A self-similar figure in Hesiod and Heidegger

Calvert Watkins says a 'merism' is "a two-part figure which makes reference to the totality of a single higher concept . . . [e.g.] *goods* and *chattels*, non-moveable and moveable wealth, together designate all wealth."[1] M. L. West remarks that especially characteristic of Indo-European poetry is "the use of polar expressions, that is, pairings of contrasted terms, as an emphatic expression of the totality that they make up." For example,

> "the concept of 'all intelligent beings' is expressed by 'gods and men' or 'immortals and mortals': Rigveda 1. 35. 2 *amṛtam mártiyaṃ ca;* 6. 15. 8 *devāsaś ca mártiyāsaś; Yasna* 29. 4 = 48. 1 *daēvāišcā mašyāišcā; Iliad* 2.1 θεοί τε καὶ ἀνέρες; 20. 64 θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι; *Lokasenna* 45. 3, 55. 6 *goð ǫll ok gumar; Gylfaginning* 21 *guðanna ok manna.*"[2]

Jože Krašovec wants us to keep merism distinct from antithesis: "merism should not be confounded with antithesis, for in contrast to merism in antithesis opposed extremes do not express the same aspects of the same idea in its totality, but opposite aspects of the same idea in their mutual exclusion."[3] Merism and antithesis differ in the way the elements of their pairs differ from each other in expressing aspects (respectively the same and opposite) of 'the same idea.'   (So 'merism and antithesis' – merism or antithesis?)

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[1] Calvert Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (1995) 9. He goes on, "In its present form this formula is nearly a thousand years old in English. Yet its history may be projected even further back, with the aid of the comparative method. We find a semantically identical formula in Homeric Greek nearly two thousand years earlier: the phrase κειμήλιά τε πρόβασίν τε (*Od.* 2.75), where Telemachus complains of the suitors devouring his 'riches which lie and riches which move', the totality of his wealth. . . . In its semantics and as the expression of a cultural theme the formula *goods and chattels* goes all the way back to Indo-European, even if the particular verbal expression, the wording of the phrase itself, does not. Lexical renewal of one or more components of a formula does not affect its semantic integrity nor its historical continuity. . . . In cases where we can know, as here, language is almost incredibly persistent, and in this work as a whole it is my goal to emphasize the longevity and specificity of verbal tradition and the persistence of specific verbal traditions, whether in structures of the lexicon, of syntax, or of style." *Die Sprache spricht.*

[2] M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (2007) 99-100. The heading of his discussion is "Polar expressions ('merisms')". He adds, "One may say that bipolarity (not trifunctionality) is the fundamental structuring principle of Indo-European thought." *Id.* 100; 'not trifunctionality' counters Georges Dumézil, Emile Benveniste, Jaan Puhvel – that school.

[3] Jože Krašovec, "Merism – Polar Expression in Biblical Hebrew," 64 *Biblica* 231, 232 (1983).

Watkins develops a typology of two-part figures for the range of texts he analyzes.[4] Anatomizing the prayer to Mars in Cato's *De agri cultura* Watkins shows that "the art of [this] poem is in the counterpoint of tripling and doubling, the threefold and the twofold, tripartite and bipartite. If the thematic structure as a whole is tripartite, each thematic structure point is represented by a grammatical doubling, sometimes doubled again."[5] That is, Watkins speaks of two-part contrastive structures in general as 'the twofold.' The Heideggeroid term 'twofold' will suffice here to cover any pairing of contrastive terms, whether merism or antithesis or wotnot in between.[6] We will concentrate on the feature 'sometimes doubled again' in passages of Hesiod and Heidegger.

West catalogs the Indo-European poets' telling of what they were up to as building, as weaving, as carpentry, as making a ship of song, a chariot of song.[7] "Shatter a stone," says Gass, "and the bits you make are simply further stones, but break a seashell or a poem and every piece will continue to declare itself a fragment of some whole. . . . poetry is not a kind of communication, but a construction in consciousness."[8] This aesthetic principle Hugh Kenner characterizes as 'self-similarity.' "Small units, when they have integrity, imply wholes." In a self-similar ('scaling') work "a set of structural relations recurs on a smaller scale;" in fact such a work just "*is* a set of structural relations . . . scaling up, scaling down . . . with rewards for distance, other rewards for closeness." "'Scaling' connotes interesting detail at varying ranges: *Hamlet*, one scene of *Hamlet*, one soliloquy, one image."[9]

The art of the Indo-European poet, by Watkins's account, "is to say something wholly traditional in a new and interesting, but thereby *more effective* way. It is verbal activity, artistically elaborated, but directed toward a more or less immediate, concrete goal." The verbal formulas of this activity are, he says, "the vehicles of themes," and "in the totality of these [themes] we find the doctrine, ideology, and culture of the Indo-

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[4] In tabular form at *How to Kill a Dragon* 46.

[5] *Id.* 204.

[6] "Sometimes the effort is made to stop a possible loophole by adding the middle term to the pair of opposites; the opposites are regularly placed first, with the intermediate term following. . . . Aeschylus' Eteocles demands obedience from every citizen of Thebes, ἀνὴρ γυνή τε χὤτι τῶν μεταίχμιον, 'man and woman and whatever it is in the area between' (*Sept.* 197); and similarly in the *Mahābhārata* (12. 250. 30), 'among men you will become a man in form, among women a female, among the third class a neuter' (*napuṃsakam*, literally 'a non-male, an unmannikin')." *IE Poetry and Myth* 103.

[7] *Id.* 35-43.

[8] William H. Gass, "Paul Valéry" in *The World Within the Word* ([1978] 2014) 173.

[9] Hugh Kenner, "Self-Similarity, Fractals, Cantos," 55 *English Literary History* 721 (1988) 728, 721-722, 723-724.

Europeans. These formulas are collectively the verbal expression of the whole traditional culture of the Indo-Europeans."[10] Their world.

In Heidegger's text the work of art does not *express* something other than what it is; rather the work of art 'worlds world.'

> "The [Greek] temple-work first joins [*fügt erst*] and at once gathers around itself the unity of the paths and relations [*Bahnen und Bezüge*] in which birth and death [*Geburt und Tod*], doom and blessing [*Unheil und Segen*], victory and disgrace [*Sieg und Schmach*], endurance and decay [*Ausharren und Verfall*] win for mankind in the *Gestalt* of its destiny. . . . Standing there the building holds its stand against the storm raging away in its violence, and so first shows [*und zeigt so erst*] the storm itself in its violence. The radiance and glow [*der Glanz und das Leuchten*] of the stone, themselves shining only by grace of the sun, first bring [*bringt doch erst*] the light of day, the expanse of the sky, and the darkness of night,[11] to appear in relief [*zum Vor-schein*]. The secure towering-up of the temple makes visible the invisible space of air [*macht den unsichtbaren Raum der Luft sichtbar*]. The unshaken work [*das Unerschütterte des Werkes*; 'the unshakenness of the work'] stands against the rolling sea [*das Wogen der Meerflut*; 'the rolling of the seaflow'], and in resting lets appear [*läßt erscheinen*] the surge of the tide. Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter [*gehen erst*] into their contrasting [*abgehobene*] *Gestalt* and so come into relief as what they are. . . . Standing there the temple-work opens up a world [*eröffnet eine Welt*]"[12]

Twofolds swirl about the Greek temple to make an *Einheit*. Heidegger's narrative vocabulary here is "pervaded by a little cloud of idioms,"[13] twofolds that 'first' form and sustain a world.

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[10] *How to Kill a Dragon* 68, his italics.

[11] *das Lichte des Tages, die Weite des Himmels, die Finsternis der Nacht. Cf.* Watkins on the 'upside down T' structure ($\perp$) of twofolds resting on a threefold in the prayer to Mars, and in the Umbrian Tables of Iguvium, and in the Young Avestan *Vidēvdāt. How to Kill a Dragon* 205, 222, 239-240. The figure '2, 2, . . . , 3' follows Behaghel's Law, *Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder*; "a pattern widely attested for Indo-European," says West: "the rule that shorter phrases tend to be placed before longer ones, both in prose and in verse, so that the sentence gains rather than loses weight as it develops." *IE Poetry and Myth* 117; citing O. Behaghel, 25 *Indogermanische Forschungen* 110-42 (1909).

[12] Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art* (tr. Roger Berkowitz and Philippe Nonet 2006) 26.

[13] "a general truth about Joyce's method, that his fictions tend not to have a detached narrator, though they seem to have. His words are in such delicate equilibrium, like the components of a sensitive piece of apparatus, that they detect the gravitational field of the nearest person. . . . This is apparently something new in fiction, the normally neutral narrative vocabulary pervaded by a little cloud of idioms which a character might use if he were managing the narrative." I.e., "*the narrative idiom need not be the narrator's."* Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (1978) 16, 17, 18, his italics. In *OWA*

How do contrasting figures come into relief as what they are? Gass: "Terms redefine themselves, relegating what was once central to the periphery, making fresh essence out of ancient accidents, apples out of pies. . . . The words respond to one another as actors, as dancers, do, and thus their so-called object is not rendered or described but constructed."[14] Kenner: "words do battle with the ghosts of absent words."[15] As a general matter in *The Origin of the Work of Art* world worlds, constructs itself, by 'twofolding':

> "World is not the mere collection of countable or uncountable [*abzählbaren oder unabzählbaren*], known or unknown [*bekannten und unbekannten*] things lying at hand before us. . . . World is the always non-objective, never standing-against-us, that we understand as long as the paths of birth and death [*Geburt und Tod*], blessing and curse [*Segen und Fluch*], hold us transported in being. Wherever the essential decisions of our *Geschichte* fall, are taken up and abandoned [*übernommen und verlassen*] by us, are ignored or questioned again [*verkannt und wieder erfragt*], there the world worlds. . . . In that a world opens itself, all things receive their while and haste [*Weile und Eile*], their remoteness and nearness [*Ferne und Nähe*], their breadth and tightness [*Weite und Enge*]. In worlding is gathered that spaciousness, out of which the saving grace of the gods grants or denies [*verschenkt oder versagt*] itself. Even the doom of the continued absence [*des Ausbleibens*] of the gods is a way in which the world worlds."[16]

West quotes "one of nearly sixty places in the Rigveda where the Rishi refers to his song as new or the newest," and goes on to cite the same claim of newness occurring in *Yasna*, *Odyssey*, Alcman, and Pindar. Yet the point about the 'new song,' West writes,

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Heidegger recounts two reveries in different idioms shaped by the distinct gravitational fields (*Weltfelder*?) of 'a painting of peasant shoes' and 'Greek temple'.

[14] "Carrots, Noses, Snow, Rose, Roses," in *The World Within the Word* 303-304.

[15] *Joyce's Voices* 36. E.g.: Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket move in the meaning-field of the Greek temple and thereby world as animal fable. Reconfiguring three pairs into a single pair of threefolds we get: Tree-eagle-snake / grass-bull-cricket. Aesop tells the tale of a gnat sitting on the horn of a bull. Perry Index 137. 'Cricket' will also do, and the setting is a bull grazing in a field of grass. Archilochus tells of the eagle's outrage on the fox, and "It has long been remarked that an Akkadian text has nearly the same story." Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (tr. Margaret E. Pinder and Walter Burkert 1992) 122. "According to the story told in [Akkadian] *Etana* an eagle and a snake took up residence respectively at the top and at the base of a poplar," and the outrage occurs in due course. M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (1997) 503. Burkert *loc. cit.* comments, "The polarity snake-eagle has a respectable symbolic tradition and may, to that extent, be the original model."

[16] *The Origin of the Work of Art* 28-29.

"is not that it is novel or breaks with tradition, but on the contrary that it is an addition to the body of older poetry. . . . In the passages from Greek poets cited above the word used for 'new' is νέος or νεοχμός, that is, new in the sense of young, newly appeared, not καινός 'novel'; Timotheos (*Poetae Melici Graeci* 736) is the first to boast of his καινότης."[17]

In *Theogony* Hesiod describes two kinds of marriage which exhaust the possibilities:

"Then again, the man who does partake of marriage, and gets a good wife who is sound and sensible, spends his life with bad competing constantly against good [κακὸν ἐσθλῷ ἀντιφερίζει ἐμμενές]; while the man who gets the awful kind lives with unrelenting pain in heart and spirit, and it is an ill without a cure."[18]

Echt grecque and funny. Effective not least for its fresh take on the Jars of Zeus. There are two urns *chez* Z, one of evil gifts, one of good. That person to whom Zeus gives a mix of the two encounters sometimes evil, sometimes good. For that one to whom Zeus gives from the jar of evils only, things are always bad.[19] The structure of Zeus's gift-giving is (evil and (good and evil)); likewise for Hesiod marriage comes in just two flavors: (bitter and (bittersweet)).

In *Works and Days* Hesiod comes up with an innovation, καινότης – West calls it "his new doctrine"[20] – and places it right after the Invocation:

"I see there is not only one Strife-brood [Ἐρίδων γένος] on earth, there are two. One would be commended when perceived, the other is reprehensible, and their tempers are distinct [διὰ δ᾽ ἄνδιχα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν]. The one promotes ugly fighting and conflict [πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ δῆριν], the brute: no mortal is fond of her, but they are forced by the gods' designs to do homage to Strife the burdensome. But the other was

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[17] *IE Poetry and Myth* 75, 76. Another merism then, τὸ καινόν τε καὶ νέον?
[18] Hesiod, *Theogony* and *Works and Days* (tr. M. L. West 1988) 21; lines 609-613. Note κεδνὴν . . . ἀρηρυῖαν πραπίδεσσι ('sound and sensible [has-it-together]') and ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν καὶ κραδίῃ ('in heart and spirit').
[19] δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὔδει
δώρων οἷα δίδωσι κακῶν, ἕτερος δὲ ἐάων:
ᾧ μέν κ᾽ ἀμμίξας δώῃ Ζεὺς τερπικέραυνος,
ἄλλοτε μέν τε κακῷ ὅ γε κύρεται, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ ἐσθλῷ:
ᾧ δέ κε τῶν λυγρῶν δώῃ, λωβητὸν ἔθηκε,
καί ἑ κακὴ βούβρωστις ἐπὶ χθόνα δῖαν ἐλαύνει,
φοιτᾷ δ᾽ οὔτε θεοῖσι τετιμένος οὔτε βροτοῖσιν. *Iliad* 24.527 and following.
[20] *The East Face of Helicon* 309.

elder born of gloomy Night, and the son of Kronos, the high-seated one who dwells in heaven, set her in the earth's roots, much the better for men. She rouses even the shiftless one to work [ἐπὶ ἔργον ἔγειρεν]. For when someone whose work falls short looks towards another, towards a rich man who hastens to plough and plant and manage his household well, then neighbour vies with neighbour as he hastens to wealth: this Strife is good for mortals [ἀγαθὴ δ᾽ Ἔρις ἥδε βροτοῖσιν]. So potter is piqued [κοτέει] with potter, joiner with joiner, beggar begrudges [φθονέει] beggar, and singer singer."[21]

West overtranslates the particle ἄρα – 'now then' 'after all' – as "I see" in order to highlight the change from *Theogony*. He comments that in this passage "Hesiod modifies what he had said in *Theogony* 225.[22] He now realizes that there is a good kind of Strife as well as the bad kind."[23] But here, too, are the Jars of Zeus. Bad Strife is all bad all the time, both in operation and result. The elder, 'good' Strife works her will by awakening (ἔγειρεν) men to the differences in their ἄφενος. The anxiety thus aroused sets neighbor against neighbor in competition. The verbs κοτέω and φθονέω tell us that albeit productive 'tis not a happy *Mitsein.* Once again a structure of (bad and (good and bad)).[24]

Heidegger invokes Hesiodic twofold strife in *The Origin of the Work of Art*. "World and earth" he writes, "are essentially different from one another and yet never separated [*von einander verschieden und doch niemals getrennt*]. . . . But the relation between earth and world in no way shrivels up into the empty unity of mutually indifferent opposites [*in der leeren Einheit des sich nichts angehenden Entgegengesetzten*]." Rather they are joined as *enantia* in *agon*: "The counterposition [*das Gegeneinander*] of world and earth is a strife [*ein Streit*]." Yet like Hesiod had in *Theogony,* "We all too easily falsify the essence of the strife in that we throw it together with dissension and quarrel, and therefore only know it as disturbance and destruction."[25]

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[21] *Works and Days* 37.
[22] "And baleful Night . . . bore hard-hearted Strife. Hateful Strife bore painful Toil, Neglect, Starvation, and tearful Pain, Battles, Combats, Bloodshed and Slaughter, Quarrels, Lies, Pretences, and Arguments, Disorder, Disaster—neighbours to each other—and Oath, who most harms men on earth, when someone knowingly swears false." *Theogony* 9-10.
[23] *Id.* 75, note to line 11.
[24] Aristotle cites the adage 'potter against potter' twice in the *Rhetoric*: first to illustrate the unfriendliness of those with competing interests (1381b, 2.4.21) and then to illustrate the acute envy – μάλιστα τούτοις φθονεῖν – between those who contend for the same prize (1388a, 2.10.6).
[25] *The Origin of the Work of Art* 32. *der Zweitracht und dem Hader . . . Störung und Zerstörung*; a merism of merisms.

"In essential [*wesenhaften*] strife, however, the striving opponents elevate each other in the self-assertion of their essential selves [*die Selbstbehauptung ihres Wesens*]. . . . In the strife each carries the other out of and beyond itself. . . . In that the work sets-up a world and sets-forth the earth, it is an instigation [*eine Anstiftung*] of this strife. But this does not happen so that the work at once put down and settle the strife in a stale agreement, but rather so that the strife remain a strife. Setting up a world and setting-forth the earth, the work brings the strife to its fullness. The being-work (*das Werksein*) of the work consists in the striving of the strife [*Bestreitung des Streites*] between world and earth."[26]

This leads directly to:

"In what way does truth happen in the being-work (*im Werksein*) of the work, that is to say now: In what way does truth happen in the striving of the strife of world and earth? What is truth?"[27]

"Truth is the primordial strife [*der Urstreit*]" between clearing and concealment; truth is "the counter-movement [*das Gegenwendige*] of clearing and concealment [*von Lichtung und Verbergung*];" truth essences as such "in the against-one-another [*im Gegeneinander*] of clearing and dual concealment [*zwiefacher Verbergung*]."[28]

In 'clearing and dual concealment' we meet a twofold in the form (A & (B & C)), self-similar in that the second arm of the pair is itself a pair.[29] Concealment, *Verbergung*, "sways in the midst of beings in a dual way." Through the clearing "there extends a constant concealment in the dual form of denial [*des Versagens*] and misplacement [*des Verstellens*]."[30]

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26 *Id.* 32-33.
27 *Id.* 33.
28 *Id.* 44.
29 By way of the structure (A & (B & C or more)) Agathe Thornton proposed to solve the 'crux of duals' in the Embassy to Achilles. "It is assumed that the dual always denotes two items, two, in number, of people, bodily organs, objects etc. It is not realized or rejected as unacceptable, for no particular reason as far as I can see, that the dual may also denote 'two groups' of items, or one individual and one 'group'." None of her examples has the structure (A & (A & B). Two of her examples are structured, respectively (A & (B & C) (Antilochus and a pair of horses) and ((A & B) & C) ((Diomedes and Odysseus) and Agamemnon). *See* her "Once again, the Duals in Book 9 of the *Iliad*," 56 *Glotta* 1, 2 (1978).
30 *Id.* 36, 37. *Verbergung aber waltet immitten des Seienden auf eine zwiefache Art. . . . Gleichwohl zieht durch die Lichtung ein ständiges Verbergen in der Doppelgestalt des Versagens und des Verstellens.*

Speaking now of the second arm, dual concealment: its B-element is concealment as denial, *Versagen*—'What in the world is that on the ground?' Something shows up – 'is cleared' – as something; but what 'something' is not clear:

> "Beings deny themselves to us down to that one and seemingly smallest that we best meet when we can say of a being still only that it is."[31]

The C-element is concealment as misplacement, *Verstellen*—'Snake!' (of a rope on the ground). Something 'is cleared' as something it is not.

> "A being shoves itself before another being, one veils the other, this one darkens that, a few block up many, an isolated one disavows all. Here the concealment is not simple denial, but: Although the being appears, it gives itself for other than it is."[32]

Versagen is always simple whereas *Verstellen* manifests in contrastive pairs: *x verstellt y* in the variety of ways above described. So the full structure is (*Lichtung* & {*Versagen* & [(*x verstellt y*) & (*x' verstellt' y'*) & (*x" verstellt" y"*) & . . .]}); i.e. (A & {B & [C & C' & C" & . . .]}).

As remarked at the start it was the view of Watkins, West, and Krašovec that merisms and antitheses make reference to the totality of a single higher concept, the totality that they make up, the same idea.   If they're right (and the purported totality is not instead a philologist's back-formation[33]) then what does (*Lichtung* & (*zwiefacher Verbergung*)) make reference to?

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[31] *Id.* 37.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] The claim that any polar figure is an emphatic reference to some prior totality or single higher concept or same idea resembles the thesis about metaphor which Donald Davidson contested: "the thesis that associated with a metaphor is a cognitive content that its author wishes to convey and that the interpreter must grasp if he is to get the message." Davidson denied "that metaphor does its work by having a special meaning, a specific cognitive content. . . . A metaphor does its work through other intermediaries—to suppose it can be effective only by conveying a coded message is like thinking a joke or dream makes some statement which a clever interpreter can restate in plain prose. Joke or dream or metaphor can, like a picture or bump on the head, make us appreciate some fact— but not by standing for, or expressing, the fact." So Davidson's claim for metaphor can be re-stated for polar figures; namely that the "central mistake is the idea that a [figure] has, in addition to its literal sense or meaning, another sense or meaning;" that is, the "common error" is "to fasten on the content of the thoughts a [polar figure] provokes and to read these contents into the [figure] itself." Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," 5 *Critical Inquiry* 31 (1978); repr. in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (1984) 245. E.g., to back-form a totality into a contrast. Not to deny that such figures *can* be used to designate – as 'trouble and strife' stands for the hound and grouse.

Heidegger tells us in *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*:

> "Letting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing. [*Das Seinlassen ist in sich zugleich ein Verbergen*]. . . . What conserves [*verwahrt*] letting be in this relatedness to concealing?   Nothing less than the concealing of what is concealed as a whole, of beings as such, i.e., the mystery [*das Geheimnis*]; not a particular mystery regarding this or that, but rather the one mystery – that, in general, mystery (the concealing of what is concealed) as such holds sway throughout the Da-sein of human beings."[34]

The structure is (*Geheimnis* & (*Seinlassen* & *Verbergen*).   Alcmaeon said most things human come in twos,[35] and for Heidegger too existence manifests in twofolds: being and time, *das Man* and *Eigentlichkeit*, the first beginning and the other, 'doubled again' in the Fourfold. Heidegger's fundamental language game is thus: where there is 'this and that' go *epekeina* to their 'thot.'   "What is different is different in only one respect [*in einer Hinsicht*].   In this respect, we catch sight of what is the same beforehand [*erblicken wir zuvor das Selbe*] regarding what different things belong together.   This same must be brought into view in each distinction [*Dieses Selbe muss bei jeder Unterscheidung in den Blick gebracht werden*]."[36] So from (*Wer* & *Was*) – beings – we get (*Sein* & (*Wer* & *Was*)) – being and beings, the 'narrow' ontological difference. Thence (*Lichtung* & (*Sein* & (*Wer* & *Was*))) – the 'broad' ontological difference between the clearing and being-and-beings.   Now what is 'the same beforehand' of (*Lichtung* & (*Sein* & (*Wer* & *Was*)))?   In what prior realm does truth – as primordial strife, the counter-movement of clearing and concealment, the against-one-another of clearing and dual concealment – take place?   It's the same same-beforehand of (*Seinlassen* & *Verbergen*): variously named *das Geheimnis, das Nichts, der Abgrund;* the game's limit, "the world as unread and unreadable.*"*[37]

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[34] Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," tr. John Sallis in *Pathmarks* (ed. William McNeill 1998) 148.

[35] δύο τὰ πολλὰ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων. Quoted by Aristotle at *Metaphysics* 986a. Our bilaterian *Erbe.*

[36] Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols—Conversations—Letters* (ed. Medard Boss tr. Franz Mayr and Richard Askay 2001) 77.

[37] "For man, *to on* is always *on legomenon*, 'read' beings . . . all knowing . . . is performed in and through the interpretative 'as'-structure of a *legein*." Thomas J. Sheehan, "Heidegger, Aristotle and Phenomenology," 19 *Philosophy Today* 87 at 89, 90 (1975). So: "The abyss doesn't gape; it doesn't yawn; it has better manners; it is always awake, open like a lively eye; nor is the abyss funnel-shaped, or a bag without a bottom; the abyss goes nowhere; the abyss is the obliteration of the sign; it is reality without disguise, without appearance, without remainder. The abyss is not merely where the soul goes when it goes; it's where the self is exposed like sensitive paper, till, exhausted, it draws a blank. That is the abyss. . . . The abyss is honest absence; it is not just the word wool-gathering; it is true not-being-there. It is *nein da sein*, Culp yodels. . . . It is difficult to stop talking about the abyss because one is so fearful of it and because nothing can be said. Behind Culp and his profound

Heidegger's novel game is a variant of a riddle-genre whose form of solution West believed to be "deeply rooted in Indo-European structures of thought and expression." "The Indo-European ability to create negative compounds with the prefix * n̥- made it easy to form expressions of the type 'X and non-X' . . . which appeared to leave nothing unaccounted for." This germ of grammar grows into those riddles and tales "in which a set of apparently impossible conditions is laid down, framed in terms of exclusive polarities, and they then turn out to be fulfillable by means of intermediaries;" "something on the margin between the opposed alternatives X and not-X." E.g, 'a man who was no man' – a eunuch; 'a bird that was no bird' – a bat; 'neither clothed nor unclothed' – draped in a net.[38]

Heidegger condemns a similar, perhaps homologous, genre of philosophy: the "seemingly profound question about bridging the gap between the real and the ideal, the sensible and the non-sensible, the temporal and the timeless, the historical and the suprahistorical . . . First you invent these two regions, then you put a gap between them, and then you go looking for the bridge. 'Take the gap and build the bridge.'" Whereas Rishi Heidegger's[39] καινότης is "to see these two separate orders or fields or spheres or regions [*Reihen, Felder, Sphären, Regionen*] as coming together in a unity [*eins zusammen*]"; thence to ask about "that entity that . . . renders possible these two regions of being in their original unity."[40]   And as sketched above that move leads in a couple of steps to the abyss. Game over.

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superficialities, beneath the oil slick or what all film registers, is—nevertheless—the abyss. The abyss is not the departure of the thing behind that surface, nor is it a reflection of outer space that's somehow been trapped inside the earth; it is the utter absence of significance; it is the world as unread and unreadable." William H. Gass, *The Tunnel* ([1995] 1999) 184-185.

[38] *IE Poetry and Myth* 369, 101, 368-370.

[39] J. L. Mehta, Heidegger as "A Western Kind of Rishi" in Mehta, *Philosophy and Religion* (1977).

[40] Martin Heidegger, *Logic: The Question of Truth* (tr. Thomas Sheehan 2010) 76-77.