and consequently no openness to what is non-existent and empty³⁸.

Language, as an act of saying or speaking, goes beyond being merely a tool in the hands of humans for communication, or a secondary means of expressing ideas. It is not humans who use language, but it is rather language that uses humans, as it is only through them that it can be expressed, i.e., can exercise its existence in this world. Therefore, things do not come into existence in a complete form, as known in metaphysical tradition, carrying their names or meanings. They are linguistic embryos, both formed and unformed, or linguistic beings emerging from the womb of language, signifying only

³⁴ Ricoeur, *Du texte à l'action* [From Text to Action], 104.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Gadamer, *Vérité et Méthode*, 279.

³⁷ Grondin, *L'universalité de l'herméneutique*, 151.

³⁸ Heidegger, *Asl al Aamal al Fanni*, 97.

within the linguistic system, taking their names or meanings only within the framework provided by this system in a specific context. The world is disclosed and emerges from it as a word or expression. When it names the Being for the first time, such naming carries the being to saying and appearance. This naming names the being for its existence from this being. This type of saying is the design of light, which announces in it any form by which the being reaches the open³⁹. Language, in this sense, is the true dimension in which human life moves. Wherever language is, there humanity is found. Heidegger does not think of language primarily in terms of what you or I might say. Language, for him, has its own existence that human beings come to participate in, and through this participation alone do they become human beings. Accordingly, language always precedes the individual self in existence⁴⁰.

This centrality granted to language by Heidegger gives it a pervasive character, imposing its authority on things. The era of the tool or means is irrevocably over. If humans believe they speak language, considering it as saying or expression carrying their thoughts and indicating their intended meanings, they have not realized that language speaks through us, meaning what it says, and we do not say what we mean. Did we not say that the world is its word, its things are its beings, and humans reside in its homeland and dwelling? Thus, understanding is not understanding of language by language but understanding within and through language. It is as if Heidegger, with this unprecedented and strange conception, following his ontological vision, is working to establish a utopia of language, where there is no rigor, science, objectivity, or pragmatic use, or logic, except the logic of language. In doing so, he criticizes his predecessors among philosophers and critics, especially the proponents of subjective (romantic) hermeneutics, Schleiermacher and Dilthey, who based their view of meaning, within the framework of constructing a theory of interpreting human texts, on the necessity of resorting to the life and personal experience of the author to reach the interpretation of his creation. This is what Heidegger rejects, believing, as we have seen, that language has a nature independent of its users, with its own system that makes things or words emerge from it as if they were a new creation. How, then, can it be a tool in the hands of this self or that, or an expression of the life of this writer or the psyche of that one?

The artist, whatever his role, does not exceed the role of the mediator between language and the world. And that is through the act of listening that becomes a performance forming a word or phrase said by existence, which the human carries in what he creates, not as a creation without precedent or a self-made craft that surpasses others, but if he has any merit, it is that he has been honored with this dignity; the dignity of the world's disclosure and revelation to him through language, to convey it aesthetically in the form of artistic symbols to his creative work, belonging to it by transmission and passage, not by creation or origin. This is perhaps why Heidegger views the being of humans as always building and dwelling. Even if the human is described as a being without a home, by virtue of being an anxious being, an existential possibility not yet realized, he must establish a home for his existence, and this can only be done by constantly listening to language which is his abode and settlement⁴¹.

Heidegger's view of language, as dominating its carriers and having the nature of a cradle where the things of existence are born, symbols and signs are generated, and beauty and poetry are disclosed through the word, within the decisive ontological turn, undoubtedly presents his vision of the literary text, or rather the artistic work, as the world in which the word is born and its birth certificate is recorded as a speech, an expression, a poetry, a confession, a painting, or a melody. The artistic work, and poetry in particular, from Heidegger's perspective, is the most suitable medium to express existence and convey its truth, because it carries, through language, the same features that are for existence: it is an unrealized possibility, presence or absence, an expected death that may come at any moment, disclosure or concealment, truth or untruth, incomplete understanding, a word or a phrase born to depart, leaving its echo or trace in words or texts that reproduce and generate a series of texts that intertwine, as if it were the song of existence and its eternal melody, revealing in every sound or tune. It is the word or joy that appears and disappears, indifferent to the state of its speaker or the value of the neighboring words, or what meanings it will come to, or the new or old world it

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Eagleton, *Critique et théorie littéraires*, 64.

⁴¹ Heidegger, *Essais et conférences*, 175.

will become, except for its rhythm as a sign of its absence or presence. It is an eternal return, where the journey of the beginning of humans and their story in this existence started as a word, to return likewise in the future.

Poetry, then, is that being carried by language and uttered as utterance and appearance. It is the story of the disclosure of being. Every language is, each time, the occurrence of that utterance, in which a people's world historically appears and in which the earth is preserved in its concealed form. It is that utterance that carries within it both what can be said and what cannot be said simultaneously⁴². As long as language is revealed as poetry or art through the word, it gives it the role of the mediator that conveys its question and the law of its joy. The essence of art lies in placing truth and the creative preservation of it in the artwork. Thus, art is the becoming and happening of truth. Truth that emerges as the illuminated gap between being and its concealment when composed as poetry. With the occurrence of the disclosure of being, which necessarily seeks to appear before us, everything ordinary and existing until now becomes non-existent through the artistic work⁴³.

However, poetry, as the disclosure of the truth of existence and the highest form of expression in which the world appears, is the ray that follows the light of truth or untruth, illuminating the hidden existence. It is never satisfied with anything less than the beautiful as an eternal attribute that accompanies truth, keeping it always in a state of concealment and absence. This type of light that attaches its ray to the artistic work is 'the beautiful'. Beauty is the way in which truth exists as disclosure⁴⁴. The beautiful, then, is what reveals the truth of existence but remains merely a revealer or announcer of the hidden light of truth. Once it appears, the beautiful increases in absence, like truth, which in its essence is untruth, and so is the disclosure or revelation that is dominated by refusal and abstention. Truth is the truth of being, and beauty does not exist with this truth. It is until truth establishes itself in the artistic work, that it shows itself. While appearance, which is considered as the existence of truth in the work and as an artwork, is the beautiful. This is how the beautiful belongs to the happening of truth⁴⁵.

Yet, this does not diminish the value of truth or consider it a deficiency or flaw, as if truth is not truth unless it discloses all that is hidden. This may be relatively true for scientific truth, but the truth of art or beauty in its defiance is disclosure, which is nothing but a double concealment or an illuminated gap. The sun's light is the clearest evidence; it illuminates the world as an element of life and a form in which the nature of this world is revealed as a great being manifesting the greatness of the creator, God. In its intense revelation or brightness, it conceals its light, of which only a ray or faint light reaches our eyes, because in its manifestation to us as a bright truth, it ends our existence, killing its revealing nature that remains so, between rising and setting until a designated time. According to Heidegger, poetry is not a mere arbitrary wandering thought, nor is it merely the hovering of imagination around what is unreal. What poetry presents as a revealing design and projects forward towards the fissure of form is the open, which allows for occurrence in such a way that this openness only illuminates and resonates in the midst of beings⁴⁶.

This illuminating or revealing nature of poetry at the heart of existence, by depicting it as the beautiful through which the empire of language is beautifully revealed, makes language itself, in its essential meaning, poetry. But since language is the language of that event, in which being first discloses itself to man as being, poetry, in its narrowest sense, is the most original in its essential meaning. Language is not poetry because it is the original poetry, but because it preserves poetry, which occurs in language, in its original essence⁴⁷. According to this conception, art is essentially poetry. If this is the case, can we not include architecture, painting, and music as forms of poetry? However, Heidegger considers this pure arbitrariness. It is true that we may, as long as we mean the mentioned arts are types of language art, describe poetry with this title, which can be misunderstood. However, poetry is a way of designing illuminating truth. Yet, the linguistic work, that is, poetry in its

⁴² Heidegger, *Asl al Aamal al Fanni*, 98.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 95-96.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁴⁶ Heidegger, *Asl al Aamal al Fanni*, 96.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

narrow sense, has a distinguished place among the arts⁴⁸. Things come into existence originally, and humans are born as artists and poets by nature. Heidegger himself does not hesitate to say that poetry is the dwelling of humans and the essence of their being⁴⁹, but in their transcendence, they have lost the sense of the world they live in and have become estranged from their essence. Art or poetry is a way of sensing the other and expressing all that is beautiful in this world. This is perhaps why Heidegger believes that knowing the world is akin to a system of interconnected things, as in the work of the potter, sculptor, and painter, which are manual works requiring, in addition to manual skill, artistic skill and technical design that make the production of the work an art and an original craft. It is not merely contemplative knowledge lacking the characteristics of interaction with the place we exist in and the things we use as tools.

As for the instrumental nature of the tool as the essence of work, Heidegger uses the example of 'a pair of peasant shoes' depicted in a famous painting by Van Gogh. This pair cannot be understood in its practical utility except within the field where the peasant moves. It is most authentic here when the peasant thinks about it during work, looks at it, or even just feels it. It is as she rises and moves with it that the pair of shoes fulfils its true purpose. It is through this process of using the tool that we can encounter the tool in its genuine essence⁵⁰. However, the value of the pair of shoes in the painting lies in this absence, where the familiarity of the shoes is removed, making them appear strange or as another pair of shoes different from the one we recognized. This is, in fact, the nature of art, which is to break the pattern of familiarity attached to the shoes or the tool and recreate it anew as an existential truth that appears and disappears. Art produces only beauty—beauty that is strange, wonderful, and indescribable.

Heidegger, according to Eagleton, shares with the formalists the belief that art is about defamiliarizing objects and giving them an exotic character. Art, like language, should not be seen as an expression of an individual self; the self is merely the medium through which the truth of the world reveals itself. This truth is precisely what the reader of poetry must strive to hear⁵¹. Thus, art, and specifically poetry, in its submission to existence, is added to the artist's self, so they work together in serving and nurturing this world through symbols and various forms and manifestations of culture. These serve as a medium between the self and existence, acting as a revealer that uncovers the hidden aspects of existence. Through this, the self achieves a "vision of the world" that was previously concealed or, rather, that it had concealed from itself due to its transcendence and claims of possessing a complete, flawless truth.

This is the point of contention raised by Ricœur against the transformation of understanding in Heidegger's project from a mode of knowledge to a mode of being and the difficulty of achieving this. Understanding, which is a result of the analysis of being-in-the-world, is the very means by which this being understands itself as being. Once again, we must look within language itself for the symbol indicating that understanding is just a mode of being⁵². In Ricœur's view, understanding through symbolic expressions is a state of self-understanding, achieved through a semantic approach that aims to liberate the self from the dominion of the world, transforming it from a passive to an active self, or rather, a self-aware self. This semantic approach leads, after this realization, to a contemplative approach. However, the interpreting self during the interpretation of signs is not the cogito; it is a being that discovers, through interpreting its life, that it is embedded in existence even before it establishes or possesses itself⁵³.

Even though Heidegger stripped both the self and art of the originality of creation, he did not deprive the self of the quality of participating in shaping existence and disclosing its truth. It is through surrendering to existence through openness and dialogue that the self can achieve its being and get rid of the illusion of transcendence over existence or the world. This was the case in philosophical thinking, with both rationalist philosophers and the proponents of the empirical view. However, the result has always been the centrality of the self and the marginalization of existence. The belief

⁴⁸ Ibid., 97.

⁴⁹ Heidegger, *Essays et conférences*, 224.

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Asl al Aamal al Fanni*, 64.

⁵¹ Eagleton, *Critique et théorie littéraires*, 65.

⁵² Ricœur, *Le conflit des interprétations*, 14.

⁵³ Ibid., 15.

prevailed, especially among proponents of objective interpretation, that the self controls the world through the results and conclusions it reaches, neglecting that it has imprisoned the individual self in the prison of reason or system, which has taken various forms: model or example; thinker, knower, or transcendent; or scientific, experimental, or categorical.

Heidegger, therefore, removes this transcendence and discloses the illusions of metaphysics, making the individual self, through dialogue, openness, participation, and listening, an active element in constructing the world, which is now ready to speak after a long silence. The being is nothing but an entity moving towards death, annihilation, or destruction, or a being-towards-death, leaving room for other alternative beings that await the same fate. It is a finite being that discovers the finitude of its possibilities through its being-towards-death. Thus, Dasein, is the possibility of my being that I can only truly be in my being-towards-death⁵⁴.

Heidegger, in reinforcing the organic relationship between language and speech, turns to poets who are seen as the guardians of the word, the ones most capable of hearing the call of language—the language of being. This call, which bridges the gap between humans and their language, is realized through poetic expression. We must respond to this call by seeking its proximity and dwelling within it, through the feeling of being close to poetry or the word, as the highest expression of its essence. This is the splendid beauty where language hides itself whenever it is disclosed through spoken or written words. What language itself says is concealed behind the speech or the word that emerges from it, constantly oscillating between revelation and concealment. The being pursues it, searching for its essence and the secret of its greatness, but only attaining what it allows to be spoken or exercised through speech or expression. This can only be achieved by listening to its call and finding comfort in its proximity, which grows stronger with speaking and trusting it. Do we not realize that language carries our burdens and expresses our dreams and joys? Do not all people, especially poets, hide behind it, allowing it to speak and reveal on their behalf through symbols and signs? In this way, language becomes dominant and sovereign, and we are its servants, responding not out of coercion, as Barthes suggests, but willingly, enchanted and awed by its power. Speech or words become a testament to this loyalty and a marker of our authentic existence. In this approach, Heidegger makes the self continuously question existence through the possibility of continuous understanding and creation. The essence of Man as a being, is tied to the persistent concern of questioning. Similarly, history unfolds as a series of renewed questions posed by the being through his practice of understanding existence, his openness-to-the-other, and his movement towards the anticipated death in the future.

CONCLUSION

From the perspective of these principles, the true role of language is not to denote things or to serve as a means for the self to name things as they are in the external world. Instead, language artistically creates things from within itself. Indeed, humans are nothing more than linguistic entities, both formed and unformed. Language is the dwelling place and essence of human existence. Even though the human is described as a being without a home—as an anxious being and an existential possibility not yet realized—he must establish a home for his existence, which can only be achieved by constantly listening to language as the abode and the stable ground.

Language alone can build a unique world for humans. According to Gadamer, this world differs from the environment shared by animals and humans; the world belongs exclusively to humans because they are linguistic beings. Only through language does the meaning of having a world become apparent to humans. For humans, the world exists here as a world, unlike any other being in this world. However, this being-in-the-world (Dasein) has a linguistic structure, which is what is meant by language being the vision of the world. This indicates that language, in relation to the individual belonging to a linguistic system, maintains a kind of independent existence. The world is not just a world to the extent that it expresses itself within a language, but language also has its true existence only when the world exists within it.

Hermeneutics, under Heidegger's conception, then, has become a means of understanding existence and continuously interpreting it through the self's understanding of its true existence embedded in the essence of this world. This process does not grant the interpreting self dominance over existence

⁵⁴ Heidegger, *Être et Temps*, 315 ff.

or the text, imposing upon it what is not there or subjecting it to the authority of objectivity. Rather, this existence or text discloses itself through the self, not as an absolute truth, but as a hidden and elusive presence, or an illuminated gap. This transformation of phenomenology, through the ontological perspective, into the hermeneutics of factual existence marks a departure from the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl. Hermeneutics, utilizing phenomenology, especially the concept of "returning to the things themselves," has freed itself from the illusions of objectivism or the historical-scientific method that Schleiermacher and Dilthey tried to impose on the human sciences. Understanding, therefore, is a continuous possibility inherent in existence, a dialogue and interaction between the interpreting self and the subject or existence, characterized by listening and participation, where each party retains its uniqueness. The existence or the text should not be an experimental field for the self to project its biases or subject it to hidden references through naive preconceptions imposed on the text without relying on a reading strategy to balance it with the logic of the text and the interpretive possibilities it offers through its gaps and fissures. Similarly, the self should not free itself from its preconceptions. Rather, the self must align with the logic of the text through the hermeneutic circle, where understanding is historically authentic, occurring with humans as historical beings, bearing the responsibility of their existence as beings oriented towards the future.

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