The Poetics of Being

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Cand. Mag., Cand. Philol.

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Declaration

‘Except where I have indicated, the thesis I am submitting is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for assessment at any other University.’

20.01.2004

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Abstract

Rolf I. Vaernes, *The Poetics of Being*

The aim of *The Poetics of Being* is to inquire into how the apperception of the Being of beings is produced. We will recognize this production not primarily in philosophy, but in a medium accessible to us all, theatre. Although the Romantic tradition of literary criticism from Herder to Bloom has noted that Shakespeare produces an exceptional sense of what is *true*, so much so that he is said to create the impression of nature or life, no one has so far attempted to show how precisely Shakespeare affects this experience. Contrary to T. S. Eliot, who is unable to discern any kind of poetics in Shakespeare’s plays, we have discovered an insistent and consistent pattern of inadequation, a kind of mismatch. The thesis argues, that the predominant tropes of inadequation are falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision and substitution. We shall show that these figures of inadequation are the universal means by which Shakespeare, almost imperceptibly, compels the spectator to infer the apperception of what *is* [true].

On the basis of these tropes of inadequation the thesis makes the fundamental philosophical claim that the cognition of Being through non-Being is a negative form of what Heidegger calls the ontological difference. We call this the *negative ontological difference*. The thesis demonstrates that with the exception of some Pre-Socratic thinkers, Plato in the Sophist, the work of Pseudo-Dionysius, and the writings of Derrida, the bulk of the tradition of Western philosophy has argued Being in terms of positivities. While the thesis does not question the possibility of realizing the ontological difference in a positive fashion, as does Heidegger’s philosophy of unconcealment, the thesis claims that the negative ontological difference, or ontological contradiction, is the more forceful process by which we become aware of what *is* [true].
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I would like to thank Princess Mirah for love, encouragements and support, but even more, for like a goddess indicating the true direction for this thesis, for sharing an experience of life without which this thesis would not be possible. I would also like to thank her for sharing her family at the Palace in Karangasem, Bali. My thanks extend to her family, who through their care provided me with what is invaluable to all fundamental research: time. Horst Ruthrof has been an invaluable mentor from the beginning to the end, and I would like to praise him for systematically, forcefully and knowledgeably, guiding me to the completion of this thesis, so effortlessly and cleverly that I at times may have had the false impression that I could have done so without him. Through his kind advice and learned company, I have for the first time in my academic life realized an intention, which would have been impossible if he had not from the beginning known where I was heading better than myself. I am also grateful that he has convinced me that there is even more to learn from people than from books, for he taught me the basic tenet of his own philosophy without saying a word.

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C0 INTRODUCTION

[1] In Shakespeare’s *King Lear* neither Edmund nor Edgar appear as what they ‘truly’ are. Regardless of the reason the one has for not revealing his intentions and the other his identity, regardless of whether one is ‘good’ and the other ‘evil,’ they have something in common. For it is their false appearance, Edmund as a man with good intentions, and Edgar as an unknown beggar, which grants to these men the unquestionable sense that they *are* alive. What can be said of Edmund and Edgar equally applies to many characters on Shakespeare’s stage; that their appearance does not correspond to what they really are. Yet surprisingly, these deceptive beings produce in the spectator’s mind a more powerful sense of reality than any straightforward representation. The thesis makes two major claims: one, that Shakespeare’s plays systematically employ false representations to achieve their reality effects; the other, that the success of Shakespeare’s work rests on a general philosophical principle, a negative form of the ontic-ontological difference, to be defined a little later in the introduction.

[2] If one were to *first* glance at the bibliography of this thesis instead of reading the text, one would perhaps have the impression that this work appears to be somewhat random, based on *unclassified* and *uncategorized* material. This impression would prevail if one did not note, as Kant does towards the end of *The Critique of Judgment*, that it is a ‘revolutionary idea’ that binds all parts together. The ‘revolutionary idea’ here is that a negative ontic-ontological difference – that what is presented as ‘not’ *is* more persuasive than what is as it triggers an ontological leap beyond what is perceived to be untrue to a negative sense of its Being – *is produced* by art in an exemplary fashion. This ‘idea,’ without which all
elements would appear as they did to Walter Benjamin, as fragments scattered by
the winds of History, has carried this project from the beginning to the end.

Certainly, we have been in pursuit of an idea, a notion to which no phenomena
may possibly correspond.¹ However, if the thesis were to make any essential
claims, the thesis would certainly have destroyed its intention, not articulated The
Poetics of Being. If poiesis generally is ‘to produce something where there
previously was nothing,’ as Plato, Aristotle and Heidegger all contend,² we will
expose another techne, where the impression of what truly is, is produced by the
encounter with what is not or what is false, the profound apperception of Being
created from the cognition of non-beings. It is the task of The Poetics of Being to
grasp how the singular impression of [th]is³ negative ontic-ontological difference is
produced so laboriously and apperceived so effortlessly that the beholder often
seems to believe that she is confronted with the apperception⁴ of that which is in-
different from her own life.

[3] Instead of speaking of the ontological difference as such without any
qualifications we shall repeatedly say in this thesis that the ontological difference
between Being and beings is negative. Neither Aristotle nor Hegel invented a new
word for dialectics but a new meaning for what Plato called ‘dialectics’. The

¹ For Kant’s inessential definition of idea, see Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A327/B384, p. 371.
² Plato, Sophist, 265b Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book VII, 1032a11-1034b7 Heidegger, Building
Dwelling Thinking, in Basic Writings, p. 361.
³ As St. Dionysius uses it to suggest that God is beyond his name, and St. Thomas this to convey the
singularity of existence, so shall we use [th]is as an ontological marker throughout The Poetics of
Being to indicate the negative ontic-ontological difference and its apperception, the emphatic sense
of Being it produces.
⁴ In this thesis we will clearly distinguish between perception and apperception. Following Kant, we
shall say that whereas one through perception may empirically grasp what is essentially true/untrue,
through apperception one grasps that which allows all [individual] attribution to take place, that
apperception is the condition for the unity or integrity of all perceptions. For a more extensive
elaboration of ‘apperception,’ see further Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A107-A108, and perhaps
especially A109, where Kant, as he also does in A115 and B132 and A354, empties ‘apperception’ of
all essential content. In this thesis, the Being of beings is apperceived, whereas the essential
appearance of beings, whether true or false, is perceived.
novelty of this procedure is, even in contradistinction to Derrida,\textsuperscript{5} to interpret ‘ontology’ \textit{negatively} as a science or philosophy of Being. It is crucial that we emphasise the negative understanding of the ontological difference that is argued in this thesis. Just as there is a positive and a negative theology, I want to suggest that there is a positive and a negative ontology. And just as one has not renounced all theology simply by renouncing all gods, one has not destroyed ontology by simply denouncing the positivity or substantiality of all beings. One should not necessarily, like Kleist, believe that the Being of beings has been an-nihilated simply because Kant destroyed the belief in the substantiality or permanence of each individual being. For Being may still be thought – perhaps even \textit{be} – negatively, each being individuated most convincingly by what it \textit{is not} rather than by what it is. Following such a negative course, we endeavour to produce a negative ontology as much as Dionysius the Aeropagite produced a negative theology. At the heart of this negative ontology is a negative understanding of the ontological difference to counter, to contradict Heidegger’s concept of Being. For whereas Heidegger progresses from the understanding of individual \textit{beings} to what may comprehend, produce the understanding of, the Being of all, we counter by saying that the apperception of Being is most convincingly produced by non-beings, that it is the [negative] experience of what \textit{is not}, which almost imperceptibly guides us to the most forceful appreciation of what \textit{is}. When we find Heidegger dwelling on a pair of farmer’s boots in one of van Gogh’s paintings or a fountain unconcealed in the poetry of Hölderlin, we easily recognize that Heidegger begins his contemplation on Being with what is \textit{truly} unconcealed. In contradistinction to Heidegger, it is easy to see that what we encounter in what

\textsuperscript{5} For my dissociation from Derrida’s understanding of ‘ontology,’ see pp. 106-107.
reception history has judged to be Shakespeare’s major dramas; *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, King Lear*, are not true but false appearances. We shall therefore learn that false appearance gives or grants the more emphatic sense of life, and that therefore negativities and not positivities produce the most profound sense of Being.

[[4] The novelty of my negative interpretation of the ontological difference does perhaps necessitate a brief historical clarification. Starting with Plato, we could easily have interpreted, located the ontological difference in Plato’s philosophy as the essential idea, as Plotinus does. What we do is the opposite, by identifying, even in stark opposition to Derrida, the ontological difference itself in Plato’s works as *khora*. Similarly, in Aristotle’s philosophy, it would be easy to recognize the ontological difference positively as *ousia or thing* and this thing to have a substance. Again we do not. Against all tradition the novelty of our approach is that we recognize the ontological difference in Aristotle’s oeuvre in what he prides himself of having invented for the first time a discourse for, namely *place*, which is nothing but that empty locus which grants the possibility for anything to appear and hence is what grants each being, singularly, its life. The negativity of these concepts - of *khora* and *place* - should stand out clearly, but what should be made equally clear, is that identifying the ontological difference in such a manner is not only entirely novel, but rests solely on the textual evidence that this negative, but hidden, tradition still provides. If we proceed to the origin of this negative interpretation of ontology, it is easy to see that my interpretation of Plotinus finds

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6 For an exposition of Plotinus inherently essential idea of Being, see, Cf. p. 366n.
7 See below, ‘§2.5 Derrida’s Khora.’
him attempting to get rid of this negative ontological difference, as it, like all phenomena, contradicts every positive but hidden idea. By making an attempt to remove the ontological difference of matter, by denouncing it as an insubstantial mirror for the projection of essential ideas, what Plotinus in fact does, is, as we shall see, to reinforce the impression of the negativity of the ontological difference. Against all tradition this thesis recognizes the negative concept of that which Plotinus is unable to rid himself of as the ontological difference. In our treatment of Nietzsche, the thesis likewise does not recognize the ontological difference in anything positive, but in a concept by which we interpret Nietzsche to make an attempt to surpass the positive interpretation of man, namely in the concept of ‘chaos’ or ‘eternal recurrence.’ Finally, Derrida is introduced, not because he believes he is speaking of the ontological difference in a negative manner – as is made clear, his interpretation of ‘ontology’ is entirely positive – but because he involuntarily expresses the negativity of the ontological difference through his exposition of khora and the contemplation of his own death. Finally, there is to us a second more important aspect to the ontological difference, namely an inessential, insubstantial and unsubstantiated sense of what is hidden. As is well documented, there is a positive and a negative theology in Dionysius. We could easily have identified the ontological difference positively as that absolute, but hidden, power which gives rise to everything that is. Again, we do not. We recognize the ontological difference in Dionysius as that which remains hidden after everything has been taken away, which remains regardless of its insubstantiality, however negatively apperceived, if at all. Similarly, when interpreting Kant’s Third Critique, we do again stress how Kant’s ‘Paralogisms of Pure Reason’ conveys to us an unreified but clearly hidden sense of Being.
It is now time to define the negative ontological difference. While this ontic-ontological difference can be regarded as a pyramid of positivities [beings] pointing to the apex of a likewise positive Being, and where Derrida replaces Heidegger’s pyramid of positivities by an ‘assemblage’ of differential relations ‘governed’ by the principle of differànce, the negative ontic-ontological difference argued here looks somewhat different. Reduced to its formal relations it constitutes a pyramid of negativities: falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, substitution [in its many aspects of deceit, disguise, lie, deception, mask, pretense, subterfuge, etc.], pointing towards a more forceful sense of what is, that is Being. I consider the negative ontological difference to be negative in three ways. Firstly, the negative ontological difference contradicts or negates what may be perceived at the surface. Transgressing all appearances it is nevertheless what grants the empty possibility of apperceiving the Being to all appearances. [1st moment of negativity] Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the bare impression of this negative ontic-ontological difference is most effectively induced by beings confronted with beings that appear as who or what they are not, that is beings that appear negatively. We could even say, following Aristotle, since false appearances do not exist and are therefore non other than non-beings, that non-beings most persuasively grant to its spectators the most emphatic sense of Being. [2nd moment of negativity] Thirdly, the negative ontological difference is either concealed or unconcealed. [Third moment of negativity] In either case we end up with a stronger sense of what is. For where the sense of Being is granted as a

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9 We shall later use the concept ‘ontological contradiction’ indistinguishably from ‘negative ontological difference,’ simply because there are three contradictions implied in the ‘negative ontological difference.’ Firstly, the negative ontological difference contradicts what may be perceived, secondly, the paradox that what is not offer the most profound sense of what they appear to contradict, namely Beings, as likewise false appearances give the most intense sense of what is true. The third contradiction is, as we shall see, that Being is either concealed or unconcealed.
contradiction of what is or does appear, one is offered a *hidden* sense of Being. And where the sense of Being is offered by presenting or experiencing an appearance as a contradiction of what *previously* was concealed, one has been given a *logical* or luminous sense of Being. In both cases, whether hidden or revealed, what remains is the experience of that which inessentially grants this being *place* to appear or the mystic impression of that which *hidden* upholds the Being of this appearance.

Even though there are no true philosophers on Shakespeare’s stage, and Shakespeare never essays to express a coherent philosophy, *The Poetics of Being* will nevertheless attempt to throw light on a philosophical foundation of the Shakespearean drama. In this sense, *The Poetics of Being* promises to be to Shakespearean drama what Walter Benjamin’s *Ursprung des Deutschen Trauerspiels* is to the German Baroque Drama and Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy* to Greek drama, namely an elucidation of the philosophical legacy that is expressed with or without the intention of its author. No doubt, the claims of *The Poetics of Being* are controversial. First of all, in opposition to Heidegger, it shows both historically and systematically that the ontological difference is negative, that deceit, lie, deception, disguise, more than any true appearance, give a more convincing sense of Being. Secondly, and in opposition to any vague Romantic critique the thesis attempts to define what Shakespeare produces a powerful impression of, the Being of beings. It shows that Shakespeare presents a sense of life or Being, where non-beings most persuasively grant to its spectators a sense of what is. Thirdly I show, and here breaching the bounds of *mimesis* which cannot explain how one play may come across as more alive than another, that Shakespeare systematically uses certain figures or tropes of *inadequation*; falsity,
dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, substitution, whereby negativities produces a forceful sense of Being. What we offer is not an historical, sociological or psychological reading of Shakespeare. Rather, we are offering interpretative incisions in the reading of some of some of Shakespeare’s major work.

By employing the negative ontological difference, our exposition of the ontological difference in Shakespeare’s drama clearly distances itself from Gadamer’s approach, who, following the philosophy of the early Heidegger, interprets the ontological difference in theatre in a positive fashion as merely the manner of Being present [on the stage]. It is my contention that Shakespeare massively uses false appearances, disguises, lies, deceptions, to systematically guide the reader to a cogent apperception of what is concealed. As is evidenced by Shakespeare’s major plays, the negative experience of beings that fully or partly appear as what they are not, grants to its spectators the most emphatic sense of Being uncluttered by any essential or substantial distortions. And, as Shakespeare might have said, had he been theoretically inclined, the ontological difference is best understood as an excess pointing beyond what is perceived, transgressing the character of any appearance to grant to it a more profound apperception of life, if not life itself.

To anticipate the road ahead, we shall conduct an allegorical exposition of a work that has been neglected as much by this thesis as it was ignored by tradition. Pseudo-Aristotle’s On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias will accompany the reader in this introduction much like a kind host whose invitation to a fundamental comprehension of the negativity of the ontological difference, that

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non-being creates the most profound sense of Being, has long been declined. Paradoxically, *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* appear like a preface written for *The Poetics of Being* centuries before it commenced. Ominously, Pseudo-Aristotle’s *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* is placed in front of *Metaphysics* in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*\(^{11}\) and it is surprising to see that this work has been neglected by philosophers as acute as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, who all place such importance on Hesiod’s *chaos*. For the most subtle commentary on Hesiod’s *chaos* is not found in Aristotle’s *Physics*, which uses Hesiod’s *chaos* to illustrate the concept of *place*,\(^ {12}\) nor in *Metaphysics*, which uses Hesiod’s *chaos* to display the most basic understanding of *love*,\(^ {13}\) but in Pseudo-Aristotle’s *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, which uses *chaos* to illustrate the sophistical notion of what Alexander calls, ‘the third man’.\(^ {14}\) Perhaps only an unnatural subjection to authority, or as Horst Ruthrof says, ‘the cult of the signifier,’ could explain why this text, which displays the negativity of the ontological difference with such ease and logical clarity, has been neglected for so long. However, we are not so much concerned with the authenticity of the person behind the argument as with the argument itself, which we shall follow in order to more easily indicate our own. But we shall *first* say that there is an ontological tradition which has found renewed *actuality* in the common pursuit of philosophy and theology. *Secondly*, that the understanding of the *production* of what they have in common was blocked by the *abstraction* of philosophy from literature. *Thirdly*, that literature,

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\(^ {12}\) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV.

\(^ {13}\) Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I, Chapter 4.

\(^ {14}\) For whereas the general idea or form is one and the particular idea or form is second, the singular which provides the occasion for [th]is general or particular idea or form to be unconcealed, to take place, is singularly third.
while conscientiously attending to the particulars and the universals of their science, neglected the negative production\(^{15}\) of what is third: the techne of what is singular. Fourthly, as science naturally makes progress through distinction, an analysis should not indifferently expose the apperception of the ontological difference as concealed and unconcealed, but display with clarity the negativity of the ontological difference. Fifthly, when considering the production of the ontological difference, one cannot indifferently suspend the question of what is true and false, when it is evident that the false, more emphatically, offers the profound apperception\(^{16}\) of what is, more persuasively displays [th]is in-difference through inadequation.\(^{17}\)

To grant the production of [th]is negative ontological difference a definite shape or form, we need to say that its apperception follows an inferential leap from the cognition of what beings are not to the groundless apperception that they truly are. Further elaboration of the negativity of the ontological difference is necessary. Following Pseudo-Aristotle, we should first admit that there may be no ontological difference, that things may simply generate things ad infinitum, as he says, ‘in and endless series.’\(^{18}\) This is however unlikely as those who have asserted that there is an ontological difference are, as Pseudo-Aristotle observes, ‘no ordinary men, but

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\(^{15}\) We speak of ‘negative production’ where the end of production is negative; an unverifiable and unreified sense of Being.

\(^{16}\) We speak of ‘apperception’ in like manner to Kant to indicate that which provides the fundamental or living integrity of each appearance. That the integrity of what is perceived is neither substantial, nor perceptible or describable, will often necessitate the qualification ‘negative.’

\(^{17}\) The original contribution of The Poetics of Being does not only reside in the second, fourth and the fifth of these abstractions, but in the synthesis of all the particular moments, to have gathered them all in the same place. One cannot invent everything. Certainly, one takes as much pleasure in receiving as contributing to tradition, as much delight in reproducing a tradition one loves as making an original contribution to it.

some of those who are looked upon as sages.’ In straight opposition to Melissus and Parmenides, who believe that ‘it is impossible that anything can come into being from nothing,’ Pseudo-Aristotle finds that Hesiod asserts the exact opposite when he declares of that which unconceals all beings to all,

‘First of all in the world was Chaos born, and thereafter
Broad-bosomed earth arose, firm seat of all things forever
And Love that shineth bright amid the host of Immortals,’

As the author comments, ‘All other things, he says, came into being from these, but these came into being out of nothing.’ So the first point is clearly: There is an ontological difference. However, we shall not only take a sage’s word for it but evoke the image of that philosophical tradition which, in Hesiod’s wake, has attempted to grasp this ontological difference, albeit in a negative way.

In philosophy, ontology denotes a tradition that is recognized by more than its name, for even without a name there is a philosophical tradition that inquires into being qua Being. These inquiries were pursued long before Goclenius first launched the term and Wolff put it in circulation and made it a valuable philosophical coin to express the inquiry into that which crowns or grounds all beings, the Being of beings. For the ontological difference between Being and

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20 Aristotle, On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias, 974a1-3.
23 It would, of course, be absurd to contend that there is no metaphysics in Aristotle simply because he never used the term. When distinguishing between praxis, poiesis and theoria, Aristotle saw Proto Philosophia not as something beyond any of these intellectual activities but as what unites them all. What unifies all these human pursuits may easily be ignored, for as Pseudo-Aristotle lets Empedocles say of the many, ‘they have seen of the whole but a little.’ [Aristotle, On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias, 976a37.]
24 For the conceptual history of ‘ontology,’ Farrell Krell’s note to Heidegger’s lectures on Nietzsche is very enlightening: ‘The term ontology apparently was coined by Goclenius in 1613, then taken up
beings was as much pursued in the Presocratics’ *elemental* inquiries into the *arche* of all things, as it was passionately pursued in St. Thomas’s search for the determining trace of *incarnation* or the principle of *individuation*, as it more recently was exposed in Heidegger’s *fundamental* ontology. Similarly it was *patiently* sought in the works of one whom Heidegger recognized as having launched the ontological investigations of Plato and Aristotle with new vigour, namely Kant.\(^{25}\) The most recent actualization of these ontological inquiries, the surge of Being that tempts some philosophers *to surf* and others *to dive*, has been identified by Hent de Vries as *The Religious Turn* and Dominique Janicaud as *The Theological Turn*.\(^{26}\) Certainly, the most renowned of all living representatives of [th]is quest are Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion, who often inquire into the Being of beings by expressing what it is not, a negative procedure which often begins by denouncing the very name, ‘ontology.’\(^{27}\) The theological turn is foregrounded in John D. Caputo’s study of *The Mystical Elements in Heidegger’s Thought*,\(^{28}\) which indicates its origin in the works of Heidegger, who early, as Gadamer observes, announced himself as a theologian.\(^{29}\) More fundamentally, however, this theological turn is a re-cognition of that which Aristotle professed

ontology and theology have in common, the study of what is *highest* or what is *first*,

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\(^{27}\) Jacques Derrida, ‘*Khora,*’ in *On the Name*, pp. 97, 103, and Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being*, p. 37.


the Being of beings. It is to this tradition that this thesis belongs, even if in a negative manner.

However highly we value the philosophers above, not one has recognized that the ontological difference may, in an exemplary sense, be produced by art. If this production has been suggested at all, it is doubtless that no one has attempted to comprehend the *techne* of this art before us, and that therefore *The Poetics of Being* is the first of its kind. Pseudo-Aristotle refers to Empedocles’s contention that ‘whatsoever exists, no art no device can destroy it.’ We are clearly of the complementary view. For whereas this observation may be self-evident in life, in art nothing is more difficult than to create the apperception of the ontological difference. That is, whereas in life it is almost impossible to eradicate the apperception of the ontological difference, in art it is the most difficult to produce. We shall later identify *inadequation* as a set of negative tropes that effortlessly, almost universally, produces the apperception of the Being of beings. Furthermore, we shall identify the most effective means for this singular production: *falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefinination, elision* and *substitution*. This production shall moreover not be considered abstractly, but ascertained in Shakespeare, the one who most persuasively produces the impression of what we take to be inseparable from our nature, indistinguishable from our own lives. Regardless of how much the Romantic tradition of literary criticism may think itself elevated above the many, it too failed to recognize in Shakespeare’s plays the ontological difference as such. We shall emphasize that this thesis is not primarily a

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study of Shakespeare, but of how the apperception of the ontological difference is produced.

[12] There is one question we need to address in this Introduction: Why has the production of the ontological difference not been studied? The answer may have to do with the division of labour in the humanities. We could perhaps blame the unnatural separation of poiesis and theoria, or the artificial separation of literature and philosophy. In a Commonplace Book which Nietzsche kept in 1872 under the heading, ‘The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle Between Art and Knowledge,’ Nietzsche acutely identified a great dilemma that has still not been resolved: ‘whether philosophy is an art or a science?’ It is easy to see that this problem would never have arisen if one had not discarded the possibility of synthesis, if one had not too subserviently adhered to a separation between the intellectual pursuits of praxis, poiesis, and theoria. Certainly, Aristotle never meant this division to be anything but preliminary, an heuristic classification to better understand the intellectual excellence of man as a whole as he stands apart from all other beings. Nevertheless, Plato’s and Aristotle’s definitions of poiesis preclude the possibility of a singular production, for what is brought to unconcealment is the idea or the morphe, the idea or the form which may be perceived, never the apperception of the Being of negative beings.

[13] Francis Bacon is right not only when he points out what can easily be experienced by all, that imagined riches are the root of all poverty, but equally

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when he recognizes that progress has often been halted by ‘the overmuch credit that hath been given unto authors in sciences, in making them dictators.’\(^{33}\) Among what Bacon calls ‘the vices or diseases of learning,’\(^ {34}\) none ranks perhaps higher than ‘the over-early and preemptory reduction of knowledge into arts and methods.’\(^ {35}\) A too rigid classification easily destroys the potential for making progress: hence it is timely that Jacques Derrida regretted the division of labour between philosophy and literature, that Richard Rorty mourns the separation of poetry from science.\(^ {36}\) For as much as a philosopher without theology could claim to be in possession of all the Aristotelian excellences without comprehending that which ensures the integrity of them all,\(^ {37}\) a philosopher without literature does seem like a man of many parts without any wherewithal. If you are willing to follow the example of Kant, it is easy to acknowledge that Philosophy without literature is blind, as much as Literature without Philosophy is empty. Only the synthesis of the two pursuits could make possible the understanding of the production of that which transcends experience, namely the apperception of the Being of negative beings which art makes available to man.

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\(^{36}\) Nietzsche, who throughout his life attempted to overcome the Aristotelian classification, is not only right when he considers philosophy ‘a form of artistic invention,’ as the freest of the sciences, it is also true that, ‘There is no appropriate category for philosophy; consequently, we must make up and characterize a species [for it].’ [Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth – Selections from Nietzsche’s Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, ‘The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle Between Art and Knowledge,’ ed. Daniel Breazeale, Fragment 53, p. 19].

\(^{37}\) Speaking of Derrida’s negative theology, Hent de Vries identifies the possible in-difference between theology and ontology by first quoting *Of Grammatology*, ‘The ‘theological’ is a determined moment in the total movement of the trace.’ [de Vries, *The Theology of the Sign and the Sign of Theology*, in *Flight of the Gods – Philosophical Perspectives on Negative Theology*, p. 184.] It is however more valuable what de Vries himself says about [th]is common ground, in his fine book on *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, ‘it is not so much that there is a mystery beyond what can be said about existence … ; the enigma is rather to be found in the very understanding of this existence … itself. … Where it comes into its own, existence becomes a mystery to itself.’ [de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, ‘On Becoming a Mystery to Oneself,’ p. 227-228.] It is the systematic production of [th]is mystery which we have recognized in Shakespeare.
Although we can easily join Gadamer when he praises Aristotle for having included the *Wirkung*, the effect, on the spectator in his definition of tragedy,\(^{38}\) he could not with greater ease have contradicted our position, when he, in an attempt to identify the *cause* of the ontological import of tragedy, indicates, ‘The thing presented is there (*Das Dargestellte ist da*).’\(^{39}\) Gadamer does little more than to repeat Leucippus’s positive argument that everything that is perceived *is*, when it is easily observed that whereas a dead and a living man may equally be perceived, only one is apperceived to be *alive*. Similarly in theatre, not all [*re]*presentations are *indistinguishably* granted Being simply because they, like all things, *happen* to occur.\(^{40}\) It is sad to see that Gadamer’s attempt to convey his understanding of the ontological difference in tragedy only testifies to its neglect. We could not disagree more than when Gadamer points out - as if incomprehensibly taking pride in rendering art [*indistinguishable* from science - that the experience that tragedy and all imitative arts offer is ‘*knowledge*, furthermore a ‘*knowledge of the essence*.’\(^{41}\) In contradistinction to Gadamer, we shall show that what theatre most fundamentally offers, is not the positive experience of something known, but the apperception of something *unknown*, the Being of beings, which is entirely inessential, and moreover, [*is*] either concealed or unconcealed. What will be shown furthermore is that any such ontological difference is typically *negative*.

It is not easy to grasp what *is*, and we may, like the stranger in Plato’s *Sophist*, at times be in as much confusion about what *is* as what *is not*.\(^{42}\) We cannot

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38 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 130.
42 Plato, *Sophist*, 243b.
simply and without distinction erase the ontological problem by saying, like Leucippus, that ‘all objects of cognition must exist.’ For, as Pseudo-Aristotle rightly points out, ‘what we see is not more because we see it, … what we think … not more for that.’ It is apparently so that some things offer the impression that they are whereas others do not. As Pseudo-Aristotle has to admit, ‘of which kind the true things are is uncertain.’ Whereas Pseudo-Aristotle maintains an indefinite concept of the ontological difference, referring indeterminately to the arche of all things as ‘that which is all water or all earth, or whatever this being is,’ that is ‘individually similar to itself,’ we will show that the ontological difference is apperceived as a contradiction that is either concealed or unconcealed.

While Heidegger’s aletheia is the unconcealment of positivities, Pseudo-Dionysius produces what is hidden in a negative fashion. Like Pseudo-Dionysius this thesis presents the ontological difference negatively, for appearances that are not true, like angels or impostors, produce a more ineradicable impression of that they are, the Being of beings. From this position it is easy to recognize that Shakespeare’s reputation as a poet, his renown as the maker of makers, to a large degree rests on his ability to produce the apperception of what is concealed, through false appearances, inadequations, offer a mystical notion of Being, which is not only apperceived spontaneously and persuasively by most [modern] audiences, but in great part is apperceived as in-different from their own lives.

[16] Although there are epochal shifts in the apperception of Being, neither its production nor its apperception is arbitrary or entirely subjective. The Poetics of

44 Aristotle, On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias, 980a15-16.
46 Aristotle, On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias, 976a24.
Being simply disavows any relativistic doctrine of Being, and will do so not by asserting itself but by tracing what art does to us all. As Aristotle says in Metaphysics, if there is a science that unknowingly belongs to us all, ‘if the science [i.e. episteme or knowledge of what is first] is innate, it is wonderful that we are unaware of our possession of the greatest of sciences.’\(^{48}\) Even more wonderful would it be to possess that art which is able to produce the apperception of what is, to move us, to persuade us, even to guide us by playing on this transgression, the most ancient, if not first of all sciences, i.e. the knowledge of what is first.

[17] If Parmenides was the first to prohibit the invention of such a science,\(^ {49}\) i.e. negative ontology, Gorgias, more democratically, and in line with the Athenian spirit, offered, as Pseudo-Aristotle points out,\(^ {50}\) the first sustained argument against its possible existence, against that which would uphold such a science, namely the ontological difference. Gorgias argument boils down to this, that even if there is nothing, it is impossible to convey without something different from it, i.e. words or appearances, that would negate that which one were trying to ascertain in the first place, namely that nothing exists. Secondly, if one could convey the experience of that which is dissimilar from words or appearances, the audience will not be left with the same experience. It is easy to refute these arguments. For as self-evidently as words are different from what they express, so what is effected/affected may be an experience beyond what is perceived, namely the apperception of the ontological difference. For words may convey an


\(^{49}\) Aristotle, *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*, 980b16-20. It is surprising to see that the only fragment that has survived from the famed Gorgias - the grandest of all Greek orators - is an argument against the ontological difference, but even more so that it is offered in the context of one who indicates that Gorgias position cannot be sustained, namely Pseudo-Aristotle in *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias*.

\(^{50}\) Plato, *Sophist*, 237a.
experience which itself is not [explicitly] named, but effected/affected, and [th]is effect/affect experienced without a word. This is easy to acknowledge. Gorgias second argument is equally flawed, as it does not recognize the difference between perceptions and apperceptions. For whereas anyone may understand that we may all perceive things differently, and hold different opinions about the same, it is not easy to contend that we would have different opinions if we did not have different opinions about the same [thing]. And, whereas our opinions may be true or false, we may through art produce the apperception of that which our true and false opinions have in common, namely the ontological difference, which is more emphatically produced through inadequation rather than adequation.

To take one concrete example that resembles the many we will encounter in Shakespeare’s plays. One who appears to walk off a cliff and does not expect to fall appears to be more alive than one who jumps off the same cliff never expecting to rise again. The one has adequate cognitions, the one apprehends the world adequately, the other inadequately, one truly, one falsely, but what they experience, at least, what they encounter, is undeniably the same, i.e. that which is given irreconcilable properties: ‘that from which I may not fall,’ and ‘that from which I may fall to never rise again.’ The apperception of the same, is, moreover, more emphatically pro-duced, we are left with a more persuasive apprehension of the same, if it is inadequately apprehended. Even a relativist cannot from any perspective deny that whether one has adequate perceptions/apperception and the other inadequate, they do encounter in-differently the same. And the same is that which asserts itself regardless of our opinions, that which all true and a false

51 From Gorgias argument that ‘a man may scarcely perceive the same thing as someone else,’[Aristotle, On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias, 980b17.] does not follow that what is appercieved is necessarily apperceived differently.
opinions have *in common*, namely *this*. Evidently, Shakespeare never laboured to give rise to millions of opinions about his work, but to offer the immediate apperception of the *same* to everyone, the undeniably impression of that which, like the *arche* of all things, is, as Pseudo-Aristotle indicates, ‘*individually* similar to itself’.52 We shall note that Shakespeare’s works could only break into so many pieces when that which kept them together was not acknowledged, when the understanding of that which sustains the integrity of them all was missing: not only the appreciation of its production, but the *awareness* of the ontological difference *itself*, as a negativity, a kind of pyramid of negative beings that produce a powerful sense of Being.

[C1]  Chapter 1 *The Hermeneutics of Being*, begins by exploring the Romantic creation of the Shakespearean aporia. This aporia is unmade by acknowledging that what Shakespeare *most fundamentally* offers, is *not* primarily a meaningful experience, but the apperception of the Being of negative beings that only a hermeneutics of Being may adequately discover.

[C2]  Chapter 2 *Philosophies of Unconcealment*, denies Adorno’s view that there is no ontological difference, by exploring a philosophical tradition that has discovered *[th]is* difference as *unconcealed*: Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Nietzsche, and Derrida. However, we do not acknowledge *[th]is* as the ontological difference *per se*, but only as an aspect of the *ontological contradiction*.

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[C3] Chapter 3 Philosophies of Concealment, denies Heidegger’s view that the ontological difference is by necessity unconcealed, by discovering a non-reified and unsubstantial tradition that explores the ontological difference as concealed. This tradition is traced back through history from Derrida, to Kant, and finally to Pseudo-Dionysius, where we find its most profound and influential expression in negative and symbolic theology.

[C4] Chapter 4 The Techne of Being, investigates the inadequacy of Aristotle’s concept of mimesis by identifying that it cannot explain what makes one [re]presentation more effective than another in producing a sense of what is [true]. The poiesis of Being is identified as belonging to an art of indequation where the most fundamental tropes of this techne are falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefinition, elision and substitution.

[C5] Chapter 5 The True Production of Being, inquires into the fundamental unfamiliarity of some of Shakespeare’s plays by discovering that it is founded on a logic of Being, which truly belongs to a Neoplatonic tradition that is profoundly unfamiliar to modern man. Shakespeare is shown to make himself inseparable from ourselves when he betrays this tradition, and, more emphatically, produces an apperception of Being as inessentially and insubstantially concealed.

[C6] Chapter 6 The False Production of Being, rejects Aristotle’s claim that the false merely [re]presents what does not exist, a position which denies the function of any false [re]presentation. The chapter demonstrates how Shakespeare produces a more profound sense of Being by, paradoxically, offering false [re]presentations that invariably bequeath a more emphatic sense of what is [true].
Chapter 7 The Production of Being through Dissimilarity, displays concretely the inadequacy of any mimetic theory of [re]presentation, when it is shown how Shakespeare, by presenting dissimilarities rather than similarities, offers a more irrefutable sense of Being. For by [re]presenting beings as what they are not, the spectator is left with the undeniable impression that they are concealed.

Chapter 8 The Production of Being through Nothing, finds that the battle for nothing has predominantly been a fight between Platonism and Neoplatonism. We discover that Shakespeare concretely continues a Platonic tradition by using three variations of this trope of inadequation to produce the apperception of the Being of beings: ‘nothing,’ indefiniteness and elision, through which the spectator is offered an unreified experience of what is either unconcealed or concealed.

Chapter 9 The Production of Being through Substitution, recognizes that the function of substitution in Shakespeare’s plays is to produce the reinforced realization of the Being of that which is not apperceived. The thesis discovers a dialectics of inapperception and misapperception whereby the spectator is imperceptibly persuaded to give herself away, and thereby offered an emphatic sense of Being.

Chapter 10 The Paradox of Being, sums up how Shakespeare has produced contradictions to facilitate a dialectics of substitution that lies at the heart of all tropes of inadequation. For paradoxically, the contradiction experienced by the spectator creates the reinforced apperception of that which is contradicted, namely what is, the ontological difference.
C1 THE HERMENEUTICS OF BEING

§1.1 Making the Shakespearean Aporia
§1.2 Unmaking the Shakespearean Aporia
§1.3 The Topology of Being

C1 EXPOSÉ

[1] In Chapter 1, The Hermeneutics of Being, we will witness how the aporia of Shakespeare, for centuries, has been created and recreated by a Romantic tradition, which, often unaware of what Shakespeare produces the apperception of, praises his plays as highly as it praises what is unknown. To make further progress possible it was necessary to formulate a problem. We therefore propose that Shakespeare, more than any of his peers, produces the apperception of the negative ontic-ontological difference, the contradiction between non-beings and that which they more profoundly offer the profound impression of, the Being of beings. It is the art of expressing the ontological difference negatively, i.e. The Poetics of Being, which makes Shakespeare’s plays stand out as truly grand and sometimes overwhelming. In Chapter 2, Philosophies of Unconcealment and in Chapter 3, Philosophies of Concealment, we will present two different aspects of the ontological contradiction, before we, in Chapter 4, The Techne of Being, more systematically, reveal how the apperception of [th]is\(^1\) negative ontological difference is produced. The general means and the most applicable and effective instruments for [th]is poetic production, are all identified as belonging to the art of

\(^1\) [th]is, is used as an ontological marker to highlight the apperception of what is, the Being of beings. The form of [th]is experience will be clarified as we proceed, abstractly in Chapters 2, 3, 4, concretely in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. We should however indicate that Being contradicts that which it makes possible the Being of, beings. Moreover, the ontological difference is itself considered as a contradiction, [which] is either concealed or unconcealed.
inadequation. The instruments that most effectively achieve this end, are: falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, and substitution. We will have a look at Shakespeare’s unequalled mastery of these means of inadequation for the production of the ontological contradiction – the contradiction between non-beings and that which they offer an almost ineradicable impression of, the Being of beings - in Chapter 5, The True Production of Being, Chapter 6, The False Production of Being, Chapter 7, The Production of Being through Dissimilarity, Chapter 8, The Production of Being through Nothing, Chapter 9, The Production of Being through Substitution, before we finally discuss a figure of inadequation which may sum up the effect of all these devices, in Chapter 10, The Paradox of Being.

If all arts receive their name from their end, painting from painting, music from music, and if an art is a means to that end and Being names the negative ontological difference, we are attempting to write no less than The Poetics of Being. To the one possessing the virtue of this poetry will belong a techne or an art, as it does to Shakespeare, of making the apperception of the ontological contradiction, or quite simply, as we portray in Chapter 4, The Techne of Being. For, as we shall see, non-beings offer the most profound impression of that which they appear to contradict, namely that which transgresses all beings but nevertheless lends to them the apperception that they are [alive]. The clarification of the negative history of the ontological difference, in Chapter 2, Philosophies of Unconcealment and in Chapter 3, Philosophies of Concealment, is followed by a general chapter on how [this] ontological contradiction is produced, negatively. After the abstract

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2 Where the method of aphairesis is applied to the gradual or violent removal of properties from an individual being so as to convey a glimpse of its singularity, we shall speak of elision and not aphairesis, where all attributes, be they perceptual or intelligible, are taken away from the world at large.
The Hermeneutics of Being

consideration of the instruments that belong to the techne of Being, and the end that they pro-duce, the apperception of ek-stasis, Being in the light, or hypo-stasis, Being in the dark, of Being concealed or of Being unconcealed, we will consider how these means of inadequation are applied, so unnoticeably that even when we know and have recognized these instruments they appear to vanish before our very eyes, to evaporate as we grasp that which they produce the solid impression of, while they themselves melt into thin air.

[3] Judging from the testimony of tradition, it is obvious that Shakespeare in most of his plays, in an exemplary manner, presents living beings, produces the apperception of something that is alive, whereas, for example, Goethe creates immaculate representations, that the first is admired for the life he creates as much as the last is admired for the ideas he represents dramatically. In order not to pretend that we have created [th]is poetics from nothing, we will show that the disembodied principle of inadequation, has already been incarnated on Shakespeare’s stage. However, if we in [th]is work only consider the poetic productions of Shakespeare, the reader should be informed that we are laying down principles of a poetics that may be applied to the understanding of any play, novel or film, in order to separate the works that produce the apperception of Being, from those that merely offer the impression of representations. For as the concept of the negative ontological difference suggests, it is the negative experience of beings that offer the most profound sense of Being. Still, we cannot say that the abstract considerations of The Poetics of Being did exist prior to reading

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3 Whether the Faust legend has its origin in an obscure or hermetic past or a more recent origin in the legendary life of Paracelsus, it is obvious that it is the idea of the Faust Drama, what is essentially represented, that fascinates and never the experience of life that this legend occasions, be it in a play by Christopher Marlowe or Goethe or a novel by Thomas Mann. For the most notable expressions of the Faust legend, see Marlowe, Faustus, Goethe, Faust, and Mann, Doctor Faustus.
Shakespeare’s plays, but that *The Techne of Being* slowly developed over time much like a map is developed from carefully reading the landscape. And yet, we do not expect Shakespeare’s plays to merely illustrate the abstractions.\(^4\) If the concrete chapters offer a portrait of Shakespeare as an artist, a glimpse into his laboratorium, we are the first to acknowledge that Shakespeare is so much more than we can capture in one painting and that in *The Poetics of Being*, he is solely presented as *The Master of Inadequation*. We are also aware that there could have been painted many other portraits of this artist, and that the hermeneutical process will ensure that the paint never runs dry.

§1.1 Making the Shakespearean Aporia

\(^4\) We shall witness the creation of the Shakespearean aporia, the judgment that we in part or fully neither know what Shakespeare creates the experience of nor how he creates this ineffable experience. This aporia, which we acknowledge the existence of, is created and prolonged by a Romantic tradition which heralds Shakespeare as a supreme maker, that is able to produce an experience almost if not wholly indistinguishable from what the Romantic without further attempt at definition would call, ‘Nature,’ ‘Truth,’ ‘Life,’ ‘Reality,’ and sometimes ‘God.’ One should not blame any reader who does not immediately grasp the significance of any of these words, which seem like signifiers longing for a long lost beloved, the signified, which here appear to be ungraspable. But, for the Romantic, the lure of any of these terms, is, of course, that they produce a signified, a transcendental signified, that is bound to be ungraspable, and it is this indefinite, if not wholly

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\(^4\) The relation between the abstract considerations in Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and the concrete considerations of Shakespeare’s plays in Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 is truly dialectical: there is always an abundance in *concreta*, something that always invites the inquisitive to take one step further into the unknown, if there is time.
empty concept that itself produces a longing for that which we are unable to grasp with our senses. We do take our cue from this Romantic tradition, which like a kind host points out that what Shakespeare produces the supreme impression of is beyond what we may [immediately] perceive, as the Romantic says of his plays, they are ‘ineffable,’ ‘insurmountable,’ ‘inscrutable,’ etc..

Following this Romantic tradition, it is not difficult to agree with one of its latest grand exponents, George Steiner, when he says of Shakespeare, ‘Could one, without everlasting peril, match something of [Shakespeare’s] rights and powers of conception, of calling into life?5 Immediately we agree with Steiner, although we find it hard to define what we agree about when we agree about ‘life’? In his beautiful book, *Grammars of Creation*, which has a negative trait throughout as it searches for that inexhaustible source that creates all aspects of life, Steiner sums all powers of creation: psychological, poetical, mythological, philosophical, musical, technological, and gives a tour de force of some of the thinkers within our Western tradition that explicitly voices their poetical views. So there is a poetics for Dante as one may find a poetical discourse in Dante’s works, as there is for Hegel, of whom Steiner shows to have an intimate knowledge. But Steiner’s exposition of the *Grammars of Creation* comes to a halt where he does not

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5 We shall see that what Steiner calls ‘life,’ we shall later recall through the concept of the ontological difference. It is perhaps surprising that a book, which on such a grand historical scale considers creation in all its facets, omits mentioning the ontological difference, the vantage point from which Heidegger made it possible to consider the Being of all beings. The mistake does not lie with Steiner, who considers Heidegger briefly, but with Heidegger himself. For, as is clear, Heidegger takes the Being of beings for granted, whereas Steiner considers all aspects of creation, whether this making is theological, poetical, mythological, philosophical, technological or musical. There is however one thing we would like to point out. When considering what is, according to Aristotle, highest or first, *Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book I, 983a4,* the Being of beings, the distinction between theology and ontology does often become blurred. We shall therefore place a comment by Gadamer next to Steiner’s remark, ‘Heidegger’s ontology is grounded in a constant ‘keeping at bay’ of the theological.’ *[Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, p. 16]* For as Gadamer indicates, ‘In a letter to Karl Löwith in 1921 [Heidegger] said of himself, “I am a Christian theologian.”’ [Gadamer, *Heidegger’s Ways, ‘Being Spirit God (1977),’* p. 182]. [See also, Gadamer, *Heidegger's Ways, ‘The Religious Dimension,’* p. 170].
recognize its own discourse. To emphasise that it is not I but Steiner himself who points out the aporia that faces all Shakespearean scholarship, I will let Steiner say this, ‘There are magnitudes and complexities of vision before which ordinary scholarship and criticism are lamed. Only the facts can be made out.’ Steiner does even suggest that the road to a theoretical discourse about Shakespeare’s poetics may forever be inaccessible, when he says, ‘Shakespeare may, most wisely, have chosen not to put the question of creation to himself or to articulate it in his works. Augustinian-Aquinian Dante can and must do so./Thus Dante provides privileged access to almost the entirety of our theme [i.e. creation in all its facets], whereas Shakespeare’s absence from this theme [i.e. creation in all its facets] – he is its deus absconditus – renders such access problematic.’ If not, we should rather say, ‘aporetic.’

By exposing the aporia of Shakespeare, Steiner shows the way to what any criticism of Shakespeare will have to go through if it is to discover Shakespeare’s explicit powers of creation. And we believe what Steiner says, in Grammars of Creation, when he lucidly exposes the basis of that Romantic aporia which we later will attempt to solve. For nowhere is there ‘in Shakespeare a theorizing discourse on aesthetics, let alone any disclosure of his personal experience of creativity.’ The irrational ground of the Shakespearean aporia is further clarified by Steiner when he remarks, ‘Was there ever a sensibility more receptive of the manifold disorders and instabilities of human existence, of the energies of unmasted being as they

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6 Steiner, Grammars of Creation, p. 66.
7 Steiner, Grammars of Creation, p. 69.
8 Steiner, Grammars of Creation, p. 67. Emphasis added. Immediately after Steiner ads, again to stress the same point, ‘Nowhere is there any sustained reflection on what it is to be Shakespeare, on what it is to be a supreme maker.’ [Steiner, Grammars of Creation, p. 67].
spill over the confines of doctrine or of reason?" Everything points to the excessive or irrational nature of Shakespeare’s plays that makes it impossible to grasp an underlying poetic structure with reason, the lack of discourse barring access to his [poetic] laboratorium. There is however something missing in Steiner’s insightful assessment of Shakespeare. For even though there cannot be found, as Steiner says, ‘anywhere in Shakespeare a theorizing discourse of his personal experience of creativity,’ not finding a discourse does not mean that the grammar does not exist, for obviously, there are grammars even for languages where these rules have not yet been detected, and there may be a poetics for what transcends reason. Although I am grateful for Steiner pointing out the aporia, which we have no doubt exists, I shall preliminary say this: Shakespeare may very well adopt a philosophy that transcends reason, that grounds a poetics which concretely enables him to create the apperception or experience of what we all may vaguely call ‘life.’

[7] The Shakespearean aporia is not made by me, but by a Romantic tradition that continues to this very day. Even the most renowned of all living Shakespeare scholars, Harold Bloom, confesses that he has dedicated his life’s work to what still remains a mystery to him; Shakespeare. Speaking of the ‘miracle’ of Shakespeare’s creations, thus placing himself securely within a Romantic tradition that never seize to create wonder, Mr. Bloom soon admits, ‘The more

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9 Steiner, Grammars of Creation, p. 67. Emphasis added.
10 Steiner, Grammars of Creation, p. 67.
11 In his greatly readable book, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, Mr. Bloom admits, ‘I have read and taught Shakespeare almost daily for these past twelve years, and am certain that I see him only darkly. His intellect is superior to mine.’ [Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 2].
12 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. xix.
13 Mr. Bloom says, ‘Essentially, I seek to extend a tradition of interpretation that includes Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt, A. C. Bradley, and Harold Goddard, a tradition now mostly out of fashion.’ [Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. xx.] Speaking of his Romantic debt, Mr. Bloom says, ‘Romantic criticism, from Hazlitt through Pater and A. C. Bradley on to Harold
one reads and ponders the plays of Shakespeare, the more one realizes that the accurate stance toward them is one of awe. How he was possible, I cannot know.\textsuperscript{14} But where are we to locate the crux of the Shakespearean aporia, what is it that makes or grounds this impassability, this unanswerability? As Bloom says in the introduction to his intimate, psychological readings of Shakespeare, which are fabulously nuanced, ‘Some critics of Shakespeare may conservatively contend that Shakespeare’s originality was in the representation of cognition, personality, character. But there is an overflowing element in the plays, an excess beyond representation, that is closer to the metaphor we call “creation.”’\textsuperscript{15} It is this ‘overflowing element,’ this ‘excess’ that creates the Shakespearean aporia, where we dumbfounded appear to not know what we are facing the wonder of.

[8] There would, of course, not be a Shakespearean aporia if one did not discover it in any of his plays. The Tragedy of King Lear, which Bloom rightly calls the ‘height of literary experience,’\textsuperscript{16} may also be the culmination of this aporia. As Bloom says, ‘Hazlitt thought that it was equally impossible to give either a description of the play itself or of its effect upon the mind. Rather strikingly, for so superb a psychological critic, Hazlitt, remarks, “All that we can say must fall far short of the subject; or even of what we ourselves conceive of it.”’\textsuperscript{17} But what is it we are not able to apprehend, comprehend, understand, fathom, when we are reading or watching King Lear? What is it that remains beyond comprehension, incomprehensible? Is it possible to define or circumnavigate that which to us

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\textsuperscript{14} Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. xix. Emphasis added.
\textsuperscript{15} Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. xx.
\textsuperscript{16} Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 477.
\textsuperscript{17} Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 484.
remains incomprehensible, that place where we find nowhere to go? First of all, we could say this; it would be difficult to find answers to scientific questions when reading the Bible or Homer. Similarly, it may be that not all answers to Shakespeare’s plays, *The Tragedy of King Lear* in particular, are found by posing psychological questions. If we do think so we are almost certain to, as Hazlitt proves and Mr. Bloom shows, end up with an aporia, an unpassable critical abyss where one may stand, if one will, and wonder. But what if one were to ask another kind of question, a non-psychological question? But, one may ask, are there then, would there then be any other question to pose to the Shakespearean play, that more than other ways could bear fruit, create a clearing, and perhaps provide an answer?

[9] If we allow ourselves to both consider Bloom’s point of view that Shakespeare is the inventor of what we call [psychological] ‘personality,’ but also allow Foucault to intervene in this discourse and say that at the time of Shakespeare, the psycho-logical may not yet have been invented, we could at least be tempted to look for other than psychological solutions for the often enigmatic behaviour of Shakespeare’s creatures. It may be time to begin an ontological

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19 The only thing troubling with Mr. Bloom’s theoryless or ‘aesthetic’ [Bloom, *Shakespeare – The Invention of the Human*, p. 9] reading of how Shakespeare invented the human, is not its universal claims, but rather that there is not, in more than seven hundred pages, an inkling or a hint that Shakespeare also incorporates experiences that are not our own. For example, Eugene M. Waith says in his thoughtful introduction to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ‘If uncertainty about the authorship of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* is one reason for its neglect by directors and its dismissal by some reviewers as inferior or downright silly, surely another is the problem posed for any contemporary spectator or reader by the conventions of chivalric romance. As some awareness of the laws of heroic behaviour in Homer’s time is needed for an understanding of Achilles, so an awareness of the ideals of chivalry is a necessary first step in approaching Palamon, Arcite, Emilia, and Theseus.’ [Waith, ‘Introduction’ to Shakespeare, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, p. 43.] Although it is undeniable that an ahistoric or psychological approach such as Mr. Bloom’s [See for example, Bloom, *Shakespeare – The Invention of the Human*, p. 1] is itself the greatest and simplest expression of history, and that Mr. Bloom, like all of us, is bound to speak of, even erect, something other than what he intends to, and that history, irrevocably, speaks allegorically in all
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interrogation of Shakespeare’s plays, by simply asking; how does Shakespeare create the almost unquestionable experience that what appears before the spectator is? Or, as Mr. Bloom, quoting Shelley, puts it, “forms more real than living men.” Let us look at one character larger than life. When Mr. Bloom points to Edgar as the main enigma of King Lear, that Tom O’Bedlam is ‘the central emblem of the play: philosopher, fool, madman, nihilist, dissembler,’ we could not agree more. As Mr. Bloom justifiably says, ‘We can wonder at the depth and prolongation of the self-abasement, but then Edgar would not have been Edgar without it.’ Truly, the right word is ‘depth’? But what kind of depth are we speaking of? A social depth? A religious depth? A psychological depth? Would it not be possible, for the first time in Shakespeare, to seek an ontological depth, to finally say that Shakespeare offers the negative, the profound impression of that without which all things would seize to be, the Being of beings?

[10] It may be true, as Mr. Bloom says, as he again poses the Shakespearean aporia, that ‘Every attempt to mitigate the darkness of this work is an involuntary critical lie.’ Truly we believe that no psychological reading alone can disentangle the Gordian knot created by the many characters in The Tragedy of King Lear. But if we look at the enigma that lies at the hear of King Lear, as if at the core of interpretations, that all interpretations inevitably are bound to have no other subject than our own, it is nevertheless clear that as scholars we cannot always allow ourselves the undisciplined pleasure of committing ourselves to a one-sided representation, which, however much it keeps history alive, would soon lead to the death of history as a science. It is therefore clear that no scholarly approach to Shakespeare can avoid also an exact awareness of the historical context without which any interpretation of Shakespeare would remain or become precisely what all scholarly activity is: an attempt to rid itself of what is merely subjective. Chapter 5, The True Production of Being will show that Mr. Bloom has exposed one-half of the experiences that Shakespeare’s ouevre makes available to man, if not all the experiences available to modern men, which is to say not a little.

20 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 7.
21 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 480.
22 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 489.
23 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 485.
24 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 485.
the Shakespearean aporia, we find one central fact, namely, as Mr. Bloom
recognizes, Edgar’s ‘consistent unwillingness to reveal himself.’25 Again Mr.
Bloom says something truly profound, ‘Whether as a bedlamite or poor peasant,
Edgar refuses his own identity for more than practical purposes.’26 But what other
points out, psychological reasons alone does not explain Edgar’s ‘unwillingness to
reveal himself to Gloucester, his father.’27 But what then? Considering this
impasse, would it not be possible, finally, to read this non-revelation along with
Shakespeare’s non-dramatization of the encounter where Edgar finally reveal his
identity to his father,28 differently: onto-logically, poeto-logically. For is it not, as
we shall see, clear that it is and remains Edgar’s false appearance as Tom
O’Bedlam, the fact that he is never recognized, that creates the most profound
sense of his Being. To some extent, it can be argued, Mr. Bloom takes for granted
that Edgar already is a ‘philosopher, fool, madman, nihilist, dissembler,’29 when it
is this very lack of revelation, his false appearance that truly creates, as we shall
see, the profound apperception of his Being [in the first place].30 For is it not false
rather than true appearances, unrecognition rather than recognition, that most
convincingly persuade the spectator that what appear before him is? Does not
unrecognition quite simply provide a sense of depth where recognition often does
not? We wish to elaborate, but need to fully expose the aporia before the problem,

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25 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 480.
27 Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. 480.
28 Mr. Bloom has finely characterised the non-dramatization of ‘the recognition encounter’ between
Gloucester and his son as ‘one of Shakespeare’s great unwritten scenes,’ [Bloom, Shakespeare – The
Invention of the Human, p. 481] Although this may emotionally ring true, I reserve the right to
disagree on its possible poetic effect/affect, as I believe that to Shakespeare, non-recognition rather
than recognition produces the more profound sense of Being.
29 Bloom, Shakespeare – The Invention of the Human, p. 489.
30 For my particular reading of the false encounter between Lord Gloucester and his unrecognized
son Edgar, when he appears as Tom O’Bedlam, see pp. XXX-XXX.
those places where even the most prominent of all Shakespeare scholars seem to find no way out. Thence, we shall continue.

[11] As there is among rhetoricians a common figure of denying a denial, there is among Romantics a common gesture of making the inexpressible inexpressible, to obscure what is already obscure, to offer an encomium of the unknown. De Quincey is likely to be on opium when he repeatedly speaks of the knock on the door at Macbeth’s Castle, which in the middle of the night sounds much like the last beat of a single heart after the host has killed his guest. The obsession with the inexplicable clearly finds De Quincy, the dream-diarist and opium-eater, in ekstasis, when he says, ‘the knocking at the gate, which succeeds the murder of Duncan, produced to my feelings an effect for which I never could account.’

Elaborating on his profound experience, obscuring what is already unknown, he says, ‘why it should produce such an effect [I don’t know] …In fact, my understanding said positively that it could not produce any effect.’ No one should expect a Romantic to solve the puzzle he presents. Neither does De Quincey, who guards the secret, keeps what is inexplicable in the dark, protecting one riddle with another riddle, each one moving us further away from what is inexplicable, not, however, without these layers creating the superficial apperception of depth, an impression that remains almost regardless of what has been said.

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31 De Quincey, 'On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth,' in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 432. The reference is to Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act II, Scene ii.56-73.

32 De Quincey, 'On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth,' in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 432. Emphasis added. What De Quincey in effect says is that, not only do I not understand the knock on the door in the middle of the night after Macbeth has slain King Duncan, but I do not understand why I do not understand the knock on the door in the middle of the night after Macbeth has slain King Duncan.
What often happens within the Romantic discourse on Shakespeare is, perhaps because there appear to be nothing left to grasp, that the subject able to produce the apperception of the inexpressible becomes more worthy of devotion than the inexpressible itself. Loudly expressing the Romantic encomium, the credo of the unknown, De Quincey speaks of Shakespeare, ‘O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art; but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers; like the frost and the snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little.’ Shakespeare is simply said to erase the difference between art and nature, to make his spectators unable, when faced with his productions, to distinguish between nature and art. For once we agree with De Quincey, and may I add, that it is as helpful to follow the inspiration of a Romantic, as it is to learn from the failures or advancements of the enemy. For it is obvious that the phenomena of art and nature could only be seen as indistinguishable, if they give rise to the apperception of something more than what we can or may essentially perceive through which they may be or become experienced as inseparable. As we will continue to show throughout this thesis, in a certain sense, Shakespeare’s art produces the experience of nature, not because art mirrors nature, as Aristotle would say, or nature mirrors art, as Plato would be.

33 De Quincey, ‘On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 435. Emphasis added.
34 As Richard McKeon says in his introduction to Aristotle’s Poetics, ‘Aristotle is fond of repeating the observation that the objects of art are produced as nature would have produced them, and that in the processes of production and the objects produced, art imitates nature. [Richard McKeon, Introduction to Aristotle’s Poetics, in Aristotle, Introduction to Aristotle, New York: Random house, 1992. Emphasis added.] A perhaps humorous case in point is when Aristotle, having observed that ‘the poet [is] an imitator just like a painter,’ [Cf. Aristotle, Poetics, 1460b8] adds that ‘it is a lesser error in an artist not to know, for instance, that the hind has no horns, than to produce an
more inclined to contend, but rather, because they both yield, life necessarily and art masterfully, the apperception of the Being of beings, the apperception of that which is more than what we may possibly perceive. Through [th]is ontological contradiction, that which is more than what we can possibly perceive, the 
phenomena of nature and the phenomena of art may appear to be indistinguishable.
For both art and nature may convey the apperception of the ontological contradiction, not the direct perception of what anything essentially is, but the apperception of that without which [th]is would not be anything at all.

[13] An unwillingness to explicate one’s understanding may in fact stem from a true incapacity to do so. However, what is helpful in the Romantic praise of Shakespeare is that it often recognizes that Shakespeare produces the experience of ‘life,’ ‘nature,’ ‘truth,’ ‘reality,’ however vaguely they may consider or use any of these terms. The one who expresses this experience most forcefully, even pathetically, is none other than Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister, who says of Shakespeare’s plays, ‘I cannot recollect any book, any man, any incident of my life, has produced such important effects on me … They seem as if they were performances of some celestial genius, descending among men, to make them, by

35 Speaking pedagogically, Socrates states that in the [ideal] republic it is necessary to ‘supervise the storytellers. We’ll select their stories whenever they are fine or beautiful and reject them when they aren’t. And we’ll persuade nurses and mothers to tell their children the ones we have selected, since they will shape their children’s souls with stories much more than they shape their bodies by handling them.’ [Plato, Republic, 377b-c].
36 The dispute over the priorities of art and nature is truly an essential debate that undoubtedly is superficial from the perspective of the question of the Being of beings. For only superficially do these positions clash. Claiming that art mirrors nature or nature art contains merely a superficial contradiction, for the common and sole focus, which shows that they agree about what is fundamental, is on what is essentially reflected. A discourse that focuses on the question of the primacy of art or nature, whether it is Plato or Aristotle, Nietzsche or Oscar Wilde, is likely to neglect the question of the ontological difference, as it is concerns itself, almost solely, with what beings essentially are, and not the Being of beings.
the mildest instructions, acquainted with themselves. They are not fictions. But perhaps this effect of being experienced as not fictions is only presented in the right light when seen next to Tieck, where one Romantic may shed light on another. For Ludwig Tieck says, ‘[Shakespeare] had learnt what produces an effect on people’s minds by studious observation of mankind, and he created his words of art according to his own instinct and the rules which he had derived from experience. This is the reason why most of his plays are so generally effective in performance and when read, and why they must necessarily be effective, for perhaps there is not one poet who has calculated the theatrical effect of his works as carefully as Shakespeare.’ Neither Tieck nor Goethe do however explicate the means through which Shakespeare achieves this baffling end, that inexplicable effect, and we could, like Wilhelm Meister, capitulate before the aporia of the Shakespearean play, and simply announce that they are ‘the most mysterious and complex productions of creation.’ What is brought to mind in the Romantic discourse is again the superlative of not knowing, the praise of what remains concealed. Thus the Romantic shows, time and again, tirelessly and almost without interruption, that he does not hope, does not even desire to reveal anything, that he more than anything takes care to guard what is, what perhaps must remain, secret.

[14] To Charles Lamb and so many Romantics the depth of nature witnessed in Shakespeare’s plays seems unfathomable. ‘It is common for people to talk of Shakespeare’s plays being so natural; that everybody can understand him. They...

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38 Tieck, Ludwig, ‘Shakespeare’s Treatment of the Marvellous,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 61.
39 Goethe, ‘Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship (1796),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 68.
are natural indeed, they are grounded deep in nature, so deep that the depth of
them lies out of the reach of the most of us.\textsuperscript{40} Acknowledging Lamb’s difficulties,
we shall nevertheless try to penetrate [th]is mystification whose sole purpose is to
pride oneself with ignorance. We shall maintain, with Schlegel, that the impression
of [th]is depth was consciously produced, that Shakespeare did not produce the
apperception of [th]is depth without thinking. Schlegel stands positively on the side
that attributes Shakespeare’s excellence, not to the coincidences of nature, but to
the mastery of an art. Schlegel, quite simply considers Shakespeare’s ‘dramatic
composition, one of the most thoughtful productions of the human mind,’\textsuperscript{41} which,
long before the play was ever staged, went in conscious pursuit of the ‘theatrical
effect.’\textsuperscript{42} Schlegel explains,

‘To me [Shakespeare] appears a profound artist, and not a blind and wildly
luxuriant genius. I consider, generally speaking, all that has been said on
the subject a mere fable, a blind and extravagant error. In other arts the
assertion refutes itself; for in them acquired knowledge is an indispensable
condition of clever execution.’\textsuperscript{43}

There are, of course, those who are of the opposite view of Schlegel, who
still assert that the ground of Shakespeare’s productions cannot be attributed to an
art, and if it can, it is impossible to produce its theory, which would be even more
inexplicable than its effect. Adam Müller appear to say at first sight that,

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\textsuperscript{40} Lamb, Charles, ‘On the Tragedies of Shakespeare, considered with reference to their fitness for
stage representation (1811),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 117.

\textsuperscript{41} Schlegel, ‘Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature (1808-11),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on
Shakespeare, p. 94. Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{42} Schlegel, ‘Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature (1808-11),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on
Shakespeare, p. 94. Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{43} Schlegel, ‘Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature (1808-11),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on
Shakespeare, pp. 93-94. Commenting on the rumour that Shakespeare was no more than a wild
genius, Schlegel says, ‘An idea, however, soon became prevalent that Shakespeare was a rude and
wild genius, who poured forth at random, and without aim or object, his unconnected
compositions. Ben Jonson, a younger contemporary and rival of Shakespeare, who laboured in the
sweat of his brow, but with no great success, to expel the romantic drama from the English stage,
and to form it on the model of the ancients, gave it as his opinion that Shakespeare did not blot out
even enough, and that as he did not possess much more to nature than to art. The learned, and
sometimes rather pedantic Milton was also of this opinion.’ Schlegel, A. W. von, ‘Lectures on
Dramatic Art and Literature (1808-11),’ The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 89.
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'It is impossible to derive from [Shakespeare’s] work vulgar rules for the craft of poetry, or poetic calculation; it is quite impossible to imitate him; but to be seized by him and swept along in the mighty stream of life, into the freedom from all oppressive, restrictive forms - that is certainly possible.'

However, when emphasizing the freedom of Shakespeare’s plays from the ‘constraint’ or conformity to [poetic] rules, Adam Müller [1806], admits that Shakespeare ‘appears at one and the same time to sound the depths of nature and to create it artificially.’ But there is and remains a double aporia here. For not only does Shakespeare produce the apperception of that which is beyond comprehension, we also have no idea of how he achieves this end. We cannot simply comprehend how Shakespeare produces the apperception of what is incomprehensible. Again, the means by which Shakespeare produces the ineffable remains unknown. As Goethe already said of Shakespeare’s plays, ‘We experience the truth of life - how, we do not know!’ To sound persuasive to the unknowing, the Romantic does often make Shakespeare appear less as an artist and more like a magician. No one does perhaps more clearly than Carlyle express the mystification, if not the naïveté, of the Romantic criticism, when he says, ‘Shakespeare’s Art is not Artifice; the noblest worth of it is not there by plan or precontrivance. It grows-up from the deeps of Nature, through this noble sincere

44 Müller, Adam, ‘Fragments Concerning William Shakespeare (1806),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 83.
46 Goethe, W. von, ‘Shakespeare and no End (1815),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 71. Emphasis added. We should perhaps not fail to point out the perspective through which Goethe fails to understand the art of the Shakespearean theatre. Goethe approaches the secret of Shakespeare’s incarnations/characters from within, and not from without. That is, from what is known about these characters, and not from the point of view where these characters remain unknown to the other. It seems that Goethe suffers from the enlightened reluctance to identify, if that is the right word, with the unknow. This incapacity makes Goethe unable to understand how the experience of these characters as living beings is created.
47 Claiming that Shakespeare appears much like a magician, one has, of course, admitted that one does not know what one is speaking of.
soul, who is a voice of Nature.\footnote{Carlyle, Thomas, ‘The Hero as Poet (1840),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 252. Emphasis added.} Being like so many Romantics fond of origins, \textit{archae}, Carlyle goes on to name the founder of the topos of Shakespeare as the \textit{artless} creator. Carlyle says, ‘Novalis beautifully remarks of him [Shakespeare], that those drama of his are products of nature too, deep as nature herself. I find a great truth in this saying.’\footnote{Carlyle, Thomas, ‘The Hero as Poet (1840),’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 252.} We can easily see that Thomas Carlyle thinks that Shakespeare wipes away all traces of production, as if he had committed a crime and much less written a drama.\footnote{It would perhaps be fair to indicate that Carlyle adds that what Shakespeare above all produced the impression of, is something \textit{deep}. According to Adorno, Kant - a contemporary of Carlyle - is considered no less than the philosopher of depth par excellence. Not unnaturally, Kant will come to our assistance, when we more precisely than Carlyle, attempt to define what Shakespeare produces the impression of. We will mark out that the hidden is not only expressed but produced, and \textit{is} apperceived by the cognitive faculties, more specifically, by \textit{Reason} [\textit{Vernunft}]. We shall point out \textit{how} Shakespeare succeeds in \textit{this} production, of what only Reason can grasp at a depth beyond \textit{Understanding} [\textit{Verstand}]: the \textit{noumenon}, be the illusory apperception of \textit{this} \textit{substance} called, self, world or even God.}

§1.2 Unmaking the Shakespearean Aporia

Theatres like Shakespeare’s \textit{Globe} were first built after the performance of theatre in the streets of London was forbidden.\footnote{Parrot and Ball adds the reason for this prohibition: ‘The city officials from the beginning, unlike the Queen and her court, were chary of public play-acting, partly on moral grounds, more definitely for fear of three menaces: fire, seditiion, and the plague. These were no idle fears. Fire was a constant danger to old London, which was at last almost wiped out by the great fire of 1666. The two largest theatres, the Globe and the Fortune, were burnt to the ground in 1613 and 1621. Plague was endemic in London: the deaths from this source averaged forty to fifty a week. When they rose above this number, the theatres closed until it seemed safe to reopen them. The disorderly groundlings sometimes stormed the stage or indulged in rioting among themselves. One theatre, the Phoenix, was almost destroyed by rioting apprentices in 1617.’ Parrot, Thomas Marc and Ball, Robert Hamilton, \textit{A Short View of Elizabethan Drama}, pp. 48–49.} Prior to this prohibition, it could, of course, at one time or another, in the great marketplaces of London, happen that an actor was mistaken for a man and a man taken to be an actor, the one confused with the other, so much so that the world suddenly became a stage and the stage no less than the world. It is this ambition to incorporate everything on
one stage that resonates in the name Shakespeare gave to his theatre, the *Globe*,
the confusion of theatre and life no less intended by the banner that greeted all its
spectators before they entered the theatre, ‘All is True’.52

Concerning the question as to what Shakespeare produces the unequalled
apperception of, we shall follow history, taking history in the sense of *historein*,
experience, and present the *aporia* before the problem. A problem is a question for
which there are two diametrically opposed and mutually exclusive answers where
there are proponents or arguments for both propositions, which both cannot be
true at the same time.53 An *aporia*, however, is a question for which there is or
appears to be no answer, or rather, as Aristotle points out in *Metaphysics*, a
philosophical question for which there immediately appears to be no answer.54

Again, a problem is a question for which there exist two mutually exclusive
answers, an *aporia* is a question for which there exist none, and so obscure, so
indistinct may *[th]is* aporia appear to be, that one may even be unable to pose the
question, ‘What is it that Shakespeare produces the unequalled apperception of?’

Obviously, what Shakespeare has produced so far, to philosophers and spectators
alike,55 is not a philosophical problem, but an aporia. For there exists to date not

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52 Parrot, Thomas Marc and Ball, Robert Hamilton, *A Short View of Elizabethan Drama*, p. 15. It is
perhaps a true token of the potential in-difference between stage and life, theatre and the world,
when on the premiere of *Henry VIII* (or *All is True*) on 29 June 1613, the Globe finally burned
down to the ground. [Waith, ‘Introduction’ to Shakespeare, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, p. 5].
53 For Aristotle’s definition of the impossibility of resolving a problem except through dialectical
means, that is, by appealing to the views or opinions of the many or the few, see Aristotle, *Topics*,
Book I, 104b29-37.
54 For Aristotle’s views on, even praise of the necessity of *aporia*, see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, where
he says, ‘those who inquire without first going through aporiae are like people who do not know
where they have to go, … in addition, … one <who has not gone through aporiae> does not even
know whether he has ever found the object sought for or not.’ [Aristotle, *Metaphysics B*, 995, a31-
55 We do recall that the distinguishing mark of all philosophers: attending the Olympics they would
not be found among the athletes, neither among the tradesmen, but among the spectators. Cf. As
related of Pythagoras by Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Volume II, VIII.6-8,
two mutually exclusive answers as to what Shakespeare produces with such mastership, but rather none. Nor do there exist two mutually exclusive answers as to what means Shakespeare uses to produce an almost unequalled effect on his audience.

[18] The Romantics did not only lead us to the end of the road where we experience the inexplicable effect of the Shakespearean play, but more so, it was the Romantic himself who made [th]is end, who made [th]is aporia. Evidently, if you erase the road towards an end, you will have nowhere to go, you will, as is obvious, already be at the end. But, as Aristotle asserts in Metaphysics, an aporia is not simply to encounter a problem that seemingly cannot be resolved, the experience of reaching a dead end or a dead beginning. Aporia is also that which you have to go through to reach the end. A mountain is an aporia until you build a tunnel; a fjord is an aporia until you build a bridge. If Aristotle and a Romantic were suddenly to discover an aporia, we are quite sure what would have happened. Whereas we believe the Romantic would be inclined to admire its depth and perhaps be tempted to suicide, Aristotle, being a more practical man, would

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56 Approaching the aporia, Derrida appears somewhat impatient, erasing the road as he walks along, neglecting that negative theology, as a methodos, is but a means to an end. For signs of Derrida's impatience, or his reluctance to move ahead or even his desire to produce the impression of an aporia, see for example his definitions of 'aporia' in Aporias. Cherishing the aporetic experience, Derrida says, when he encounters ‘aporia’ in Aristotle’s exposition of place in the fourth book of Physics, ‘that ‘aporia’ ‘concerns the impossible or the impracticable. (Diaporeo is Aristotle’s term here: it means ‘I’m stuck … I cannot get out, I’m helpless.’[Derrida, Aporias, 13] How different is not the patience with which Arthur Madigan, the translator of Aristotle’s Metaphysics B, notes the three-stage process through which aporiae are resolved in the Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle says, ‘We must, as in other cases, posit the phainomena and first go through aporiae, and thus prove, if possible, all the endoxa about these affections or, if not, most of them and the most authoritative; for if the difficulties are solved and the endoxa left, the matter would be sufficiently proven.’[Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, VII.1.1145b2-6, as quoted by Arthur Madigan in Aristotle, Metaphysics B and K 1-2, p. xviii.] Evidently, Derrida’s valuation of aporia differs considerably from Aristotle’s, where aporia is an unavoidable part of any significant investigation, of any great advance to a known end from a beginning unknown.

57 Aristotle, Metaphysics B, 995a25f.

58 Like Aristotle, we are using metaphors to speak simply about what is very difficult.
find a way to build a bridge to reach the other end. For, as was said, even the aporia is man-made. In this thesis, we will attempt to unmake [th]is aporia. Hence, the thesis could have been subtitled, ‘The Making and the Unmaking of the Shakespearean Aporia.’ Certainly, what is at stake in any aporia, is, as Derrida says, the experience of ‘not knowing where to go.’59 But a problem proposes that there are two ways to go, and we will lead the reader to the concrete realization that Shakespeare in some plays produces the apperception of what is concealed, in others of what is unconcealed, but in both cases, he produces, almost without rival, the profound impression of the ontological contradiction, the Being of beings.

[19] There are two questions that arise when we consider the belief and trust in Shakespeare’s unequalled ability to create life, his almost unparallelled capacity to present, to convey beings that do not merely represent, as actors do, something beyond themselves, but beings that appear to be so persuasively that even the stage disappears before them. The first question is to locate those who praise Shakespeare for [th]is power or genius to create life or nature. That is not too difficult, for since the upsurge of Romanticism more than two centuries ago, the choir of believers have, as Kittredge testifies,60 gradually grown larger and larger, so huge that Harold Bloom today at last can say that Shakespeare sings for us all, simply expresses what humanity is.61 Secondly, we would have to find, not merely the scenes and characters these Romantics indicate to illustrate Shakespeare’s unequalled powers of poetic creation, but in order to recognize their scholarship, the concepts they use to throw light on what they, unlike any passer-by coming into

59 Derrida, Aporias, p. 12.
60 Kittredge, An Address, p. 27f.
61 See the introduction to Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, ‘Shakespeare’s Universalism,’ pp. 1-17.
the warm theatre from the cold streets, would immediately recognize as especially true to life or lifelike. Finding the concepts that these Romantics use to explain Shakespeare’s unparalleled craftsmanship, we would certainly have an invaluable tool which would enable us to recognize the irreplaceable quality that they so often find to empower the characters, the scenes, the language and the appearances, in many if not all of Shakespeare’s plays. We would even, through these tools, be able to measure the master against himself, against his own standards of craftsmanship. Sadly, we encounter in the works of these Romantics no such conceptual efforts. All we find are words without definition, concepts with boundaries so weak they seem unable to contain anything at all: ‘nature,’ ‘life,’ ‘real,’ ‘true.’ The words ‘nature,’ ‘life,’ ‘real,’ ‘true,’ are so repeatedly used without any thought being given to their content, that when listening to the Romantic praise of Shakespeare, one often has the impression of listening to machines rather than anything lifelike.62 For rather than blindly worshipping Shakespeare like a god, we will inquire into how he most systematically uses non-beings to create the profound apperception of Being, be [th]is called ‘nature,’ ‘life,’ ‘reality,’ or ‘truth,’ words which in the Romantic vocabulary are no more than unsuccessful attempts to grasp the Being of beings, the ontological contradiction.

62 Pinocchio was a Romantic creation. Undoubtedly, there would be no story if Pinocchio did not walk away from the workshop, finally escaped his master. The allegory of Pinocchio is obvious: there would be no history of man if not the created rebelled against the creator, if not man walked away from God.

63 Schlegel is, of course, a remarkable exception, when he, in On Freedom, so unlike Kant, speaks of ‘nature’ and ‘freedom,’ even of man as ‘the redeemer of nature,’ [Schelling, Of Human Nature, 411,
people who value life so highly that they may, like Werther, be driven to suicide to prove its worth, never attempt to define or conceptualize what ‘life’ or ‘nature’ is. Contrarily, Heidegger shows that what Aristotle means by ‘nature’ is the self-presencing of what essentially is, the coming to light or appearance of morphe, the essential form, and that Aristotle’s physis or nature, to no little degree, corresponds to Plato’s idea.64 And, as we shall later see in Chapter 2, Philosophies of Unconcealment, whereas [th]is nature or physis is expressed or comes to light through place,65 [th]is idea is expressed or comes to light, through khora.66 The absence of any real effort to delineate that quality which the Romantic above all praises as ‘nature’ or ‘life’ is so apparent, that he only seems willing to praise that which he knows nothing about, that which is beyond his comprehension, that which he may not properly speak of, or that which makes him stammer or stutter, or simply, not say a word.

[21] We need not quote all Romantics on Shakespeare, for, as if they were one being, as if they had already attained the unity they aspire to, they utter a similar cry, appearing not unlike a ghost who, to this day, still haunts Shakespeare’s theatre. Herder, who are among the first Romantics to haunt us, cries, ‘When I read [Shakespeare], it seems to me as if theatre, actors, scenery all vanish! Single leaves from the book of events, providence, the world, blowing in the storm of history.’67 And later, ‘This is not a poet, but a creator! Here is the history of the

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65 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV.
66 For Plato’s exposition of khora, see Plato, Timaeus, 48d-52d, but also, the delightful myth of Er that concludes the Republic with an allegory of a human soul looking for a place [to be] unconcealed. [Plato, Republic, 614b-621d].
67 Herder, ‘Shakespeare,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 41.
world!" Herder even takes time to deprecate some of Shakespeare’s spectators, saying that if they do not experience Shakespeare’s theatre as real, they have probably seen nothing at all. For when conceiving Macbeth, Shakespeare was, according to Herder, not merely construing a play, but ‘was turning over in his mind as a fact of creation the terrible regicide, the tragedy called Macbeth.’ If you now think Herder means to stress some individual occurrence in that play, which especially evokes or creates the experience of something real, you would be mistaken. For Herder places all incidents, all actions into one and the same black bag before he ties it up and raising it before the audience, declaims, ‘This is life.’ It does not, however, take long before one man rises to accuse the Romantics of mystification. For in his (in)famous introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit (1807), Hegel condemns the Romantics for seeking ‘indeterminate enjoyments,’ of wailing in ‘rapturous haziness.’ We will not gladly give in to these unknown pleasures, and do not hesitate to agree with Hegel when he concludes, ‘Still less must this complacency which abjures Science claim that such rapturous haziness is superior to Science.’

Speaking against the Romantic encomium of the unknown, Hegel could say, ‘just as there is an empty breath, so too there is an empty depth,’ an ‘intensity without content.’ And it is easy to concur when Hegel, accusing the

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68 Herder, ‘Shakespeare,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 44.  
69 Herder, ‘Shakespeare,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 46.  
70 Herder, ‘Shakespeare,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 45. Emphasis added.  
71 More specifically, Hegel speaks against those who ‘pursue the indeterminate enjoyment of this indeterminate divinity,’ Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, ‘Preface: On Scientific Cognition,’ Paragraph 9, p. 5.  
contemporary spirit for its own poverty,\textsuperscript{75} says, ‘The Power of the Spirit is only as
great as its expression, its depth only as deep as it dares to spread out and lose
itself in exposition.’\textsuperscript{76} We also agree with Hegel that this appeal to the unknown is,
more often than not, an excuse for not thinking, and does often make the thinker
appear unnecessarily feeble. However, even without this pathos, the unknown still
remains. Not only would there remain something unknown, like something would
remain after the party of science is all over, but the apperception of /th/ is
unknown, the ontological contradiction, would still be produced, even before any
guest has arrived, be that which tempts us all, like Romeos, to crash all parties.\textsuperscript{77}

[23] What has been overlooked, in Hegelian terms, by self-consciousness or the
absolute spirit, is that the apperception of something unknown is not something we
can take for granted, but will itself have to be produced. Where there is a lack,
where the consciousness of [th] is production is missing … or rather, nowhere is
one more persuaded of the unknown than where one does not know that also the
apperception of what is unknown has been produced. For the incapacity, even, the
unwillingness, to acknowledge that the apperception of [th] is unknown has been
produced creates, more profoundly, the impression that [th] is unknown is
indistinguishable from our own ‘nature,’ inseparable from what is [alive]. For
what is unknown is not thought to represent life, but to be indistinguishable from

\textsuperscript{75} Hegel, ‘The Spirit shows itself as so impoverished that, like a wanderer in the desert craving for a
mere mouthful of water, it seems to crave for its refreshment only the bare feeling of the divine in
general. By the little which now satisfies the Spirit, we can measure the extent of its loss.’ Hegel,
added.
\textsuperscript{77} Throughout this thesis, metaphor is only an heuristic device, applied to explain what is more
difficult by what is more simple, to thereby, more clearly, produce an impression of what is first,
the ontological difference. On the expediency of this analogical principle of exposition, note for
example when Aristotle, in Book XII of \textit{Metaphysics}, compares nature to a house where each being
has its place. Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 1075a19.
what is, indifferent from life. The effect of the unknown is not simply cancelled by not being aware of its production, but, paradoxically, its effect is enhanced by ignorance. The incapacity or unwillingness to acknowledge the production of the ontological contradiction, the apperception of that which negates and upholds the Being of all non-beings, reinforces the impression of that which one is unknowingly affected by, the ontological contradiction. For there is no time when we are more easily convinced of the unknown Being of what stand before us, than when we are not conscious of its production. In short, the effect of the unknown is reinforced when the traces of its production have been erased, and what affects us is unidentified, indefinite, inexplicable, ineffable. We could not agree more when Hegel speaks deridngly of those who hide ‘the truth from itself: by spurning measure and definition.’\(^{78}\) We shall therefore make an attempt to define, more closely, what the Romantics have an impression of when witnessing the Shakespearean theatre, but not without first giving the word to a man with less pathos and perhaps more measure, Doctor Johnson.

Following the Shakespearean reception, we shall look more closely at some attempts to define the effect or experience of the Shakespearean drama. It is obvious that, for example, Doctor Johnson identifies Shakespeare’s mastership with what he essentially produces the impression of. This can be gleaned from the pages of *Preface to Shakespeare*, where it is clear that the unsurpassed quality that Doctor Johnson recognizes in Shakespeare’s plays is that of representing characters as what they truly appear to be in life. The Shakespearean dialogue is

nothing less than, ‘a diligent selection out of common conversation,’\textsuperscript{79} where the incidents of the plays appear to be taken from the ‘common occurrences’ of life.\textsuperscript{80}

In short, when Doctor Johnson says that Shakespeare’s ‘drama is the mirror of life,’\textsuperscript{81} this simply means that Doctor Johnson thinks Shakespeare’s drama is a mirror of what life essentially is, that no one knows more about what life essentially is than Shakespeare. That this unquestionably is Doctor Johnson’s position, becomes clear when he identifies that there are no heroes in Shakespeare’s plays, as for example in the basically unread works of Spencer’s \textit{Fairy Queen} or Sidney’s \textit{Arcadia}, that his scenes are occupied only by men.\textsuperscript{82} Shakespeare’s characters appear to be more lifelike simply because what they represent is like what the characters we stumble on or converse and commerce with in daily life actually are. Evidently, it is the mimetic quality of Shakespearean play that, according to Doctor Johnson, deserves our praise. For as he says of those authors who are unable to imitate our lives, ‘The theatre, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen conversing in a language which was never heard upon topics which will never rise in the commerce of mankind.’\textsuperscript{83} And we’ll let Johnson conclude his exposition by pointing out the crux of the Shakespearean experience, ‘This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life.’\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{79} Johnson, \textit{Preface to Shakespeare} (1765), in Gerould [ed.], \textit{Theatre Theory Theatre}, p. 223.
\textsuperscript{80} Johnson, \textit{Preface to Shakespeare} (1765), in Gerould [ed.], \textit{Theatre Theory Theatre}, p. 223.
\textsuperscript{81} Johnson, \textit{Preface to Shakespeare} (1765), in Gerould [ed.], \textit{Theatre Theory Theatre}, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{82} Johnson, \textit{Preface to Shakespeare} (1765), in Gerould [ed.], \textit{Theatre Theory Theatre}, p. 224.
\textsuperscript{84} Johnson, \textit{Preface to Shakespeare}, in Gerould [ed.], \textit{Theatre Theory Theatre}, p. 224. Evidently what should be stressed in ‘mirror of life,’ is mirror and not life, where mirror is understood in a modern and limited sense as the place where an original and essential being is reflected. For the two differing, but, for long, commonplace understandings of mirror as both the original place of unconcealment and as the place where an original being is reflected. [Cf. Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, \textit{The Mirror - A History}.] For a more lively exposition of the intrinsic connection between mirrors,
Quite unromantically, Doctor Johnson admits that even though Shakespeare’s characters mirror life, they are never mistaken for life, appearing to contradict what Mr. Bloom says, that Shakespeare’s characters even taught us how to live. As Doctor Johnson says, ‘It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatic fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.’ ‘The truth is,’ Doctor Johnson continues, ‘that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players.’ Speaking of the delectables of drama, Doctor Johnson may even state, ‘The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more. Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind.’ By this quality of ‘bringing realities to mind,’ the stage appear to be nothing more than a stage for memories, mere representations of something that is not anymore [alive]. Doctor Johnson’s position is clearly that Shakespeare simply, perhaps enthusiastically, construes [re]presentations that we delight in because they accurately represents what life is, not because it presents beings whose Being we apperceive, what to us no longer appear to be representations, but to be alive.
We find numerous voices that disagree with Doctor Johnson. The Romantic assessment is generally that Shakespeare makes us mistake players for persons, theatre for life, the stage and the world. Among the more analytically inclined of Romantic critics, we find Wilson Knight, who alleges that Shakespeare’s drama does not present a copy of life, but life itself, that ‘The Shakespearean play is … not a copy of experience, it is itself experience.’\footnote{Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, ‘The Shakespearean Art-Form,’ p. 38.} Wilson Knight, to whom Harold Bloom gladly acknowledges his debt,\footnote{Bloom, \textit{Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human}, p. 9.} believes that Shakespeare is actually able to present something more than what life essentially is. His argument is that a memory can easily hold or keep the impression of what life is. However, a memory cannot easily persuade us that it presents life itself. Speaking of ‘representations,’ perhaps heuristically, as ‘memories,’ Wilson Knight points out the obvious, that a representation is not life. Wilson Knight attempts to grasp [th]is difference in the concept of what is \textit{actual},\footnote{Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, ‘The Shakespearean Art-Form,’ p. 37.} believing that [what] Shakespeare produces with such unsurpassed mastery is not only, like a journalist, [the facts of] what essentially happened, but the experience of [th]is actually happening before our very eyes. As Wilson Knight could have concluded, ‘[T]he Shakespearean play … recreates, the actual, the world of experience, the reality of life.’\footnote{Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, ‘The Shakespearean Art-Form,’ p. 38.}

Of course, there are, in the Romantic choir of unknowing, those who actually attempt an exposition of the Shakespearean aporia by trying to formulate a problem. Wilson Knight says that, ‘We can distinguish the Shakespearean artist from the newspaper reporter saying that the latter presents only one of the two
elements necessary to art. He tells us the facts and no more.’\textsuperscript{93} What separates the poet from the reporter is, according to Wilson Knight, who conceptually struggles to make this distinction, that

‘Shakespeare is interested not only in facts but in their significance. The one gives us a series of memorized incidents, the other a dynamic and living experience. Therefore the Shakespearean play is not realistic in the usual sense. It is not like events we remember, and our knowledge of the world is almost entirely a matter of memory; rather it is like experience itself. The plays are vivid experiences, to be lived through and judged not as life-memories but as life, not as distillation of experience but as experience.’\textsuperscript{94}

What Wilson Knight simply means to say is that Shakespeare’s plays are not merely mimetic, and, being more than [re]presentations, unlike memories that [re]present events, they appear to be, to unconceal the events themselves.

[28] What we often learn from a Romantic is the difficulty of describing the effect of the Shakespearean drama. It is therefore surprising to find that Wilson Knight defines [th]is inexplicable effect of the Shakespearean play, when he says, that it offers an experience of what is hidden, but also, that nothing is hidden, that nothing is actually hidden.\textsuperscript{95} Being among the few who actually attempts an exposition of what Shakespeare produces the apperception of, although without suggesting the means to [th]is end, we shall say that we superficially agree with Wilson Knight when he indicates that Shakespeare produces the apperception of what is mysterious.\textsuperscript{96} Particularly, we concur when Wilson Knight alleges that the

\textsuperscript{93} Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, ‘The Shakespearean Art-Form,’ p. 37.

\textsuperscript{94} Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, ‘The Shakespearean Art-Form,’ p. 37.

\textsuperscript{95} We will later have a look into nothing in \textit{Chapter 8, The Production of Being through Nothing}, and there also qualify our own understanding of nothing and how it distinguishes itself from Wilson Knight’s interpretation. Evidently, nothing is not difficult to hide, for even if you show nothing it does often remain undiscovered. See C8.[6]

\textsuperscript{96} We shall see that Wilson Knight does not draw a distinction between the mystical as concealed or unconcealed, which we shall later do in \textit{Chapter 2, Philosophies of Unconcealment} and \textit{Chapter 3, Philosophies of Concealment}. 


mysterious is what is most familiar, not something remote or distant or rare, but simply what is actually there. As Wilson Knight says,

‘Memory falsifies actuality, abstracts from it, while the unique and immediate actuality eludes us: nothing is so mysterious as the actual – and all our poets and prophets labour to draw the veil which shuts us from the life we live.’\(^9\)

As the term ‘mystery’ is often applied without limits, we should perhaps clarify that Wilson Knight maintains that the actual is hidden, that nothing is more hidden than what is actual. Hence, Shakespeare excels in the production of what is concealed, his mastery lies in the production of what is hidden. One should perhaps not blame the Romantic tradition for not finding what Shakespeare attempted to hide already from the beginning. According to Wilson Knight, who makes an admirable attempt to qualify his position, what is concealed and lures the spectator into Shakespeare’s theatre time and again, is not something remote or distant or rare, but that which is immediately present to all, the actual, what is actually hidden to all. Moreover, as we are concerned not only with an epistemological, but an ontological problem, what is hidden, the actual, is what sustains the life of all, the Being of all beings.

[29] We shall continue the search for the Shakespearean aporia, but first say that Shakespeare evidently manages to produce the apperception of what is beyond saying, produces an effect where the possibility of description often ends. Shakespeare’s mastery, his craft, if you will, lies, precisely, in purposefully producing the apperception of that which we are unable to describe, that which, however indescribable, still leaves an undeniable impression. Being indescribable

The Hermeneutics of Being

§1.3 The Topology of Being

Since Schleiermacher, the human sciences have solely been concerned with meaning, which is almost incomprehensible, since the search for meaning is only made possible by its negation. For, as Schleiermacher, the founder of modern hermeneutics and the guiding light of all his predecessors, says in the critical paragraphs that launches the infinite project of modern hermeneutics, ‘Hermeneutics proceed from not understanding, and there will be no end to this art if we in the beginning did not not comprehend.’

Schleiermacher does therefore stand upon, as on mud, like all hermeneutical enterprises, the ground of incomprehension, which is why the house of hermeneutics, inevitably, is bound to move. In this thesis we will not occupy ourselves with what is scarce, but rather, with what is most abundant. Compared to Being, meaning appears to be no more than wrapping paper. We shall therefore focus on that which makes any search for meaning almost incomprehensible, since the search for meaning is only made possible by its negation.

98 There is method that attempts to describe, more analytically than is customary for a Romantic, not the end of Shakespeare’s productions, but rather the way in which he effects the mind to achieve [th]is end. For rather than speaking of the production of an immediate encounter with that which we cannot seize to believe in, Coleridge takes the negative road by saying that what Shakespeare does, is not to produce the belief or the apperception that [th]is is, but contrarily, to suspend, as when experiencing a dream, the belief that [th]is is not. Thus is created, according to Coleridge, the apperception of, as in a dream, not a positive, but a negative reality. See Coleridge, ‘Remains,’ in Bate [ed.], Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 528.

99 We should perhaps remind the reader of the first three principles Schleiermacher sets up for a General Hermeneutics: 1. Hermeneutics rests on the fact of the non-understanding of discourse: taken in its most general sense, including misunderstanding in the mother tongue and in everyday life. 2. Non-understanding is partly indeterminacy, partly ambiguity of the contents. So it is thought of without any fault on the part of the utterer. 3. The art of explication is therefore the art of putting oneself in possession of all the conditions of understanding. Schleiermacher, ‘General Hermeneutics,’ in Hermeneutics and Criticism, p. 227.
meaning, any inquiry possible in the first place, *Being*, which, like a cornucopia, unconceals or conceals all beings to all. We could almost say, paraphrasing Heidegger, that if we were to write an ontology, which we have often been tempted to do, we would not use the word ‘meaning.’ What is most crucial to [th]is enterprise, could be interpreted, as Adorno says, from what we often, if not completely, avoid to speak of, the concepts we do not use. And as much as Kant avoids the word ‘essence,’ we shall try to avoid ‘meaning,’ although to the humanist, ‘meaning’ always remains the greatest temptation.

Our approach differs considerably from a hermeneutics of meaning, whose sole goal is to gain an understanding of the meaning of any text, which we consider to be as easily available to any man, as easily grasped as the meaning of an instrument is grasped through its function, an axe comprehended through its use. It is also given that there is no meaning in nature, but only artifices. Things made

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100 Jean-Luc Marion notes that the word Heidegger would avoid if he were to write a theology, is the word ‘Being.’ Stressing the importance of what *is* to be avoided, Marion says, ‘Let us cite, for once, the little-known original: ‘Wenn ich noch eine Theologie schreiben würde, so zu es mich manchmal reizt, dann dürfte in ihr das Wort ‘Sein’ nicht vorkommen,’ … [Aussprache mit Martin Heidegger an 06/XI/1951, privately issued edition by the Vortragasschuss der Studentenschaft der Universität Zürich (Zurich, 1952).] Marion, *God Without Being*, pp. 211n-212n.] The reason why Heidegger would exclude ‘Sein’ from a theology can be gleaned from his preliminary reflections on death in *Sein und Zeit*, p. [Ger.]248/230 [Eng.], where he states that ‘The this-worldly, ontological interpretation of death comes before any ontic, other-worldly speculation.’ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, ‘How the Existential Analysis of Death differs from Other Possible Interpretations of This Phenomenon,’ S. 248/p. 230] We shall carefully mark the gathering of ‘otherworldly’ and ‘ontic’ in the same place. For generally Heidegger imagines theology in the light of Revelation, which presents beings without Being [to the faithful], beings which will [be] without Being until the *parousia*, the second coming, when all [ontic] beings [described or promised by Revelation] may forever be. There is, however, another sense of theo-*logy*, in which there is no difference between the ontological and the theological pursuits, that is, when considering, as Aristotle did in the first place, being qua Being,[Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book IV, and Book I, esp. 983a5-10.] For this ontological concept of theology, see Heidegger, *Parmenides*, pp. 110-113. Perhaps we should listen when he says, ‘A-theism,’ correctly understood as the absence of the gods, has been, since the decline of the history of the West as the basic feature of this history itself,’ [Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 112] ‘But how is an appearance of the divine at all supposed to be able to find the region of its essence, i.e. its unconcealedness, if, and as long as, the essence of Being is forgotten and, on the basis of this forgetfulness, the unacknowledged oblivion of Being is elevated to a principle of explanation for every being, as occurs in all metaphysics?’ [Heidegger, *Parmenides*, pp. 112f.].

and created have ‘meanings,’ carry meaning, as they are produced, and it is taken for granted that most things are not produced without an intention. We do not deny this intention, do not contend that the author is without intention, we in fact take it for granted that he does, that he intentionally produces meaningful sentences, actions and wares. For the most part our intentions are not obscure. We cannot all be Hamlets.

The hermeneutic program, and the modern inception of hermeneutics by Schleiermacher, does explicitly say that the act of hermeneutics does not start with understanding but with the incomprehensible, and that there would be no art or science of hermeneutics without our immediate incapacity to understand. Hermeneutics as an art rest on our immediate inability to comprehend, even, on our immediate capacity to not understand, to not apprehend what presents itself as wholly or partly incomprehensible, where even the reasons for this obscurity remains hidden. To Hermeneutics, the reason for misunderstanding boils down to cultural differences which are either synchronic or diachronic, in short, what Gadamer would say are, following Schleiermacher, based on different horizons of understanding. We could, of course, based on these prejudices, speak of ‘horizons of misunderstanding,’ and, from this vantage point write The History of Misunderstanding. Evidently, such a history would follow a real route and not an ideal, perhaps even be closer to Realgeschichte than Geistesgeschichte could ever dream of becoming. Like Aristotle, we adhere to a dialectical principle of

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103 Gadamer says, ‘The task of historical understanding also involves acquiring an appropriate historical horizon, so that what we are trying to understand can be seen in its true dimension. If we fail to transpose ourselves into the historical horizon from which the traditionalary [sic.] text speaks, we will misunderstand the significance of what it has to say to us.’ Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 303.
exposition, take it for granted, as most people do, that the one speaking to us does so within our own culture, our own horizon, our own class. The ‘meaning’ of what is said, is more often than not so perfectly clear, so transparent that from the point of view of everyday life, the humanities’ search for meaning seems almost incomprehensible to those who do not participate in this scholarly exercise.

This investigation does not follow the habitual hermeneutic path, as we shall take it for granted that we, what faces us, is immediately understood, that nothing is as apparent as the meaning of what is said. But, one could ask, is there then anything to question, anything to search for or into or investigate if the ‘meaning’ of a play is obvious? Most humanists would possibly be immediately inclined to say that there is not. But as it is with the question of ‘meaning,’ the immediate impression is often of what is confused or what is incomprehensible. One should not be surprised to find that some have searched for the ‘meaning’ of a ‘play’ as they have searched for the ‘meaning’ of life, that is, in vain. Perhaps the failure can be explained by, if, in this incessant search, one ascribes to a basic principle of interpretation that allows only one meaning in one play. We shall not object to this, but take it for granted that a play may have one, more or many ‘meanings,’ even many ‘meanings’ for one person or no meaning for many personae. We shall take this for granted, and proceed from this realization, that a play would not be studied and watched and applauded and cried and laughed about, if it did not provide us with a sense of Being. We shall also come to understand that the apperception of Being, that which separates the impression of

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104 See, for example, Aristotle’s exposition of love and friendship in Book VIII of Nicomachean Ethics. For the principles of a dialectical exposition, that is, a demonstration based on the reputable opinions of the many or the good few, or what is commonplace to all, see the first book of Aristotle’s Topics and the first book of Aristotle’s Rhetoric.
all living beings from those that are not, is not merely or arbitrarily produced, but produced in accordance with certain principles, which can be discovered, although the topos of the undiscoverability of these principles, as we have seen, has had a long and prestigious tradition and thus hindered any real progress or enlightenment.

Like what is meaningful, what is meaningless equally has a history. There are, as we shall see, different interpretations of what is meaningless. According to Schleiermacher, all hermeneutics opens with the meaningless, not with what is meaningful. Indeed, there would be, as he states in *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, no hermeneutics without what is meaningless. Most generally, we could say that ‘meaningless’ is ‘that utterance for which either the subject or the predicate is not comprehended.’ Another way to approach definition, stemming from the two different ways to express ‘meaning’ in German, is to say that ‘meaningless’ is ‘that proposition which has neither subject [Bedeutung, reference] nor predicate [Sinn, meaning].’ Bertrand Russell adheres to this position, saying that a statement which is without a reference, which has no Bedeutung, may however not be without Sinn, meaning. For Russell there are other statements than false statements that are meaningless. First among equals is what von Wright, in *The Logic of Negation*, calls ‘negative affirmations,’ which Aristotle already named, ‘indefinities.’ Russell simply excludes indefinities, like false propositions, from meaningful discourse, as they are statements without predicate or subject. But, of course, even if there can be made rules against uttering such statements, no one can deny,

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105 For Russell’s position, see, Von Wright, *The Logic of Negation*, p. 1.
as we shall see in Chapters 4 and 8, that it is possible to break those rules, and that we habitually do so, and not without achieving the most spell-binding, persuasive effect on our audience. Hegel, on the other hand, presents in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* his own interpretation of the meaningless as the faintest trace of subjectivity.\(^{109}\) And why faint, because it is unrecognized. To Hegel, the meaningless is a trace of a spirit without consciousness, without self-awareness. To Hegel, the ‘meaningless’ would be the impression of what is *essentially* empty, where the subject fails to take, to assume responsibility for this essential emptiness, as when it hears the meaningless word ‘God’ and thinks of nothing, not only is God neglected, but the self.\(^{110}\) We do not simply, as Adorno, a true Hegelian, does in *Negative Dialectics*, ascribe ‘meaningless’ to that history which is without intention or end or to that history which transcends any man’s hopes, wishes or desires,\(^{111}\) but call, more fundamentally, *that truly meaningless which first* makes possible any historic event and *consequently* makes possible the assessment of any historical event as either meaningless or meaningful depending on whether they do or do not conform to our ideas, hopes or intentions. We shall therefore maintain that truly meaningless *is* the ontological contradiction prior to its apprehension, the incomprehensible *is*. If we have no notion of Being, we may very well, as does Wittgenstein, stumble on an aporia. We could speak of the aporia of meaning. Meaning becomes an aporia if we unknowingly, like Wittgenstein, are searching for what is *meaningless*. For Wittgenstein’s failure to approximate what *is* entirely


\(^{111}\) Cf. Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 186-187. In *Negative Dialectics* Adorno even speaks of how the ontological difference is nothing less than Heidegger’s attempt to ‘invest absurdities - i.e. the positive, history, holocaust - with sense’ by invoking ‘a ‘mythical concept of fate,’ and Angst as the only experience adequate to this mode of existence. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 118-119. Adorno contradicts the ontologisation of the ontical by asserting, ‘If ontology were possible at all, it would be possible in an ironic sense, as the epitome of negativity,’ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p. 121, i.e. subjectivity.
and completely singular, and therefore his inability to complete his *Philosophical Investigations*, can easily be ascribed to the fact that while searching for what makes each language game singular, he did not acknowledge that what provides the singularity of each utterance does not itself belong to or reside in language, more precisely, that what is entirely singular is not meaning, but Being.\footnote{We can well understand Wittgenstein’s reluctance to publish *Philosophical Investigations*, even the bashfulness that is displayed in Wittgenstein’s own preface to the English Edition of *Philosophical Investigations*. For would one not be shy if one was compelled to display one’s shortcomings, to publish an *aporia*? However, what in *Philosophical Investigations* remains commendable, is Wittgenstein’s effort to approach the singularity of the *act* of language, the singularity of each word-exchange, but what he fails to acknowledge is that the reason for this singularity cannot be ascribed to the positive *meaning* of any particular word or any particular proposition, but *is* and remains beyond language. The singularity of language does not reside in different meanings a word or a statement may or may not have, but, on the contrary, the singularity is provided by what *is* unconcealed, which Wittgenstein seems to totally overlook. It is not surprising that one should not find what one is looking for if one is searching in the wrong place.}

However, in one concept Wittgenstein himself appears to intimate what he is incapable of understanding, when he names that which is indispensable for each language act but itself does not reside in language, *Lebensform*.\footnote{Horst Ruthrof identifies *Lebensform* or ‘forms of life’ as ‘a cultural frame for language that … Wittgenstein was moving towards.’ [Ruthrof, *The Body in Language*, p. 136.] Ruthrof marks the instances were Wittgenstein uses *Lebensform/Lebensformen* in *Philosophical Investigations*, namely Fragments 19, 25, 23, 357, 358. Wittgenstein thereby indicates the position he never arrived at. Tellingly, Wittgenstein has left the most significant utterance unnumbered on page 226 of *Philosophical Investigations* [1953], where it is said, ‘What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - forms of life.’ Ruthrof defines ‘forms of life’ as ‘cultural specific clusters of nonverbal signs,’ [Ruthrof, *The Body in Language*, p. 136. Emphasis added.] before he points out what is most fundamental to any enterprise: ‘The presence of nonverbal interpretations in both language and social life enables us to make sense of the world.’ [Ruthrof, *The Body in Language*, p. 136].} The failure of *Philosophical Investigations* can be ascribed to the attempt to approach this *Lebensform* solely through the positive meanings or positive functions words have in and within each particular, each *primitive* language game, when he could easily have continued this road beyond the aporia or made a right turn if he had realized that this *Lebensform* is always out of reach of language, is never meaningful, is even that which *meaningless* makes all meanings possible, the Being of beings. It is safe to say that since Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and perhaps more...
recently, since Gadamer, Heidegger’s most influential student who, perhaps unknowingly, betrays his master, the humanities have been solely focused on meaning. Contrary to this tradition, we are, like Heidegger, more inclined to write the history of what is meaningless. The praise of what is meaningless, incomprehensible, unacknowledged, neglected, forgotten belongs to a Romantic tradition. Even so, it is quite clear that this Romantic tradition neither understands nor grasps what it is reaching for when it is reaching out, as for another blue flower, for what is inexplicable. For in the end as well as in the beginning, meaningless is the apperception of what is, even though Heidegger would say that the meaningless is what escapes the end but is at the very beginning.114

[35] Within the Heideggerian corpus, it is customary to make a clear distinction between, on the one hand, the exposition of the meaning of Being or Dasein in Being and Time, and, on the other, the exposition of Time or Da that occurs as early as Heidegger’s inaugural lecture at Freiburg University from 1928, where he displays no little impatience with his earlier efforts in the essay entitled What is Metaphysics? Heidegger’s Kehre amounts to one single but crucial step of transferring emphasis from Being to Time, from Dasein to simply Da. Heidegger’s transformation encouraged some to speak of a dividing, if not divine, experience, not long after the publication of the unfinished Being and Time, that Heidegger never speaks of, that suddenly made Heidegger change his ways, that led to Heidegger’s Kehre.115 In his last testament of 1955, Identity and Difference,

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114 What is meaningless is saved by death, which guarantees the incompleteness of Dasein. What remains, is as Derrida would say, autre. The apperception of this incompleteness is the trace of what is meaningless: the Being of beings.
115 For a negative intimation of this experience, see Gadamer, Heidegger’s Ways, p. 21.
Heidegger shows again impatience with his earlier efforts, transposing the emphasis as he attempts to unconceal an additional dimension of Da, speaking no longer of Da or Dasein, Time or Being, but Arrival and Overcoming.\(^{116}\) Following Heidegger’s shift from Dasein to Da, his Kehre from Being to Time,\(^{117}\) one immediately notices that time, which in a certain sense is indistinguishable from place, leaves us with nothing to grasp or hold on to, is an attempt to express that which cannot be objectified, to describe or present that which remains indispensable to [th]is being but nevertheless remains indescribable, the Being of beings. We will not divert our attention to what is Da, but rather focus on how the apperception of Da is produced. Of course, that would not be possible without having at least a superficial sense of what is Da. Heidegger considers both the inner experience of time, in the Bergsonian sense of dureé, and chronological time to be vulgar interpretations of what time is.\(^{118}\) To avoid the vulgar understanding of time, we would have to say that without time nothing would take place. And the notion of place will, in the next chapter, provide us with an opening to a presentation of Being beyond Heidegger’s Kehre.\(^{119}\)

\(^{116}\) We find Stambaugh’s translation of Heidegger’s Ankunft and Überkommnis as arrival and overwhelming inappropriate. Much closer to what Heidegger intends to convey as the beginning, namely an interpretation of what is first, is to not speak of overwhelming but overcoming. Stambaugh’s Identity and Difference, an otherwise remarkable translation of Heidegger’s Identität und Differenz, does perhaps display its own lack of assurance by including the original German essay side by side. [Cf. Heidegger, Identity and Difference, p. 64].

\(^{117}\) Nowhere does Heidegger explain the Kehre more clearly than in Letter on Humanism, when he, speaking of ‘this other thinking that abandons subjectivity,’ comments on the fragmental character of Being and Time, says, ‘the third division of the first part, “Time and Being,” was held back … because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning [Kehre] and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics. The Lecture “On the Essence of Truth,” thought out and delivered in 1930 but not printed until 1943, provides a certain insight into the thinking of the turning from “Being and Time” to “Time and Being.” [Heidegger, Letter on Humanism, in Basic Writings, p. 231].

\(^{118}\) For the exposition of the vulgar or common understanding of time, see Heidegger, Being and Time, S. 18 [Ger.]/p. 16 [Eng.].

\(^{119}\) Heidegger’s first attempt to save the Being of beings from beings is found in his inaugural lecture at Freiburg, What is Metaphysics? in 1929, where he presented, as he stepped up to take the chair of Husserl, a lecture on nothing. For nothing is certainly not a being, or, if you consider
Even though we will be the first to acknowledge our debt to Heidegger, even say that this thesis would be impossible without his ontology, his persistent search for and expression of the ontological difference, we would have to admit that our ways depart drastically from his, make it clear, already from the beginning, the three ways in which our ways depart from his. Initially, we do not attempt to eliminate but maintain the epistemological concept of truth as *adequatio*. Secondly, we do not agree with Heidegger that there is only one *true* sense of Being, that is, the unconcealed, *aletheia*. We do not consider the concealed to be secondary to what is unconcealed, something that only amounts to a forgetfulness or a withdrawal of Being. Rather, we contend that the concealed and the unconcealed, both, on an equal footing, are expressions of what *is*, even, that the concealed *is* often closer to our immediate apperception of what *is*, more effectively produces an immediate apperception of the Being of beings. Thirdly, we depart from Heidegger in that we, by *keeping* the epistemological concept of truth as *adequatio*, have the *means* to investigate how the apperception of the Being of negative beings is *produced*. It is the *production* of [th]is negative ontological difference - the realization that the apperception of what *is* most persuasively ensues from the encounter with what *is not* - which has made us flag our position already from the

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Nothing to be in any way similar to a being, there would not be found many that believe you are sane. The second way in which Heidegger attempts to save the Being of beings from beings occurs in his presentation of man’s *Da-sein* as *ekstasis*, which is particularly clear in his *Letter on Humanism* of 1946. [Cf. Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, in *Basic Writings*, pp. 233ff.] Obviously, Heidegger’s presentation has here the same ground, since *Da* is prior to *Sein*, since *place* is prior to *what* a man essentially is, man is *ek-static*, he *is* [in] [th]is place in which he is unconcealed, before he conceals [th]is place through the interpretation of subjectivity, which only hides or covers [th]is place of unconcealment away from apperception. But one thing is important to realize, that for Heidegger, [th]is place is, in one of many ways, called the place of the *happening of truth*, and since truth is considered negatively as un-concealment, it is obvious that we perhaps should, change the order, and look at what appears negatively, and not at what is first posited. Heidegger’s third, and final attempt to save the Being of beings takes place in his last and final masterpiece, the remarkably simple essay, *Identity and Difference* from 1955.
beginning, and without attempting to hide anything have called [th]is thesis, *The Poetics of Being*.

[37] There is however one element from Heidegger that we truly keep, and that is Heidegger’s methodological sense of *place* or *Stelle*, although it is safe to say that we are not looking for the same places. Reading Shakespeare, we cannot simply relate everything, and will therefore only discover *places* that truly stand out. Whereas to Heidegger, a *place* is where the ontological difference *itself* is unconcealed,\(^\text{120}\) we discover a *place* where Shakespeare has *produced*, and, in most cases, let the spectator experience, the ontological contradiction, a negative experience of beings so convincing that the spectator does not even know that he has made an *inference* to what *is* either concealed or unconcealed, the Being of beings. We do not need many illustrations to prove that Shakespeare is a master of inadequation, the techne of Being, bearing in mind that not even Kepler needed more than seven planets two prove his cosmological laws and Newton no more to prove the law of gravity.\(^\text{121}\)

[38] Before we in the next chapters encounter *The Poetics of Being* concretely, we need to point out *methodologically* how we are to identify these ontological places, the places where we are most likely to be given the most persuasive apperception of what is *first*, what *is* in the very beginning. Heidegger speaks of *Stellen* or *topoi* where the Being of beings is more luminously unconcealed. In his

\(^{120}\) Heidegger writes in *Letter on Humanism*, ‘beings might appear in the light of Being … Man does not decide whether and how beings appear, whether and how God and the gods or history and nature come forward into the clearing of Being, come to presence and depart.’ [Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, in *Basic Writings*, p. 234.] Another point in which our approach will differ from Heidegger’s is that he in the main emphasizes the truth-character of Being, whereas we will point out that nothing is experienced as more [true] than what *is* false.

\(^{121}\) For the first expression of these cosmological laws, see Kepler, *Mysterium Cosmographicum* and Newton, *Principia Mathematica*, as related in Boorstin, *The Discoverers* and in Will Durant, *History of Philosophy*. 
lectures on *Parmenides*, Heidegger defines ‘topos’ by saying, ‘*topos* is the Greek for “place.” The place is the originally gathering holding of what belongs together …’¹²² In the same lectures, Heidegger clarifies how this *place* relates each being to the Being of beings, ‘The Greek thinkers speak of, “to save what appears” that means to conserve and to preserve in unconcealedness what shows itself *as* what shows itself and in the way it shows itself – that is, against the withdrawal into concealment and distortion.’¹²³ We will locate the places in Shakespeare’s plays that most convincingly ‘save appearances’ to Being, that is, the places where Shakespeare most persuasively produces a sense of the ontological contradiction, not this time, as unconcealed, but predominantly, as *concealed*. Like Homer or Rilke, what Shakespeare gathers in these places is the apperception of what is *first*, the Being of beings.

[39] We rely on the *methodology*, or, in Greek, the *way* in which Heidegger approaches literature. Whether it is Greek epic or German poetry, whether it is Homer or Rilke, Hesiod or Trakl, Heidegger’s approach remains the same: to find in these texts, traces of a specific mode of Being, whether concealed or unconcealed. It is no secret that Heidegger finds in Rilke, as much concealed,¹²⁴ as much neglected, as in Hölderlin or Trakl,¹²⁵ and even more, in Homer,¹²⁶ he finds unconcealed. We shall follow Heidegger’s method, but look for other places, bearing in mind that Heidegger, as Gadamer says, ‘never claimed to espouse a new

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¹²² Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 117.
¹²³ Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 120.
¹²⁶ Heidegger, *Parmenides*, pp. 31f.
The Hermeneutics of Being

doctrine. When the large edition of his writings, the one that followed his own arrangement, began to appear, he gave it the following epigraph: “Ways, not works.”¹²⁷ One of these ways is found in Heidegger’s *Parmenides*, where a method for identifying ontological *places* provides a *Lichtung* where all our illustrations may be gathered, before we attempt the exposition of what they conceal.

[40] Heidegger’s topology is not a significant part of his production and has so far, to my knowledge, failed to have a reception history, that is, an application beyond interpretations of Heidegger’s philosophy. Nonetheless, [th]is ontological topology provides a method for reaching *places*, *topoi* or *Stellen* where the Being of beings is exceptionally expressed or clarified. To have a clear view of Heidegger’s methodology, how he recognizes and exposes the topography of these places, we shall say that Heidegger considers these *Stellen* as indicative. That is, they do themselves unconceal a certain mode or experience of Being and provide not merely an illustration for an already existing theory. When Heidegger is looking for the Greek experience of what is false, he does not merely search for a concept, but for the places where, *even without a word*, the false discloses itself, and by doing so, *saves* a certain experience of Being. Heidegger says of [th]is method of indication, of the places that discloses the Greek notion of what *is* false,

‘Now it is time, however, to leave the word to the Greeks themselves, so we may have a witness testifying that, and to what extent, *pseudos* belongs to the essential realm of concealing and unconcealedness. Let us cite two *places*, the one from Homer, the *other* from Hesiod. These places [“*Stellen*”] are not mere authorities [“*Belegstellen*”], which by the simple accumulation of a large number would gain demonstrative power; for it is not a matter here of demonstrating and arguing, but of a pointing out that opens our eyes.’¹²⁸

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What Heidegger suggests by ‘a pointing out that opens our eyes’ becomes clear only within the context of the lectures as a whole, as it indicates Heidegger’s understanding of the self-unconcealing activity of *theoria*, which makes available a certain experience of Being if not Being itself. Of the Greek sense of theory, Heidegger simply says,

‘The look of Being, which looks into beings, is in Greek *thea*. The grasping look in the sense of seeing is in Greek *horao*. To see the encountering look, in Greek *thea-hora*, is *theorao-theorein, theoria*. The word ‘theory’ means, conceived simply, the perceptual relation of man to Being, a relation man does not *produce*, but rather a relation into which Being itself first posits man.’\(^{129}\)

What Heidegger conveys in this passage is not only the understanding of the Greek experience of *theoria*, how it relates beings to *place* and *place* to Being, but also how our ways depart from his. For we will consider that man may, through art, through drama, deliberately *produce* such places that will allure the spectator, that will not only seduce him or her to arrive at [th]is place, but keep them *there*. We will not simply say that the production of these *places* nor their consumption quite simply indicates a self-disclosure of the Being of beings, but say that if one is capable repeatedly and throughout history, like Shakespeare, to make these spectators not only come visit these places, but to keep them there, that one in these places have perhaps unconcealed a mode of Being in-different from our own lives. Of these ontological places, which Heidegger considers to be the clearest unconcealment of the ontological difference *itself* through art, to the point where there is left no trace of its [subjective] production, Heidegger says, ‘What is decisive here is not the sheer number of the places, in the quotation of which generally one place is left in darkness as much as the other, in the expectation that

\(^{129}\) Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 147. The Latinized spelling of the Greek concepts are emphasized.
the one unclear place would clarify the others and then that the darkness of all the places taken together would result in clarity.\textsuperscript{130} Elaborating on Heidegger, we would mark that these places are not already there, Da from the very beginning, but that the apperception of these irreplaceable places, which convey an experience of the Being of beings in-different from our own lives, may be deliberately produced.\textsuperscript{131} As easily as it is noticed that not all places are experienced as in-different from our lives, so it is clear, that [th]is, the apperception of the Being of beings that is expressed in these exceptional places, may be produced more or less successfully.\textsuperscript{132}

It is obvious that one does not always end up where one began. Whereas we begin with Heidegger’s true topology of Being, we end up mapping out the topography of inadequation in Shakespeare’s plays, based on a distinct topology of inadequation, which is not so much a topology of Being as it is a typology of the methods that most effectively produces the apperception of the ontological contradiction, that which transgresses all beings and lends to them the empty impression of life. But let us first acknowledge what our own topological method is different from. Heidegger’s topological method has three elemental steps: 1. Abstract place. 2. Concrete place 3. Exposition. First, Heidegger identifies the abstract place, for example, the Greek experience of what is false, pseudos. Secondly, Heidegger locates the concrete place, found in Book II of the Iliad, which

\textsuperscript{130} Heidegger, Parmenides, p. 29.
\textsuperscript{131} If we are to speak metaphorically, to mark out how our method differs from Heidegger’s ways: the ontological difference is not like the clearing along a path you may simply follow, but what an artist consciously, intentionally and systematically has to produce the apperception of, so that the spectator may be lead through the woods, as if through a clearing, as if a long a path that he thinks is already there.
\textsuperscript{132} As we shall later see in Chapter 4, The Techne of Being, [th]is incomparable sense Being, these exceptional places that are experienced as indistinguishable from our own lives, are not produced without method.
he quotes or indicates. Thirdly, the commentary clarifies how the Being of beings, the ontological difference itself unconceals the events [falsely], and the experience or non-experience of [th]is [false] unconcealment.\textsuperscript{133} We shall likewise follow three steps in the methodological process from \textit{abstract topos} to \textit{concrete place} and further to its \textit{exposition}. But we shall add a \textit{dimension} to [th]is place, for we shall investigate how [th]is place was deliberately \textit{produced}, and also find and distinguish clearly between the different \textit{instruments} that most emphatically produce these ontological places. Furthermore, we shall name the abstract place after the instrument used to produce the apperception of [th]is ontological

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{133} To get a concrete sense of Heidegger’s topological method, we should let him quote the place from the \textit{Iliad} where Zeus \textit{falsely} unconceals the events of the future, not without, of course, influencing the \textit{true} course of events through [th]is \textit{false} unconcealment. Heidegger, identifying the event, says, ‘The quotation from Homer is taken from the second book of the \textit{Iliad} (B 248ff.). Here the poet has Nestor say that for the Greeks there is no hope of returning home from the battlefield of Troy: …

(as) “previously, from the lightning-thrower we knew whether he was out to deceive us or not.”

The reference is to Zeus, and the event called to mind took place the day the Greeks in Argos boarded their ship to go to Troy. …

“On the right his lightning flashed, a sign portending good fortune.” [Heidegger, \textit{Parmenides}, p. 31, sic.]
\end{quote}

In the exposition of [th]is place, Heidegger surely appears to be inspired. Almost like a rhapsode commenting on the Homeric poems, Heidegger says, ‘Such a sign is in every case a concealing that shows. But the question remains whether this type of concealment holds back (i.e. holds back the glimpse into destiny) or whether it is a showing whose concealing aspect dissembles what is to come. In that case, the holding forth on the part of the showing which appears, and thereby the sign itself, are \textit{pseudos}. The concealing is a dissembling.’ [Heidegger, \textit{Parmenides}, page 32] To ensure that the reader is not given a false impression of Heidegger’s ontological approach to literature, Heidegger similarly exposes a \textit{true} place from book XXIII of the \textit{Iliad}, verse 358ff, where Achilles is unconcealed, by the Gods who does not fail to indicate the future. [Heidegger, \textit{Parmenides}, page 32] As Heidegger points out, the winner, Achilles, \textit{is already unconcealed before} the chariot race begins. [Heidegger, \textit{Parmenides}, page 128f] As Heidegger shows, to the Homeric Greeks, even the false is true or takes part in unconcealment, is that through which [th]is is brought into light and unconcealment. But of all places of unconcealment, no one in Heidegger’s works is perhaps more memorable than when, in Rilke’s \textit{Duino Elegies}, he recognizes its withdrawal, recognizes the place of withdrawal where the \textit{open} has degraded into empty space and that which \textit{is} no longer is experienced as mysteriously unconcealed, but already \textit{given}, thus rendering the Being of beings entirely unrecognized, withdrawn and forgotten. In the exposition of Rilke’s place, Heidegger defines the \textit{open} as what is unconcealed, before he shows us that the \textit{open} place of Rilke’s \textit{Duino Elegies} \textit{does not} comply with, but negates his concept, appears to be no less than the negation of what \textit{is} unconcealed, confirming again that the ontological difference is no longer apperceived but forgotten. [Cf. Heidegger, \textit{Parmenides}, pp. 152-153.]
contradiction, to show that non-beings, what is not, grant the most irrefutable sense of what is, the Being of beings.

[43] Finally, whereas to us the sense of place remains the same, we will, more often than not point in the opposite direction of Heidegger, to the apperception of what is concealed and not unconcealed. Secondly, we will not only discover an outstanding experience of Being, but rather, how [th]is experience was systematically produced. We will therefore go in search of, not like Heidegger immediately only the true or false places themselves, but rather, how [th]is exceptional place was produced, discover not only these concealed or unconcealed places but the negative principles for their production. In Chapter 4, The Techne of Being, we therefore make distinct certain instruments of incarnation, identify the means of inadequation that most effectively, that is, immediately and without being detected, produce the apperception of the ontological contradiction, i.e. that non-beings offer the most irrefutable sense of what is. For produced through these instruments of inadequation, is the forceful apperception of that which no being can be without if it is not to give up all claims to existence. As instruments of inadequation we predominantly recognize: falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, and substitution. These are the primary instruments of incarnation, means of inadequation which we shall focus on in Chapter 4, The Techne of Being, although it is safe to say that there are other means, which are part of a more general topos of inadequation; doubt, aporia, contradiction,

\[134\] Elision, is the transposition of the negative method of aphairesis to the gradual or violent removal of attributes from an individual [being], so as to effect the profound apperception of that which remains, the Being of that being which everything has been taken away from.
nonsense, even [truth],\textsuperscript{135} all figures that less convincingly dis-cover the negative ontological difference and hence the apperception of life.

\textsuperscript{135} ‘Truth’ is here understood in the negative and ontological sense as what is unconcealed, not in an epistemological sense as the correspondence between a proposition and something already given. That is, truth is not only understood but experienced negatively as that which is un-concealed.
§2.1 Plato’s Khora
§2.2 Aristotle’s Place
§2.3 Plotinus’ Mirror
§2.4 Nietzsche’s Chaos
§2.5 Derrida’s Khora

C2 EXPOSÉ

[1] In this chapter and the next, I will present the contradiction of Being, the ontological difference as either concealed or unconcealed, in order to convey that which Shakespeare produced the apperception of. Beginning by tracing the history of the unconcealed through Plato’s khora, Aristotle’s place, Plotinus’ mirror, Nietzsche’s chaos, Heidegger’s Lichtung and Derrida’s khora, we shall see, in this unparalleled historic display of Being, this unequalled Gallery of Philosophies of Unconcealment, that Adorno is certainly not siding with history when, speaking against all tradition, he says that there is no ontological difference.¹ For not once does Adorno take time to consider the arguments of those who have so profoundly shaped the tradition that Heidegger, whom Adorno speaks so forcefully against, is only the culmination of.² In the next chapter we shall focus on Pseudo-Dionysius,

¹ Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 97, more sarcastically on the following page, where he says, ‘If we try to accomplish Heidegger’s distinction of Being from the concept that circumscribes it logically, we are left … with an unknown quantity which nothing but the pathos of its invocation lifts above the Kantian concept of the transcendent thing-in-itself.’ Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 98.
² There is a similar understanding of what is mysterious, ineffable in Thomas Aquinas’ concept of this as presented in his essay On Being and Essence. [St. Thomas, On Being and Essence, in Thomas Aquinas, Selected Writings, p. 35ff.] Defining the determinate this by expressing what this is not, Thomas says, ‘The unity of genus stems from this very indetermination or indifference,’ [St. Thomas, On Being and Essence, in, Thomas Aquinas, Selected Writings, p. 36.] meaning that this alone is what escapes any essential category and existence alone what allows [individual] incarnation. Wittgenstein is only one of the last to express the understanding of the mystical as
Kant and Derrida, to convey the ontological difference as concealed. What unites these three philosophers is that they avoid what Aristotle, Descartes and Leibniz do not. However different these last three philosophers may be, they did not resist the temptation to hypostatize or reify the concealed as substance, be this called *hypokeimenon, cogito* or *monad*. There is then, as we shall see, a tradition for understanding the ontological difference as *insubstantially* concealed, a negative tradition, moreover, which Heidegger completely neglects as he attempts to convince the reader that the ontological difference, the Being of beings, *is* never concealed, what *is* concealed, the ontological difference. ³

[2] Denouncing the withdrawal, the forgetfulness of Being, Heidegger speaks as if Being necessarily and unavoidably *is* unconcealed, and that *this* is unconcealed prior to any subjective ascription. It is *this* necessity, *this* unrecognition [of the subject], that grounds Adorno’s critique, his assessment of Heidegger’s philosophy as an attempt to mystify the ontic, a fetishization of what is already positively given. Adorno believes Heidegger’s ontology and the expression of the ontological difference is nothing but an attempt to mystify the world as it is given, a mystification covering up the reification of an objective world which makes it possible to *not* recognize that whatever *is* is not given but the result of a social and historical production which, according to Adorno and in good Hegelian tradition, should not be irresponsible but subjective, that is, ascribed to the *positive* and

³ See for example The Introduction to *Being and Time* where Heidegger once and for all demarcates his position, ‘The Being of beings can least of all be something ‘behind which’ something else stands, something that ‘does not appear.’’ Heidegger, *Introduction to Being and Time,* Basic Writings, p. 82.
negative labours of the subject.⁴ In Negative Dialectics Adorno stresses the negative labours, the labours that are yet undone in a world subject to the powers of fascism and capitalism.⁵

[3] According to Adorno there is either no ontological difference or the ontological difference is merely a mystification of the ontic, which amounts to an expression of what the apperception of this ontological difference more fundamentally is, an alienation from whatever is positively given, that is, for Adorno, the beings that already are. In this view, Heidegger’s ontology is nothing but a covert or disguised positivism of the sort that gives or lends a false aura of inevitability to whatever is at hand, to whatever can be grasped by your fingers – to whatever is present and makes that which is already there, its presence, look inevitable, necessary and even fated.⁶ Fundamentally Adorno believes Heidegger’s ontology has its ground in that world from which it is alienated, a world over which one has lost control. In these ‘uncontrollable’ or objective forces, where the subject does not recognize itself, one catches, again and again, according to Adorno, ‘falsely’ a glimpse of something holy, that which always is beyond the reach of man, which makes it again possible to hail what is meaningless as what is most profound.⁷ It is, furthermore, this mystification that, according to Adorno, gives legitimacy to any political or economic system or any systemic suppression,

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⁴ Perpetuating and reinforcing a Hegelian tradition, there is, to Adorno, nothing that is not produced. Everything is fabricated, even ‘facts’ forget their origin, something we do not easily forget when it is brought to our attention that the Latin ‘facere’ simply means, ‘to make.’

⁵ Adorno, Negative Dialectics, pp. 119f.

⁶ Adorno never shows any desire to speak anything but polemically, and speaking with Marxian mannerism, he cries out, ‘Mana is raised up under the name of Being, as if our dawning impotence resembled that of pre-animistic primitives in a thunderstorm.’ Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 106.

⁷ Adorno, Negative Dialectics. For Adorno’s thoughtful elaboration on Schiller and the Romantic praise of what is meaningless as what is most profound in tragedy, see also Adorno, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 183-185. For a similar view of the sublime impression that tragedy offers, see, Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, Book III, § 51, pp. 161ff.
as it justifies the status quo by suggesting that the current state of affairs is, \textit{as if} handed down by the gods, without which \textit{nothing} would be unconcealed.

[4] Speaking of Heidegger’s ontological difference as a paralogism, not without alluding to Kant’s \textit{The Paralogisms of Reason},\textsuperscript{8} Adorno says in the polemic, the tirade that opens \textit{Negative Dialectics}, ‘The paralogism is evinced by the fact that we cannot conceive such a supposedly pure substrate of “is.”’\textsuperscript{9} Adorno clarifies this by saying that “‘is” has no substrate without synthesis.’\textsuperscript{10} This means that there is no apperception of the Being of beings without beings, no apperception of what \textit{is} without \textit{what} \textit{is} essentially is, and hence, that the Being of beings is secondary, and not, as Heidegger thinks, something first, prior to any being. Of course, this does not suggest, as Adorno seems to think, that the Being of beings is nothing. For \textit{what} \textit{is} impression or apprehension may indeed follow \textit{upon} synthesis, be consequent to synthesis and not anticipate it. Or, regardless of whether the apperception of the Being of beings is first or last, antecedent or consequent to the apperception of \textit{what} \textit{is} is, to \textit{what} \textit{is} phenomenological perception, we will maintain throughout \textit{what} \textit{is} thesis, that there is, regardless of whether \textit{what} \textit{is} apperception is first or second, primary or secondary, an apperception without which \textit{what} \textit{is} phenomenon would not appear \textit{to be} [real/true].\textsuperscript{11} Basically we do

\textsuperscript{8} For the insurmountable chapter that precedes or opens the noumenological analysis in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, see ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,” Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A341/B399-A405/B431, pp. 383-441. Also note the invaluable commentary by Karl Ameriks in \textit{Kant’s Theory of Mind - An Analysis of the Paralogisms of Pure Reason}.

\textsuperscript{9} Adorno, \textit{Negative Dialectics}, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{10} Adorno, \textit{Negative Dialectics}, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{11} We shall maintain a use of ‘true’ and ‘truth’ throughout the thesis which may ring unfamiliar. We will often use the word ‘true’ where it would be more common, habitual to use the word ‘real.’ We do not thereby attempt to destroy the commonplace distinction between truth and reality, but acknowledge that we need to apply the word ‘true’ in a twofold way, in an ontological sense of what \textit{is}, and in an epistemological sense of the correspondence or adequation to whatever \textit{is} or \textit{is not}. It is, as we shall see more systematically in \textit{Chapter 4, The Techne of Being} and throughout this thesis,
agree with Heidegger that there is an ontological difference, and although we
acknowledge Adorno’s dialectical critique of ontology as no more than a
‘mystification of the ontic’,12 we will argue against this view. The argument is, of
course, not our own but the sustained argument of tradition. For Heidegger,
whether he acknowledges this or not, and however much he gives the impression of
destroying the tradition or being without precursors, places himself securely
within a philosophical tradition.13

§2.1 Plato’s Khora

[5] Speaking of the ontological difference, Heidegger observes in What is Called
Thinking,

‘An interpretation decisive for Western thought is that given by Plato. He
says that between beings and Being there prevails the khorismos; e khora is
the locus, the site, the place. Plato means to say: beings and Being are in
different places. Particular beings and Being are differently located. Thus
when Plato gives thought to the different location of beings and Being, he is
asking for the totally different place of Being, as against the place of
beings.’14

Although it is not made explicit, it is clear that the difference between these places
is essential, or rather, that the place of the Being of beings is inessential, whereas
the place of any particular being is not, [th]is simply because the particular is the
concretization of the universal idea, essence or concept. /Th/is means that the place

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12 Adorno, Negative Dialectics, pp. 116, 122.
13 As I use the tradition in this chapter to make an argument against Adorno by presenting an
undeniable tradition named by what they expose, Philosophies of Unconcealment, so will I, in the
next chapter, use the tradition to make an argument against Heidegger. I draw attention to a
complementary tradition to emphasize another notion of Being, which gives expression to what
Heidegger consistently does not. By thus presenting Philosophies of Concealment alongside
Philosophies of Unconcealment, my hope is that our apperception of Being will not appear to be
unnecessarily normative, even prejudiced, and that, by thus suspending judgment, by showing
preference for neither side, my presentation will not, already before this ship is launched,
knowingly risk capsizing. For both traditions give different expressions to the ontological
difference, the contradiction of the Being, whether concealed or unconcealed.
of Being is an inessential place, devoid of any essential properties, whereas the place of beings is the place where these essential properties are incarnated in one particular individual. It will later become clear that also Aristotle has presented [th]is inessential place and hence unconcealed the Being of beings.

Before Timaeus begins his exposition of khora he performs a prayer for its unconcealment. For khora itself to be unconcealed, he desires khora to guide him through the expression of what he could not have spoken of, what would remain unuttered, if khora did not take place. And surely, if Plato’s theory of khora is true, not even the following prayer would have been unconcealed without khora, ‘Let us therefore at the outset of this discourse call upon the god to be our saviour this time, too, to give us safe passage through a strange and unusual exposition, and lead us to a view of what is likely. And so let me begin my speech again.’ Prior to any presentation of Plato’s khora in Timaeus, it is perhaps important to notice, as does Mr. Cooper in his splendid introduction, ‘Plato, as author of the work, is responsible for all Timaeus’ theories.’

15 Plato, Timaeus, 48d.
16 As is well known, in Timaeus, Plato lets Timaeus perform a very long speech that describes the creation of the world, which resembles, or at least, reminds us of, a theogony. But it is not, for what is described is not the creation of the Gods, as in Hesiod’s books, but rather, the creation of the world, a cosmogony, and the creation of man, an anthropogony. In his introduction to Timaeus, John M. Cooper, says this to clarify, ‘Timaeus, who appears to be a dramatic invention of Plato’s, comes from Southern Italy, noted for its Greek mathematicians and scientists. He bases his cosmology on the Platonic division, familiar, for example from Phaedo and Republic, between eternal, unchanging ‘Forms’ and their unstable ‘reflections’ in the physical, perceptible world of ‘becoming.’ But he introduces a creator god, the ‘demiurge’ (Greek for ‘craftsman’), who crafts and brings order to the physical world by using the Forms as patterns – Timaeus does not conceive the Forms as themselves shaping the world. And he develops the theory of a ‘receptacle’ underlying physical things [khora], onto which, as onto a featureless plastic stuff, the Formal patterns are imposed.’ Plato, Timaeus, Complete Works, Introduction by John M. Cooper, p. 1224.
The negativity of the ontological difference is clearly expressed as *unconcealed* in Plato’s concept of ‘khora,’ a concept that, from the very beginning, states that the subject is always in a *different* place. However different, this place is not only where the subject is unconcealed, but prior to subjectivity, a *first place*, a *proto topos*, indispensable to the phenomenological Being of any being. Khora is, as Aristotle will say of his place, and Heidegger will say of his clearing, *first*. But the place that is without subject, and delivers and receives all subjects, is the place of all origins, as it makes the unconcealment of all subjects possible in the *first* place. And so it is that khora, the mother of unconcealment, is the recipient of all beings *unconcealed*. For there would be no birth without khora, without khora nothing unconcealed. And Being different from each being, but nevertheless fundamental to all beings, *khora* is indistinguishable, in-different from the existence of all beings, and does therefore, as *place* and *clearing*, name the ontological difference, the Being of beings.

Plato thinks of khora as that which is without any essential characteristica, Being without predicates. Clearly, khora is not an idea. Without properties one cannot say what khora is, except that it is. In *Timaeus* Plato performs many metaphorical expositions of khora, one in which khora is likened to a *mother*, another to gold, a third to a neutral base for fragrant ointments. In the fourth exposition khora is likened to that which is without a face but projects all faces, a fifth presents khora as similar to a canvas upon which all things of ‘unsleeping,'

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19 Plato, *Timaeus*, 50d-e.
20 Plato, *Timaeus*, 50d.
22 Plato, *Timaeus*, 50d-e.
23 Plato, *Timaeus*, 50d-e.
truly existing reality,’ are painted. What is implied in this last metaphorical exposition of khora, is that khora, like a canvas makes this phenomenon appear essentially, projects the idea by allowing or making possible or delivering its appearance, which is no more than a singular dream compared to the ‘unsleeping, truly existing reality’ of things/ideas. Through khora, what is delivered is not only an image, but existence, not only an image of life but life itself. The idea being that the picture is different from the idea pictured. An idea is delivered or received in an element different from itself, which makes what is essential appear through this khora. Having made a clear division between ideas, phenomena and khora, Plato says,

‘It provides a location for all things that come to be. It is itself apprehended by a kind of bastard reasoning that does not involve sense perception and it is hardly even an object of conviction. We look at it as in a dream when we say that everything that exists must of necessity be somewhere, in some place and occupying some space, and that that which doesn’t exist somewhere, whether on earth or in heaven, doesn’t exist at all.’

The phenomenon unconcealed clings to Being not like paint sticks to a canvas, but more like a man, a climber clinging to a mountain wall, so steep, that one may easily slip and become, as Plato says, ‘nothing at all.’

Khora does not appear or disappear, but rather, through khora all things are unconcealed singularly. Khora remains the same, the name of that which receives, delivers all beings to Being, and delivering the multitude of beings, the Being of beings remains inseparably one. Speaking of khora, Timaeus says,

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24 Plato, Timaeus, 52b.
25 Plato, Timaeus, 52b.
26 Plato, Timaeus, 52c.
27 Plato, Timaeus, 52a-b.
28 Plato, Timaeus, 52b.
29 Plato, Timaeus, 52c. The reader should be informed that metaphor is only applied for heuristic purposes, in order to enlighten about what often remains obscure.
‘We must always refer to it by the same term, for it does not depart from its own character in any way. Not only does it always receive all things, it has never in any way whatever taken on any characteristic similar to any of the things that enter it. Its nature is to be available for anything it makes its impression upon, and it is modified, shaped, and reshaped by the things that enter it. These are the things that make it appear different at different times.’

And styling what is most significant in this passage, but within another khora, ‘these are the things that make it appear different at different times.’ And khora is prior to all things.

[10] Again, to make the apprehension of what is most difficult easier, Timaeus likens khora to gold. There would be no similitude without the experience of a common ground. So comparing khora to gold does not only speak of its value, its transformations, but also of its immutability. Timaeus says, that if gold can be shaped into every possible form, moulded into every thinkable shape, still the answer to the question, ‘What is it?’ would be the same. For be this a ‘triangle or any of the other shapes that come to be in the gold, your safest answer by far, with respect to truth, would be to say, ‘gold.’ Obviously there would be no metaphor without the perception of a common ground. Clearly, Plato believes khora brings beings into shining presence, unconceals ideas like gold unconceals forms, patterns, for like gold khora too is distinct from the forms it receives. And as cosmos appears indistinguishable from the chaos that receives it, as the ornament appears indifferent from gold, Being is indistinguishable from all beings. And again, if khora is a canvas that projects every phenomena, to render these distinct, even contradictory, ideas perfectly, it would itself have to be without properties.

30 Plato, Timaeus, 50b-c. Emphasis added.
31 Plato, Timaeus, 50c.
32 Plato, Timaeus, 50a.
33 As is evident from the common Greek belief poetically presented by Hesiod, Theogony, 116, and quoted by Aristotle at the opening of his books on nature, Physics, Book IV, 208b30.
for showing all faces it is itself faceless, revealing all phenomena, it is itself not a phenomenon. And as it brings forward everything that can be looked at, it can itself not be seen. And it is through this khora, from this faceless mother, that Er, the soul who lingers in another world looking for a place to be born, is finally incarnated, at last transgresses beyond the ideal to become a true man, unconcealed, aletheia.

§1.2 Aristotle’s Place

Hegel is the first to recognize that Aristotle’s Metaphysics is no more than a compilation, and to remark the ‘peculiar drawback’ that neither Aristotle nor any of the ancients did know this work by that name, but as proto philosophia. But Hegel helps us along the way by clarifying the intention of this science, which is to be among all sciences, regardless of name, a science of what is first. Proto Philosophia is clearly distinct from the other sciences by being ‘the science of that which is, in so far as it is.’ It is therefore quite paradoxical, that whereas Aristotle in Metaphysics merely speaks about a science of what is first, it is only in Physics that Aristotle proposes or suggests an answer to what the ontological difference is. Whereas Hegel speaks of substance/ousia, as what is necessarily first, even

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34 Plato, Timaeus 50d-e.
35 Plato speaks of a kind of ‘bastard reasoning’ involved in the apperception of khora. [Plato, Timaeus 52b.] In his essay on Khora, Derrida, speaking of the logic of khora, emphasizes what Plato merely suggests, ‘a hybrid, bastard, or even corrupted reasoning (logismo notho).’ [Derrida, Khora, in, On the Name, p. 90]. This corrupted reasoning is, of course, what makes it almost impossible to present khora without the assistance of metaphor or allegory. Hence, the abundance of metaphor, hence, the story of Er that ends the Republic and begins the life of Er.
36 For Plato’s story of the incarnation of Er, see Plato, Republic, 614b-621d.
37 Hegel, History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists, p. 137.
39 Hegel says, ‘The main object which Aristotle has in view (Metaphysics VII.1) is the definition of what this substance (ousia) really is’. Hegel, History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists, p. 137.
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Aristotle has to admit that there may be something prior to [th]is substance. As Aristotle concludes the fourth book of Physics,

‘These considerations then would lead us to suppose that place is something distinct from bodies, and that every sensible body is in place. Hesiod too might be held to have given a correct account of it when he made chaos first. At least he says: “First of all things came chaos to being, then broad breasted earth,” implying that things need to have space first, because he thought, with most people, that everything is somewhere and in place. If this is its nature, the power of place must be a marvellous thing, and be prior to all other things. For that without which nothing else can exist, while it can exist without the others, must needs be first; for place does not pass out of existence when the things in it are annihilated.’

What we are pursuing in this chapter are different interpretations of the ontological difference [as unconcealed], of what is, as Heidegger says, ‘most indefinable.’ If there is such an ontological difference between Being and beings, [th]is would not only be different from beings, but there would be no beings without [th]is difference. Aristotle’s place, no less than Plato’s khora and Heidegger’s Lichtung, are clearly interpretations of the same. For all these concepts announce that two identical beings cannot be in the same place, and that no being would be without [th]is place, khora or clearing. They all attempt to give conceptual clarification to the ontological difference, of the Being of beings by announcing what is unconcealed. Before we continue our exposition, we should perhaps let the reader have a sustained look at [th]is place [of unconcealment], let the Philosopher himself speak,

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40 The Fragment is taken from Hesiod, Theogony 116.
41 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV, Chapter 1, 209a1-2.
42 Heidegger, Being and Time, ‘Introduction,’ in Basic Writings, p. 43.
43 Reading Aristotle’s exposition of place in the fourth book of Physics, one is reminded of the paradoxical opening of Hamlet, where Shakespeare makes the entrant speak out of place. For the one who is to relieve the other on watch, speaks as if he is already on guard, and therefore, before he has re-placed [th]is guard, before Barnardo has re-placed Francisco, he speaks as if [Being] in another place, when he asks, as when stopping an intruder, ‘Who’s there?’ Shakespeare, Hamlet, I.i.1.
'Hence the place of a thing is neither a part nor a state of it, but is separable from it. For place is supposed to be something like a vessel – the vessel being a transportable place. But the vessel is no part of the thing./In so far then as it is separable from the thing, it is not the form; and in so far as it contains it, it is different from the matter.'

It is easily overlooked that also in common idiom an occurrence takes place, and that if something does not take place it does not happen, and if it never occurred, it has no claim to existence, and that therefore, also in common parlance, place is not forgotten as the true place of unconcealment without which nothing would ever be.

In this light it is perhaps clear why an immediate understanding of what takes place is most easily obtained by an understanding of what does not. For example, Aristotle makes a clear distinction between natural and mathematical objects when he says that ‘the objects studied by mathematics … have no place.’

In his exposition of place, Aristotle pretends or claims to be without precursors, saying that in the exposition of place, ’we have inherited nothing from previous thinkers, whether in the way of a statement of difficulties or of a solution.’ Although no one would question that Aristotle invented logic, it is clear that, however much his immanent critique of place is different from Plato’s transcendent exposition of khora, he does indeed exaggerate the novelty of his investigation, not, I believe, to throw more than a little honour on his vain person. To justify his claim to novelty, Aristotle identifies khora as indifferent from space or matter, saying,

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44 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV, Chapter 1, 209b26-31. The reference is to Immanuel Bekker’s standard edition of the Greek text of Aristotle of 1831.
45 In Chapter 4, The Teche of Being, and in Chapter 8, The Production of Being through Nothing, we shall witness the production of this indefinite place through indefiniteness, a proposition which truly gives us nothing to perceive, but yet produces the apperception of this place.
46 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV, Chapter 1, 208b23.
47 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV, Chapter 1, 208a34.
48 As is heard from the anecdotal evidence of Diogenes, Aristotle was not a little vane, and although he credits Plato with creating a discourse about the essence of place, of whether place is inessential,
‘This is why Plato in the *Timaeus* says that matter and space are the same; for the ‘participant’ and space are identical. (It is true, indeed, that the account he gives there of the ‘participant’ is different from what he says in his so-called unwritten teaching. Nevertheless, he did identify place and space.) I mention Plato because, while all hold place to be something, he alone tried to say what it is.’

I shall continue the exposition of Aristotle’s *topos* with Hegel’s clarifying comments on its place within the Aristotelian ‘ontology’ as a whole.

‘In this ontology or, as we call it, logic, he investigates and minutely distinguishes four principles (Metaphysics I.3): first, determination or quality or quality as such, the wherefore of anything, essence or form; secondly, the matter; thirdly, the principle of motion; and fourthly, the principle of final cause, or of the good.’

There is, however, something that even to Aristotle escapes the *essential* definition of being, but which beings cannot be without, namely, *place*. While first attempting to think the different causes that, to Aristotle, essentially defines *what a Being is*, Hegel goes on to think with Aristotle, what is necessary for beings *to be* which is *not* part of their being, but *is*, more crucially, still indispensable to all beings. For as Aristotle says, after having analyzed *kinesis* in Physics III.1-3, ‘… it is necessary that the natural philosopher should consider the subject of place (*topos*)’. To firmly understand the ex-position of *place* within Aristotle’s *Physics*, it is perhaps necessary to take directions from Heidegger’s essay on Aristotle’s

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Aristotle on many occasions did his utmost to embarrass and discredit the aging Plato in disputes in the Academia, which is perhaps why Aristotle was *not* offered the place as Plato’s successor as the head of the Academia. Aristotle, of course, went on to found a school in another place, the Lykeion/Lyceum. See, Diogenes Laertius, *Lives, Volume One*.


50 Hegel’s presentation of Aristotle’s fundamental ontology is found in *History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists*, pp. 137ff, his elaboration on Aristotle’s concept of ‘place’ in Hegel, *History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists*, pp. 165f.


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Concept of physis in Physics B. For Heidegger reminds us that Aristotle understands *physis* or *nature* as the self-placing into appearance, regards *nature* as nothing more than that which shows or unconceals itself. Obviously, there would be no unconcealment without place. Hegel right away gives us a sense of the Greek definition of place by elegantly and simply distinguishing between *space generally* and the *particular space of place*, which leads to the fundamental question, a question which concerns the Being of beings, ‘Is *place* a body?’ Politely, Hegel lets Aristotle answer his own question, ‘But the place cannot be body; for if it were there would be two bodies in the same place.’ Place is evidently a principle of unconcealment, for, as Hegel clarifies, ‘place, according to Aristotle, is the boundary, the negation of a body, the assertion of a difference, of discretion.’ What this means is that *place* does not take part in what a being is, neither formally, materially, essentially or teleologically. Nevertheless, *[th]is* negation is first, marking off that place which no being can escape if it is to enjoy more than the hope, the potential, of Being.

Speaking of how place appears in relation to the other principles or causes of what beings essentially are, Aristotle says the following about place, which shows clearly that place is a way of thinking about what is not essential to a being, but what is necessary for its unconcealment. Aristotle says,

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59 Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV, 209a6, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Volume One*, p. 356. Hegel, *History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists*, p. 165. The principle of non-contradiction demonstrates that two bodies cannot be in the same *place*. Still, as we shall see in Chapter 9, *The Production of Being through Substitution*, the cognitive transgression of this principle, produces, through the experience of *[th]is* impossibility, not despite, but because these two bodies cannot be in the same *place*, the apperception of the unavoidable separation between beings and the Being of beings.
'But in truth there is no difference between the point and the place of the point, so that if place is not different from the other forms of limitation, neither is it something outside of them. It is not an element, and neither of corporeal nor of incorporeal elements, for it possesses magnitude, but not body. The elements of bodies are, however, themselves bodies, and no magnitude is produced from intelligible elements. Place is not the material of things, for nothing consists of it – neither the form, nor the Notion, nor the end, nor the moving cause; and yet it is something.'

The negativity of the ontological difference, insofar as there is a difference between beings and the Being of beings, cannot be expressed any more clearly. And by exposing [th]is place of unconcealment, where nothing essential remains, no one can accuse Aristotle of reifying everything that is.

[16] A concrete illustration of the principle of place will perhaps suffice, and is perhaps necessary at this point. Although two identical twins or clones, which essentially are the same, can be in different places at the same time, two identical beings cannot be in the same place at the same time. [Th]is means that place and not being, in the essential sense, is the individuating principle for what is essentially the same, as much as it is the principle of unconcealment for all beings that are essentially different. For the first time, cloning, which superficially shows an extreme neglect of what is unconcealed, the Being of beings, may yet provide the clearest opportunity for its apprehension. For if perfect cloning is possible, the same two essentially identical beings may easily be in two different places, but no two essentially identical beings may be unconcealed in the same place, which clearly shows that place is different from the essential characteristics of each being although it remains, is indispensable for its unconcealment, its Being. Cloning provides an excellent occasion for the comprehension of the Greek sense of place, which may be indistinguishable from our sense of time. For even if one may

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succeed in creating identical clones, even if a man would one day make a perfect copy of himself, of what he essentially is, still [th]is being would be in a different place. In [th]is place, insofar as there is such a place, a different being will be unconcealed or [th]is being will be unconcealed differently. Hence, the ontological difference.\(^62\)

§2.3 Plotinus’ Mirror

[17] It is well known that Plotinus performed his lectures without paper, papyrus or book, that the trance in which he performed his lectures was not broken by the interruptions he allowed from his students or disciples.\(^63\) In one of these trances Plotinus spoke of khora, or as it is written down by his meticulous student Porphyry.\(^64\) One of the most influential of the numerous interpretations of Plato’s Khora is given by Plotinus, a rather forceful composition, a tirade against khora, which, as it is identified with matter, is considered to be no more than a mirror, that is, as something which itself is without existence or essence.

Immediately one recognizes the simplicity with which Plotinus’ names and presents khora in a way that almost sounds too familiar, as transparent as mirror. Let us remind ourselves that mirror does not merely denote what it does today, but also the insubstantiality of phenomena, the insubstantiality of that place where each phenomenon is [perceived]. We are witnessing Plotinus’ displacement of Plato’s

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\(^62\) Concerning the relation of time and place, we could certainly say that there is no time, if time only signifies place or is a metaphor for the relation of place to place, like ‘night’ is a metaphor for ‘being in the shadow of the earth.’ If ‘time,’ ‘chronology’ is merely measured by ‘the relative movement of heavenly bodies,’ there would be nothing to measure but place, or place would be what is fundamental and time not what is first.

\(^63\) As can be gathered from the testimony of Porphyry, ‘On the Life of Plotinus and The Arrangement of His Work,’ in Plotinus, The Enneads, p. cix and cxv.

discourse on khora. Compelled as he perhaps must have been, in an age of both scepticism and mysticism, to produce an argument for the non-existence of phenomena, Plotinus adds another dimension to the ontological discourse on khora, an epistemological element, as he not only considers the Being/non-Being of khora, not only how the world presences itself, but how we may possibly apperceive what is non-existent. For, as will become clear, Plotinus doubts the existence of khora, or rather, even if it unconceals everything, it is itself nothing.

Whereas we could say that Plato’s presents the khora of Being nowhere more clearly than when naming that which gives birth to what comes to essential or ideal presence, the ‘wetnurse of becoming,’ Plotinus’ takes away the Being of that which presences all things, all phenomena. In Plotinus’ Ennead III, 6.7 it is clear that Matter is bodiless, powerless, without Being, invisible, and is neither what is referred to nor what is expressed when expressing Being. ‘[I]t is in itself invisible, eluding all effort to observe it, present where no on can look,’ absolute lack of Being, ‘like a mirror showing things’ as in itself when they are really elsewhere, ‘containing nothing, pretending everything,’ ‘in itself, a false thing,’ ‘like an image in a dream or against water or on a mirror.’ Apparently, it is not

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65 It is said in Ennead VI.7 that we were not given our senses, our sight and hearing, without reason. As we shall hear, there is to Plotinus neither lack of agent nor telos in creation, a creation which both has a subjective cause and an intelligible end, where the Being of [th]is end or [th]is cause appear to depend on a god or a demiurge who acts as [th]is subject. Of course, Plotinus recreates the impression of the Demiurge of Timaeus, when he says, ‘God, or some one of the gods, in sending the souls to their birth, placed eyes in the face to catch the light and allotted to each sense the appropriate organ, providing thus for the safety which comes from seeing and hearing in time and seeking or avoiding under guidance of touch.’ [Plotinus, The Enneads, p. 197.] But, this is not where Plotinus speaks of the mirror.

66 Plato, Timaeus, 52d.


impossible to apperceive this non-entity, which in itself is nothing, khora, for
without khora no beings could be perceived, however falsely, as incarnated.

What is most surprising in Plotinus’ transparent concept of mirror-
matter/matter-mirror is that nowhere does there arise, as it does in, e. g. St.
Thomas, the understanding that matter is a principle of individuation. For the
singularity which matter, according to St. Thomas, gives birth to or, in St.
Thomas’ own vocabulary, ‘determines,’ is not considered at all, is even ridiculed as
an empty idea, only considered as an attempt to taint the spotless idea which,
according to Plotinus, is without being incarnated, is without taking place. That
matter is neither a principle of individuation nor existence could perhaps be
explained by Plotinus’ doctrine of individual substances or ideas.72 It seems to be
the inability to grasp the principle of existence for everything that is, as anything
but essential, which makes it impossible for Plotinus, except involuntarily, to
accept the ontological difference between what beings are and that beings are,
between [th]is and what [th]is is, between beings and the Being of beings. As with
modern science Plotinus’ denies the existence of and discourages the probing into
anything but that which essentially is, for otherwise, there is nothing. It is, of
course, this essential simplification, which makes it so easy for Plotinus to speak of
procession and return of ideas – that is definitions of what beings essentially are -
of that which is only insofar as it essentially is.73

72 See Plotinus’ Ennead V.7, ‘Ideal Archetype of Individual Beings,’ and Ennead IV.3, ‘Problems of
the Soul (I).5,’ p. 257 to which John Dillon marks that when Plotinus here speaks of ‘identical
being’ and that ‘each soul is permanently a unity (a self)’ it supports the view that ‘Plotinus
believed in the forms of individuals.’ Plotinus, Enneads, IV.3.5 note p. 257 by John Dillon.
73 No tractate in The Enneads displays Plotinus’ theory of procession and return more simply and
beautifully than the treatise ‘On the Intellectual Beauty,’ which, by the way, also is the clearest
expression of Plotinus’ aesthetics. As Plotinus says, ‘The art exhibited in the material work derives
from an art yet higher.’ Plotinus, The Enneads, V. 8, ‘On The Intellectual Beauty,’ p. 411. For
Plotinus apophatic aesthetics, see particularly Plotinus, The Enneads, I.6.9.
To Plotinus, mirror/matter is less than nothing. [Th]is mirror/matter is not an individuating principle, neither is it a principle that explains what beings essentially are or a principle that announces their irreplaceability. Mirror is neither a principle for beings nor the Being of beings. Plotinus’ concept of mirror can indeed provide us with nothing, appear to provide us with no ontological difference. After having given a résumé of Plato’s concept of khora as ‘the ground on which individual things appear and disappear,’ Plotinus seems to have one problem with Plato’s presentation, one point in Plato’s presentation of khora which he cannot possibly accept. As Plotinus goes on to say, ‘The description may be challenged as situating [i.e. locating or placing] the Ideas in space.’ Of course, this is a challenge Plotinus takes up by saying, the ideas are never in space, not even in this place. No idea ever takes place. It, the idea, is simply not there. For there is, to Plotinus, no principle of incarnation, and even matter is not a principle of incarnation and/or individuation. For, to Plotinus, matter is merely a screen, a pro-jector through which something that is not there, namely, the individual and/or essential form, the particular and eternally self-identical ideas are made present. Matter itself takes part in neither essence nor existence, is so fully and totally devoid of anything, without any form whatsoever, that hardly a trace remains, all traces being wiped out, eradicated to such a degree that in itself matter does not even appear to take place. It is nothing. Matter is nothing or merely a mirror unseen, unrecognised, as such.

Plotinus says of matter, ‘Mirrors and transparent objects even more, offer a close parallel; they are quite unaffected by what is seen in or through what is seen

74 Plotinus, The Enneads, III.6.13, p. 204.
in or through them: material things are reflections, and the Matter on which they appear is further from being affected than is a mirror.\textsuperscript{75} Plotinus continues to speak of the non-incarnation, the non-reception of the \textit{idea} in matter, or rather, \textit{the non-presence of the idea in matter}. Speaking of what appears to our senses and shows itself as a phenomenon, [th]is appearance of the idea, Plotinus asks his disciples rhetorically,

\begin{quote}
‘Is this then a pseudo-entry into a pseudo-entity, a false entry into a false thing, a non-entry into nothing, something merely brought near, as faces enter the mirror, there to remain just as long as the people look into it? Yes: if we eliminated the Authentic Existent from this Sphere, nothing of all now seen in sense would appear one moment longer.’\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

Finally we should reveal that the name of \textit{Ennead III.6} is ‘The Impassivity [apatheia] of the unembodied’. It should now be clear from what we have said, what is ‘unembodied,’ namely ‘matter,’ which is that which, like a mirror, is totally without pathos. And there we let Plotinus rest.

\subsection*{§2.4 Nietzsche’s Chaos}

\textsuperscript{[21]} Heidegger raises the Nietzschean concept of \textit{chaos} out of oblivion. There, in the tenth lecture of \textit{What is Called Thinking}?, Heidegger speaks of Nietzsche’s concept of ‘eternal recurrence,’ as he does of Nietzsche’s concept of \textit{chaos} in his lectures on \textit{Nietzsche}, as an attempt to name the Being of beings.\textsuperscript{77} Through his concept of eternal recurrence, Heidegger believes that Nietzsche superseded himself, for, in the beginning, ‘the more profound origin’ of time remained closed to Nietzsche.\textsuperscript{78} As Heidegger here speaks of the concept of eternal recurrence as a fundamental interpretation of \textit{time}, it is obvious that he is weighing Nietzsche on

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{75} Plotinus, \textit{The Enneads}, III.6.9, p. 198.
\textsuperscript{76} Plotinus, \textit{The Enneads}, III.6.13, p. 204.
\textsuperscript{77} Heidegger, \textit{What is Called Thinking}, Part I, p. 227n.
\textsuperscript{78} Heidegger, \textit{Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same}, p. 94.
\end{footnotes}
the scales of his own concept of *aletheia*, unconcealment.\textsuperscript{79} Evidently, what Heidegger indicates by a more profound origin of time is its non-subjective, non-metaphysical origin, a horizon from within which Heidegger easily detects the subjective distortion in Nietzsche’s apperception of time in his early works.

Heidegger writes,

‘In the earlier, immensely important essay, “On truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense (summer 1873),”’ Nietzsche, still perfectly in tune with Schopenhauer, writes that we “produce” representations of space and time “in us and out of us with the necessity of a spider spinning its web” (X, 202). Time too is represented subjectively and is even defined “as a property of space” (WM, 862).\textsuperscript{80}

To clarify [th]is misapperception of time, and to clear Nietzsche of all suspicion of reification, we recall Derrida’s reference to Heidegger’s lectures on *Nietzsche* in his essay on Plato’s *Khora*.\textsuperscript{81} The note on Nietzsche’s ‘chaos’ and the reference to Heidegger’s note on ‘khora’ or *khorismos*, makes it clear that Derrida senses a resemblance, a *Wahlverwandtschaft* between the platonic *khora* and Nietzsche’s *chaos*, which is, as Heidegger points out, another name for Nietzsche’s *eternal recurrence of the same*,\textsuperscript{82} a concept inseparable from any understanding of Nietzsche’s later works. The note in Derrida’s *Khora*, which begins a trace we shall follow, reads,

‘Cf. also Heidegger, *Nietzsche, I*: 350: “Chaos, *khaos, khaine*, signifies the yawning [das Gähnen], the gaping, that which is split in two

\textsuperscript{79} It is made clear in Heidegger’s essay *On the Essence of Truth*, that unconcealment, *aletheia*, is the word which most clearly announces Heidegger’s Kehre, the turn away from Being to Time, from Dasein to what is quite simply Da. See Heidegger, *The Essence on Truth*. In this essay from 1930, it appears that Heidegger values his earlier *Being and Time* [1927], its exposition of Dasein or subjectivity, as merely a preparation for the explication of Da, or Time, in its priority to all beings, to anything Da.

\textsuperscript{80} The last quote is from *Wille Zur Macht*, Fragment 862, the quote found in, Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume II: Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, p. 90.

\textsuperscript{81} Derrida, *Khora*, in *On the Name*, p. 102n.

\textsuperscript{82} From the perspective of the ontological difference, the attention should be given to ‘the Same,’ the unrepeatable event, the irrereplaceable appearance, the incomparable unconcealment of that which is more singular than any being, that which makes each being appear different at different times, although *time* remains unchanged, unaltered, ‘the Same.’
[Auseinanderklaffende]. We understand khaos in close connection with an original interpretation of the essence of the aletheia inasmuch as it is the abyss which opens (cf. Hesiod, Theogony). The representation of Chaos, in Nietzsche, has the function of preventing a ‘humanization’ [Vermenschung] of existence in its totality. The ‘humanization’ includes as much the moral explanation of the world on the basis of the resolution of a Creator, as its technical explanation on the basis of the activity of a great artisan [Handwerker] (the Demiurg).”

[23] In the note provided by Farrell Krell in Heidegger’s Nietzsche, we are made aware that Heidegger’s reference is to Line 116 of Hesiod’s Theogony, where it is said, ‘And in the very beginning Chaos came to be.’ Krell does not, however, mention that Aristotle quotes the same passage in Physics at the beginning of his exposition of place, but what Krell does say is very illuminating, ‘I know of no detailed discussion of Hesiod in Heidegger’s works, but suggest that khaos might be interpreted along the lines of the Timean khora, the “receptacle” of “space,” namely, as the open region in which all beings can first appear and be in being.’ What Farrell Krell indicates when speaking of khora, is, of course, not space, but rather, place, or if you will, following Aristotle, ‘particular space.’ In this light, viewing the possible indifference of khaos and khora, we may again quote Hesiod, ‘And in the very beginning Chaos came to be.’ We should immediately reveal what both Heidegger and Derrida have willingly or unwillingly suppressed, that it

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84 David Farrell Krell’s note in Heidegger’s Nietzsche, p. 90f.
85 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV, Chapter 1.30.
86 Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume II: Eternal Recurrence of the Same, note by David Farrell Krell, p. 92. Farrell Krell continues, ‘The gap of Chaos is usually interpreted as resulting from the separation of earth and sky - even though both Gaia and Ouranos are explicitly said to emerge after Chaos came to be. The confusion is intensified by Hesiod’s use of the verb to become, rather than any form of to be. For Hesiod, the differentiation seems to come to be prior to all and sundry beings; its very genesis suggests that differentiation is prior. Yet such priority is given no name. For a presentation of the basic sources, Farrell Krell refers the reader to G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, The Presocratic Philosophers: A critical History with a Selection of Texts (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 24-37.’
87 Aristotle, Physics, Book IV, as quoted in Hegel, History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists, p. 165.
88 Hesiod, Theogony 116.
is exactly this passage on *khaos*, which is quoted at the opening of Aristotle’s treatment of *place* in his fourth book on *Physics*.\(^89\)\(^90\) This is not insignificant as it suggests the continued and consistent focus on what *is* unconcealed in the works of Aristotle, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida. Moreover, Heidegger speaks of *chaos* as indifferent but in name from the *eternal recurrence of the same*. And if chaos is an interpretation of khora, it will soon be clear that Nietzsche’s chaos adds a dimension to this discourse not mentioned so far, the [non]psychology of chaos/khora. For the attempt to *avoid* humanization, this attempt to produce a logic of what is *not* human, is, in the philosophical tradition, expressed by the ontological difference.\(^91\)\(^92\)

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\(^89\) Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV, Chapter 1, 208a30.

\(^90\) As Heidegger reminds us in his remarkable essay on the second book of *Physics*, ‘nature’ is that which unconceals itself, distinct from that which does not unconceal itself or is only unconcealed through art. Heidegger, *On the Essence and Concept of physis in Aristotle's Physics B*, pp. 219ff.

\(^91\) Derrida’s reference to Heidegger’s note on Plato’s *khora* in Heidegger’s *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 227, can be found in Derrida, ‘Khora,’ in *On the Name*, p. 148n5.

\(^92\) What Heidegger *is* searching for, and Derrida in his wake, is another logic, a logic not of beings but the Being of beings. *The logic of Da* which negate or at least supplements a logic of *Dasein/beings*, a predicative logic which can only grasp what beings essentially are, if it is successful. For traditional logic relates solely to the interpretation and manipulation of the *essence* of [logic] beings, while what Heidegger suggests is, as he already does in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, that, ‘There is another logic.’ [See, Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 5.] Heidegger repeats this wish for another logic in *The Introduction to Being and Time*, but also later, in the concluding remarks to *Letter on Humanism*. [Cf. Heidegger, ‘The Concept of Logos,’ *Introduction to Being and Time*, Basic Writings, pp. 77ff. and Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, Basic Writings, p. 265.] More concretely, however, Heidegger makes an attempt to make this wish come true in his lectures on *Parmenides*, where he indeed makes a sustained effort to clarify, preliminary, a logic of unconcealment, truth or *aletheia*, a logic so all-encompassing that it even would include what is false, *pseudos*. If there is such a logic, it evidently does not concern itself with what beings essentially are, but with that which furthers and makes possible, perhaps gracefully, the Being of each being. But in order to present or make a logic of the ontological difference viable, one needs first to know what *Being* is. Of course, Derrida is continuing the negative labours of Heidegger, saying that the logic of Being is not the logic of beings, without ever coming to the point where he clearly can state the rules of [th]is other logic, nor lay out the grammar of the unknown. Derrida’s dream of ‘a logic other than the logic of the logos,’ begins with this quote from Jean-Pierre Vernant, ‘Raisons du mythe,’ *Mythe et Société en Grèce Ancienne* (Paris, 1974), p. 250. Derrida, *Khora*, p. 88ff.
The new element in Nietzsche’s chaos, his concept/ion of the eternal recurrence of the same, what it adds to our understanding of khora, if there between these concepts is homology whereby thinking one, one necessarily, at least involuntarily, thinks the other, is nothing. Nietzsche apperceives a beckoning nihilism at the heart of Europe, which no longer has a positive will, hence, in the hearts of Europeans is nothing already undisclosed. Sometimes Nietzsche speaks of the will as an old superstition already lost, at other times, as in Twilight of Idols, he speaks of the outstanding task, the negative labour of hammering out the will, this old superstition from the body of Europe, to remove [th]is fantasy from the minds of Europeans, to finally reveal, nothing inside. There is, of course, a striking contradiction in Nietzsche’s authorship, as if he in one book actively pursued the elimination of what in another book mourned the loss of. In both cases, however, Nietzsche apperceived the ecstasy of living without [will]. Therefore, Twilight of Idols only appears to contradict The Will to Power. For with an obvious reference to the opening of Twilight of Idols, Nietzsche speaks in The Will to Power of ‘the hammer’ that will finally destroy all European superstitions.

Whereas it is commonplace to think that what is hidden is valuable, Nietzsche presents an argument to the contrary, that khora is gold, that khora is Being without will. Nietzsche discovers at once the reluctance to give away something that modern man has acquired so recently, which is why Nietzsche suggests that one may need torture to remove the false spirit of subjectivity. The

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93 See the last and concluding envelope in Nietzsche’s The Will to Power, ‘The Eternal Recurrence of the Same,’ pp. 544ff. Der Wille Zur Macht, translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann.
94 Implicitly in The Will to Power the will is already considered as enfeebled, corrupted if not already departed. See for example, Nietzsche, The Will to Power, Fragment 55, p. 35.
95 Nietzsche, Twilight of Idols, ‘Foreword,’ p. 3.
96 Nietzsche, The Will to Power, Fragment 1053 and Fragment 1054, p. 544.
superstition of subjectivity needs to be hammered out, exorcised. This is, of course, not easily done, and it is therefore surprising that such an exorcism actually occurs in Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors.* To the relief of many, in *The Comedy of Errors,* this exorcism is entirely unsuccessful. But unlike theatre, in life Nietzsche has paradoxically already detected a certain ‘cultivation’ through which the will is about to be finally annihilated. He even goes on to ask in Fragment 1054 whether Europe could ‘will’ ‘will’s ‘destruction,’ and next, in Fragment 1055, he speaks of an ecstasy of nothing, an ‘ecstatic nihilism’ which would seem to follow after the substratum has been exorcised.

It is clear that the sole purpose of the *new hammer,* which is what Nietzsche calls his *Twilight of Idols,* is to remove all metaphysical beliefs, just as the *old hammer,* *The Malleus Maleficarum* was used by the Inquisition to exorcise pythons, devils and undead souls that presumably possessed witches. Likewise, the *new hammer* will exorcise the most fundamental of all modern superstitions, what seems to be what no modern man can be without, the will. Nietzsche, clearly imagining himself as the grand inquisitor of Metaphysics, expresses his hope to the jury of posterity, that after the exorcism, if it is successful, the subject [will], after much torture and doubt, confess that it has none, that it may in fact be without [will]. However, the obliteration of subjectivity does not only suggest the pure apperception of what is unconcealed, but its affirmation. In Fragments 1053 and

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100 For the expression of this hope, see, Nietzsche, ‘Error of Free Will,’ *Twilight of Idols,* VI. 7, p. 31.
101 Hence, Nietzsche does, in *Ecce Homo,* his philosophical autobiography, present the proper attitude to chaos, the eternal recurrence of the same, as *amor fati,* to love one’s destiny, to affirm what is unconcealed. In Fragment 1041 of *The Will To Power* Nietzsche repeats this formula for existence, saying, ‘The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence – my formula for this is *amor fati.*’ In the note provided by Walter Kaufmann, it says,
1056, *chaos* is seen as the ‘great cultivating idea,’ which promises, if we are to look away from Nietzsche’s reference to ‘degenerate and decaying races,’ ‘a new order of life.’102 Clearly, what belongs to man is the right to erase himself, *to be* unconcealed without metaphysical delusions or substantial hyperbole.103

When Nietzsche speaks of a ‘Cultivation of Ecstasy,’104 of Being suspended across [th]is great divide without the safety-net of subjectivity, what is implied is not only that it belongs to each man to erase himself, but that ‘the eternal recurrence’ specifically circumscribes the *place* where man is *not* himself, and that clearly Nietzsche speaks of the cultivation of that *place* of unconcealment, where prior to any false inference to subjectivity, soul or substratum, man *is*, but *not* himself.105 It is made clear that this *ecstasy* of Being is prior to subjectivity, and that prior to ecstasy there is no ‘substance,’ nor subject to suspend, but that *substance* is an empty attempt to self-secure or anchor, an empty attempt to escape the ecstasy of Being. For in ecstasy, within the *non*-subjective man *is* prior to being a subject. And, as Nietzsche says, we might do very well, or even better without any subjective interpretation or valuation of phenomena. There is of course in non-ecstasy, in subjectivity, something most of us are not willing to forego, that is, as Nietzsche points out in Fragment 1059, the, perhaps *false*, *certainty* of being a subject. Not many are willing to exchange the Descartian certainty of being a subject with the uncertainty of Being *unconcealed*. For as Nietzsche informs the

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unwilling, Being ecstatic we would, ‘No longer [find] joy in certainty but in uncertainty.’[^106] And, so he adds in the same fragment, neither would we rejoice in anything ‘merely subjective.’[^107]

[28] We should perhaps at this point ask ourselves what directions Nietzsche’s concept of chaos [eternal recurrence of the same] gives to our investigation from behind this thick veil of metaphors. We learn most of all that what stands in the way of comprehending the ontological contradiction, the priority of Being over beings, is the being that stands in his own way, man, when he insists on Being a subject.[^108] Blocking the possibility for the apperception of chaos as what is unconcealed, is man himself, when he insists on subjectivity, defining himself by will. For without either, Nietzsche imagines a life in ecstasy, an ecstasy that is, moreover, prior to subjectivity, which is no more than the dream-interpretation, the wishful thinking of a governess.[^109] It is easy to spot the attractiveness of these passages to Heidegger after his Kehre,[^110] for Nietzsche is approaching or at least seeking a way out of subjectivity, beyond metaphysics which only comprehends beings as what they essentially or substantially are. What Nietzsche’s concept of ‘eternal recurrence’ adds to Aristotle’s and Plato’s exposition of what is

[^108]: In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche presents man as an aporia, an unsurpassable divide. A tightrope-walker may pass this great, deep divide of his own Self, to reach over onto the other side, into the open. But it is soon made painfully clear to Zarathustra, who arrives from the solitude of the Alps only to see the tightrope-walker fall, that the many rejoice knowing that he was not capable of transgressing beyond himself, subjectivity, knowing that if indeed he made the attempt to step, even dance beyond man, to become *Overman*, *Hyperman*, *Übermensch*, he would not make it. Paradoxically, by not completing this Sprung, by diving to his own death, the self is resurrected, the false impression of substantiality reinforced, indeed saved. And so, Zarathustra walks away, without illusions. For this allegorical presentation of man as an aporia, see Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, ‘Zarathustra’s Prologue,’ pp. 41-48.
unconcealed, is the assurance that man lives in ecstasy before his attempt to, presumably falsely, anchor [th]is ecstatic existence in a substratum, that man’s life is ecstatic before it is substantial or subjective, and that life, long before it belongs to him, belongs to another, to that which grants or welcomes [th]is ecstatic being into existence. That is, prior to having a subject man has none, although [th]is does not mean that man has no intentions, no purposes and that man’s life has ‘no meaning,’ only that [th]is purpose, [th]is intention, [th]is meaning would first have to appear, and nothing would appear without chaos/khora. [Th]is means that man’s intentions are not primarily or primordially his own, but are given to him. It is in this view, and only from [th]is perspective, that the word ‘creativity’ becomes utterly perplexing, incomprehensible, we could almost say with Hegel, merely a ‘sound.’ Exposing the non-subjective ground of the ‘continually creative’ of Fragment 1059, Nietzsche says in Fragment 1066, ‘The concept “create” is today completely indefinable, unrealizable; merely a word, a rudimentary survival from the ages of superstition.’ And speaking of superstition, it becomes clear as Nietzsche arrives before sunrise, that he is carrying more than one hammer in his hand, for in one hand he holds The Twilight of Idols and in the other The Will to Power.

112 Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 545.
113 Nietzsche, The Will to Power, Fragment 1066, p. 548.
114 According to Heidegger, Nietzsche presents two mutually contradictory principles throughout his philosophy, pursues two contradictory trajectories. On the one hand, Nietzsche reaches for ‘the supreme humanization of beings’ through his doctrine of The Will to Power. On the other hand, Nietzsche’s concept of chaos and the eternal recurrence of the same are attempts to utterly dehumanize man and to de-deify the world, to rid the world of any trace of a hidden soul or a God concealed. Heidegger says, ‘In Nietzsche’s usage, the word chaos indicates a defensive notion in consequence of which nothing can be asserted of being as a whole. Thus the world as a whole becomes something we fundamentally cannot address, something ineffable – an arreton.’ [Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same, p. 94f. Emphasis added.] In the note accompanying the translation, Farrell Krell says that ‘Arreton, the negation of rheton, is found in Homer, Hesiod, and throughout Classical Age. It means what is unspoken, inexpressible,
If we, in some way, are excluded from these ecstasies, precluded from the pleasures and pains of [th]is ‘boundlessly creative God,’ it is, as Nietzsche explains, because in some way, ‘the old God still lives.’ What is almost incomprehensible to modern man is that the ‘boundlessly creative’ is not subjective, does not belong to subjectivity, but to what makes man create in the first place. To a large extent [th]is explains man’s reluctance, his unwillingness to embrace [th]is principle of unconcealment, as chaos/khora does not belong to him, but to another, if you will, to God. It is easy to recognize in chaos, as Heidegger does, Nietzsche’s God-inventing spirit in the eternal recurrence of the same, his desire to create, as Jean-Luc Marion remarks, at least a notion of God again. For following Nietzsche’s clear lead, not even the gods would be were they not made, nor would they be unmade if one did not close the theological workshop. As Heidegger, quite surprisingly, presents Nietzsche’s doctrine of chaos as a kind of negative
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theology, it is perhaps justified to deliver Heidegger’s argument in extenso.

Heidegger says,

‘The most fundamental point to be made about Nietzsche’s notion of chaos is the following: only a thinking that is utterly lacking in stamina will deduce a will to godlessness from the will to a de-deification of beings. On the contrary, truly metaphysical thinking, at the outermost point of de-deification, allowing itself no subterfuge and eschewing all mystification, will uncover that path on which alone gods will be encountered if they are to be encountered ever again in the history of mankind. ‘What to common sense looks like ‘atheism,’ and has to look like it, is at bottom the very opposite. In the same way, wherever the matters of death and the nothing are treated, Being and Being alone is thought most deeply – whereas those who ostensible occupy themselves solely with ‘reality’ flounder in ‘nothingness.’

If khora and chaos are indistinguishable, Nietzsche teaches us in the last fragments of his last book, The Will to Power, about our subjective, if not personal, relation to khora, that there are different ways of Being in khora, even ways of hiding away from khora, an unwillingness to be where one is not a subject. Rather than rejoice in khora, in non-subjectivity, man still takes pride in being himself, which makes him, as is suggested, his persona less creative, his life darker, his soul heavy, as he carries what he needs not, according to Nietzsche, a soul [inside] his chest, which keeps him from taking part in Being ecstatically. The implications of Nietzsche’s last envelope, is that philosophy was already sidetracked from the very beginning when Thales was asked, ‘What is most difficult?’ and answered, ‘To know yourself.’ To the contrary, what is most

119 Heidegger continues, ‘What Nietzsche is practicing with regard to the world totality is a kind of negative theology, which tries to grasp the Absolute as purely as possible by holding at a distance all ‘relative’ determinations, that is, all those that relate to human beings. Except that Nietzsche’s determination of the world as a whole is a negative theology without the Christian God.’ Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same, p. 95. Emphasis added.
120 Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same, p94. Emphasis added. Again, by ‘eschewing mystification.’ Heidegger is again stressing the negative path to what is unconcealed, and there, Da, to its apperception.
121 Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same, p. 208.
123 Plato, Protagoras, 343a/b, p. 774.
difficult is to not know your self, and even more, to be not yourself. But posing these questions is already approaching the problem from the wrong angle. In the beginning there is no self to escape from or remove. In the beginning, there is only the non-self, what is unconcealed, be it chaos or khora, which we escape from by anchoring [th]is ecstasy in the illusion of Being a subject. Evidently, Nietzsche denounces the Oracle of Delphi, claiming that nothing is more superfluous than to know yourself, nothing more fundamental than to know khora, and that only the acceptance of khora could one day make man become hyperman, that is, no longer himself, but khora. When the Oracle asks every man, ‘Know Thyself,’ it appears, from [th]is perspective, as if God through the oracles was asking for something that was impossible, that could not possibly be accomplished, only to keep himself secret.

[31] What we finally come to realize, and any reader that has followed his exposition, is that at the heart of Nietzsche’s attempt to dehumanize man is the opposite drive to redivinization, and that the attempt at apotheosis came about through a kind of negative theology. What superficially appeared to utterly disenchant the world, was nothing but an attempt to reenchant the lives of all beings through a kind of negative theology that was so subtle or so apparent that

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124 On the illusion of subjectivity, see particularly. ‘The Four Great Errors,’ in Nietzsche, Twilight of Idols, pp.26-32, but also ‘One The Prejudices of Philosophers,’ in Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, pp. 5-24, esp. paragraph 16, where Nietzsche humbly says, ‘What gives me the right to talk about an ‘I,’ and beyond that an ‘I as a cause,’ and beyond that yet ‘I as the cause of thoughts?’ Anyone who dares to answer such metaphysical questions promptly by referring to a kind of epistemological intuition … will be met with a smile …’ [Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, page 17]. Perhaps we should let Nietzsche explain, ‘There is thinking, but to assert that there is the same thing as that famous old ‘I’ is, to put it mildly, only an assumption …[a] grammatical habit.’ [Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, page 17] And finally, speaking aporetically of that which is impossible to erase in all attempts to think without erasing the thought or utterance itself, namely place, Nietzsche makes an impossible prognostication, ‘perhaps some day logicians will even get used to doing without that little ‘there’ (into which the honest old ‘I’ has evaporated).’ [Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, p. 18].
it, for the most part, remained undiscovered. That Nietzsche, as a classical philologist, and also, but not least, a trained orator, could foresee that announcing the death of God,\footnote{Nietzsche, \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra}, p. 41.} was perhaps the simplest way to awaken all the Gods, makes it possible to understand why Nietzsche speaks of \textit{Götzendämmerung, The Twilight of the ‘Gods,’} not only their demise, but their final appearance after everything hidden has been taken away.\footnote{By ‘dämmerung,’ Nietzsche announces that everything hidden will finally be brought to light and nothing will be hidden; neither causes, feelings, principles or wills,\cite[Nietzsche, \textit{Twilight of Idols}, pp. 26-32][]{Nietzsche1873} which will all disappear as swiftly as Hamlets from under Juliet’s balcony when the sun breaks. [Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, II.ii.176].} Having by detour found that Nietzsche’s ‘God is Dead,’\footnote{Nietzsche, \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra}, p. 41.} is in fact a theo-logical statement, we have indeed discovered the same God of unconcealment which Plato addressed in the prayer opening the exposition of \textit{khora} in \textit{Timaeus}.\footnote{Plato, \textit{Timaeus}, 48d. To facilitate comparison with any other edition, we list the marginal references in \textit{The Complete Works} of Plato, which refers to the Greek text of Plato as edited (Paris, 1578) by the French scholar Henri Estienne (in Latin, Stephanus). Cf. ‘Editorial Notes’ to Plato, \textit{Complete Works}, ed. John M. Cooper. p. xxvii.} I then end [th]is exposition not only with a \textit{parousia}, the constantly deferred, and never expected, apotheosis of man, but at least a foretaste of that ecstasy man could take part in if he was ever truly unconcealed. And having arrived here, we appear to be where we began our exposition, only acknowledging that another has answered Plato’s prayer. For through sheer luck or kind grace, benevolence or hard labour we have discovered that what Plato, in the beginning, was praying for, \textit{is} indistinguishable from what he was praying to, that is, \textit{khora}, which is, with or without man, what \textit{is} highest or first, that which nothing can be without, the Being of beings.
§2.5 Derrida’s Khora

Derrida begins his essay on Khora by saying that the title does not only name what is beyond language, but *is* itself a testimony to ‘the incapacity for naming.’\(^{129}\) Khora does not simply name what is beyond language, but rather, khora names the possibility for Being unconcealed. Derrida claims that in every act of *representation*, khora is always missing, as it *is* beyond representation. We will later make a contrary, at least supplementary, claim by saying that there is no khora, that the apperception of khora may or may not be produced, but not without letting Derrida give us a clear sense of what *is* missing.\(^{130}\) In [th]is text, what Derrida speaks about and what speaks through [th]is text is inevitably different. The elegance of [th]is text is not only that it expresses *khora* doubly, both discursively and performatively, but that Derrida, almost effortlessly, is able to make us apperceive the unconcealment of khora as we read. Thus we become

\(^{129}\) Derrida, Khora, in, *On the Name*, p. 89.

\(^{130}\) What is odd is not that Derrida always finds a lack in language, but that some of his opponents do not. Derrida mourns his own misreception, and clarifies his own position by, perhaps wrongfully, distancing himself from the philosophy of language as represented by Richard Rorty. [Derrida’s *A Taste for the Secret*, p. 10.] For through such concepts as *trace*, *differance*, khora, Derrida attempts to express that which is inevitably beyond language and makes *possible* any discourse, a way for the apperception, if not Being, of everything that *is*. [For Derrida’s acknowledgment of his mis-reception, see also Derrida, *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials*, p. 77] I should add that Richard Rorty himself mourns the ontological vacuum in linguistic philosophy. [Rorty, in epilogue to the reedition of the influential, *The Linguistic Turn*, ‘Twenty-Five Years After,’ pp. 371-374] Rorty confesses, ‘The slogan that ‘the problems of philosophy are problems of language’ now strikes me as confused.’ [Rorty, ‘Twenty Five Years After,’ in *The Linguistic Turn*, p. 371] No one can deny the fecundity of the new philosophical program that Rorty announces in his conclusion, ‘If ‘philosophy’ comes to be viewed as continuous with science (as Quine wishes it to be) one the one hand and as continuous with poetry (as Heidegger and Derrida often suggest it) is on the other, then our descendants will be less concerned with questions about ‘the method of philosophy’ or about the ‘nature of philosophical problems.’[Rorty, ‘Twenty Five Years After,’ *The Linguistic Turn*, p. 374.] Strangely, Derrida announces a similar philosophical program in his conversation with Maurizio Ferraris, however, not without being concerned, ‘Another criterion is needed, and the search for this criterion can and must destroy the great ensembles that give us Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel on one side, and Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe on the other ... If we look ... closely ..., we shall find a Platonic literature that is not the literature of Hegel, and a Shakespearean philosophy that is not the philosophy of Dante, Goethe or Diderot. What we have, then, is an enormous research program, in which the received - or receivable - categories of academic scholarship must not be trusted.’ [Derrida, *A Taste for The Secret*, pp. 11-12]
conscious, even self-conscious, of khora, as if [th]is handsome text is aware of itself, even presents the self-consciousness of khora. Khora conscious of itself cannot be likened to a man conscious of his own looks, but is more like a mirror conscious of itself and the way it unconceals not reflections, but beings, that is, the Being of beings. Derrida’s performance is inevitably different from what he speaks of, and it is [th]is self-conscious display of the unconcealment of khora, as if we are witnessing khora in the very act of unconcealing itself, which is what Derrida brings to the discourse of khora, and what separates Derrida from Plato and Plotinus, the urge to be, if he has not already become, as Nietzsche prophesized, indifferent from khora.\textsuperscript{131}

[33] It is the difference between the unconcealing, the ‘performative element,’ if you will, and the discursive element of khora, which makes Derrida speak of an inevitable ‘oscillation,’ of the discourse on khora Being the site of an inevitable contradiction. Derrida says, ‘Let us recall once more, under the heading of our preliminary approach, that the discourse on the khora, as it is presented, does not proceed from the natural or legitimate logos.’\textsuperscript{132} And making clear that he is simultaneously approaching a negative understanding of the ontological difference, and making [th]is ontological difference perform before our eyes, Derrida notes,

‘The oscillation of which we have just spoken is not an oscillation among others, an oscillation between two poles. It oscillates between two types of oscillation; the double exclusion (\textit{neither/nor}) and the participation (\textit{both})

\textsuperscript{131} No doubt, superiorly Derrida displays the self-consciousness of displaying khora. As an example of [th]is self-awareness, we may quote the following passage from \textit{Khora}, ‘What we have just put forward, for example, for the sake of the example, on the subject of ‘khora’ in the text of Plato’s discourse, reproduces or simply brings back, with all its schemas, Plato’s discourse on the subject of the khora. And this is true even down to this very sentence in which I just made of the word schemas.’ [Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 95].

\textsuperscript{132} Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 90.
this and that). But have we the right to transport the logic, para-logic or the meta-logic of this super-oscillation from one set to the other? It concerned first of all types of existent thing (sensible/intelligible, visible/invisible, form/formless, icon, or mimeme/paradigm, but we have displaced it toward types of discourse (mythos/logos) or of relation to what is or is not in general.133

Having at the same time ‘displaced’ khora ‘towards types of discourse’ ‘or’ - and her lies the site of the oscillation, the locale for the inevitable ‘teleological anachronism’ - a ‘relation to what is or is not in general,’ Derrida has made clear that what he attempts to express, both, discursively and as a happening, is the ontological difference, which through [th]is anachronism, if not the simultaneity of [th]is discourse and [th]is happening, we are made aware of.

[34] Of course, it is not easy to immediately understand what ‘teleological anachronism’ is, would be, but it becomes clear, as ‘telos’ means ‘end,’ that speaking of khora is always to speak of another end. That is, it is impossible, according to Derrida, to express the khora of that which you speak of, or that which you attempt to [re]present. Therefore ‘khora’ is without reference; if anything, it is rather [th/is], the sign which in its attempt to signify something shows that it is not even a sign, it even erodes or implodes its own significatory, [re]presentative function when it is expressed. For khora is not a sign, which is why it has no reference. Khora is not even a sign, as it is expressed, or rather, ‘khora’ is even undermined as a word when it is expressed, as if it has no reference, is not even self-referential. As Derrida [de]scribes it, ‘Deprived of a real referent, that which in fact resembles a proper name finds itself also called an X which has as its property (as its physis and as its dynamis, Plato’s text will say) that it has nothing

133 Derrida, Khora, in On the Name, p. 91. Emphasis added.
as its own and that it remains unformed, formless (*amorphon*). Obviously Derrida is clearly thinking beyond language, attempting, through khora, to think, ‘*what* is and is not.’ [Th]is counts for, would explain the numerous times he mentions ‘ontology’ in the essay, although it is rather clear from what he says that when he is speaking of ‘ontology’ he is not speaking of what is ontologically different, the negativity of the ontological difference, but when he is speaking of *khora*, he is. That Derrida uses ontology or ontotheology as a synonym for a metaphysical science of beings and not a poetics of Being is evident throughout the text. But even though Derrida speaks derogatorily of ontology as a metaphysical science, he does nevertheless, perhaps involuntarily, present the negativity of the ontological difference through *khora*, and what occupies us here is not how Derrida understands the word ‘ontology’ but rather how he understands the negativity of the ontological difference as *khora*.135

What Derrida finds in *khora* is an attempt to express that what is highest, or what is first. For our purposes, we find it unnecessary to emphasize Derrida’s positive use of the word ‘ontology,’ a use which runs with the meaning implied in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, namely, ‘a science of beings,’ but nevertheless does not conceptually acknowledge Heidegger’s distinct differentiation between the *ontic* and the *ontological*, where the first science will, if it is successful, describe the

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135 To show that Derrida’s use of ‘ontology’ is an expression of his true understanding of the word and not merely displaced or a misunderstanding, we should listen to Derrida when he speaks of ontology as if it was an overreaching or universal science in an Aristotelian sense, ‘This encyclopaedic logos is a general ontology, treating of all the types of being, it includes a theology, a cosmology, a physiology, a psychology, a zoology. Mortal or immortal, human and divine, visible and invisible things are situated here.’ [Derrida, ‘Khora’, in *On the Name*, p. 103. Emphasis added,] Conceptually Derrida confuses or mistakes the ‘ontic’ and the ‘ontologie,’ a confusion not his own, but stemming from Aristotle. That is, the concept of ontology, which Derrida here uses, is that *implied* in the metaphysical tradition founded by Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, where obviously the ground for the confusion between Being and beings may have been laid once and for all.
substantial properties of any being, whereas ontology will *not* describe what is essential to any being, but what will allow them *to be*, that which is indispensable to all beings. In what Derrida says we agree with everything except his positive use of the word ‘ontologic’, but, of course, the misuse of a word is quite insignificant if what you have expressed is [not]. Derrida says,

‘… there is only one khora, and that is indeed how we understand it: there is only one, (however divisible it be), the referent of this reference does not exist. It does not have the characteristics of an existent, by which we mean an existent that would be receivable in the *ontologic*, that is, those of an intelligible or sensible existent. There is khora but the khora does not exist.’\textsuperscript{136}

Derrida seems reluctant to confess that he *is* speaking of the negative ontological difference between Being and beings, when he maintains that *there is*, ‘*es gibt*’ is implied in all negative theology, adding the immediately perplexing, but ‘what *there is*, there, is not.’\textsuperscript{137} What is taken for granted in this statement is two different uses of ‘is,’ one ontic and one ontological, corresponding to, if you will, to the uses of positive theology, which believes in heavenly *beings*, and of negative theology, which renounces all *phenomenological* attempts to express the Being of beings. In one sense, ‘is’ is used as a copula to connect a being to what it essentially is, in the other, to say *that* it is even without having these properties described. Derrida attempts to make this distinction clear, ‘[I]t will be risky to see in it *khora* the equivalent of a *es gibt*, or the *es gibt* which remains without doubt implicated in every negative theology, unless it is the *es gibt* which always summons negative theology in its Christian history.’\textsuperscript{138} We can therefore let Derrida unconceal his fundamental argument, ‘Now what we can read, it seems, of

\textsuperscript{136} Derrida, *Khora*, in *On the Name*, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{137} Derrida, *Khora*, in *On the Name*, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{138} Derrida, *Khora*, in *On the Name*, p. 96.
khora in the Timaeus is that “something,” which is not a thing.\(^{139}\) There is no simpler way to unconceal, without the word, the negative ontological difference, to express the Being of beings, negatively.

\[37\] Exposing the essential emptiness of khora, Derrida says, ‘Not having an essence, how could the khora be \(se \ tiendrait-elle\) beyond its name? The khora is anachronistic; it ‘is’ the anachrony within being, or better: the anachrony of being. It \(khora\) anachronizes being.'\(^{140}\) [Th]is ‘teleological anachronism,'\(^{141}\) is moreover a ‘structural anachronism,’ which is of course to say, that it is \(unavoidable\). ‘[The structural anachronism] would be the inevitable effect produced by \(something\ \text{like}\ \text{the } khora\) – which is not something, and which is not \(like\) anything, not even like what \(it\) would be, \(itself\), there beyond its name.'\(^{142}\) We do agree with Derrida, that khora is untranslatable, or will always have to appear as khora, beyond language, without language, without a word, as it makes something, anything, even a word open up as it steps out into \(khora\). Although khora more properly signifies the place that makes possible any phenomenal appearance, exactly where the singular and unrepeatable placing of beings in the clearing takes place, one cannot disagree that also a word would have to take place in order to be expressed. Derrida says, ‘And yet, “khora” seems never to let itself be reached or touched, much less broached, and above all not exhausted by these types of tropological or interpretative translation.'\(^{143}\)

\(^{139}\) Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 96.
\(^{140}\) Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 94.
\(^{141}\) Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 93.
\(^{142}\) Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 94.
\(^{143}\) Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 95.
We shall finally speak of [th]is untouchability, the unreachability of khora, where khora appears not unlike another blue or Romantic flower. Derrida asserts the impossibility of speaking of another man’s khora or the khora of another, as if what is unconcealed as the khora of another is inescapably your own. [Th]is inability to represent, possibly even to apperceive, another man’s khora, reminds us of what Kant, in seeming contradistinction to [th]is position, says in *Critique of Pure Reason*, that the Being of the other is always my own, that the other has no Being without me. For through khora, the other is without me and I am solely on my own. Through [th]is isolation, Derrida’s *khora* resembles Leibniz *monad*, were not the first unconcealed and the other hidden, if not it is more true to say that the khora of the other is always hidden to me, and what I apperceive as the khora of the other, the birth of the other, is always my own, and he could not have been born without me, that again, the Being of the other is my own. We shall here not neglect the fundamental difference between a *self*, a soul concealed and khora unconcealed. For that which cannot be replaced or represented is through khora unconcealed, through the self concealed. But we cannot always speak of ourselves, although Derrida says we inescapably do. Derrida holds that I can *speak* of the *essence* of the other, but never [of] his *khora*. The *khora* of the other is beyond what I may possibly speak [of].

The impossibility of representing another man’s life, his Being, is of course, solely our own. [Th]is problem does not belong to Plato, for Plato lets Timaeus present a theory of how *ideas* appear as *phenomena* in [th]is world, that is through

145 Derrida limits khora unnecessarily to the sphere of discourse, representation and to reproduction, when it is easily noticed that what *khora* names is the way in which phenomena, images, likenesses, are allowed to appear.
khora, and not of how we experience or apperceive khora, and much less how it is possible or impossible to participate in a discourse about khora, impossible to discursify khora, which indeed, Derrida says it is, as khora cannot be an object of discourse as the unconcealment of khora is inevitably displaced. Of course, without an object there would be no discourse, but the paradox of khora is that – even if [th]is is impossible - each discourse will nevertheless make khora appear, present khora, inevitably. However, a discourse on khora is impossible, as khora cannot essentially be described and therefore any possible common platform or ground has, already from the beginning, been taken away. Nevertheless khora is expressed, but not the khora of the other. Again, I can speak of the being or the essence of the other, but not his khora. For when I speak or perceive him I will inevitably speak from without, within another khora. And if I do attempt to speak of his khora, the khora of the other, I am bound to speak anachronistically, ateleologically, of another end [telos], in another time [place], inevitably … [I am bound to speak anachronistically, for speaking of his khora, I do it from within my own] …
In this chapter we will discover Pseudo-Dionysius’ unreified theory of what is concealed in his symbolic and negative theologies, theologies that make possible not only the interpretation but the production of what is concealed through the two distinct methods of *aphairesis* and *dissimilar similarity*.\(^1\) We will further find that Kant similarly produces the apperception of what is concealed through a philosophy that does *not* accentuate what is unavailable to man, the thing-in-itself,\(^2\) but rather, what he believes man unavoidably makes an inference to or *is* the condition for everything that he may know *and* not know, the *noumenon*, whether */th/is*, which remains concealed, is called Subject, World, or God.\(^3\) We shall thirdly see, that Derrida, however much he attempts to emulate and develop the philosophy of Heidegger, however he may do so at times successfully, he ends up, perhaps voluntarily, although we shall not speculate on the causes for */th/is* betrayal, with a subversion of Heidegger’s ontology. Derrida presents the exact

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\(^2\) For Kant’s continued emphasis on the false interpretation of what is and must remain unavailable to man, be it the essence of spirits, angels or God, see the almost untimely essay, *Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics* from 1766, in Kant, *The Philosophy of Kant*, ed. Carl J. Friedrich.

\(^3\) For the illusory production of singular *noumena*, see the incomparable chapter in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘The Paralogism of Pure Reason,’ A341/B399-A405/B432, pp. 382-441.
opposite of what he intends to emulate, for when he accentuates Heidegger’s
presentation of death as that which makes [i]is irreplaceable, he makes death into
a negative, but clearly hidden principle for life or Being. Nothing could be further
from Heidegger’s heart, or, if you will, more concealed.

§3.1 Derrida’s Death

[2] Any investigation throws on its subject the suspicion that it would not have
been studied, never become the subject of investigation, if what was studied was
still alive. That is Baudrillard’s critique of Foucault in one of his earliest works,
Forget Foucault,⁴ that neither the power-structures nor the subject that Foucault
studies the birth and disciplination of, as he does in The History of the Prison or in
The History of Madness, would have been available to the archaeological
procedures of Foucault, if they were not already dead. Only then would it be
possible to analyse and dissect this subject.⁵ After having shaken off his youthful
exuberance for the unconcealed, Heidegger admits, in his remarkably simple essay
of 1955, Identity and Difference, that there are, in the history of Being, different
ways in which the Being of beings is destined to show or not show itself. What
follows is a list of the different incarnations of Being, so long that it seems to
exhaust the possibilities for Being. However it is safe to say it does not. Heidegger
says in the second lecture on Identity and Difference entitled ‘The Onto-Theo-
Logical Constitution of Metaphysics,’

⁵ Although Vesalius, in the name of science, dissected a living man before the birth of subjectivity, it
may be true that Foucault was more civilized, that he waited until the subject was dead. For the
birth of modern anatomy see Daniel Boorstin, The Discoverers.
'There is Being only in this or that particular historic character: Physis, Logos, Hen, Idea, Energeia, Substantiality, Objectivity, Subjectivity, the Will, the Will to Power, the Will to Will. But these historic forms cannot be found in rows, like apples, pears, peaches, lined up on the counter of historical representational thinking.'

Giving this positive listing of the historical incarnations of the Being of beings, it is obvious that what is, at all times neglected in the totality of Heidegger’s writings, is the unreified expression and experience of Being as what is concealed.

Like scales weighed down on one side or the other by the Zeitgeist, the scales of Being, dark-light, concealed-unconcealed, make Being advance into shining presence or retreat into obscure withdrawal. Clearly, Kant’s ‘unavoidable’ inference to what is hidden, the noumenal ground apperceived by Reason behind every phenomena that presents itself to the Understanding, is to Heidegger an expression of the obscurities of Metaphysics which neglects what is present or already unconcealed. The Being of beings, not only the awareness of the clearing but the clearing itself, withdraws into oblivion. The Being of beings changes its aspect, its expression, as it leans on one foot or the other, from the unconcealed to the concealed. But Heidegger claims that there is only one authentic, primary or original aspect of Being, and not acknowledging this is tantamount to forgetfulness, if not a withdrawal of Being itself. Heidegger’s argument in Identity and Difference is only the latest eloquent testimony to what his writings make clear all along, that Heidegger never attempts to write a descriptive, but a normative

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6 Heidegger, Identity and Difference, p. 66. The Greek characters in the original are emphasized.
7 By his early inquiry into the mystic traits of Heidegger’s thought, John D. Caputo alerted us to what was not made entirely explicit by his analysis, that Heidegger is a proponent of a mysticism of light, in tradition with Plotinus, Augustine and Eckhart, but that he most emphatically contradicts a mysticism of darkness, as expressed most forcefully by Pseudo-Dionysius’s The Mystical Theology. [Cf. Caputo, The Mystical Element in Heidegger’s Thought, 1990.] On the difference between these two strains of mysticism, see also Henry, Paul, ‘The Place of Plotinus in the History of Thought,’ 1991.
8 On Heidegger’s understanding of the oblivion of being, see for example Heidegger, Identity and Difference, p. 68ff, and Heidegger, Letter on Humanism, Basic Writings, p. 232.
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ontology. Allowing myself the privilege of honest disagreement, I will modestly point out that Heidegger’s enumeration of Being does not exhaust all its aspects. For there is the Being of what is hidden, and nowhere is this more clearly expressed than in Kant’s concept of the noumenon that conditions all phenomena, the unseen that conditions everything that we may properly see. It is clear that the faculty for or the function of making distinct judgments, disjunctive propositions that separates one thing from another, does not produce the apperception of the noumenon, but phenomena as they stand apart, individuated, as one being different from another, abstracted from everything it is not. But appearing in the world as one phenomenon distinct from another, would to Kant give you no claim to Being, for the Being of beings, the noumenon is to Kant entirely concealed, beyond perception, imperceptible. But still it is, so unlike the thing in itself, which remains beyond apprehension, inappercieved.9

[4] Showing a clear taste for images, towards everything that is brought to light, Heidegger evidently turns his back on Kant as he favours phenomena, shying away from everything hidden. Judging from Heidegger’s admiration of van Gogh,10 we may say of Heidegger, as we undoubtedly may of Nietzsche, that

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9 Kant’s negative concept of the thing in itself is nowhere more easily grasped than through his critique of Leibniz’ monad. In order to demarcate his position, Kant says in ‘Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection,’ ‘Leibniz turned all substances, because he conceived them as noumena, into simple subjects endowed with powers of presentation - in a word, into monads.’ [Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A266/B322.] ‘Appearances was for him the presentation of the thing in itself.’ [A270/B326] However, as Kant concludes his exposition of Leibniz, ‘what things may be in themselves I do not know - nor indeed need to know, since, after all, I can never encounter a thing otherwise than in appearance.’ [A277/B333] We should perhaps take note of what distinguishes a critique from other intellectual inquiries. ‘All objections can be divided into dogmatic, critical and sceptical ones. A dogmatic objection is one directed against a proposition; a critical objection is one directed against the proof of a proposition. [Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A388] The critique does not prove that an assertion is incorrect, but takes away the proof on which the assertion is based, [A388] ‘it topples the theory; it does so by withdrawing the theory’s alleged foundation, without seeking to establish anything else.’ [Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A389].

10 See Heidegger, The Origin of the Work of Art, in Basic Writings, pp. 158 ff., for Heidegger’s exposition of a pair of farmer’s boots in one of van Gogh’s Stilleben; and Gadamer, Heidegger’s
perhaps he could not imagine a finer life than *ein Bilderleben*.\(^\text{11}\) Undoubtedly, Heidegger looks away from the negative presentation of what *is* concealed as it is found in both Kantian philosophy and Dionysian theology. In [th]is light, it almost appears to be an act of karmic justice, when, as we shall soon see, the most outstanding of all Heidegger’s followers, one who almost explicitly attempts to emulate Heidegger’s philosophy, ends up unknowingly *subverting* his position, giving voice to what Heidegger always attempts to avoid, the concealed. Principally, Heidegger looks away from another mode of Being as he identifies Metaphysics with the *reification* of what *is* hidden, be it defined as *cause, essence* or *substance*. Therefore, Heidegger never speaks of *X*, what is *inessentially* or *unsubstantially* concealed in his attempt to destroy metaphysics. Throughout his entire life, Heidegger never acknowledges the possibility of a negative presentation of what *is* concealed, for what *is* hidden may be presented as clearly and as *negatively* as he himself presents the appearance of any phenomenon as *unconcealed*. Heidegger strives to present the open, *die Licthtung*, the phenomenal clearing, as negative, and thereby to disclose the ontological difference as something unreifiable, what negatively comes to presence by negating its own concealment. Heidegger depreciates the hidden by presenting it as the unfounded knowledge of something merely positive or ontic. This reification is twofold, it may rest on a faith in heavenly *beings*, as it occurs in theology, or, as in the metaphysical tradition which begins with Aristotle, *be* hypostatized as the *hypokeimenon* of any *phainomenon*, the *substance* of any *Erscheinung*. A

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hystazation, moreover, which Heidegger claims is an inference to what is concealed from what is prior to [th]is concealment, the unconcealed without which [th]is inference could not be made. What Heidegger therefore looks away from, or even decides to look away from, as if it was a decision he merely and arbitrarily could make, is the negative disclosure of the concealed, whereby what is hidden is not hypostatized, but what remains.

[5] There is perhaps no clearer testimony to Heidegger’s complete neglect of what is concealed, than his misapprehension of negative theology. The only time Heidegger uses this term, it is used to pronounce Nietzsche’s doctrine of the eternal recurrence, the chaos left after God is dead, as ‘a kind of Negative Theology.’\(^{12}\) It is clear that Heidegger’s use of ‘negative theology’ on this occasion speaks against all tradition, for, as witnessed,\(^ {13}\) what is expressed through chaos and eternal recurrence is the apperception of what is unconcealed, but, as we shall see later in this chapter, as most logically expressed by Pseudo-Dionysius, what is exposed by negative theology is never anything but what is concealed. Instead of admitting that there is another side to the apperception of the ontological difference, as Adorno would say in his lectures on Kant, ‘a metaphysical experience,’\(^ {14}\) perhaps another state of Being, Heidegger appears to have made an arbitrary decision when without a word he leaves the tradition in the dark that presents the ontological difference as concealed. We shall therefore continue, with one who appears to follow in Heidegger’s footsteps, but along the way discloses what

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12 Heidegger, Nietzsche: Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence, p. 95.
13 What is negatively expressed through ‘God is dead.’ [Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, p. 41.] judging from Nietzsche’s comments on the soon to be lost belief in any hypostatized God or in any substantial soul in The Will to Power, his unrealised and final achievement, is undoubtedly what is unconcealed. Cf. Chapter II, Philosophies of Unconcealment, §2.4 Nietzsche’s Chaos.
14 For Adorno’s assessment of the metaphysical experience implied in the Kantian critique, see Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, pp. 110 ff. and 175 ff.
Heidegger never did. For unlike his precursor, Jacques Derrida does unquestionably have *A Taste for The Secret*. Reading Derrida’s *Aporias*, it becomes clear that Derrida betrays the philosophy of Heidegger by attempting its emulation. Questioning death, Derrida acknowledges, even masterly exposes, what Heidegger, throughout all his works attempted to avoid, a presentation of what is concealed. By thus willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously, undermining the philosophy of Heidegger, Derrida becomes the last, a living philosopher, to convincingly deliver an interpretation, to present an understanding of the Being of beings as concealed. [Th]is is remarkable, not because death is presented as a negative principle of life, as it also is in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, but when we discover what [th]is means. For in *Aporias*, the Being of beings is presented negatively, is only signalled by the death of my appearance. Certainly, what is most valuable to Heidegger, the phenomenally unconcealed, dies in the hands of Derrida, who presents the phenomenal as a principle of death, whereas life is only Being signalled by something more, unappearing, hidden. Let us now look at Derrida’s exposition of the ontological difference, a theory, which, in effect, says, my death is my *only* appearance, where you may no longer catch a glimpse of what is [hidden], my life, my Being.

Being in perfect contradiction to Heidegger’s intent, Derrida’s enthusiastic misinterpretation of *Being and Time*, his pretence to follow what he severely undermines, does not seem accidental, as it amplifies and reinforces the impression of exactly that which Heidegger attempted to avoid, the withdrawal of the Being of beings, where [th]is is no longer unconcealed. I do not, however hold [th]is against

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Derrida, do not attempt to take sides, but will show that by, perhaps unknowingly, contradicting what he attempts to emulate, Derrida has in fact given not only the most profound, but also the clearest expression to another state of Being, a state of Being which Heidegger is guilty of neglecting. Derrida turns Heidegger’s exposition of the incompleteness of Being upside-down, for death comes to indicate exactly what it does not to Heidegger, a negative principle of the hidden life of all beings. Although to the untrained eye, for one with *A Taste for the Secret*, the ontological analysis of death in *Being and Time* may appear to disclose something hidden, what is revealed is exactly its opposite, what is un Concealed. For even in the ‘preliminary’ analysis of death, Heidegger, who distastes anything secret, never attempts to disclose the Being of beings as anything but un concealed. Still, Derrida attempts to imagine what Heidegger did not, namely his own death, thereby revealing death as a negative principle of the concealed life of all beings.

For to Derrida, death denotes the event whereby the phenomenal is left alone, where a being is without depth, and therefore no longer is, a being among beings. My own death is unimaginable, what is beyond me, the pure perception of my own [pure] appearance, where I finally appear without having anything to hide. For my death is my only true appearance. Only the living has anything to hide. The dead have nothing to hide. I can never witness or take part in this event, which is truly hidden to me.

[7] That Heidegger anticipated, if not already experienced, the misapprehension of the sections on death in *Being and Time*, may well be the reason that he never returned to complete or develop what he himself deems ‘a

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preliminary sketch.' To Heidegger, death fundamentally guarantees that my life is never essentially complete. By stressing this incompleteness that death guarantees the living, to Dasein, as to the dead there are no remaining projects, no other places to go, it is perhaps obvious that Heidegger’s death guarantees something that it does not to Derrida, and that is a principle of unconcealment. Certainly, Derrida, in Aporias, by his constant misreading, gives voice to the opposite of what his mentor expresses, the exact opposite to what he thinks he is about to emulate, that is a principle of concealment. Propounding the ontological difference as concealed, Derrida comes to incarnate the inevitable teleological anachronism that he speaks of in Khora, that you are bound to speak of another end, inevitably will speak of another khora. But even to Derrida it could be surprising that he was bound to express its forgetfulness, the withdrawal of khora.

Derrida perhaps involuntarily gives himself away from the beginning, unknowingly suggesting his own betrayal, when he begins his discourse on the limits of truth by quoting Seneca. For as much as Caesar came to incarnate the betrayal of the Republic, Seneca became the father of the double standard, who executed exactly in life what he was speaking against in his writings. Derrida quotes Seneca, saying that life is a property man squanders without thinking of his own death. But when Derrida follows Seneca’s counsel, trying to imagine his own death, he soon discovers that it is impossible. It is perhaps ironic that Derrida

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18 Derrida, *Khora*, in *On the Name*, p. 94.
begins his discourse by quoting *Vita Brevis, The Shortness of Life*, which was written by a man who was forced to take his own life, after the conspiracy to kill Emperor Nero was discovered.

[9] It is when speaking of Heidegger’s famous definition of death in *Being and Time*, ‘the possibility of the pure and simple impossibility for Dasein,’ that Derrida suggests the impossibility of writing the history of death as it would clearly be a history without a subject. Despite this negative introduction, Derrida goes on to state positively that it is death that guarantees my singularity through the impossibility of dying in the place of another, of dying for another. Again Derrida is referring to, and appears to emulate, what has already been said by Heidegger’s sections on death in *Being and Time*, 49-52, ‘that it is impossible to die for the other in the sense of ‘to die in his place.’ In the section on death in *Being and Time*, ‘Chapter 46, The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death,’ Heidegger basically says that it is possible for me to represent *what* another person is, on stage as in life, but that the possibility of representation ends, when it comes to representing *that* [th]is person *is*, for I can, as Heidegger notes, not die for another. Heidegger notes, ‘The broad ways of being-in-the-world in which one person can be represented by another extends only to the used-up modes of public being. Here one Da-sein can and must, within certain limits, “be” another Da-sein.’ ‘However, this possibility of representation gets completely stranded when it is a matter of representing the possibility of being that constitutes

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the coming-to-an-end of Da-sein and gives its totality as such. No one can take the
other’s dying away from him.25

[10] As clearly as Heidegger believes that dead are those who have nothing left
to unconceal - where nothing is outstanding - that without ever Being encountered,
death nevertheless guarantees that no one can unconceal anything in my place, so
Derrida, like an apprentice, turns his back on his master, saying, with a
gourmand’s taste for secrets, that dead are those who have nothing left to hide.
The living stand apart from the dead as Being hidden. For even though my death is
hidden from me, it is equally true that the dead have nothing to hide. Incapable of
hiding anything, life itself becomes a secret. For whereas a living man may hide a
dead man cannot [hide]. In Being and Time, Heidegger states that ‘Dying is not an
event, but a phenomenon to be understood existentially in an eminent sense still to
be delineated more closely.’1 It is when attempting to develop Heidegger’s analysis,
when thinking why this event may never occur, may ‘never take place,’ that
Derrida discovers an aporia, ‘the experience of aporia,’26 that it may be possible
that it may never happen, that he will never be around to witness his own death,
that his own death [is] always hidden from him.

[11] Being undiscoverable, death is an event I can never take part in, and this
event, which I can never take part in, nor experience, belongs to me, is nevertheless
mine. I am the occasion for this event, although I will never be around to witness
its performance. In the staging of my death, ‘death’ is the meaningless symbol of
what is inevitably hidden from me, not only what I cannot comprehend, but what I

25 Heidegger, Being and Time, ‘Chapter 46, The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-
toward-Death,’ S. 240/p. 223.
26 Derrida, Aporias, p. 19.
cannot be. This difference adds another dimension to Derrida’s negative performance, as he attempts to express not only something meaningful, but the ontological difference itself, albeit negatively. For approaching [th]is ‘inexhaustible singularisation,’ which cannot be stated positively, Derrida makes explicit what he throughout this essay will want his audience to acknowledge the existence of, namely, ‘[that] without which there will never be any event, decision, responsibility, ethics, or politics.’ In short, the ontological difference.

Like all aporiae, also the experience of the aporia of my own death makes me turn around. For from the phenomenal anticipation of what is inconceivable to me, I suddenly realize, that my own pure appearance, when I will have nothing left to hide, does not belong to me, that my appearance is my death, that my death is not only my final, but my only, true appearance. For while I am alive, what is hidden to me is my pure phenomenality. Indeed, it is impossible to recognize myself, even with eyes open, without making the inference to what is hidden. What is clear from this argument, is that we can detect, in Derrida’s Aporias, which is an exposition of the aporia of death, a principle of concealment, the ontological difference concealed, as clearly as we recognized, in Derrida’s Khora, a principle of unconcealment. Derrida does not only speak negatively of the ontological difference as concealed, but performs [th]is ontological difference when he attempts to imagine a stage, a site, where he may witness his own death. Since

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27 Derrida, Aporias, p. 20.
28 Derrida, Aporias, p. 20.
29 In his essays Khora and Aporias, Derrida does something more than merely express an opinion. He produces, if not enacts, the apperception of that which is beyond language, succeeds in Being its incarnation, whether as concealed, as he is in Aporias, or unconcealed, as he is in Khora. Whereas in Khora Derrida performs the khora itself, in Aporias, his performance is entirely negative. It is an impossible performance Derrida delivers, which intends to enact and not speak referentially, to be beyond that which he is speaking of, the incarnation of his own discourse, when he questions the
death has no subject, no end and nothing to aim for, we could immediately say that the statement, ‘I am dead,’ transforms itself into its opposite, the performance of the negative affirmation of what is unconcealed, for speaking, ‘I am [truly] not dead.’ We should think this statement through without taking the existence of the subject of this statement for granted. If we do, no one can doubt that the not offers an opening for me to appear, that ‘I am not dead’ or ‘Not-I am dead.’ The last variation shows immediately what Derrida essays to express in Aporias, that death is without subject, that if we do not take subjectivity for granted, it is, at least logically impossible for me to die, for any pronouncement of my death has no subject, is without subject.

[13] To make it perfectly clear, logically I cannot die. If I could, I have already from the very beginning denounced what makes the utterance of any meaningful statement about my death possible in the first place. For it would, of course, as Bertrand Russell says, be senseless to utter statements without a subjects, but saying that ‘$x$ is dead,’ that is precisely what I have done, pronounced a statement that may not possibly have a subject. This is why Derrida asks the question which begs all questions, ‘Is my death possible?’ [For] If my death is purely beyond me, and it is impossible to speak truly without a subject, it is clear why Derrida opens Aporias by questioning the limits of truth. Kleist mourns the coming of the philosophy of Kant as it buries any real hope for perennial truths, for, as Kleist realizes, reading with horror the Critique of Pure Reason, there would be no truth possibility of his own death, by asking, ‘Is my death possible?’ Or, am I dead? [Derrida, Aporias, p. 21 ff].

30 From this perspective even Leibniz’ monadology becomes understandable, as he consider the I as an imperishable monad, a unit or entity which no one may look in to or out of, for logically I cannot die.

31 Wright, The Logic of Negation, p. 6.

32 Derrida, Aporias, p. 21 ff.
beyond the point of subjectivity. But Derrida denounces the commonplace, ‘In
sum, the truth is not everything, one would then say, for there is more, something
else or something better: truth is finite [finie].’ Derrida takes a prominent place
in the Philosophies of Concealment, for where Nietzsche pronounced the death of
God to divert our attention to what is unconcealed, Derrida speaks of the limits of
truth, to indicate that without hiding anything, without Being untrue, all
phenomena are soon rendered lifeless. Where nothing is hidden, no beings may be.
Without a secret there is no life. Being becomes a negative principle, if not a state,
of concealment.

§3.2 Kant’s ‘Paralogisms of Pure Reason’

We shall approach Kant from another angle, not by considering his own
position right away, but by considering the position he destroys. To understand a
perspective different than our own, we shall proceed metaphorically by likening
predicates to a masque that masks the subject, a masque she may or may not
carry, take off or on as she pleases, and stress that this phenomenal masque may
be available to other [beings]. This masque of predicates may make one [being]
appear different from another being, may make it stand out through these
predicative differences as a being in isolation, individuated. As a phenomenal
disjunction it is, as Kant says in the Critique of Pure Reason, bound to have either
this or that property. A man is phenomenally not much more than a mannequin
who has many properties but no substance. To the Greeks of Homer, as well as to

33 Nietzsche, Untimely Meditations, p. 140.
34 Derrida, Aporías, p. 1. The two paragraphs of Derrida’s Aporias are called, ‘Finis’ and ‘Awaiting
at the Arrival,’ the last showing again how Derrida explicitly attempts to emulate Heidegger who in
Identity and Difference speaks of Being as a kind of arrival or overwhelming, Ankunft or
Überkommennis. [Heidegger, Identity and Difference, p. 64f].
the Inquisition of Kramer and Sprenger, gods or devils, may at any time wear this cloak, as that which carries these properties is apperceived as Being different from its appearance. The gods, all spirits, can speak through anything, be anything, anywhere, anytime. But not after the creation of *Metaphysics*, which makes it impossible for one Being to borrow the predicates of another, for [th]is to carry the properties of another. That is, what is created is ‘a metaphysical block’. Adorno, however much he attacks all kinds of mystification, mourns the establishment, the erection of the metaphysical block. For we may no longer imagine that the spearman in the opening of Homer’s *Iliad* is anything but himself. That is, it is impossible for Athena to appear through Laokodos. Moreover, it is impossible that the appearance of the spearman should cover the substance of something different from that appearance, or more concretely, another substance, that is, a jealous god, a malicious spirit. With the Law of Non-Contradiction in hand, one being is only allowed to express itself and never another.

In *Metaphysics*, Aristotle establishes this principle of non-contradiction once and for all, making sure that the cape of attributes can, from now on, only be

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35 ‘Those persons are said to be pythons in whom the devil works extraordinary things.’ [Kramer and Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, p. 6, cf. p. 3.] In the *Iliad*, the Trojans and the Achaians were about to celebrate the peace after Melanaus overcame Paris in fair battle. But the gods willed it otherwise. ‘Athena passed into the mass of Trojans in man’s form, that of Laokodos, Antenor’s son, a strong spearman,’ and wearing the mantel of a man, she persuades the godlike Pandaros, the archer, to shoot an arrow for glory, the arrow that finds unknowing Melanaus. Thus begins the final act of the Trojan War. [Homer, *The Iliad*, 4:73-152, pp. 55 ff.].


37 Speaking of the metaphysical block, of the Kantian critique as concomitant with the disenchantment of the world, Adorno says something very enlightening, ‘Underlying that duplication [into phenomena and noumena] stand the idea that our world, the world of experience, really has become a world familiar to us; the world in which we live has ceased to be ruled by mysterious, unexplained powers. Instead, it is something we experience as our world in the sense that we encounter nothing that is incompatible with our own rationality. The experience that in this world we stand on our own two feet, and that we inhabit a known world without dreading the intervention of demons, without magical and mythical anxieties - all that is implicit in Kant’s immanent concept of the thing.’ Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 110.

carried by one substance, the hypokeimenon. To each person there does only belong one hypostasis, which brings the persona together, that ensures the integrity of each [being], metaphysical bounds from which one believes no individual is set free except through death. From nowhere, there suddenly occurs a principle of interpretation unknown to antiquity and the Middle Ages, as unknown to Homer as it is to Kramer and Sprenger, that one persona is only allowed to have one substance. With Metaphysics this prohibition, [th]is norm for apperception is formalized, and, with Aristotle, who never denies the gods but nevertheless destroys the possibility for their appearance, [th]is norm becomes the law of non-contradiction. From now on, the gods have no place, nowhere to go, nowhere to appear, as each appearance can only express one substance, the persona only one person.

[16] Having been cognitively disciplined, we are no more able to discern through one and the same phenomenon, a witch, a ghost, a devil, a god, another man. For after the world has become thoroughly and fully anthropomorphized, it has equally

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40 See the passage where Kramer and Sprenger defines, with reference to St. Thomas, the disbelief in the actuality of possession, as ‘heretical,’ an ‘opinion … founded on absolute infidelity. Because the authority of the Holy Scripture says that devils have power over the bodies and over the minds of men, when God allows them to exercise this power.’ Cf. Kramer and Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum, p. 2.
41 Boethius clarifies the difference between person and persona once and for all, when he says, ‘It was by the masks they put on that actors represented the individual people concerned in a tragedy or comedy - Hecuba or Medea or Simo or Chremes, - so also of all other men who could be clearly recognized by their appearance the Latins used the name persona, the Greeks prosopa [Latinised]. But the Greeks far more clearly called the individual subsistence of a rational nature by the name hypostasis [Latinized], while we through want of appropriate words have kept the name handed down to us, calling that persona which they call hypostasis [Latinized]; but Greece with its richer vocabulary gives the name hypostasis to the individual subsistence.’ Cf. Boethius, The Theological Tractates, p. 87.
42 See Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book IV, 1005b9-34.
43 It is the principle of contradiction, which, of course, is a principle of identity, that turns Augustine’s work on The Trinity into an aporia. But, as we said, this is only a norm, to which neither our beliefs need adhere nor our experiences comply. Nevertheless, they do, for there are not many among us who through an appearance are able to detect another subject, or, more precisely, another substance or something more than the substance of the other.
become entirely *metaphysical*, for we see through the appearance of one man, only the same, and, more than that, we discover him in isolation. As Marx would habitually say, each man is an *island*, or even less or better, as Leibniz says, each man is a *monad*, a complete and self-sufficient world from which *no one can look in* and *no one can look out*. That is, we are suddenly these self-sufficiencies, these self-sufficient entities, which we are compelled, convinced or persuaded by *Metaphysics* to be. But it is not necessarily so that we are these monads, it may very well be that this is, as Nietzsche says, just another superstition, although a very compelling one. There is, today not even available the negative experience of a *daimon*, as Socrates had, no one from within who could reach out and say, ‘No.’

In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger praises Kant for attempting to think the ontological difference for the first time since Plato and Aristotle. Speaking of Kant’s enterprise as ‘genuine ontology,’ Heidegger points out that ‘genuine ontology’ is based on making explicit the ontological difference between being and the Being of beings, thus offering another ground than the

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44 If anyone is searching for the relevance of these remarks, the justification is twofold. Firstly, as nothing is understood except through contradiction, one would first need to understand what Kant’s philosophy contradicts. Secondly, that Shakespeare, at least superficially, contradicts Kant, if we inquire into the beings that are essentially [re]presented, that is, gods, fairies, demons, and not, if we are, the Being of beings.

45 The metaphysical foundation of Capitalism, at least its theories, is apparent. For, without the existence of this entity, there is no rational subject to supply and demand, perhaps only the ghost of consumption; the spirit of investment.


47 Heidegger says, ‘Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is the first attempt since Plato and Aristotle to think ontology.’ Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, 151.


49 Tracing the revival of ‘the interest in ontology’ back to phenomenology, and, more originally, back to Kant, Heidegger makes explicit the philosophical problem of ‘genuine ontology,’ which is to clarify the ontological difference. Heidegger writes, ‘Being is different than beings, and only this difference in general, this possibility of distinction, insures an understanding-of-being. Put another way, in the understanding-of-being this distinction of being from beings is carried out. It is this distinction that makes anything like ontology possible in the *first place*. We thus term this distinction that first enables something like an understanding-of-being the *ontological difference*.’ [Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 152. Emphasis added].
positive provides for the scientific exploration of beings, the final definition of what beings essentially are.\(^{50}\) However much Kant asserts a double concept of Being,\(^{51}\) we shall focus on Kant’s negative presentation of what is concealed, particularly the exposition of this production in ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ the negative introduction to the noumenological investigations in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.\(^{52}\) We shall follow the directions of Hegel, Nietzsche, Adorno and Friedrich, who all, unanimously, call Kant a ‘mystic.’\(^{53}\) It is perhaps necessary to contrast the mystification of Being which is evident in Kant’s writings, with the infamous use of the word ‘mystic’ towards the end of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*.\(^{54}\) For however vaguely Wittgenstein speaks of the mystic, the *mysterium\(^{55}\) to him is never what is concealed, but what is unconcealed, never what is hidden but that this phenomenon appears. The *mysterium* is undoubtedly understood differently by Kant, as Friedrich says in his thoughtful introduction to a beautiful selection of Kant’s works, ‘Kant’s transcendental method, the justification for positing existence is found in the fact that without thus positing existence we cannot understand the possibility of understanding or cognition whatsoever.’\(^{56}\) That is, without the existence of something, i.e. Self, World, God, there would be nothing to comprehend, but since we do comprehend something, it must necessarily be. Even

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\(^{50}\) As Adorno points out, Kant never uses the word ‘essence’ in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 208.

\(^{51}\) For Kant’s double concept of Being, one adequate to Sense and one to Reason, see Heidegger, *Kant’s Thesis about Being*, in *Pathmarks*, pp. 338ff.

\(^{52}\) *Kant, Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘The Paralogisms of Reason,’ A341/B399-A405/B432.

\(^{53}\) See, for example, Hegel’s remark in the *Encyclopaedia*, where he says, ‘Kant’s Enlightenment endeared itself to obscurantism,’ Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 249.


\(^{55}\) We continue to use, ‘mysterium’ and ‘mystic’ in the general sense of the perception or apperception of what is hidden. Cf. Paul Rorem’s note to Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*, *The Complete Works*, p. 135n.

when we do not understand, when Understanding does not know what [th]is essentially is, its existence is however grasped, apperceived by Reason. This is, of course, Kant’s famous X.57 That is, the first proof of existence in Kant is negative, that is, ‘without this,’ ‘without positing the existence of X, I cannot comprehend how it is possible for me to comprehend anything at all.’ Again, without [th]is existence, which Kant later defines as Subject, World, God, I cannot understand the possibility of understanding or any act of cognition whatsoever. If we read carefully, we can find a remarkable persistence in Kant’s works. Anticipations of Kant’s transcendental method can, according to Friedrich, already be discerned a couple of his precritical works, which appeared as early as 1763, The One Possible Proof for Demonstrating the Existence of God and Inquiry into the Clearness of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals.58

[18] The Poetics of Being will draw nearer to what is unknown, clarifying right away, and here Kant is in agreement, that the unknown is experienced as more real than what is known,59 the apperception of noumena experienced as more real than the perception of any true phenomena. Or rather, without the simultaneous, if not antecedent, apperception of the noumenon, a phenomenon would appear [to be] unreal, appear [to be] ‘mere phenomena.’ For taken by themselves, phenomena are not experienced as if they are. The lack of [th]is ‘inevitable inference’ is perhaps why Nietzsche at times experiences the world like an Indian Sant, as an

57 See for example, Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A346/B404.
58 Friedrich quotes and translates from the first of these works a passage which is rendered thus, ‘If all existence is suspended, nothing is posited and nothing is given as material for any kind of thought and all possibility whatever is completely eliminated …’ To say that there exists a possibility, but nothing real, is a contradiction in itself, because if nothing exists, nothing ‘thinkable’ is given …’ Kant, Prolegomena, in, the Philosophy of Kant, Edited and Introduction by Carl J. Friedrich, page xxiv. The passage is, according to Friedrich, taken from, Einzig möglicher Beweisgrund, 1. Abt.,2. Betrachtung, Works, II, p. 83.
59 Of course, Kant would agree with everything except our use of the word ‘experience.’ For, as we shall soon see, what grounds all experience is the apperception of an illusion.
illusion, as he believes the inference to the ‘ground’ or ‘substance’ or noumenon is false. Kant does not deny that this inference to what is hidden is false. He asserts, however, that it is unavoidable. Nowhere is the falsehood of these inferences to what is unknown, more clearly expressed than in what Adorno calls the ‘negative part of the Critique of Pure Reason,’ ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason.’ When Adorno speaks of Kant’s anti-intellectualism, we should beware that Adorno still considers the Kantian philosophy as the philosophy of depth par excellence, regardless of the fact that Adorno’s remark is perhaps meant derogatory. Again, what Adorno means by speaking vaguely of ‘Kant’s anti-intellectualism’ is clearly [th]is, that Kant attempted to think beyond beings, the Being of beings. Kant attempted to think beyond the ‘essence’ of beings, which is, fundamentally, a word Kant completely avoids in both the phenomenal and noumenal part of the investigation, the Critique of Pure Reason. For as, Adorno makes clear, if we are to judge a philosopher by the words he never uses, Kant should be judged by the omission of ‘essence.’ It is this lack of thinking what is essential, which gives the Kantian philosophy the impression, the sublime impression of depth. For Kant attempted to think more than what merely shows itself as what it essentially is, to think beyond phenomena, to the very ground of beings, to what is [first].

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60 Here, ‘illusion’ is used contrary to the sense above: not as the noumenal ground provided for all perceptions, but to coin our perceptions without this noumenal ground.

61 See for example ‘Reason: in Philosophy’ and ‘How the “Real World” Finally Became a Fable,’ Nietzsche, Twilight of Idols, pp. 16-20.


64 ‘Kant’s philosophy … is renowned as the deep philosophy par excellence.’ Adorno, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, p. 74.
If the reader would like to dwell on Adorno’s impression of the Kantian depth, we invite the reader to follow Adorno more carefully when, attempting to clarify what he believes is the fundamental difference between the Kantian philosophy and its *misreception*, he says, ‘we must note how this concept of depth has come into the world.’\(^{65}\) Adorno continues his exposition by pointing out that ‘the concept of depth has a catastrophic effect. This is because it is irrationalist and hostile to Enlightenment. According to such a concept thinking can only be deep if it refers to forces that lie beyond reason.’\(^{66}\) And finally, to expose the difference between Kant and the Kantians, Adorno concludes, ‘To put it mildly, then, it stands in flagrant contradiction to the explicit intentions of Kant’s philosophy. Kant would have retorted that the deepest foundation of his philosophy is in fact reason.’\(^{67}\) However, Adorno fails to inform the reader that Kant has *redefined* Reason as that faculty or that activity which grasps what is *not* phenomenal, but nevertheless, if not all the more, conditions the comprehension of any phenomena, and that there from the vantage point of Kant’s transcendental critique is *no longer possible* to think ‘irrationally,’ neither *to be* irrational, that all cognitive activities are indeed rational regardless of content. For so all-encompassing, so universal is Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* that the irrational has been eradicated from the face of the earth. And if anything is irrational in the Kantian system, it is Sense.

The map for the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the *Prolegomena* provides,\(^{68}\) would have been even easier to follow if Kant were to have said explicitly, ‘Reason

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\(^{65}\) Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 184.
\(^{66}\) Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 185.
\(^{67}\) Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 185.
is not a tool for looking.' As it is, Kant stresses the point about the *unavoidability* of the inference to what *is* unknown, the noumenon, nowhere more unambiguously than when, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he says, ‘there will be syllogisms which contain no empirical premises and by means of which we infer, from something that we are acquainted with, something else of which we have in fact no concept and to which, through an unavoidable illusion, we nonetheless give objective reality.’ Reason is that faculty through which we apperceive, although never entirely comprehend, the unknown *ground* of any phenomena. Kant never claims that [th]is inference to the noumenon is not false, only that it is, unavoidable, inseparable from our metaphysical constitution. Unlike his predecessors, Kant appears to not take what lies behind appearances, the existence of a metaphysical ground, for granted. Kant states clearly that man himself takes an irreplaceable part in the constitution of what lies behind appearances, the soul of subjectivity, the World of causes, the God that encompasses it all, which all in all appear to coincide in the possibility of that which *is* singular. That is, not only of that which stands apart before us and divided as phenomena, but more so, that which may give the *false* impression of having *substance*, even, of Being substantial. [Th]is is undeniably a false inference, for although we almost invariably make the inference to [th]is substance or soul, we cannot know whether [th]is appearance has substance. The apperception of the substance of any persona, the noumenon grounding the presence of any phenomena, is an effect of Reason/Vernunft, which

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69 Speaking of another faculty which conceptualise sensations, Kant simply says, in Friedrich’s translation, ‘Our intellect is not a faculty for looking at things.’ [Kant, *Prolegomena*, §34, in *The Philosophy of Kant*, p. 97.] In the translation of Paul Carus it says, ‘Our understanding is not a faculty of intuition.’ Kant, *Prolegomena*, §34, trans. Paul Carus, p. 77.


71 Kant, *Prolegomena*, §57, pp. 112f.
cannot help but to infer to what makes this appearance possible. That which grounds this phenomenal presence is however what remains, entirely concealed.\footnote{Cf. Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, ‘The Paralogism of Reason,’ A341/B399-A405/B432.}

We shall speak of Kant’s negative introduction to the ‘Transcendental Dialectic’ in the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, specifically how Kant names the dialectical inferences from phenomenon to noumenon, ‘false.’ The Second Division of the \textit{Critique of Pure Reason} is entitled, ‘Transcendental Dialectic.’ Book II of the Second Division named, ‘On the Dialectical Inferences of Pure Reason,’ and the first Chapter of this book is called, ‘On the Paralogisms of Pure Reason.’\footnote{Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A341/B399-A405/B432.} It is in this chapter, the \textit{negative} section of the \textit{Critique}, that Kant specifically names the noumenological inferences - the inferences to the singular apperception of \textit{Substantiality},\footnote{Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A348.} \textit{Simplicity},\footnote{Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A351.} \textit{Personality},\footnote{Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A362.} \textit{Ideality}\footnote{Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A367.} [the four paralogisms] - as ‘false.’ No more readily are these inferences delineated as ‘false’ than when Kant, defining the ‘paralogism,’ says,

‘A logical paralogism consists in a syllogism’s wrongness/\textit{Falschheit} as regards form, whatever its content may be. A transcendental paralogism, however, has a transcendental basis/\textit{Grund} for inferring wrongly as regards form. Such a \textit{fallacious} inference will thus have its basis in the nature of human reason, and will carry with it an \textit{illusion} that is \textit{unavoidable} although not unresolvable.’\footnote{Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A341/B399. Emphasis added.}

The definition of ‘para-logism’ as a false inference to what is hidden, \textit{grounds} the exposition of the whole chapter. The definition is therefore implied in all dialectical inferences from what is \textit{phenomenal} to what is \textit{noumenal}. And since this is the negative introduction to the transcendental dialectic as a whole, it is by definition
applicable to the understanding of the transcendental dialectical as a whole. At least, that is Kant’s intention, which is nowhere more clearly stated than when he, in the opening of Book II, ‘On The Dialectical Inferences of Pure Reason,’ says, ‘there will be syllogisms which contain no empirical premises and by means of which we infer, from something that we are acquainted with, something else of which we have in fact no concept and to which, through an unavoidable illusion, we nonetheless give objective reality. Hence such inferences, should, with regard to their result, rather be called subtly reasoning/vernünftelnd inferences than inferences of reason, although they may indeed bear the latter name because of how they are prompted: for they are, after all, not invented, nor have arisen contingently, but have sprung from the nature of reason. They are sophistries/Sophistikationen not of human beings but of pure reason itself. Even the wisest among all human beings cannot detach himself from them; perhaps he can after much effort forestall the error, but he can never fully rid himself of the illusion that incessantly teases and mocks him.’

In one sense the inference to the noumenon is false, as it is phenomenally ungrounded, is an inference to that which no object in experience may possibly be given. As Kant states, [transcendental] dialectic is ‘a logic of illusion.’ The error is made by Reason, which mistakes the object apperceived for the subject inapperceived. As Kant says, ‘We may posit all illusion as consisting in taking the subjective condition of thinking to be the cognition of the object.’ The dialectical illusion of pure reason is not an ‘empirical illusion,’ but an illusion of what is beyond what may possibly be grasped empirically: Substantiality [A348], Simplicity [A351], Personality [A 362], and Existence [A367]. One must, as Kant points out, not mistake ‘appearance and illusion.’ Nor should anyone deem [th]is ontological

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[79] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A339/B397. Emphasis added. It is curious that a fine translator such as Werner S. Pluhar has left out ‘false’ from the index to Kant’s major work, no less that a systematic commentator such as Howard Caygill has excluded ‘false’ from A Kant Dictionary, when the whole exposition of the transcendental dialectic is false, that is, beyond what may empirically be proven.


[81] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A293.

[82] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A396.

[83] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A293.
deduction as merely an ‘artificial illusion that immediately vanishes once we have insight into it, but a natural and unavoidable illusion that still continues to delude us.’

Rather, it is this metaphysical illusion, ‘these subtly reasoning assertions,’ that reveal ‘the dialectical Kampfplatz/combat arena’ where later the rationalist and the empiricist will appear, prepares the list for the duel between Leibniz and Hume. Placing the knights face to face, Kant’s hope is that ‘after having more exhausted than harmed each other, they will become aware … of the nullity of their Streit/fight and will part as good friends.’ For this is, as Kant states, a metaphysical combat where both ‘vigorous knights … will carry off the wreath of victory,’ but where neither will escape ‘the critique’s ordeal by fire.’

In the Critique of Pure Reason Kant raises the question, ‘How is it possible to apperceive the noumenon?’ Should he not rather have asked, ‘How is it possible to not apperceive the noumenon?’ Of course, the negative variation of the question makes it clear that Kant actually takes for granted what he pretends to doubt - the existence of, if not existence itself, the Being of, if not Being itself - that there is something hidden, and that Vernunft/Reason plays an irreplaceable part in the production of [th]is apperception. If Kant was to take [th]is production seriously, what he should have done was to procure the conditions under which or the methods through which, [th]is apperception would be produced more or less effectively. Instead, Kant takes [th]is production for granted in the sense that the inferential chain from phenomenon to noumenon is unbroken, inevitable in any perception, in any experience. [Th]is inevitability is what grants Kant the freedom

84 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A422/B450.
85 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A 422/B450.
87 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A423/B450.
88 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A406/B433.
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and the justification to not inquire more discerningly, we could almost say, ‘more critically,’ into how /th/is apperception is produced. For Kant has given himself, autonomically, we might say, a carte blanche to immediately proceed into the territory of the unknown, in relation to which the known land is, as Kant says in the opening remarks to his noumenal investigations, but a small island in a great and tempestuous ocean. It is however true that the inference to and the passage from phenomenon to the apperception of singular noumena is anything but certain, never inevitable nor necessary, and that, more discerningly, we would have to say, as we will show in the next chapter, that the inference to the unknown is more or less effective according to different methods or ways.

Kant says in Prolegomena, ‘For now the question is: How does our reason behave in this linking of what we know with what we do not know and never can know?’ Never more clearly does Kant ask for the structure of the inference from known to unknown, from phenomenon to noumenon. In the subsequent chapters we will show that [th]is inference, from the perception of phenomena to the apperception of singular noumena, can be most effortlessly accomplished by an inference from what is untrue to what is [true]. Contrary to Kant, we will show that nothing is more habitual than to reasonably infer from the perception of what is not true, to the apperception of what is [true]. Speaking of knowing and unknowing, if knowing is not saying too much, we could say that I make an inference from what [I know] is untrue to what [I do not know] is [true]. [Th]is inference is entirely false, or at least illusory. For even though I am certain that these properties do not belong to /th/is, I cannot thereby say that [th]is is.

89 Kant speaks of the ‘vast and stormy ocean’ of the unknown as he opens the noumenal part Critique of Pure Reason, B295, p. 303.
90 Kant, Prolegomena, Paragraph 57, in The Philosophy of Kant, p. 113.
Nevertheless, that is exactly what I do. It is surprising to see that Kant never recognized [th]is persuasive paralogism, [th]is inference from what is untrue to what is [true], or does appear to be. It should however not astound us, as Kant limited his investigation phenomenally to what is true, and therefore, as he fell victim to [th]is enlightened prejudice of searching only for the truth, false perceptions like false judgments about anything in the phenomenal world were never to appear in his investigation, but were simply discarded. We do not blame Kant for this neglect, only point out to those who claim that Kant’s critique is exhaustive, that the investigation is phenomenally limited to what is true, to true or adequate judgments about that [being] which either posits itself or is hidden.91 For the only false or unfounded cognitions Kant has devoted any of his critical patience to, were noumenal, but to these illusions he devoted the major part of his major work, the Critique of Pure Reason.

[25] As a theory before it has time to historically develop, Kant’s analysis is undifferentiated, for Kant claims that irrespective of whether our perceptions are true or untrue, the perceiver would, in either case have to, and this is for Kant a necessity, make an inference to the noumenon, be [th]is called, Subjectivity, World or God, and whether subjectivity is apperceived as having substantiality, personality or existence. What we would like to add, is that [th]is singular inference is not as necessary as Kant believes. For as the experiences of both Wittgenstein and Husserl indicates, it is possible to experience another human

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91 For Kant’s double concept of Being, See, Heidegger, Kant’s Thesis about Being, Pathmarks, p. 338ff. A concrete display of this double concept of Being as adequate to Anschauung and Vernunft, but not Verstand, as that which either posits itself indefinitely or is assumed as the hidden condition for what is perceived, see, Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A32/B377.
being as an automaton or a mannequin, that is, as a being without self or soul.\footnote{Wittgenstein, \textit{Philosophical Investigations}, Fragment 420, p. 107. Ferraris, ‘What is There,’ in Derrida and Ferraris, \textit{A Taste for the Secret}, p. 95.}

What we then say is that we have to persuade the spectator/auditor of the \textit{Being} of this phenomenal appearance, which, as Kant clearly points out, does not reside in the phenomenal appearance alone, but in the apperception of something \textit{more}, something hidden, something in excess of what is perceived. We will then say that the inference to something \textit{more} is not made necessary but very compelling and almost unavoidable if [th]is appears through an inadequation or is perceived as \textit{what} it is not, or what is essentially \textit{false}. The perception/apperception of what [th]is is \textit{not} will then persuade me to, instantaneously and without effort infer to the \textit{Being} of [th]is being, which does \textit{not} have the properties presented, and thus remains \textit{unknown}.

§3.3 Dionysius’ Mystical Theology

That the \textit{Being} of beings \textit{is} concealed and, to some extent, entirely \textit{unknown} is not something Kant discovers, but is a thought that belongs securely to our tradition. All traditions have origins, and regardless of origins, traditions have some exponents who speak clearer than others. There is then, in the history of philosophy, no one who speaks clearer about what \textit{is} unknown, secret, hidden, and by doing so does not fall pray to the easy mistake of reifying what \textit{is} concealed, be they named angels or gods, than Pseudo-Dionysius. When reading Pseudo-Dionysius’ mockery of literal interpretations of biblical symbols, we are reminded of Kant’s ridicule of all reified interpretations of \textit{what} is concealed in \textit{Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics}, his ridicule of the transcendental
visions of Emmanuel Swedenborg. Of all theologians that shaped the Christian traditions of positive and negative theology, none expressed himself more analytically than Pseudo-Dionysius, who without a trace of rambling enthusiasm gave voice to the mystery of what is hidden. The clarity with which Pseudo-Dionysius expresses this mystery could be summed up by Rosemary Ann Lees, who in her magnificent study, says that more than anything else, Pseudo-Dionysius method of theology was that of a logician.

Pseudo-Dionysius is, in our Christian tradition, the chief exponent of a non-reified concept of a hidden God. The influence he exerts through his Negative and Symbolic Theologies on Christian philosophy and art can easily be understated. For it is basically through the principles of interpretation and production that he invented, through his hermeneutic and poetical principles, that

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93 Kant declares, ‘I confess that all stories about apparitions of departed souls or about the presumptive nature of spirits and their connection with us, seem to have appreciable weight only in the scale of hope, while in the scale of speculation they seem to consist of nothing but air.’ [Kant, *Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics* [1766], in *The Philosophy of Kant*, p. 15.] The critique could as easily be directed to the likes of Ficino and Giordano Bruno, and to the historian that presents their hermetic tradition, Ms. Frances Yates, for all are attempts to reify what is hidden, that is, to falsely transform what is concealed into a belief in hidden beings or hypostatized powers.

94 Of Pseudo-Dionysius’ three theologies, the positive, the negative and the symbolic, the first is presented in *On Divine Names*, the second in *The Mystical Theology* and the third in *The Celestial Hierarchy*. Only the first, the positive depends entirely on faith or revelation for the understanding of what is spiritual, while both the negative and symbolical theologies belong, in great part, to natural theology. It is clear that to a protestant, who believes in salvation through faith alone, the word ‘natural theology’ has long lost its meaning, and only Revelation remains. One may invoke the authority of St. Thomas to define the Dionysian corpus as mainly belonging to natural theology. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, Question Eight: Article 1, p. 315.

95 Making a concise summary of J. Vanneste’s argument in *Le Mystère de Dieu*, Rosemary Ann Lees says, ‘Pseudo-Dionysius’s approach to mystical religion is that of a logician rather than a metaphysician or practicing mystic. *Aphairesis* is defined as a technique of logical progression whereby sensible and intelligible phenomena are successively negated: its logical term is the condition of unknowing *agnosia*, when the soul has finally abandoned natural modes of knowledge according to the senses or intellect. At this point, however, the soul is impelled by the fact of God’s transcendence to pass beyond itself and enter through ecstasy into a state of union, *henosis.*’ [Lees, *The Negative Language of the Dionysian School of Mystical Theology*, pp. 110f.]

96 If one immediately would think that Dionysius’s *Mystical Theology* bears no influence on modern notions of what is true, notions so effectively and convincingly produced in Shakespeare’s most popular plays, one would have to argue that the moon affects the tides even though this was hidden for centuries, for millennia entirely unknown. However, as we proceed, the *Wahlverwandtschaft* between Dionysius’ theology and Shakespeare’s poetics will become self-evident.
the angels were, and God was, for centuries, both philosophically understood and poetically represented. The Reformation, however, eliminated the need for any mediating influence, removed all interpretative methods, and so the Gospel suddenly became understood, as it always is by the impatient, as immediately available to all. This principle of interpretation led inevitably to the demise of religion, the withdrawal of all gods in the West, as it gradually became commonplace to think that what is not immediately available to the perception or apperception of all, what is not essentially available to all or immediately available to everyone, does not exist.97 There are, however, indirect, non-referential means to both understand and produce the apperception of what is hidden. The principles for this understanding and this production are laid bare by, even open to everyone’s view in Pseudo-Dionysius’s *The Mystical Theology* and *The Celestial Hierarchy*. In the latter he does however say, what he again repeats in his Letter to Titus the hierarch, that these teachings should remain the property, the possessions of the few, that one should preclude the uninitiated from reading these principles that govern the understanding and the production, the hermeneutics and the poetics, of Being.98 We are not merely looking for an interpretation of what is hidden, but more importantly, the means for this production, the means available for this production which would most effortlessly and without affectation, produce the immediate impression of the Being of beings, or that which is concealed. One need then first to speak of one’s end, which in the case of Pseudo-Dionysius seems obvious, that is, to produce the apperception of the mystic

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97 Kant, furthering, as Adorno says, ‘the metaphysical block,’ [Adorno, *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 110] is the main exponent of the view that what is not generally, even universally available to all, is not. Or, to state it more positively, hypothetically, if it is not universal, it does not exist. Cf. Kant, *Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics* [1766].

or what is concealed. [Th]is end is ours in two specific senses, firstly as what we recognize the systematic production of, secondly, and perhaps more importantly, as Being almost in-distinguishable from our own sense of existence. The means to [th]is end do however remain unrecognized, a still undisclosed part of our selves, and so [th]is end as well as its beginning, remains in the dark, still hidden, a mystery.

[28] We should follow the directives given in a note provided by Paul Rorem in the only systematic presentation of the complete works of Pseudo-Dionysius available in English, ‘The terms ‘mystic’ … and mysterious both translate mustikos, with some reservations. The former translation is not meant in the later sense of a ‘mystical’ or extraordinary, private experience transcending one’s self, but rather in the more general sense of something ‘mysterious’ or secret or hidden.’99 We should perhaps add another note that Rorem provides elsewhere, that when Pseudo-Dionysius speaks of the mystical or the hidden theology, which is tellingly how the author of The Cloud of Unknowing translates The Mystical Theology in the High Middle Ages as Denis Hid Divinite,100 the word ‘theology’ denotes not primarily the science of God but God himself, not the interpreter but the interpreted, not the apperceiver or a system of apperceptions, but the one apperceived.101 Similarly we have what Heidegger, in Parmenides, calls a non-derivative use of the word logos, which does not signify the act of cognition, inference or representation, but rather that which appear to be cognized, that which appears to perception or apperception as unconcealed. That is why

100 Denis Hid Divinite with its added emphasis on love is available in the translation of James A. Walsh as Denis’s Hidden Theology, in The Pursuit of Wisdom - and other works, by the author of The Cloud of Unknowing, pp. 51-97.
101 Rorem, Pseudo-Dionysius, p. 184.
theology, the logos of God, announces the appearance of [th]is God or the Being of [th]is God, the Being of [th]is Being, and why Pseudo-Dionysius does not predominantly, if at all, speak of the revelation of [th]is God, of this God coming to light, as he does through Revelation, but stresses another aspect of God, that is, how he is, like the Being of beings, inscrutable, that God is [also], if not primarily, hidden.102

[29] If one ever wanted to write an anti-Heideggerian manifesto, one would have to consider that it has already been written. A more logical, more influential critique, more overt subversion of what is to Heidegger first, namely the unconcealed, be it called time, Lichtung, arrival or aletheia, or quite simply, Being, cannot be found in the history of philosophy than Pseudo-Dionysius’s *The Mystical Theology*. Clearly, in his symbolic and negative theologies, Pseudo-Dionysius gives a negative expression to the ontological difference as concealed. For at the core of all beings that are, at the heart of everything that is, lies something that is, but is

102 If one should think that [th]is mystical concept of the Being of beings is taken care of more properly by Meister Eckhart’s obscure writings or his more public sermons or by Ignatius of Loyola’s *The Dark Night of the Soul*, one has not yet acknowledged the clear distinction between the three theologians. For what Ignatius of Loyola, even in [th]is mystic night presents, is nothing other than a mysticism of light, a mysticism of appearances or unconcealment hardly different from a Hildegard of Bingen or a Theresa of Avila, and never a mysticism of what is concealed. And if one would think that Meister Eckhart, and not Dionysius, is the one to whom one should more properly attribute a lasting influence on the understanding and expression of what is hidden, one has, of course forgotten that, after his excommunication, Eckhart was hardly read and has remained a scholarly curiosity, but also, that ‘the preeminence of the Aeropagite in the history of Western spirituality … justifies the title by which he is now universally acknowledged, ‘The Father of Christian Mysticism.’ [St. Thomas, as quoted by James A. Walsh in the introduction to Denis Hidden Theology, *The Pursuit of Wisdom*, p. 52.] But more importantly and materially, that is as relates to the content of the philosophical concepts used, it is obvious to anyone who has gone to the trouble of actually reading Meister Eckhart, that his apperception of what is, the Being of beings, is purely Neoplatonic, that is essential, whereas it never is to Dionysius. For where the latter dissociates [th]is, the Being of beings, from any essential characteristics, it is obvious that Meister Eckhart subsumes or makes whatever is dependent on what it is. To Meister Eckhart what exists is essentially ideas, and in furthering this Neoplatonic conception and interpretation of Christianity, one would almost be tempted to say that Meister Eckhart was a heretic, and perhaps not unjustly condemned for heresy, for confusing Christianity with Neoplatonism, what is with what is, the existent and inscrutable with what essentially is, regardless of how much he speaks about nothing which more often than not is only used as an empty phrase to negate everything that is.
not a being, and however it is indispensable to its *existence*, it remains totally in the
dark, a mystery. Such *is* the ontological difference as presented by Pseudo-
Dionysius in *The Mystical Theology*, which is the shortest and most influential text
of Medieval Christendom, which on *five* pages covers everything that *is*. According
to Pseudo-Dionysius, there are two separate and distinct ways to produce the
apperception of what *is* hidden. One is negative and belongs to *negative theology*,
the other is symbolic and belongs to *symbolic theology*.103 The major instrument at
the disposal of negative theology is *aphairesis* or denial, the only tool available to
symbolic theology being the symbol which is *not* valued as a likeness, but as an
unlikeness of what it is *unable* to represent. Still, through [th]is *incapacity* to
represent *what* [th]is spirit, angel, God *essentially* is, it does, invariably produce a
profound sense of what *is* concealed, the Being of beings. Both methods present the
same, and as the relation between the two methods are, as Paul Rorem says, in his
handsome introduction to the works of Pseudo-Dionysius, ‘very complex and
complicated,’104 I shall attempt to disentangle this complexity by treating them
separately as negative and symbolic theology, which is not often done as *The
Symbolic Theology* is a title without a book. We shall study in detail these ways to
unrevelation, *The Mystical Theology*, which presents the negative way to the
concealed, to the apperception of what *is* concealed, and *The Celestial Hierarchy*, as
wells as Pseudo-Dionysius’ *Letters*, which presents the symbolic way to the same,
what *is* and remains concealed.

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103 The symbolic theology is presented in the methodological chapter in Pseudo-Dionysius, *The
Celestial Hierarchy*, ‘Chapter Two, That divine and heavenly things are appropriately revealed
even through dissimilar symbols,’ *The Complete Works*, pp. 147-153, and in Pseudo-Dionysius,
104 Rorem says, ‘The combination of negation and dissimilarity is complex and thus requires careful
It would appear that as his time, Pseudo-Dionysius had more patience than we do today, and that he did not immediately proceed with the exposition of what is hidden, but patiently and systematically laid down the means, the methods for its interpretation and production. There is an image of negative theology which, according to tradition, stems from Plotinus and is taken up by Pseudo-Dionysius and the mystical tradition to make an image of what is imageless. In this picture the mystic is likened to a sculptor that sees the whole world, and everything in it, as one colossal, cosmic building block, each individual as no more than scattered rocks, unfinished stone. Just as the sculptor removes the stone, as does Michelangelo, who himself followed this principle of creation through aphairesis, chisels away all superficial aspects to uncover the perfect shape within, so the theologian/philosopher removes everything perceptual and everything conceptual, until nothing remains but the apperception of what is concealed, not a being, but the Being of beings or that which concealed is without essential characteristic.

In this paragraph we shall follow the process of aphairesis, denial to its end, the apperception of, if not the complete union with, the Being of beings. For Pseudo-Dionysius has not only found a way to interpret but a way to create this apperception, the apperception of what is concealed, by following a path of denial whereby what is first, is denied all phenomenal characteristic and then denied all intelligible characteristic until finally nothing remains except

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106 Principally, Clements discovers ‘the sealed figure concept,’ in Alberti’s *De Statua* [1464], and concretely, creation through aphairesis in Michelangelo’s *David*. Clements, *Michelangelo’s Theory of Art*, pp. 22f.] History constantly reminds us that Michelangelo died the same year Shakespeare was born, in 1564. We shall later see that Shakespeare adapts this principle of creation through aphairesis for his own ends, and if the reader immediately begs to think concretely we could perhaps mention, *King Lear*. Speaking of the concrete production of Being, we shall, however, adopt the word elision. For as much as aphairesis is used to deny all properties to everything, we use elision to denote the sudden or progressive removal of all attributes from a single being.

the apperception of that which without any characteristica remains hidden.

Finally, also [th]is is denied existence by removing the act of apperception itself, for so hopefully to achieve mystical union with that which is no longer apperceived.\footnote{Superficially, Dionysius provides both Dante as well as any abbot or novice with the three basic steps on the ladder to perfection: [ethical/moral] purgation, [cognitive/contemplative] illumination, [ontological/theological] union, with God, the Being of beings. Rorem remarks however that these three stages, which are distinct in Bonaventure, are all cognitive to the Aeropagite: ‘we are purified from ignorance, then illuminated further and then perfected in our understanding.’ See Rorem, \textit{Pseudo-Dionysius}, p. 219. See also, Underhill, \textit{Mysticism}, ‘Chapter IX, The Dark Night of the Soul,’ pp. 380ff.}

[31] To get a clear view of Pseudo-Dionysius’ apophatic method, it is helpful to compare it to Descartes’ scientific Method,\footnote{Descartes, \textit{Discourse on Method and Related Writings}, Part Four, pp. 24ff.} as something is often only understood by understanding what it is \textit{not}, and something complex more easily acquired when, as Aristotle maintains, compared to something simple.\footnote{For this principle of edification, see for example, Plato, \textit{Republic}, Book VI, 488a, p. 1111.} It is as easy to notice the superficial \textit{likeness} between Pseudo-Dionysius’ and Descartes’ art of hyperbolic denial, and hence the influence of negative theology on Descartes, as it is to notice the \textit{unlikeness} between the results of applying the same method of aphairesis/denial to so different pursuits. For as Descartes through denial ends up with \textit{Cogito}, Pseudo-Dionysius ends up with God or the Being of beings, and whereas Descartes ends up with something substantial, \textit{res cogitans}, Pseudo-Dionysius ends up with what is insubstantial, \textit{it}. Where Pseudo-Dionysius ends up with something \textit{inessential}, it, Descartes ends up with what is \textit{essential} as the \textit{cogito} is defined through its one essential characteristic, thinking, the \textit{cogitans} in \textit{res cogitans}. Where Descartes proceeds through doubt and ends up with certainty, Pseudo-Dionysius proceeds with certainty and ends up with something \textit{doubtful}, for in the end, Descartes ends up with what is known, \textit{res cogitans}, whereas Pseudo-
Dionysius ends up with what is unknown. Nothing could be further apart or more distinct than the known and the unknown, which, we could say, separates or distinguishes all beings from the Being of all beings. It is, however clear that Cogito, as Heidegger remarks in *Identity and Difference*, is also an interpretation of the Being of beings, if it is not more than that, a sign of its forgetfulness or only significatory of its withdrawal or reification. So, however similar the process whereby Descartes reaches his aim may appear to Pseudo-Dionysius’ *apophatic* theology, it is safe to say that it appears similar, although it is not.

If there remains any semblance between these two methods, we could say that the *Method* by which Descartes reaches his essential foundation in *Cogito*, is the same through which Pseudo-Dionysius takes away all essential foundations. For what Pseudo-Dionysius has, through *aphairesis*, through the gradual process of denial, provided, is indeed another ground, the ground for the Being of beings, which still, after [th]is long and painful process, remains entirely hidden. What is left after everything has been taken away, is nevertheless at the core of all beings, and the mysterious or hidden core of all beings is, as Pseudo-Dionysius ends [this paragraph in] *The Mystical Theology*, ‘above everything that is.’ To reach [th]is end Pseudo-Dionysius begins by denying it all [perceptible] attributes. He proceeds by denying it all [intelligible] attributes, and so Pseudo-Dionysius, about to reach the conclusion, says,

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112 It is clear, that regardless of the textual evidence, Descartes’ method is closer to, if not identical with Augustine’s method of doubt, which he uses to confront the scepticism of the pyrrhonists and the relativism of the Platonists, in *Against the Academicians*. Augustine turns scepticism against itself, arguing that the *inability* to resolve a contradiction, that is to decide which one of two mutually exclusive propositions is true, supports the fact that that which one is unable to reach a judgment on does exist, that even doubt proves the existence of that which is doubted. See, Augustine, *Against the Academicians*, pp. 72ff.
‘Again, as we climb higher we say this. It is not soul or mind, nor does it possess imagination, conviction, speech, or understanding. Nor is it speech per se, understanding per se. It cannot be spoken of and it cannot be grasped by understanding… It cannot be grasped by the understanding since it is neither knowledge nor truth.’

It is stunning, and we can never remind ourselves often enough, that at [th]is height, or [th]is depth, Pseudo-Dionysius does not ever use, as Hegel says, ‘the meaningless word ‘God’, to create the apperception of what is.

If Reason only grasps what essentially is, what is apperceived at the end of *aphairesis* is clearly above Reason. There are, however, two interpretations, we may even speak of two distinct experiences, of what remains at the end of *aphairesis*. At the end of *via negativa*, is, according to St. Bernard, a sudden flower, a sudden outburst of *love*, wherein the apperceiver and the apperceived are united in love if meditation reaches its end. For what, to Bonaventure or the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, is after everything has been taken away is *love*, the experience of the love of God, or quite simply God, which to the world, like the lover, like Christ to his bride, the church, remains hidden. When the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* in the fourteenth century translates Dionysius’ *The Mystical Theology* into Middle English as *Denis Hid Divinite*, the author adds the aspect of love to the unknown, to the interpretation of that which is above beings, the Being of beings. [Th]is interpretation cannot be sustained by a close reading of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus. For, like Bonaventure, the author of *The Cloud of

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116 Evidently, the way we use the concept of ‘reason’ in this passage differs from Kant’s interpretation in *Critique of Pure Reason*, but remains in line with the usage by Dionysius and the Dionysian Tradition, where Reason perceives or understands what essentially is, and that which cannot be defined, and hence may only be apperceived, is above reason. To Kant, it is obvious, that contrarily, it is exactly, Reason that comprehends what is imperceivable.
Unknowing, anticipated what Pseudo-Dionysius never did, that one would be *in love* after everything had been taken away.

Whether apperceived as definite or indefinite, as Being in love or simply Being, it is clear that that which appears to be above reason, is apperceived as something hidden, something concealed, and also that *this* understanding of love as what is concealed, although being a commonplace to us, is entirely foreign to, even unthinkable to Plato or Aristotle. For these Greek philosophers perceived love or *eros* or *agape*, as that which brings *this* into unconcealment, as that which unconceals, whereas, in contradistinction to *this* belief, the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages, among them St. Bernard and Bonaventure, creates, in an entirely Dionysian tradition, *love* as what remains after everything essential has been taken away, and nothing remains except the apperception of what is hidden. For it is to that which is hidden that the Christian mystic feels love, towards that which is concealed and never to that which is unconcealed. Some may find this mystical pathos superfluous, assert that the Being of beings may well be concealed without *this* pathos.118 Regardless, it is self-evident that our views were shaped by theirs,

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118 All scholars, commentators, from Albert Magnus and St. Thomas to Rosemary Ann Lees and Paul Rorem, concur that the aspect of love cannot be found in Dionysius’ exposition of the unknown, but is an interpretation that securely belongs to the Western reception of the Dionysian Corpus, and can be traced back to Eriugena’s first Latin translation in the Ninth Century. As clearly as Pseudo-Dionysius presents the Being of beings logically and without pathos, the author of The Cloud of Unknowing is unable to transcribe Dionysius’ theology without it. For translating Dionysius’ The Mystical Theology, he adds, as Phyllis Hodgson shows in the introduction to The Cloud of Unknowing published for The Early English Text Society, the element of love to his translation Denis Hid Divinite. And as much as the Latin The Mystical Theology of Eriugena was available to Benedictine, Cistercian and Carthusian alike until Henry VIII tore down the Abbeys that housed the Dionysian corpus, the Middle English translation, Denis Hid Divinite, was, according to the sparse evidence, still widely read, even with fervour, until the English Reformation.[Walsh, Introduction to Denis’s Hidden Theology, The Pursuit of Wisdom, p. 67 and 85n, where it is said, *’Phyllis Hodgson argues for the widespread popularity of the Cloud and its author’s minor treatises, from the fifteenth-century observation that they ‘walked up and down at deer-rates’ (in D. M. McIntyre, ‘The Cloud of Unknowing,’ The Expositor 7, no. 22 (October 1907): 373). Cf. P. H. p. lxxxii. Her view is recently corroborated by P. H. Jolliffe, A Check-list of Middle English Prose Writings (Toronto: IMS, 1974).’*] But overnight one had to read Dionysius in secret in
by Pseudo-Dionysius and the author of The Cloud of Unknowing, by Augustine and Bonaventure, to believe that not everything that is not reason is below reason, and that calling something ‘irrational’ one may indeed not speak deprecatory but in praise. For in unknowing and in unreason, at the end of [th]is transgression, where one is prone to recognize a lack, they, the unknown author of The Cloud of Unknowing and the man who falsely, and for more than a millennium, went under the name of Dionysius the Aeropagite but to this day remains entirely unknown, found not something missing but an abundance, not something less but something more, an abundance called unknowing through which one may apperceive what lies at the heart of all things, but is not a thing, apperceive, perhaps be, what is fundamental to all things, but transcends them all, and hence must remain entirely unknown, the Being of beings. Only within [th]is docto ignorantia tradition, does it remain true, after all knowledge has been taken away, that ignorance is bliss.119

England. A cherished copy was available to John Dee,[Yates, Theatre of the World, pp. 10, 12] whose library was finally burned in Protestant frenzy, like so many of the books of the Monastic Libraries.[Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, pp. 187ff.] It is safe to say that the analytic instruments for understanding the poiesis and the hermeneutics of Being were suddenly, and violently, taken away. However, judging from the effective history of Shakespeare’s plays alone, it is safe to say that what was removed was merely its apprehension, never its influence, which like the moon affects the tide even when no one is aware of it.119 The author of The Mystical Theology and The Celestial Hierarchy, who is entirely unknown and wrote under the pseudonym he borrowed from Dionysius the Aeropagite, the convert of St. Paul in Works, is believed to have been a Syrian Monk and to have died in the first part of the sixth Century.119 The evidence for this conjecture is that he is mentioned by the later Maximus the Confessor, and seems to be have been influenced by the earlier and last great philosopher of Greek antiquity, namely Iamblichus, who among other works wrote the esoteric The Egyptian Mysteries. [Cf. Iamblichos, Theurgia or The Egyptian Mysteries, 1911.] Iamblichus himself appear to be clearly influenced by Plotinus or a Neoplatonic tradition where the theory of ideas, or a theory of procession and return, dominates the ontologies and theologies, which are, at this point, not separate inquires. Although it may be true that Pseudo-Dionysius, whatever his actual name is, was such a Syrian monk, I do not however support the view that Pseudo-Dionysius wrote within a Neoplatonic tradition, and if he did or attempted to emulate and perpetuate such a tradition, he clearly subverted it unwillingly. [Th]is is evident from Pseudo-Dionysius’ theory of the Being of beings, which is always and without exception presented as inessential, whereas in the Neoplatonic tradition, what is is inseparable from what is essential. There could hardly be staked out a greater difference than between one who believes the Being of beings is essential and one who thinks it is not. For further proof of how the Dionysian theology distinguishes itself from its supposed Neoplatonic ancestry, see C8[43].
Before we proceed with our exposition of Pseudo-Dionysius’ symbolic theology, the exposition of the Dionysian symbol, it is important to notice that the key book in Pseudo-Dionysius’ works is *The Celestial Hierarchy*, and not only that a chapter in this book, Chapter II, provides directives for understanding the corpus as a whole, but that one single letter, *Letter 9*, illuminates the meaning of this single chapter, and hence one single letter could express Pseudo-Dionysius’ theology as a whole.  

Paul Rorem says of *The Celestial Hierarchy*, in his *Pseudo-Dionysius - A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* [1993], the only systematic exposition of the Dionysian Corpus in English, ‘An introduction to the Dionysian treatises should start with *The Celestial Hierarchy*, for several reasons.’  

Rorem’s argument is not that *The Celestial Hierarchy* was the first to be written by Pseudo-Dionysius, as he himself argues that it follows after *The Mystical Theology*, but rather, that it provides ‘crucial facets of the author’s theological method that recur throughout the writings …The author’s interpretative method, essential to the entire enterprise, is pursued in this treatise …’  

Rorem marks the importance of *Letter 9*, and we shall follow his lead, but not without listening to what Rorem has to say about the crucial second chapter of Pseudo-Dionysius’ *The Celestial Hierarchy*, called, ‘That Divine and Heavenly …’

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120 Pointing out the differences within the Dionysian corpus, Rorem explains in a note provided for *The Divine Names*, ‘The lost or fictitious Symbolic Theology concerned those biblical symbols for God taken from the realm of sense perception …As such, it follows the presentation taken from the realm of concepts (The Divine Names) as part of the descent or procession from lofty simplicity to lowly plurality …The Treatise (Symbolical Theology) … may be summarized in the Ninth Letter.’  

[Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works*, p. 57n.] Rorem also provides another note, where the locus of ‘Symbolic Theology’ within the Dionysian works, is more precisely identified. Rorem clarifies, ‘The lost or fictitious Symbolic Theology was ostensibly concerned with those biblical symbols for God that depend on sense perception, such as the symbols discussed in this letter. The title is also mentioned at the end of this letter (1113BC 21-30), and in DN 1 597 AB 5-20, DN 13 984 11, MT 3 1033AB 13-25, and CH 15 336A 2-9. See DN 1, note 89.’  


Things are Appropriately Revealed even through Dissimilar Symbols.\textsuperscript{124} ‘The second chapter of \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy} is a sustained methodological argument for the use of symbols in depicting the angels and God. It is especially concerned to justify those symbols that may seem most incongruous and insulting to the heavenly beings.’\textsuperscript{125} Invaluably, Rorem adds what is not explicitly stated in Pseudo-Dionysius work, ‘The symbols have a double rationale: to reveal and to conceal.’\textsuperscript{126} Pseudo-Dionysius says,

‘Among uninstructed souls the fathers of unspeakable wisdom give an impression of outstanding absurdity when, with secret and daring riddles, they make known that truth which is divine, mysterious, and so far as the profane are concerned, inaccessible. That is why so many continue to be unbelieving in the presence of the explanations of the divine mysteries, for we contemplate them solely by the way of the perceptible symbols attached to them.’\textsuperscript{127}

And concerning the efficacy of these incongruous symbols, Dionysius says, ‘It was right … that the Holy of Holies should be kept from the contamination of the mob.’\textsuperscript{128}

Generally there is, as Pseudo-Dionysius points out, in Scripture, a tendency to represent gods or angels with ‘incongruous’ images,\textsuperscript{129} for example angels as men with wings. These ‘incongruous’ images should first of all make it immediately clear that these beings are essentially different from \textit{human} beings, secondly, and more fundamentally, that they are different from the way they are essentially

\textsuperscript{125} Rorem, \textit{Pseudo-Dionysius}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{126} In extenso, Rorem says, ‘The symbols have a double rationale: to reveal and to conceal, to accommodate revelation to the capacities of the receivers and to keep it secret from the outsiders.’ Rorem, \textit{Pseudo-Dionysius}, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{129} Pseudo-Dionysius does not speak of images but of \textit{dissimilarities}, but, as dis-similarities to Dionysius, in one sense, simply are re-presentations, and \textit{images} are such re-presentations, we speak of ‘incongruous images’ for the sake of clarity. [Pseudo-Dionysius, \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy}, 137C–D, \textit{The Complete Works}, p. 148].
represented, leaving again the beholder with nothing to grasp but what is singularly concealed. For, as Pseudo-Dionysius says, ‘These pictures have to do with beings so simple that we can neither know nor contemplate them.’\textsuperscript{130} Pseudo-Dionysius considers those who interpret biblical symbols literally, as adequate depictions or representations of heavenly beings, not only as naïve, but mad,\textsuperscript{131} for these images are not adequate, but inadequate [to what they represent]. As Pseudo-Dionysius notes,

\begin{quote}
‘We cannot, as mad people do, profanely visualize these heavenly and godlike intelligences as actually having numerous feet and faces … They do not have the curved beak of the eagle or the wings and feathers of birds. We must not have pictures of flaming wheels whirling in the skies, of material thrones made ready to provide a reception …’\textsuperscript{132} And later, ‘The word of God makes use of poetic imagery when discussing these formless intelligences but, as I have already said, it does so not for the sake of art, but as a concession to the nature of our own mind. It uses scriptural passages in an uplifting fashion as a way, provided for us from the first, to uplift our mind in a manner suitable to our nature.’\textsuperscript{133}
\end{quote}

Whether or not a symbol is perceived as similar or dissimilar, an adequate or an inadequate representation of what [th]is essentially is, depends on the capacity of the reader, who may chose, at all times, to perceive [th]is symbolic representation naively as an adequate, literal or an essentially true [re]presentation.\textsuperscript{134} Pseudo-Dionysius does, however, add a word of warning, ‘one must be careful to use the similarities as dissimilarities, as discussed, to avoid one-

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{130} Pseudo-Dionysius, \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy}, 137B, \textit{The Complete Works}, p. 148.
\item\textsuperscript{131} Pseudo-Dionysius, \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy}, 137A, \textit{The Complete Works}, p. 147.
\item\textsuperscript{132} Pseudo-Dionysius, \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy}, 137A, \textit{The Complete Works}, p. 147.
\item\textsuperscript{134} Here we may add that to interpret a symbol \textit{metaphorically} is not considered profound, as the metaphorical focus, the transformation that occurs through metaphor, leaves [th]is essentially unchanged. In this view, the metaphorical interpretation of, for instance, the four beasts in \textit{Revelations} as the four continents of Asia, Africa, Europe and America, which surrounds the Lord, the Host of hosts, is of course, entirely superficial. This metaphorical or allegorical interpretation is no less superficial than the literal, which would see God surrounded by four beasts looking upon God, whose face is as much hidden to the beasts as their faces are hidden to us.
\end{itemize}
to-one correspondences.

Symbols are therefore unmistakably made dissimilar through interpretation. What is brought or thrown together in the Dionysian symbol is the perceptible and the imperceptible, what we can perceive and what we can only apperceive, where the road to that which is only apperceived goes through the negation of the perceptual characteristics that immediately seems to belong to [th]is but does not, so that, finally, nothing remains except the negative impression of that which is inconceivable. The symbol is the site of a contradiction. It brings together the perceptual and the imperceptual, the conceivable and the inconceivable. It is therefore truly a sym-bol, as it throws opposites together.

Before we let Pseudo-Dionysius conclude his theory of the symbol, let us say this:

There are two intertwined, even contradictory movements in the production and interpretation of dissimilar symbols. The symbol is both like something and unlike something, and that which it is like and unlike is the same. The symbol is immediately like what we may phenomenally perceive or imagine, it is medially unlike what it only negatively [re]presents. The symbol is the site of a contradiction, it is the crossroads, the intersection between the perceptual and the imperceptual which it presents negatively, which it offers the negative impression of. Therefore, the dissimilar symbol is truly a symbol as it gathers, or brings together, the perceived and the imperceived, the imperceivable at the site of the symbol.

The symbol is a way of looking past or through phenomena, even to neglect them. The symbol is a way of looking through phenomena or what is unconcealed towards what is concealed, even towards what [th]is conceals, and by looking

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136 For the etymology of the symbol, as cym-bolon, cym-ballein, see Wilson Knight, The Christian Renaissance, p. 23.
through [th]is, past the phenomenon, the symbol, which is undoubtedly unconcealed, becomes merely the bridge between the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknown, becomes itself what is concealed or hidden, [is] no longer apperceived. Dionysius says, ‘My mind was not permitted to dwell on imagery so inadequate [i.e. the deformed imagery used by scripture], but was provoked to get behind the material show, to get accustomed to the idea of going beyond appearances.’137 No longer do we apperceive what is unconcealed. So the symbol gives expression to what is hidden, and by doing so effectively, by reaching [th]is end, it obliterates itself, the impression of itself, and does itself become what is hidden. If all phenomena are approached symbolically, which Metaphysics does either in an essential or in an inessential sense, and if phenomena are what is first unconcealed, it is obvious that [th]is symbolic interpretation of and approach to phenomena will be what hides the fact that these phenomena are first unconcealed, that is, that their appearance is negative, is a movement by which what is removed through [th]is appearance, is the concealed. By thus appearing, man is unconcealed much like Michelangelo unconcealed his sculpture, through the removal of that indefinite matter which conceals, for through aphairesis is [th]is unconcealed or brought to life.

[39] As is well known, the Academia of Plato and the Lyceum of Aristotle continued to prosper during the Roman Empire, as the Roman nobility for centuries sent their offspring to Athens for culture and education, ensuring a continuous academic tradition until the 6th Century A.D. when the Christian Emperor Justinian, in 527, following the desires of his wife, finally closed the

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Academy. It is perhaps no coincidence that Plato’s Academy was closed at the same time as one today believes whoever took the name of Dionysius wrote his highly influential books on *The Mystical Theology*, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, *On the Divine Names* and *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, thus signifying the end of one era and the beginning of another, the end of Antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages, the demise of Plato and the surge of Dionysius, whose works came to Western Europe as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor Michael the Stammerer to the Frankish Louis the Pious, in 827. John the Scot Eriugena (810-77), The Scottish or Irish John, was the first to translate the Dionysian corpus into Latin, and the first to make *The Mystical Theology* available in any local tongue was an English friar, who translated this influential and popular work into the vernacular as early as the fourteenth century under the name Denis Hid Divinite. Tellingly, this work, like the one written by the same man, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, is written by a friar or a priest who to this day remains entirely unknown. So much does Dionysius write natural theology in *The Mystical Theology* that the sparse and almost absent references to Christ throughout his corpus has made him occasionally fall under the accusation of heresy. On the mature Luther’s dislike of Dionysius’ theology, what should be noted is that Dionysius’ *Mystical Theology* is a natural theology, whereas to Luther, there is no theology without revelation. What should be noted is that through Dionysius’ major and most influential work, *The Mystical Theology*, it is as easy for Dionysius to project a theology without Revelation as it is impossible for Luther to perceive a theology without one. Obviously, it is the possibility of a pure natural religion or Christianity without revelation, which made Dionysius fall into disrepute and later complete neglect in the Protestant and Evangelical traditions of Christianity.
§4.1 The Inadequacy of Mimesis

§4.2 The Techne of Inadequation

§4.3 Instruments of Inadequation

C4 EXPOSÉ

[1] Having recognized the two traditions that have exposed the ontological difference negatively as Philosophies of Unconcealment and Philosophies of Concealment, I will emphasize that like Hamlet, Shakespeare betrays his own ideals by producing the ontological contradiction [between Being and beings] as concealed. Contrary to T. S. Eliot, who detected no elements of a poetics in Shakespeare’s plays, we have discovered a consistent pattern of inadequation, which we will have a first look at in this chapter, before we determine the different instruments of inadequation within the context of the places provided by Shakespeare’s plays. Since techne is the virtue of poiesis, we need first to clarify that this poiesis aims at the production of the apperception of the Being of beings. Our main thesis throughout is that the apperception of the Being of beings is most spontaneously, even effortlessly, produced through unlikeness rather than likeness, non-beings rather than beings, a poiesis that works through inadequation rather than adequation. As a result of this inadequation, the negative ontological difference is not only produced but, most often, also apperceived. Before diving into The Techne of Being I offer a preliminary critique of the poetical theory of mimesis, which is as much structured on a logic of likeness by which it achieves its end of cementing the perception of beings, the perception of what this is essentially
is, as *The Poetics of Being* is structured on a logic of unlikeness. Evidently, mimesis is a theory through which we are progressively *removed* from understanding that non-beings offer a more persuasive sense of Being, blocked from apprehending the negative ontic-ontological difference. Surprisingly, we are removed from the experience of what is ‘true’ or ‘real’ by exactly what we immediately, but falsely, would have thought would bring us closer, namely a true [re]presentation, a likeness. I shall therefore first speak of the inadequacy of mimesis before we offer the theory of inadequation.

§4.1 The Inadequacy of Mimesis

[2] As Aristotle says in *Metaphysics*, what is first is investigated by either ontology or theology.1 Apparently, *The Poetics of Being* is able to produce the impression of that which these sciences merely take for granted. Whereas ontology/theology may be the sciences of what is first, there may be an art that produces its apperception. Evidently, as no science is higher then the one contemplating what is highest, no art is higher than the one making the apperception of what *is*. The success of any dramatic art is surely not measured by the extent to which the spectator is led to believe that [th]is is a *[re]presentation*. No dramatic art considers it an achievement to convince the spectator that [th]is is a *[re]presentation*, but rather, that [th]is *is*. We can even say that if tragedy has *only* convinced me that it has delivered a *true* [re]presentation, it has failed as art and would perhaps be considered more as a true historical record, and hardly be perceived as drama.

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1 See the *theological* Book XII of *Metaphysics* and the *ontological* Book IV, and a book that anticipates them both, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I, esp. 982b8-983a11.
What Aristotle actually says, as he considers the difference between poetry and history, is that, ‘poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history.’ Like Heidegger after him, Aristotle’s never explains why ‘poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history.’ We shall attempt to expose the reason for this hierarchy. The reason is not that one craft studies what was and the other what may be, but rather, that one craft produces what the other takes for granted, namely the ontological difference. To support the interpretation/valuation of the superiority of poetry [over science], we would use Aristotle’s own argument in *Metaphysics*, where he evidently considers no investigation to be higher than the investigations of what is highest. As Aristotle is approaching the question of ‘what is insofar as it is,’ being qua Being, what is highest is either the gods or the Being of beings, which are studied by the sciences of theology and ontology. The superiority of poetry would be that it is first. For prior to what studies what is highest would be that activity which actually produces what is highest. Therefore, if poetry produces what the sciences merely investigates, poetry would be an activity superior to any science, tragedy superior to any scientific inquiry. For as it is evident that it is first to study what is first, it is even more primary to produce its apperception.

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6 In this sense, one could say that Aristotle, like Hegel, values action above contemplation, places *poiesis* above *theoria*. It is therefore not surprising that one hailed Napoleon as he rode into Jena and the other educated Alexander who conquered the world.
The reason why I in the exposition of *The Poetics of Being*, feel forced to step beyond existing poetologies, is that there is a deep lacuna within tradition itself. We are almost tempted to accuse our philosophical predecessors of the same as Plato accuses his, namely of laziness. For where Plato’s predecessors failed to consider the Being of what is not, our own forerunners failed to consider the production of the ontological difference. Like Plato, we cannot simply ascribe this lack to ignorance when we are dealing with philosophers. Obviously, as Aristotle says in *Metaphysics*, any lack is a potential, and it was only natural that this potential would sooner or later come to be realized as *The Poetics of Being*.

It is our task in this chapter to identify and expose the *instruments* that, for centuries undetected, systematically and with surprising ease, produce the apperception of the Being of beings. There is, however, one element that blocks the possibility for comprehending its production, a concept that has to be removed to make possible the identification of the places that convey the most incomparable sense of life, namely ‘mimesis.’ Superficially it appears to be a heavy task to remove the concept of ‘mimesis’ from the preperception of the relation between life and drama, stage and life. However, as soon as one realizes that ‘mimesis’ does not explain the relation between life and art, but explains away its relation, the concept of ‘mimesis’ is rendered superfluous. We could continue to use Aristotle’s concept of ‘mimesis,’ if what we desired was to make another contribution to the

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7 The classical contribution is, of course, Aristotle’s *Poetics*. For contemporary poetologies, see, for example, Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction to Poetics*, Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining*.

8 Plato, *Sophist*, 267d, *Complete Works*, p. 292. Neither Kearney, Bachelard nor Todorov are accused of laziness, as they indeed have provided us with admirable poetologies, which nevertheless do not inquire into what we here are pursuing, the poetics of Being. What they, respectively are investigating is the poiesis of imagination, dreams and the structure of storytelling.

distortion of the metaperception of art and its experience for another two thousand years. Instead, to let the concept of ‘mimesis’ expose its own inadequacy, I will proceed negatively, and by letting ‘mimesis’ remove itself from all discourses on art by pointing out that one learns more about the relation between theatre and life from its conceptual negation, ‘animitation.’ For neglected in the understanding of drama as a mimetic representation is that, in any performance that effortlessly offer the experience of the Being of beings, [th]is is no longer perceived as a likeness. The concept of ‘animitation’ could signal that [th]is negative ontological difference comes across, most persuasively, through the experience of an unlikeness.

[6] What we make the spectator aware of through the concept of ‘animitation’ is that a successful performance in any theatre takes away the layer of - predicative or subjective, essential or substantial - likeness from the apperception of [th]is, which is either concealed or unconcealed, but in both cases, apperceived as irreplaceable. [Th]is is no longer perceived as a likeness. Speaking teleologically, we could say that the eudaimonia of any drama, the happiness of any theatre, lies in denying the spectator the experience that [th]is is as an imitation, and by doing so, making [th]is come alive. For by erasing the impression of the reference, what is created is the apperception of what is first, the apperception that [th]is is [alive]. It is animated. [Th]is immediate effect of what appears to be, whose production there suddenly is no trace of, we could have called ‘animitation,’ the craft, ‘to animitate.’ I will, however, continue to use the concept ‘inadequation,’ not only because it sounds more familiar, but because we do not want to give the false impression of merely negating a pre-existent theory, when The Poetics of Being is entirely self-
consistent and its theory completely autonomous. ‘Animitation,’ does however stake out the distinction of *The Poetics of Being*, how it differs from previous poetologies, most importantly from Plato’s and Aristotle’s. We shall therefore attempt a finer definition. ‘To animitate’ would mean ‘to take away, to negate the apperception that *is* is a likeness in order to create the apperception of the Being of beings, or at least, as Coleridge would say of dreams, to suspend the negative judgment that pronounces these phenomena that appear before us as unreal.’ Moreover, animitation is not accomplished through adequation, but through inadequation, not the presentation of a likeness, but an unlikeness. The expert of this art would therefore superiorly master the craft of unlikeness-making, through which these unlikenesses, that is, these *phenomena*, are animated.

In *The Poetics of Being*, ‘poiesis’ simply denotes the act or art of ‘making,’ of bringing forth, an activity, which may or may not reach its *telos*. Being in possession of the ability to produce something with excellence - in this work, the apperception of the Being if beings - one would certainly possess a virtue or a power. I shall follow Aristotle and say that as much as the virtue that belongs to science is *episteme* and to action *phronesis*, the virtue that belongs to *poiesis* is an art or a *techne*. If man by virtue is an animal that thinks, there is, to Aristotle, no *arête* without knowledge of the principle that predictably may produce a

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10 Plato’s poetics is found in the *Sophist* and the *Republic*, Book II and Book X.
12 For Plato’s theory of mimesis as likeness-making, see, Plato, *Sophist*, 265b ff, and the *Republic*, Book II and the *Republic*, Book X.
particular effect.\textsuperscript{15} As much as perspective produces a realistic painting, and harmony song, so I will show that in literature, especially in drama, the principle of inadequation produces a more emphatic sense of Being.\textsuperscript{16} To proceed methodically, it is sometimes necessary to mark out the places where one is not going. I shall mark out, already from the beginning, what distinguishes \textit{The Poetics of Being} from Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics}. To properly understand what we are up against when offering a preliminary critique of Aristotle’s poetology, we should bear in mind what Heidegger says at the conclusion of \textit{Letter on Humanism}, ‘Aristotle’s words in the \textit{Poetics}, although they have scarcely been pondered, are still valid - that poetic composition is truer than exploration of beings.’\textsuperscript{17} By truer, Heidegger simply means that poetry unconceals the Being of beings whereas science does not, as it limits itself to the investigation of what beings essentially and categorically are.\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Poetics} transcends this limitation.

It is obvious that our ways depart from Aristotle’s, for the concept of ‘mimesis’ offered in the \textit{Poetics},\textsuperscript{19} is not a concept that furthers an understanding of how one play appears more real, convincing or persuasive, than another. To the concept of ‘mimesis’ all plays are equal. The theory of mimesis - which we would have passed over in silence had not this theory cemented itself as one of the pillars of philosophical and literary discourse - takes for granted what is [first] to be

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Aristotle, \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, Book VI, Chapters 1-6.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Evidently, a master without techne does not have many followers, so we will not spend much time, if any, on attempts that do not reach [th]is end, that does not produce the apperception of the Being of beings.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Heidegger, \textit{Letter on Humanism}, Basic Writings, p. 264. Emphasis added.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Science is, as Habermas points out, the activity through which one attempts to adequately express what beings universally are or to make possible the precise understanding of the principles according to which these beings work so that in the future their behaviour may be explained and their actions modified, predicted and controlled.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Surprisingly, while enumerating the different kinds of \textit{mimesis}, as Aristotle does in the \textit{Poetics}, 1447a, and often speaking of the effect of the tragic kind of \textit{mimesis} as he does in 1453b, ‘mimesis’ itself is never defined.
\end{footnotes}
proven, namely that *this* play, *this* performance offers an impression of something that *is* whereas another play, another performance does *not*. The concept of ‘mimesis’ does *not* answer its own question. Rather, ‘mimesis’ is a concept whereby one avoids questioning, even erases the question as to how the apperception of the Being of beings is produced. Aristotle himself shows the helpless generality of the concept of ‘mimesis’ when his reliance on this concept *alone* is insufficient to distinguish between historiography and drama,\(^{20}\) or, for that matter, between painting and dance,\(^{21}\) an actress and a doll, even less between a play that reaches its end in persuading the spectator that what it *represents* *is*, and a play that does not appear to *represent* anything real at all. Aristotle even admits the inadequacy of the concept of mimesis, when he attempts to qualify the mimesis of drama, by pointing out that ‘tragedy … is the imitation of an action.’\(^{22}\)

Of course, it is what is added, namely the word ‘action’ that proved such an allure to the young Heidegger, and made Heidegger find a better intimation, a better school of ontology in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* than he ever did in *Metaphysics*.\(^{23}\)

\[9\] A play is only superficially judged by *what* it represents. More fundamentally and prior to any essential considerations - without considering the difference between tragedy and comedy - a play is judged by its *formal* capacity to persuade us that what it represents *is* *true*. A play is not principally judged by

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\(^{21}\) Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1460b7-33 and 1447a25.

\(^{22}\) Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b25 and 1450b23.

\(^{23}\) *The Nicomachean Ethics* provided Heidegger with the first intimation of what constitutes, even what makes possible, the singularity of any action, presenting Heidegger for the first time with a sense of the irreplaceability of Being, which the general categories of being that Franz Brentano had systematically presented to him through his limited exposition of Being in *Concerning the Multifarious Meanings of Being* [*Seiende*] in Aristotle did not. Cf. Gadamer, *Heidegger’s Ways*, p. 40 and p. 168. See also Heidegger’s reference to the invaluable contributions of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in Heidegger. [Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, in *Basic Writings*, p. 318.]
nor esteemed for its contents, but its form, and without a certain form, its content, what it represents, would stand out as helpless as predicates without a subject. Aristotle points out that the subject is only known by its predicates.\textsuperscript{24} I will however point out that without the apperception of an unknown foundation, these predicates would appear to be as disintegrated as a persona without a person.\textsuperscript{25} Regardless of how much you did appreciate its masque, you would never mistake its expression for something alive. Hence, what a superior theatre creates, is the apperception of something that wears this masque of predicates, and without giving or providing [th]is sense of depth, it is not likely that a spectacle, however violent or daring or sensuous, would furnish us with the apperception of what is [true], or, as Wilson Knight would say, what is actual.\textsuperscript{26}

It is baffling to see that to this day one continues to refer to Aristotle as an authority on poetics, when it is commonly known that half the book - or, if you will, the second book - is missing, and that the one part still extant partly concerns an art which to this day is still without a name.\textsuperscript{27} We should also bear in mind that the concept of ‘mimesis,’ which is easily taken for granted, was entirely new to the Greeks of Pericles’ Athens. As J. Tate says in Plato and ‘Imitation,’ a somewhat fashionable way to present the relation between art and beings, that has never


\textsuperscript{25} Undoubtedly, Shakespeare uses ‘person’ in the sense of persona, when, speaking of the ghost that ‘perchance … will walk again,’[Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act I, Scene ii, 243.] at Elsinore Castle, Hamlet says, ‘If it assumes my noble father’s person,’[Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act I, Scene ii.244] that is, his persona, his masque. Evidently, Shakespeare’s intention is not to give attention to the masque but to it, not the phenomenon but to what is hidden.


\textsuperscript{27} Speaking of this nameless art, Aristotle says in the \textit{Poetics}, ‘There is further an art which imitates by language alone without harmony [i.e. music], in prose or in verse, and if in verse, either in some one or in a plurality of metres. This form of imitation is to this day without a name.’ Aristotle, \textit{Poetics}, 1447a28-b1, \textit{Introduction to Aristotle}, pp. 665f.
ceased to be in vogue since.\textsuperscript{28} It is puzzling to see that in the \textit{Poetics} the question of the Being of beings is never raised, more puzzling still, that the sign or mark of this \textit{lack} of inquiry is precisely what many immediately believe explains the relation between art and world, the concept of ‘mimesis.’ The concept of ‘mimesis’ does quite simply \textit{not} acknowledge [the production of] the Being of beings but takes it for granted.\textsuperscript{29} Without the contradiction between beings and the Being of beings, without admitting that there \textit{is} something that transgresses all appearances to lend to them a sense of Being, it is indeed impossible to explain how one play comes across as real and another does not.\textsuperscript{30}

[11] The concept of ‘mimesis’ keeps secret more than it makes known, which is why Aristotle is forced to qualify his definition of drama, by speaking of the mimesis of the \textit{action} of men.\textsuperscript{31} The definition of action could indeed have indicated the difference between arts and sciences if it was ever defined, but, apart from what is vaguely suggested by Aristotle’s emphasis on \textit{reversal} of fortune,\textsuperscript{32} the term does, to this day, remain unexplained, tells us, quite simply, nothing. Of course, if the arts only aimed at \textit{mimetic} productions, the emulation of \textit{what} already is, it would be impossible to know the difference - from the concept of ‘mimesis’ alone - between arts and sciences, \textit{if} it were true that poetry \textit{only} represents what beings

\textsuperscript{28} For the origin of the concept of \textit{mimesis} and its fashionable introduction in the 5\textsuperscript{th} century as a neologism with a special emphasis on how the concept was used differently in Book II and Book X of Plato’s \textit{Republic}, see J. Tate, ‘Plato and ‘Imitation,’’ \textit{The Classical Review}, 1931, p. 163.\textsuperscript{29} For theories of mimesis, see for example, Plato, \textit{Republic}, Book II and \textit{Republic}, Book X, Aristotle, \textit{Poetics}, J. Tate, ‘‘Imitation’ in Plato’s \textit{Republic},’ Erich Auerbach, \textit{Mimesis}, and, most recently, Arne Melberg, \textit{Theories of Mimesis}.\textsuperscript{30} The concept of ‘mimesis’ does not acknowledge the ontological difference, the difference between Being and beings. Therefore, ‘mimesis’ will always cloud more than it reveals, for through the many concepts that breeds from this same nest: metaphor, simile, allegory, ‘mimesis’ appears to be the mother of the interpretation of all arts. However, if we wanted to understand the offspring as we do their mother, never would we think that they were alive.\textsuperscript{31} Aristotle, \textit{Poetics}, 1449b25 and 1450b23.\textsuperscript{32} Aristotle, \textit{Poetics}, 1452a21.
essentially are. The helpless generality of Aristotle’s theory of mimesis is easily shown when we consider that his theory does not allow us to distinguish between a play we experience as real and a play which to us appear unreal, as both plays will simply and indifferently be considered as ‘mimetic.’ ‘Mimesis,’ then, has only limited value, because it fails to explain the ontological function of a presentation, and this precisely because no one knows its meaning, or its meaning seems so obvious that it is impossible to doubt the theory. The Problem with the theory of mimesis is not that it is false, but that it is too trivially true, a genuine truism.

[12] As Aristotle probably intended, knowing how much he loved to be first,\textsuperscript{33} instead of being a good beginning for exploring the ways in which drama works, his Poetics, suddenly and unintentionally became the limits within which the understanding of drama had to traverse. The reverence for this theory has certainly clouded the origin of the basic flaw in Aristotle’s theory. For Aristotle’s theory confuses the experience of the character and the experience of the spectator, so much so that we can say that Aristotle seems to have written, quite redundantly, a poetics for characters and not for spectators, as if these characters were ever going to stand up or sit down and write anything that could affect us. Clearly, Aristotle takes for granted the Being of these characters when he constructs his poetics, when what we need to know is how [th]is or that character come alive or appear to be in the first place. The word ‘mimesis’ is not a word that explains how [th]is appears to be alive, but rather a word that announces that this question will be avoided. For calling [th]is performance a mimetic [re]presentation is to announce that it does not give or produce the experience of something alive, the

\textsuperscript{33} Aristotle, \textit{Sophistical Refutations}, Chapter 34, esp. 183b22, 183b34-36.
Being of beings, and to say ‘mimesis’ is not to say that [th]is is, but rather, that this is not. So, mimesis is not a concept that may explain that one play and not another appear to be more vivid or alive, more true than another, other than in a superficial sense. For by saying that this is a [re]presentation one emphasizes either that [th]is is not alive or that this is only a [re]presentation of something different from itself, the [re]presented that may already be essentially part of our lives.

Mimesis could never account for the fact that we sometimes do experience [th]is as [true/real] and at other times [untrue/unreal].

§4.2 The Techne of Inadequation

To Hegel there is nothing hidden which not man has hidden himself, and no serious investigation will ever fail to unconceal its object, make transparent what the beholder has made obscure to himself. In [th]is spirit we will investigate how the effect, the apperception of the Being of negative beings is produced by Shakespeare. We will take nothing for granted, not even our own prejudices. And it will be paramount that we, when we look for the means of producing what is, should not let our immediate responses slip through our fingers, even search for,

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34 Even though we originally wanted to, we shall not here embark on an exposition of the forgetfulness of Being that is expressed through metaphor and all similar rhetorical tropes. Not showing how Derrida’s The Retrait of Metaphor moves us even further away from the possibility of apperceiving the Being of beings than any simple mimetic expression, we shall however say this: Like metonymies, allegories and similes, metaphors take the world too lightly, proceed as if the world is already essentially there, that there is something essentially given which one may make a reference to or depart from in the first place. Finally we understand Lautremont’s obsession with metaphor in Maldoror. He wanted perhaps to make, to transform the impression of the world into something lighter, before he committed suicide. Of course, even his name is nothing other than a metaphor, l’autre mont, another mountain, perhaps suggesting the labours of Sisyphus, again the heaviness of existence, to which this very young man, Isodore Ducasse, who tried to make life lighter through metaphor, finally succumbed to the heaviness of life, Being. And it is a young man’s quest for lightness, the lightness of Being, which also resounds when Rimbaud proclaims, ‘I am a metaphor.’ And it does not express anything differently, when Derrida announces the same. Cf. Derrida, The Retrait of Metaphor.

look back to what later reflections have concealed. For it is our mediate responses that reify not only ourselves but what we perceive. It goes without saying that self-consciousness is a very patient process, and that the ontological contradiction is apperceived much more swiftly, in a Hegelian sense, almost thoughtlessly. It is our mediate responses, our conscious efforts that make us discard the mechanisms, disregard the means through which the Being of beings is produced, that bar us from discovering the figures that most spontaneously create an apperception indifferent from what is: falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, and substitution. For, as we shall see, both abstractly and concretely, these are the most effective means of producing the apperception of the Being of beings, or, quite simply what to us appear to be [true].

[14] If it is true that there is no spirit without consciousness, perhaps the final step on the spiritual road to enlightenment, is to acknowledge that not only am I responsible for perceiving what the other essentially is, but, more fundamentally, I am responsible for the apperception that the other is [alive]. To become supremely self-conscious, the spirit would have to recognize, as Hegel does, that man is nothing but the dialectical activity of the spirit whose absolute subject I am, that the spirit is what indefinitely makes itself essentially. But there is a deeper sense in which the spirit may become conscious of its own productions, and that is to make itself aware that man does not only produce [his perceptions of] the beings that are, but also [his apperception of] the Being of beings. We shall therefore not, like Heidegger, take the ontological difference for granted, as if it was something already given, but inquire into how the apperception of the Being of beings is produced. And to dissociate ourselves from Heidegger completely, we will show
how the negative ontological difference between beings and Being offers a more emphatic sense of what is, that non-beings rather than beings, what is not rather than what is, produces a more ineradicable impression of life.

[15] No one in the history of philosophy defines poiesis more readily than Plato does in the Sophist, where he lets the Stranger declare that production is ‘any capacity that causes things to come to be that previously was not.’36 We are obviously searching for the production of the Being of beings, the poiesis of an ontological contradiction, the emphatic impression of life devoid of all content, which could not be apperceived without [th]is negative production. Whereas Heidegger states that Being produces beings, much like God creates man, in the sense of that which brings forth or into true unconcealment,37 we will look at it differently, and lay down the principles through which man may systematically produce the apperception of the Being of beings; the apperception of that which contradicts the attributes of any being but nevertheless gives the empty apperception of its integrity without which it would not appear to be [alive]. But we shall depart from Heidegger’s Ways also in another sense,38 pointing out that what is made is predominantly not the apperception of what is unconcealed, but, in the main, the apperception of what is concealed, Being much closer to our hearts.

Heidegger points out that the Greeks knew the virtue of poiesis as the art or techne

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37 Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology, Basic Writings, p. 317f, perhaps we should particularly note where Heidegger says that ‘man does not have control over unconcealment itself, in which at any given time the actual shows itself or withdraws.’ Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology, in Basic Writings, p. 323. Emphasis added. For Gadamer’s insistence on Heidegger as a theologian, see Heidegger’s Ways, pp. 169-170 and p. 182, where Heidegger confesses that he is not a philosopher but a theologian. Stressing the unsubjectivity of the Being of beings, it should not be surprising when Heidegger, in one of his lectures on Nietzsche says, ‘Ontology is simultaneously and necessarily theology.’ Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume IV: Nihilism, p. 209.
38 The allusion is to Gadamer, Heidegger’s Ways, p. 11, where Gadamer emphasizes that Heidegger referred to his corpus as ‘Ways, not works.’
of letting ‘things’ appear, pronouncing [th]is techne fundamentally as the virtue of unconcealment, of bringing into light what was previously kept in the dark. What is produced through the techne of inadequation is, however, in most cases, something entirely and indefinitely concealed, and one may therefore speak of, if that is possible, a virtue of concealment whereby the producer is praised for keeping things in the dark, quite simply, hidden.

Being is the contradiction between the concealed and the unconcealed. There is, as we have seen, different expressions of [th]is ontological contradiction. All philosophical problems are made up of a contradiction, which, as Aristotle points out in Metaphysics, cannot be decided one way or the other. As we have seen, the ontological contradiction is such a problem where it seems impossible to decide once and for all, whether Being is concealed or unconcealed. But there are better ways than to consider a problem in isolation. One may, as Aristotle often does, let the many or the best dialectically decide what holds [true], or what most convincingly is. The reception history of Shakespeare’s plays alone speaks volumes, would prove beyond doubt, whether we consider Herder, Goethe, Schegel and Schopenhauer to personify the populace or their superiors, that Modernity has sided with what is concealed. As we shall see in the coming chapters, in most cases Shakespeare produces the apperception of what is concealed, and where he

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39 Surprisingly to some, Heidegger speaks of technology and art in the same breath, as both are ways of letting something appear, or as Heidegger says, ‘The Greeks conceive of techne, producing, in terms of letting appear.’ [Heidegger, Building, Dwelling, Thinking, p. 361.] The same view is reiterated by Heidegger in The Question Concerning Technology, and also, in some sense, in the Letter on Humanism, where language is what keeps what is unconcealed in unconcealment. 40 Heidegger says, ‘The Greek for ‘to bring forth or to produce’ is tiko. The word techne, technique, belongs to the verb’s root, tec. To the Greeks techne means neither art nor handicraft but, rather, to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way. The Greek conceive of techne, producing, in terms of letting appear.’ [Heidegger, Building, Dwelling, Thinking, Basic Writings, p. 361].

41 Aristotle, Topics, Book I, Chapter 11.
does not, the plays are as forgotten or neglected as the unconcealed apperception of the Being of beings which they give expression to.

[17] If there is a contradiction of Being concealed/unconcealed, it is obvious that one may in different ways effect a dialectical, in the sense of inferential, movement in either direction, arriving at one moment of the contradiction, beginning at another. To illustrate one such movement historically, we could point out that Hegel and Heidegger direct our minds in different ways, in different directions. Hegel directs our attention from the unconcealed to the concealed, from seen object to unseen subject, to finally arrive at the dialectical apperception of absolute spirituality, that is, subjectivity, which is the oscillation between the two moments.\(^42\) Being is however considered differently, as nothing in the beginning, as that which appears to be abandoned by subjectivity, or that which subjectivity has not yet conquered or is unable to conquer essentially. In three ways Heidegger concurs with Hegel: first that Being is first, second that Being is nothing, and thirdly that Being is unknown.\(^43\) Heidegger does, of course, not share Hegel’s disregard for unknown beginnings, neither his praise of known ends. To emphasize the non-objectivity of what is, Heidegger claims that beings are first unconcealed by removing what keeps [th]is [being] from becoming present, by taking away, gradually or suddenly, a veil of concealment, that keeps beings from Being unconcealed. Heidegger directs our minds towards the apperception of a clearing, to that which is no longer untrue, aletheia.\(^44\)

\(^{42}\) Hegel, *Logic*, §79, p. 113 and §88, p. 128.
\(^{44}\) For Heidegger’s elaboration on the Greek concept, if not experience, of truth as aletheia, see for example Heidegger, *On the Essence of Truth*, in *Basic Writings*, pp. 130f., 137 f., and Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking*, in *Basics Writings*, p. 446. However the most sustained and thorough exposition of aletheia is found in Heidegger’s lectures on Parmenides as a whole.
As there are different ways to expose the ontological contradiction, we shall emphasize that there is no apperception of Being without [th]is contradiction, but more importantly, that there are different ways to produce the apperception of [th]is ontological contradiction. The means of producing [th]is ontological contradiction will direct us either to the apperception of that which is concealed or that which is unconcealed, but never one [way] without the other. That is, to produce an almost ineradicable sense of Being, one has not only to produce what we perceive or apperceive, but also that from which we are looking away. One does not apperceive the Being of beings without making an inference, either from what is concealed to what is unconcealed or from what is unconcealed to what is concealed. [To the mind] Being is an inference, and, as an inference, it is not that which is taken for granted, but what is concluded, not antecedent but consequent. That Being is consequent is not obvious. The contrary position, taken by Heidegger, is to hold that whatever is known last, is first. That is, we could not make the inference to whatever is if we did not already apperceive something that was already there, Da, from the very beginning. However, we shall maintain that the ontological difference is produced. Again, Being is a contradiction. There is no being without [th]is contradiction. This contradiction is produced. In the production of [th]is difference something is made to stand out, and something is concealed from what is unconcealed or from what is concealed.

Inescapably all philosophers direct us one way or the other. Like Pseudo-Dionysius, Kant directs from phenomena to noumena, from known to unknown. Plotinus directs us to the unconcealment of ideas through his theory of procession and return. And as much as the direction of cognition proceeds from the unconcealed to the concealed, ontologically the Being of beings proceeds in the opposite direction, from what is concealed to what is unconcealed.

We sometimes prefer to use ‘ontological contradiction,’ as it reminds us that the negative ontological difference is either concealed or unconcealed. Furthermore, ‘contradiction’ suggests more clearly a movement which ‘difference’ does not. Moreover, ‘contradiction’ indicates that the Being of beings supersedes everything we may essentially perceive, as well as suggests that the Being of beings may only be apperceived negatively.

concealed. There is always given cognitive priority to what appears, to what is perceived, but one has to offer more than one’s appearance to give the impression that one is a being among beings.

[19] It is not surprising, but still a remarkable observation Nietzsche makes, when he says, ‘The difference between art and truth makes me shudder.’

Obviously, Nietzsche shivers on the verge of apperceiving what is not subjectively produced, not made by man. To be more specific, we could say that what makes Nietzsche shudder, what finally arrested the externalization of his will, was the ontological contradiction, the empty transgression of subjectivity that upholds the life of all its subjects. It is, of course, Nietzsche’s vain hope, like it was Kant’s, Hegel’s, Marx’s and Adorno’s, that man alone makes everything that is.

We pointed out the contradiction in Nietzsche’s approach. One the one hand he completes The Enlightenment, a project that declares not only man’s autonomy, but lives in the hope that the world Will one day finally become completely anthropomorphized. On the other hand, it is this total anthropomorphization that makes Nietzsche sarcastically speak of each man as an undiscovered artist, the ‘subject’ as no more than the daydream of a Governess. It is perhaps to announce the completion of the anthropological project, that everything has finally become manmade, that makes Marx recognize that there is nothing new under the sun, nothing undiscovered, nothing that is not made by man except perhaps an

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47 Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume I: The Will to Power as Art, p. 142.
48 One could easily be corrected if one were to believe the prophet Isaiah, in 45.7, where the Lord says to the prophet, ‘I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things... Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, what makest though?’
49 Cf. Kant, What is Enlightenment?
50 Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume II: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same, p. 94.
51 Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, ‘Towards a Natural History of Morals,’ Fragment 192, p. 81.
undiscovered island off of Australia.\textsuperscript{53} We shall take this project one step further, asserting that also the ontological difference is produced. Therefore, even though it may be true that \textit{Being} produces or projects \textit{beings}, we maintain, against Heidegger, that beings may produce, more or less successfully, more or less deliberately, the apperception of the \textit{Being} of beings. For it is not alone \textit{Da} that produces or projects \textit{Dasein},\textsuperscript{54} but \textit{Dasein}, subjectivity that produces a sense of what is \textit{Da}, and, following reception history, we shall mark how Shakespeare has - at least in his most popular plays - produced the negation of what is \textit{Da}, namely, the apperception of what is [hidden].

\textsuperscript{20} [Th]is investigation will begin where Plato’s investigation in \textit{Sophist} ends. For as clearly as Plato points out that there is a \textit{poiesis}, a \textit{techne} of \textit{Being}, and as vaguely as he suggests the means or instruments for [th]is production, so shall I lay down the means for the production of the ontological contradiction that Plato did not fully discover. I shall not expose this techne without first acknowledging that Plato, like a god, however obscurely, indicated the right direction in which \textit{The Poetics of Being} were to be discovered. For as will be exposed concretely in the readings of Shakespeare’s drama, non-beings or the appearance of what \textit{is not} give us a more profound sense of what \textit{is}, the \textit{Being} of beings. The traditional way of grouping the poetics of Aristotle, Horace and Longinus together to the exclusion of Plato’s \textit{Sophist} or for that matter the second or the tenth book of Plato’s \textit{Republic},

\textsuperscript{53} I read the observation in \textit{Gesammelte Werke}, and I have thus far been unable to find the locus of the statement. However, it is suggested that this island off of Australia is completely unspoiled, has not only never been touched, but never been seen, neither corrupted by the actions nor the cognitions of man. For even cognition corrups, makes everything appear to be man-made, and therefore, in the most fundamental sense, historical. This view is taken, no less by Marx, than his forerunner, Hegel.

\textsuperscript{54} For the contention that \textit{Being} projects or produces \textit{beings}, and not vice versa, see for instance, Heidegger, \textit{Letter on Humanism, Basic Writings}, pp. 252-253, 256, 258.
is therefore a sign of no little ignorance. For reading the Poetics of Aristotle anyone can easily see that it begins where Plato’s Sophist ends, that is, with an attempt to classify the different categories of imitation. As so often, the teacher outclasses the pretentious student, for speaking of imitation, Plato identifies a category that Aristotle does not, namely ‘unlikeness-making.’ What Plato in effect says - for once cutting through the knots of what is an excessively entangled argument - is that one may be persuaded of the Being of anything regardless of whether its essential characteristica exist or do not exist. This means that when the sophist persuades the listener ‘that that which is not somehow is,’ what the listener is persuaded of is something inessential and inideal. According to Plato, mimesis has two parts, ‘likeness-making’ and ‘unlikeness making.’ Both are called ‘a kind of double production.’ What is produced is the perception of the essence of one being, but, more fundamentally, the apperception of the Being of this being is produced, and the apperception of the Being of beings may be produced regardless of whether this essentially is or is not, if not, as we shall see, more persuasively if it does not exist. It is therefore untrue to say, as Aristotle does, that the false does not exist, when Plato points to, that even if it is true that what is essentially false, does not exist, one may nevertheless produces the apperception of its Being, which proves that Being is an inessential category, if it is not that which escapes all categories.

55 For the definition of imitation as likeness-making, see Plato, Sophist, 266d. For Aristotle’s definition of ‘imitation,’ one would, indeed look in vain, and it is hard to find a reference where one has not been committed.
56 Plato, Sophist, 241d. Plato, Sophist, 240d.
57 Plato, Sophist, 236c and 266d.
58 Plato, Sophist, 266d.
In the *Sophist*, it is crucial to acknowledge that Plato does not only identify the paradoxical Being of *what is not*, but furthermore the function of *what is not* in the production of the Being of beings. For Plato acknowledges that *what is not* is fundamental to the sophist’s art of persuasion, even inseparable from the sophist’s *techne*, the art through which he convinces the audience that *what is not* is. About the function of *what is not*, about this invaluable tool in the sophist’s tool-box, the stranger asks Theaetetus, ‘Why do we think he’d use it [what is false/what is not] and in what connection, and for what kind of purpose?’ The question is never answered. However, the answer is as simple as it appears at first glance to be contradictory, to convince the audience that [th]is *is*. Obviously inspired, Theaetetus comments, ‘Maybe that which is not is woven together with that which is in some way like that – it’s quite bizarre.’ The stranger replies, ‘Of course it’s strange. Anyway, you can see that the manyheaded sophist is still using this interweaving [of what *is* with *what is not*] to force us to agree *unwillingly* [i.e. to persuade us] that that which is not in a way is.’ Obviously the sophist possesses the art of *making* that which *is* through what *is not*, of making what is not appear to be. There are three things to point out about [th]is *techne* or art. First that [th]is weaving together suggests the compound of subject and predicate, secondly, that this compound of subject and predicate is the main instrument in the sophist’s art of producing the apperception of what *is* [through what is not], and thirdly, what

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The stranger draws the inference that the sophist is not a master of ‘the art of likeness-making,’ [Plato, *Sophist*, 235d] but rather a master of appearance-making, about which the stranger justly says, ‘Wouldn’t appearance-making be the right thing to call expertise in producing appearances that aren’t likenesses?’ [Plato, *Sophist*, 236c] And what are appearances that are *not* likenesses if not [re]presentations of what does not exist, or, as we will see in Chapter 7, dissimilarities. Already Plato indicates what we will maintain throughout this thesis, that it is the perception/apperception of what is not that compels the spectator/reader to make the inference from what is not [true] to what is [true].

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60 Plato, *Sophist*, 237c.
should be remarked, that Plato does not, as we will do later, separate between the inadequate means for [th]is production and the inadequate end of [th]is production. To be more specific, if Plato identifies the means, the instruments for the production of the Being of beings, that is, subjects and predicates, names and verbs, he never discovers or understands how the sophist is capable of using these instruments, so cunningly that the auditor is ‘unwillingly forced to agree that that which is not in a way is.’\textsuperscript{62}

[22] We can with confidence say that the first part of the \textit{Sophist} is a dialogue about what Plato fails to consider in the latter part of the \textit{Sophist}, namely the negativity of the ontological difference. In the latter part of the investigation Plato is as unwilling and reluctant to speak of what \textit{is} false as he in the opening was angered by the tradition instigated by Parmenides, who prohibited him from thinking of it.\textsuperscript{63} Even though Plato, in the end, is unwilling to speak of [th]is [ontological contradiction], and seems not to have spoken about [th]is at any length, the whole dialogue of the \textit{Sophist} is, perhaps even against Plato’s will, a negative and inessential presentation of the Being of beings. We can on the whole think of Plato’s \textit{Sophist} as an aporia which indirectly presents that which Plato is believed to be unwillingly speaking of, namely, that which no idea could possibly be without, the Being of beings. Again, the sophist is expert at persuading of the Being of what is not, and one would think that this dialogue would display the means of this art of persuasion, expose the instruments of ontological persuasion. Surprisingly, it does not. For when we expect Plato to identify the means by which the sophist is capable of producing the apperception of the Being of beings, to

\textsuperscript{62} Plato, \textit{Sophist}, 240c. Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{63} Plato, \textit{Sophist}, 258c.
thereby convince the reader that what is not *is*, he stops. And so Plato’s investigation comes to an end, exactly where our investigation begins.

§4.3 Instruments of Inadequation

[23] *The Poetics of Being* states quite simply that *inadequation* produces most convincingly the apperception of the Being of beings, that non-beings rather than beings convey a more persuasive sense of what *is*. This theory would be meaningless if we did not state what propositions are inadequate to. However, if we are to look for what a statement is inadequate to, we would, indeed, be searching in vain. We would first have to investigate the nature of propositions, only then could we have any hope of understanding the production of the negative ontological difference. According to the principle of non-contradiction, propositions are either true or not true, as there cannot be a third or the third term is meaningless.64 The question of the difference between true and false statements, and the difference between what a true and a false statement discloses, cannot be answered without looking into the nature of statements themselves. Evidently, a statement is an act of predication, and predication is the *synthetic* activity of giving *[th]is* properties it either has or does not have. The theory of inadequation maintains that we cannot take *[th]is* for granted. Rather, we maintain that the apperception of *[th]is* ontological contradiction has to be produced. *[Th]is* ontological contradiction is not where we begin our inquiry but where we end, not what affects, but what *is* effected. We may produce the impression of what *x* essentially is or the profound apperception of the *existence* of *x* by showing what it is *not*. It is obvious that the bare impression of *x*, is much more effectively produced through denial than

64 Russell’s position as clarified by von Wright, *The Logic of Negation*, pp. 6f.
affirmation, for as much as denial takes away the properties from [th]is, an affirmation will provide them. It is also clear that true properties will easily misdirect us from the naked apperception of [th]is ontological contradiction, away from the apprehension of that which transgresses all attributes but constitutes the very possibility of any attribution. As Aristotle maintains in *de Interpretatione*, there is no knowledge without predication, we cannot know any [thing] except through its properties. It should, however, be equally obvious that we cannot take the Being of the subject of any statement for granted. Rather, we would have to assert that the Being of what grounds any utterance would first have to be produced. [Th]is production is most effectively achieved through inadequation, which effortlessly, and without reminding us of its formal repetition, produces [th]is result, the affect/effect of the ontological contradiction.

Instead of drifting away, I will take the bull by the horns and say that if we attempt to understand *inadequation* by going straight away to what these statements are inadequate to, we have taken for granted that which *is*, in effect, produced, taken as a beginning what *is* in the end. There is *nothing* to compare an inadequate statement to. We cannot say what [th]is essentially is, only point and say, [th]is is either concealed or unconcealed, hidden or revealed. Again, we are drifting away, for to properly understand what an inadequate statement is inadequate to, namely the concealed or the unconcealed, [th]is place or [th]is substance, and further how this inadequacy produces the apperception of the ontological contradiction, we must look into the nature of judgments. For all

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65 Of course, there is to Aristotle no knowledge without demonstration, that is, without logic. However, there is no logic without predication. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, Chapters 3–6 and Aristotle, *de Interpretatione*, Chapter 7, 17b.
judgments are, as St. Thomas would say, and Kant, following him, complex.\textsuperscript{66} That is, one does not speak separately of essences and existents, of what \textit{[th]is} is and \textit{[th]is}, but of what \textit{[th]is is}. That is, no judgment, at least no synthetic judgment, is ever simple, but a combination of subject and predicate, of substance and attributes, existent and essence, \textit{[th]is} and \textit{what this is}.\textsuperscript{67}

We could say the same of predicates as we do of masques, that they show us either \textit{what [th]is is} or \textit{what [th]is is not}. Obviously, in the theatre, the original intention of the masque was \textit{not to hide} anything, but rather to \textit{show} the persona to the spectators in the upper rows of the ‘looking-place,’\textsuperscript{68} to unconceal \textit{what [th]is is}. However, whereas the \textit{persona} of the Greek theatre of Aeschylus and Sophocles is applied to show \textit{what [th]is is}, the Venetian \textit{masque} of the Festival, the Masquerade which we are witnessing in the opening of \textit{Romeo and Juliet} - is applied to show \textit{what this is not} or to \textit{not show what [th]is is}.\textsuperscript{69} Evidently, masques may either disclose or hide what \textit{[th]is is}, may show \textit{what [th]is is} or what \textit{[th]is is not} or \textit{not what \[th]is is}. For our purposes we shall simplify and say that whereas a Greek masque, much like a true appearance/statement, shows \textit{what [th]is is}, a Venetian masque shows \textit{what [th]is is not} or does not show \textit{what [th]is is}. In

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{67} What is obvious is that an adequate proposition does express what this \textit{[is]}, whereas as an inadequate proposition \textit{does not} express what this \textit{[is]}. Without thinking, one would expect the adequate proposition to more immediately secure our sense of Being. Paradoxically, it is the inadequate proposition that throws out the anchor. It is the inadequate proposition that secures our sense of Being. Some would argue that it is impossible for an inadequate statement to give us a more profound sense of Being as it is precisely the expression of something that does not exist. Hence, it does not refer to anything at all, and is entirely meaningless. But, of course, we could not state that this utterance was inadequate if \textit{[th]is} did not assert itself to deny its adequacy, and thus persuade us of its existence.
\item \textsuperscript{68} For the Greek understanding of ‘theatre,’ and more specifically the implications of [th]is ‘looking-place’ as it relates beings to Being, see, Heidegger, \textit{Parmenides}, p. 147.
\item \textsuperscript{69} For this obvious difference between \textit{Greek} and \textit{Modern} theatre, see Michael Ewans’s \textit{Introduction} to Aeschylus, \textit{Oresteia}, p. xix. For Shakespeare’s masquerade in \textit{Romeo and Juliet}, see Shakespeare, \textit{Romeo and Juliet}, Act I, Scene v.
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isolation there is not much to learn from this distinction, but when we remind ourselves of and remember the basic tenet of our thesis, it obviously gives us some direction. For, as was said, we are, in the Shakespearean theatre, persuaded to make the effortless inference from the perception of what is not [true] to the apperception of what is [true]. Clearly, a player with a Greek masque would fail to show us what is [true], whereas one wearing a Venetian masque would not.\(^{70}\)

The courtly Masque is part of the looking place in the Greek sense, of that which makes this stand out as what it essentially is, a truly mimetic performance.\(^{71}\) And, of course, if you like pictures, and do believe that what attracts the spectators to any theatre is more likely to be seen than unseen, we should remind the reader of what Burckhardt says, when he comments on the superiority of the English stage and the corruption of the Italian stage in the Renaissance. Burckhardt attributes the decadence of the Italian stage almost solely to its taste for visual display, what inhibited its development to nothing less than the time and money spent on elaborate decorations, stage props and costumes. For as the director was busy decorating the stage, there was no time to focus on more serious matters, namely the play.\(^{72}\) The courtly Masque of Inigo Jones, would be impossible to

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\(^{70}\) Whereas the actors of the Greek theatres of Aeschylus and Sophocles wore masques to make the persona distinct, to look definite from afar, to show what the person essentially was, it became the function of the Venetian masque to obscure, to make [th]is persona stand out indefinitely, for the person to hide. This indefinitation of presence, this emptying of persona, [th]is will to obscurity which prevail in the Venetian masque, Shakespeare invites us to witness in the opening masquerade of *Romeo and Juliet*, where they both, mutually fall in love with an indefinitation, a persona without properties, a masque that does not show what [th]is is, but rather what this is not. Adding to the mystery of the play, we realize that Romeo and Juliet fall in love while they are still wearing masques, doubtless because they are attracted to that which the Venetian masque produces the apperception of, namely what is hidden.

\(^{71}\) For a presentation of Inigo Jones as the superior master of the masque, see for example Yates, *Theatre of the World*, ‘Chapter X, Public Theatre and the Masque: Inigo Jones on the Theatre as a Temple,’ pp. 169ff.

\(^{72}\) Burckhardt, *The Civilization of The Renaissance in Italy*, ‘The Discovery of Man,’ p. 205. Yates makes a similar argument in *Theatre of the World*, where she says, ‘In the masque, magic in the form of mechanization was threatening the rôle of the poet as the most important person in the
understand if one did not recognize that the basic principle of a courtly masque is
the mimetic display of a true [re]presentation, so true that one would think, from
the visual impression alone, without a word having been said, that one was riding
through the Tuscan hills or the Iberian plains, or were caught, like Shakespeare, in
_The Tempest_. Through this elaborate display of costumes and stage decorations,
through each stage curtain illustration, one was given the positive illusion of Being
there. In the Masque the stage curtains will not fail to [re]present truly and
pictorially _where_ the characters are, neither the costumes to [re]present the
historical _persona_ of each character. On the naked stage of Shakespeare’s _Globe_, it
is of course an entirely different experience, no such visual display. But, of course,
some of Shakespeare’s later plays are masques, as for example, _The Tempest_,
which was performed in the Blackfriars theatre by the King’s Men.\(^73\) The vogue of
_The Tempest_ can perhaps be attributed to the newly discovered Americas which
the spectators hoped to catch a glimpse of through the elaborate representations of
the Masque. If we disregard the exceptional opening of the play, it is easy to
 recognize its _lyrical_ qualities, the qualities of a play struggling to produce the
apperception of what _is_ concealed, the Being of beings.

[27] How reverse the battles of life seem compared to art’s, when the latter
struggles to produce the impression of what in life by all is taken for granted, that
which one cannot escape except through death, the ontological contradiction. I
found _inadequation_ to be the shortest way to that which art produces with such
difficulty and life with such ease, the Being of beings. That is, the presentation of

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\(^73\) Yates, _Theatre of the World_, pp. 159-161.
what is not will, almost invariably, produce the apperception of what is, the Being of beings. Although it was not, it should have been easy to detect that the simplest way to produce the apperception of [that is] [ontological contradiction] is to present/represent [that is] [being] as what it is not. That is, the perception of what [that is] [being] is not, will almost invariably produce the apperception that [that is] [being] is. The perception of what is untrue in an epistemological sense, will produce the apperception of what is [true] in an ontological sense. With no intention of speaking hyperbolically, we may therefore say that without question the one who will give us the most profound notion of what is [true], is the one who appear to be most thoroughly false. [That is] would be the case, regardless of whether it occurred in life or on the stage, that what is untrue would appear to be more [alive]. As we have said, and will continue to say throughout [that] is thesis, the perception of what is untrue produces invariably the inference to the apperception of what is [true], and since there is no one more [truly] false than the actress, there is also no one who appear to be more [truly] alive.74

[28] As Bacon, Newton and Darwin did all proceed inductively, so shall I proceed ‘without hypothesis,’ without taking anything for granted, not even that anything

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74 Following Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, we could embark on some pulp deliberations: ‘No one is more untrue than the actress,’ ‘No one more true than the actress.’ None of these statements are false. However, we should point out that we do use different concepts of truth in each proposition, an epistemological concept of truth in the first proposition and an ontological concept of truth in the other. What is made clear by placing these propositions next to each other, is not that we are making an effort to produce a contradiction, but rather, that the first proposition leads invariably to the next, that the perception of what is untrue almost without exception leads to the apperception of what is [true], and that therefore, since no one appear more often as what she is not, even makes a living of appearing as what she is not, no one is more true, appear to be more alive than the actress. We can, it seems, never forgive an actress that does not betray herself. It is not effortless to be an actress, not easy to be an actor, as they both strive to be what they are not. However, [that is] effort is doomed to fail, and knowing [that is], that her and his efforts will inevitably fail, it is not undeservedly that they are praised. It is not without deserts to attempt what is impossible, i.e. to become another. For it is for attempting what is impossible that they all appear as demigods and truly as stars.
Surely we will not need a vastly greater number of plays to illustrate *The Poetics of Being* than the seven planets Newton needed to prove the universality of the theory of gravity. In all cases I shall emphasize that the impression *that* the world *is*, is produced, and without *that* continued production, nothing would seem *to be* at all. It is significant to notice, that in Shakespeare’s plays, neither the ontological contradiction nor how it is produced is spoken of, that what we are attempting to do is *not* to trace the outline of an already existing *discourse*, but *to create* a discourse that exposes the production of the ontological contradiction in Shakespeare’s plays for the first time. Shakespeare never makes an attempt to describe his *poetology*. The means of production are simply not objectified. However, this lack of description makes these means of inadequation not less but more efficient in the production of the Being of beings. Of course, a magician would no longer appear to be a magician but an artist if he, in front of his audience, explained the tricks during the performance. Clearly, we shall see that the effect of the Shakespearean play is often the result of an inference that the spectator is made to draw from means he does *not* recognize the existence of.

[29] Without taking anything for granted, we will investigate the means that most efficiently produce the apperception of the Being of beings. To do so, we will have to let our own prejudices slip between our fingers, in order to investigate what makes possible the production of that which we all take for granted, the Being of beings. Then, and only then, will we be able to make transparent how the

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75 Cf. Francis Bacon, *Novum Organon*, 1994, for the negative critique of deduction. For the positive assessment of induction, the reader is also referred to Julian Huxley’s introduction to Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, 1958, as well as Will Durant’s presentation of Newton in *The Story of Philosophy*, 1927.
profound notion of the ontological contradiction is produced. Not surprisingly, it is the immediacy with which the effect of Being is experienced which itself hides the fact that the apperception of Being was produced. That the immediacy of perception/apperception hides the mediacy of production is something we all could learn from Hegel.76 The means for the production of Being appear to be hidden to the reader/spectator. When recognizing the means for producing the Being of beings – the empty transgression of any appearance that offers the almost ineradicable impression of its life - we first of all notice that these instruments work so spontaneously, that they are almost impossible to detect, that they pass us by and affect us profoundly at the same time. We are surprised to find that the means for producing what we all take for granted are the same as when explicated we all are inclined to oppose, contradict, object to or right out refuse to accept. That what we all unknowingly, and without effort, take for granted, is the same as what we would oppose when known, shows again, that Being as such is never without contradiction, might even attest to the inescapability of the ontological contradiction.

Before we list the predominant means for the production of the Being of beings, without pretending that this enumeration exhausts the possibilities for the production of the ontological contradiction, we will remark that what enhances the

76 Concerning naïve immediacy and its ability to hide, how effectively immediacy hides what is most apparent to all, Hegel does first and foremost point to science as naïve when it studies its objects without ever recognizing itself or the spirit in that which is perceived/apperceived. [Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 'Preface: On Scientific Cognition, esp. Paragraphs 50 and 51.] More interesting, and less obvious, is that Hegel also recognizes the subjective element of production in what to the subject seems meaningless. For to Hegel, even the apperception of what is meaningless is produced like the sound of the word ‘God,’ which to many would render nothing to the imagination. The only true mediation occurs when the spirit, that is, the subject, has becomes conscious of the fact that it is the origin of everything that is. [Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, ‘Preface: On Scientific Cognition,’ Paragraph 22, p. 12].
efficacy of these means is that we are prone to look through or even away from them, and thus, they are hardly ever recognized. The most effective and unrecognized means for the production of the Being of beings are, falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, and substitution, [and if including less persuasive means of inadequation: truth,\(^\text{77}\) transformation, doubt, aporia, contradiction, nonsense, what is meaningless and what is numinous.]

First of all, it is paradoxical that neither of these means are conspicuous, secondly, that we do not find the effect/affect of any of them to contradict our notion of what is, but rather, that they produce, even enhance our notion of what is without themselves being detected. The imperceptibility of these instruments does not speak against them, but is a testimony to the fact that they are part of our silent lives. They appear to be so ‘natural,’ so artless, that one is inclined to concur with the Romantics that Shakespeare produces the apperception of what is in-different from [our own] nature, if nature is that which without any properties would carry all properties and keep anything alive. These instruments of inadequation, which Shakespeare uses in such abundance, are, more fundamentally, almost indistinguishable from ourselves, from our very Being, and so immediately effective/affective are they in producing this in-distinguishability, that there was little hope of finally objectifying that which remained hidden to ourselves, The Techne of Being.

\[31\] The ontological instruments identified as belonging to The Techne of Being are: falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefiniteness, elision, and substitution. We could easily have spoken of the meaningless and the numinous, even doubt, contradiction,

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\(^{77}\) Truth is here taken in a negative sense, not as what is given, or the correspondence to what is given, but as the way in which the world surprisingly, transgresses our expectations or hopes by un-concealing itself.
nonsense, *aporia* and *transformation*, even *truth*, as a way of producing the apperception of the Being of beings, but we shall concentrate on the most fundamental means, the instruments that most effortlessly produce the apperception of the ontological contradiction. One could always debate the *meaning* of these words, but we shall focus on what is more crucial, their *function*. It is obvious that we do not produce [th]is effect/affect, the impression of the ontological contradiction by *mentioning* any of these words. Except for ‘nothing,’ these are functions not of names, but of what is named, namely, what is experienced as *false, dissimilar, indefinite, elusive*, that is what is subject to *elision*,\(^78\) and *mistaken*, i.e. what *is* subject to *substitution*. Prior to being named, what is *false, dissimilar, indefinite, elusive, mistaken*, are, if not completely unrecognized, all *inadequations* that, by exposing what is *not*, create a more emphatic sense of what *is*. What we have done is simply to recognize the formula which, without being named, effortlessly produces the most profound apperception of Being of beings: the negative ontic-ontological difference, i.e. the contradiction between non-beings and the almost ineradicable sense of Being that they offer.

\[32\] Evidently, we need to distinguish the meaning of the word ‘substitution’ from the function of what is named substitution. Similarly, we have to separate the meaning of the word ‘nothing’ from the function of what is named nothing, and further, the function of saying ‘nothing.’ Equally, we must not make indistinguishable the meaning of the word ‘dissimilarity’ and the function of what is perceived as a dissimilar, the effect of a dissimilar appearance or a dissimilar

\(^{78}\) As we call the process of ab-straction of qualities from a singular subject, *elision*, we call the end of this singular process of *aphairesis*, that which *is* crushed out or left over, *elusive*. Here the perception of all or any essential characteristica has been removed, without doing away with, but emphasizing, the apperception of *th/is*. 
symbol. Fundamentally we will have to separate between the meaning of the word ‘false’ and the function of what is named ‘false,’ and we have therefore, to keep a clear mind through what seems excessively entangled, to remind ourselves that life is so much more than the result of a classification or what can be classified. We have to acknowledge that what is indicated by these names predominantly retain its function, sometimes only achieve the required affect/effect, when what is named through these names remains unrecognized, or, if you will, unknown. We could therefore speak of the function of the unnamed, or the ontological affect/effect of that which, more often than not, remains unrecognized: falsity, dissimilarity, indefinitness, nothing, elision, and substitution, and possibly, in an unconcealed, and perhaps less emphatic, sense, truth. 79

[33] Among all the arts of inadequation we have recognized are without doubt, also: truth. When speaking of truth as a means of producing the apperception of Being, we do use true in the ontological sense of that which is unconcealed, that which by simply being there is apperceived as an excess, a transgression of that which it negates, but nevertheless in silence discloses the negative impression of, what is, perhaps must remain, concealed. 80 But the most fundamental, the most convincing means of inadequation are unquestionably: falsity, dissimilarity, nothing, indefinitness, elision, and substitution, instruments that will be defined as we proceed. We have never pursued any of these inadequations for their own sake,

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79 Throughout this thesis we will also mention the effects of transformation, doubt, contradiction, nonsense, aporia, what is meaningless and what is numinous, but, in general we shall remain focused on these instruments of inadequation.

80 The simplest way of understanding truth in an ontological sense would be to liken it to the surprising or the unexpected, but with [th]is difference, that not only the aberration, but everything natural and conventional, is thus astoundingly unconcealed. Habituation often numbs [th]is sense of what is true to such a degree that one is incapable of apperceiving anything but the shocking, the new, the news, the revolting or the fashionable as truly unconcealed.
but for the sake of what they affect/effect the apperception of, the ontological contradiction. Furthermore, we find it noteworthy that these instruments of inadequation are often and by many considered im-moral, un-lawful, ir-rational, in-appropriate, that all these arts or instruments, in some sense, are forbidden fruits, but that the affect/effect of trans-gressing these laws or boundaries, in a certain and clear sense, create the apperception of something that is much more familiar than its opposite: adequations.

[34] To clarify, the concept of adequatio is thought differently by Aristotle, Thomas and Wittgenstein. To Aristotle, who thinks essentially or predicatively of this adequation, what is adequated, the homoiosis occurs between the thing and the intellect. The essence of this thing, the aspect or form/eidos of what is not fortuitous, does adequately or inadequately come to expression in the mind of the beholder. To Thomas what is adequated is intellectus and res, intellect and thing, to Kant, Verstand/Understanding and phenomena. It is of course, easy to notice that for both Thomas and Kant it is no longer the essence of the thing that may or may not come to expression through the mind, thus simply pronouncing that which [beforehand] is either true or untrue, but rather the mind which asserts itself freely by expressing itself independently [of whatever is or is not]. For hidden in the concept of truth as adequatio is, as Hegel could have recognized, the negative

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81 For a further clarification of the conceptual history of homoiosis, see, Heidegger, Being and Time, Section 44, and likewise, The ‘Introduction’ to Being and Time.
82 Cf. Aristotle’s Metaphysics on the difference between what is essential and accidental, that is, the fortuitous. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book VI, Chapter 2.
83 The preference of the object is for example made clear in Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book IX, Chapter X, 1051b1-5. For Aristotle’s theory of homoiosis, see particularly Heidegger, Being and Time, Section 44.
85 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A58-A62/B82-B86.
powers of the subject to express, to imagine, whatever is or is not. The young Wittgenstein follows up and cements the understanding of truth as *adequatio* by simply speaking of propositions as pictures that adequately or inadequately depicts the world. It should be evident to anyone that if an adequate statement gives the impression of what is a true *picture*, the inadequation, as should have been discovered long ago, will lead to the apperception of what is undepictable, the ontological contradiction. It is therefore *true* that we do not deny tradition by speaking of ‘inadequation,’ but have rather realized the *hidden* potential within tradition itself, which was concretely expressed, but abstractly, consciously and conceptually, unrealized. For as instrumental as the *positive* concept or picture may be, even more is its negation, as it facilitates the inference to what is truly unimaginable. However, regardless of the different names one may use to conceptualize the correspondence or lack thereof, one cannot escape the difference between what is adequated, and it is this *difference* which many of these philosophies does not merely want to build a bridge across but have a desire to

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86 On the negative powers of the subject to transgress whatever is [given], See, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Preface: On Scientific Cognition, Paragraph 32, where it is said on p. 19, ‘the tremendous power of the negative; it is the energy of thought, of the pure ‘I.’’

87 Cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 2.21, 2.22, p. 43. Rather naively, if one would not rather say ‘fundamentally,’ Wittgenstein believes that what is adequated are propositions and fact, language and phenomena. We shall not take away this belief, as no concept of truth is now more *commonplace*, or, if you like, adequate. However, we shall point out that, whether or not these propositions are expressed, its negation is equally *commonplace*, and not only is the comprehension of its negation *commonplace*, but more so, the apprehension of its effect, the Being of beings. Sadly, we recognize, that neither in Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* nor in *Philosophical Investigations* is what is *inadequate* spoken of at any length, it is almost as if Wittgenstein did desire to pass over inadequation in silence, to pass by that which language is inadequate to in silence. And so he overlooked the production of that which he in the end took for granted, that something necessarily and mysteriously is. For there is as little treatment of what is false in *Tractatus* as there in *Philosophical Investigations* are reflections on what is ‘not.’ [Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Fragments 547 and 557] Apart from *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 2.17, 2.18, 2.21, 2.22, which mentions what is false merely to discard it, the bulk of the exposition is *entirely* true.
close. Now as much as this closure is fatal, the opening is fecund, the difference gives life.\footnote{It was Jean-Luc Marion’s critique of conceptual idolization in \textit{God Without Being} that inspired us to seek the shadow-side of some treasured concepts within our tradition, wondering if it there were not \textit{more} to learn from the negation of these concepts than the concepts themselves. We learned from Marion to turn ‘suspicion of idolatry’ against the concept itself. [Marion, \textit{God Without Being}, 36.] We should perhaps all listen when Marion makes a preliminary definition of that which he attempts to avoid, ‘the conceptual idol has a site, metaphysics: a function, the theo-logy in onto-theo-logy, and a definition, \textit{casua sui}. Conceptual idolatry does not remain a universally vague suspicion but inscribes itself in the global strategy of thought taken in its metaphysical figure. Nothing less than the destiny of Being - or, better, Being as destiny - mobilizes conceptual idolatry and assures its precise function.’[Marion, \textit{God Without Being}, p. 37.]}
C5 THE TRUE PRODUCTION OF BEING

§5.1 The Battle for Truth
§5.2 The Body of Truth
§5.3 Shakespeare’s True Betrayal

C5 EXPOSÉ

[1] In this chapter, I will have a look at the unfamiliar Shakespeare to prepare the way for discussing what makes us think that Shakespeare is indistinguishable from ourselves. That this is not always the case we shall see in this chapter where we present the tradition of the judicious duel and Shakespeare’s adaptation and use of this tradition for dramatic purpose. For underlying the tradition of the judicious duel is not only an ontological understanding of truth as that which is unconcealed, an understanding from which Shakespeare never sways, but rather more specifically, the understanding of truth as what is unconcealed, a true apperception of the Being of beings. In most or many of Shakespeare’s more popular plays, [th]is sense of Being is subverted and undermined by the technique and power of the presentation, which more often than not makes the reader catch a glimpse of what is concealed.

[2] Displaying an ontological grasp of truth as what is unconcealed, Shakespeare adopts or presents a Neoplatonic understanding and conception not only of truth, but of what is [unconcealed], an understanding of truth, of Being unconcealed, which he in his most famous plays betrays in order to convince us, still and to this day, that what appears on stage is. We are presenting this chapter on the unfamiliarity of Shakespeare, not in order to make an aberration from the
true course or main focus of the thesis, but in order to be more true to Shakespeare and not only to ourselves. This chapter will provide a perfectly true setting, for nothing is perceived except by contrast. In this way, we will create a true horizon against which all false ships may later sail.

§5.1 The Battle for Truth

There are not many philosophers today who would agree if we said that truth is polemos, truth is war, and that whoever wins this war is true. But Heidegger and Nietzsche, Burckhardt and Hegel, all make remarks and reflections on truth as polemos, perhaps no one more clearly than Heidegger in his lectures on Parmenides, and perhaps no one more forcefully than Nietzsche in the opening of Twilight of Idols. In all these presentations of truth as polemos, the realization is the same, namely that the body upholds the truth. It is the body that upholds whatever is, and without this body, nothing is. Instead of speaking of Hegel’s infamous presentation of the dialectics of Master and Slave in the Phenomenology of Spirit, we shall mention another place where Hegel refers to a curious example where a philosopher attempts to uphold what is true with arms and not, as Nietzsche later remarked condescendingly of Socrates, only with words or arguments. For Nietzsche considered, as does also Heidegger, all argumentation to be a kind of decadence, a corruption which takes this for granted, without

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1 Heidegger contend to be in good company when he in Parmenides, p. 17-18, asserts that truth is war. We may have to trust Heidegger’s word that Jacob Burckhardt is among the contenders, but Nietzsche makes it explicit in, Philosophy and Truth - Selections from Nietzsche’s Notebooks of the early 1870s, ‘The Philosopher: Reflection on the Struggle Between Art and Knowledge,’ Fragment 47, p. 17. Even Hegel holds the same view, that the ancient Greeks, and no less the Middle Ages of chivalry, find truth in battle. [Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, ‘Lordship and Bondage,’ p. 111-119].

2 Nietzsche, Twilight of Idols, ‘Foreword,’ p. 3.
thinking, without acknowledging that this is above all else that which should be or would have to be fought for.  

According to Hegel, the distinguishing feature between Greeks and Barbarians is that the former, and pre-eminently the Athenians, put aside their arms in times of peace. However, as Hegel relates, a dispute between the Athenian Lawmaker, Solon and the tyrant Pisistratus, was settled by force. For Solon appeared in the court of the Athenians, ‘accoutred in arms and shield,’ willing to protect the Law with his own body. That Solon at the beginning of all lawmaking, appears in arms to defend the universal Law against the singular will of the Tyrant Pisistratus is, of course, more than a curiosity to Hegel; it conveys the body, the will that upholds all truths, all beings, the Being of beings. Another, more recent example related in the annals of philosophy, is the story of Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer, who, while still a student at the University of Rostock, was involved in an argument over who was the better mathematician. Satisfied with neither arithmetic nor rhetoric, the debate was settled by a duel, which Tycho is said to have won. Tycho thereby proved he was the superior mathematician, and as a token of his superiority and a souvenir of the combat, he was wearing a silver prosthesis in place for the nose he lost.

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3 For Nietzsche’s tirade against Socrates, see, Nietzsche, Twilight of Idols, ‘The Problem of Socrates,’ pp. 11-15. For Heidegger’s understanding of history as a battle not only for truth but a battle for the concept of truth, where as he indicates that there is no greater battle, see Heidegger, Parmenides, p. 17-18. See also, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Volume I: The Will to Power as Art, p. 28.  
4 Hegel, History of Philosophy I, p. 159. Hegel is referring to Thucydides (1.6).  
5 Hegel, History of Philosophy I, p. 159. Hegel is referring to Diogenes Laertius,  
6 Even if Hegel admired a man of action, he, more than anyone, knew that the success of any Modern Law did not depend on the superficial threat or use of force, but entirely on internalisation, that all subjects make the law their own, not on Moralität, but Sittlichkeit.  
7 As related in Boorstin, The Discoverers, 1983.
This willingness to take up arms to prove a proposition, does, of course, to us, sound strikingly unfamiliar. It is therefore surprising to see that [th]is way of solving disputes, of proving what is true, is exactly what in Shakespeare’s plays occur again and again, perhaps nowhere more tellingly than in the opening of Richard II. For when Lord Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray appear before the King, they are both willing to take up arms to prove who is speaking the truth, to show who is guilty of being a traitor to the Crown and who is not, to decide what is true in a duel, when they finally meet at the lists at Coventry. As Shakespeare shows, one did not expect to solve a controversy merely by argument, to settle a dispute merely with words. To us it may sound unfamiliar, that when claiming to speak the truth, one did often – as Bolingbroke does in Richard II – swear an oath on a precious body-part, saying, ‘by my right arm’, ‘by my head’, ‘by my right leg.’ Again it shows what was self-evident to every knight, that it is the body that upholds the truth and God that upholds the body. For it was commonly believed that the one who survived would not be guilty [of high treason], that whoever overcame was true, as God would not fail to uphold the true.

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8 Shakespeare, Richard II, Act I, Scene iii.
10 That the British Isles was a warrior society is almost equally true at the time of Henry VIII as it was at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. Tony Tanner notes the relevance of the political transition from feudalism to absolutism, from barbarism to political modernity for understanding Shakespeare’s plays. In his introduction to Hamlet Tanner refers to the German historian Carl Schmidt, who states what should be obvious, that Hamlet, like so many of Shakespeare’s plays, is set on the threshold between feudalism and the political or civilized world of modernity where states are no longer governed by personal will but by impersonal Law. Certainly, Tony Tanner and Carl Schmidt as well as the one they both rely on, namely Hegel, means to speak deridingly of the previous age where there was no rule of law. That we do not necessarily follow this enlightened prejudice, will, in this chapter, become obvious. [Tony Tanner, Introduction to Hamlet, in Tragedies, Volume I, p. xxiii-xxv].
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[6] The Normans are said to have imported the judicious ordeal, chief amongst which was the practice of trial by combat.\textsuperscript{11} It is safe to say, but striking, since it evokes such clear impressions of a premodern era with lives and ideals so different from our own, that nowhere is the procedure of such a trial presented more instructively than in the opening of Shakespeare’s \textit{Richard II}, which, of course starts with a conflict, the accuser and the accused, or rather, two men, who both accuse each other of High Treason. The men being summoned have to appear in court before the King to present their case. As Knights, they would present their own cases, as Shakespeare says, ‘face to face,’ ‘the accuser and the accused freely speak.’\textsuperscript{12} It is interesting to note what Duke Mowbray says in this context, ‘This is not the trial of a woman’s war, The bitter clamour of two eager tongues can/not arbitrate this cause betwixt us twain.’\textsuperscript{13} Nietzsche echoes this depreciating assessment of a trial of tongues when he scorches Socrates for having, indeed, been guilty of the charges waged against him, namely of having corrupted the Athenian youth. For truly, it was, according to Nietzsche, Socrates who bears the iconic responsibility of having compelled the Athenians - the strongest and fiercest and most warrior-like of all nations, except perhaps the Spartans - to suddenly, and as if from nowhere, instead of asserting their positive will [to be unconcealed], look for arguments to ‘prove’ their cause. By asking the nobility to thus ‘prove’ themselves through argumentation, and thus inventing, as Aristotle points out, the

\textsuperscript{11} Millingen, \textit{The History of Duellingen}, p. 19. Bacon, \textit{The Charge Touching Duels}, in \textit{Francis Bacon - A Critical Edition of the Major Works}, p. 309, and Hexter, \textit{Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature}, pp. 3-9. We should perhaps particularly note where Millingen informs us of what occasions the duel formally. ‘The lie - the blow - the most slanderous abuse - were … considered a stain upon a man’s character requiring an appeal to arms in order to verify the old saying, that the dead are always in the wrong.’ [Millingen, \textit{The History of Duellingen}, p. 19].

\textsuperscript{12} Shakespeare, \textit{Richard II}, Act II, Scene i.17.

\textsuperscript{13} Shakespeare, \textit{Richard II}, Act II, Scene i.48-50.
art of dialectics and logic,\textsuperscript{14} it is understandable that he made them all, stammer. But, as Nietzsche adds, Socrates would have found no ears in Athens had not the Athenians already been corrupt.\textsuperscript{15} What Nietzsche is suggesting is however clear, that any kind of argumentation is as such a sign corruption and degeneration of the will to power, the will to be unconcealed. In such gloomy light, it is curious to notice that the father of the art of argumentation, the father of logic, should have, as Nietzsche points out, \textit{willingly} killed himself.\textsuperscript{16}

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[7] What can be said about the Athens of Socrates also applies to the society of Pre-Elizabethan England, namely that it was a society of warriors. Evidently, in \textit{Richard II}, neither of the knights have been subjected to the corrupting influence of logic, for what they both present are, as they say, not ‘like womenfolk,’\textsuperscript{17} arguments for or against their own innocence or the guilt of the other, but rather bluntly and provocatively, accusations and insults. Nay, what is presented here is not an argument that slavishly would attempt to explain one’s guilt away, but rather accusations and insults that attempt to throw the opponent into an unfavourable light. For Lord Bolingbroke will not only invoke the heavens to protect and further what he says, he will also protect - the ground of - t/his saying with his own body. As Lord Bolingbroke says, ‘For what I speak, My body shall
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\textsuperscript{14} If it is granted that the universal definitions that Socrates sought, later formed the basis on which all demonstrations, whether logical or dialectical, are based. Cf. Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, Book I, 987b1.

\textsuperscript{15} Cf. Nietzsche, \textit{Twilight of Idols}, ‘The Problem of Socrates,’ p. 11-15. As a symptom of this decadence, Nietzsche points out that Socrates ‘discovered a new kind of \textit{agon} \[i.e. contest, namely demonstration or argumentation,\]’ and was its first fencing master for the noble circles of Athens. He fascinated people by stirring up the agonal drive of the Hellenes.’ Nietzsche, \textit{Twilight of the Idols}, ‘The Problem of Socrates,’ Fragment 8, p. 14] In the note provided, Duncan Large says that \textit{agon}, ‘contest’ is a ‘central concept, the importance of which goes back to one of Nietzsche’s earliest (unpublished) writings, ‘Homer’s Contest’ (1872),’ Nietzsche, \textit{Twilight of Idols}, p. 88n.


\textsuperscript{17} More precisely, Mowbray says, ‘Tis not the trial of a woman’s war.’ Shakespeare, \textit{Richard II}, Act 1, Scene i.48.
make good upon this earth/or my divine soul answer it in heaven.' Bolingbroke does not hesitate to utter his accusation, after he has posited that t/his saying will be upheld by his body, that t/his saying, which already partly unconceals him, will be furthered and kept in the open, as long as he has limbs to assert it, saying as he faces the Duke of Norfolk, ‘Thou art a traitor and a miscreant.’ To which the Duke of Norfolk replies, ‘I do defy him, and I spit at him, Call him slanderous coward and a villain.’ Evidently there are no arguments produced in this case.

While Lord Bolingbroke and the Duke of Norfolk are calling each other names, and King Richard II is listening to their accusations, and each party is attempting to unconceal the other as a traitor, let us consider what is at stake when Lord Bolingbroke throws down his gage, his glow to challenge the Duke of Norfolk to take up, what he calls ‘mine honor’s pawn.’ What is at risk is nothing less than the truth. Not only who speaks the truth, not only who is guilty of high treason and who is not, but who is [true]. For to the medieval Zeitgeist, which keeps and

18 Shakespeare, Richard II, Act I, Scene i.36-38. It is surprising to see how correctly the formal challenge resonates in Shakespeare’s play, as we listen to what, in The History of Duellingen, Millingen says of the judicious challenge, ‘The form of denial was most eloquent: ‘Thou liest, and I am ready to defend my body against thine; and thou shalt either be a corpse or a recreant any hour of the day: and this is my gage.’ [Millingen, The History of Duellingen, p. 31.] Similarly in The Tournament, where, speaking of ‘Trial by Combat in Cases Criminal,’ Coltman Clephan points out that the accuser in a trial had to support his accusation by swearing that ‘he was ready to maintain the same with his body.’ [Coltman Clephan, The Tournament, p. 150.]

19 Shakespeare, Richard II, Act I, Scene i.39.

20 Shakespeare, Richard II, Act I, Scene i.60-61.

21 It is obvious why Mowbray calls Bolingbroke a ‘coward,’ that is, someone who does not appear or runs for cover, perhaps even someone who is against - con - war. Mowbray claims that Bolingbroke is a man that does not appear truly. If there is an implicit definition throughout all of Shakespeare’s plays of what a coward is, from Henry VI, Part I to Henry IV, Part I, it should read: ‘a coward is a man that does not appear as what he is or appear as what he is not.’ One may read almost any of the numerous uses by Shakespeare of ‘coward’ and find that the in-definition is meant disparagingly. A coward does not appear truly, may even be afraid to truly appear. Nothing is more crucial to the virtu, the power of the knight than to appear to be true, to be unconcealed indifferently and honestly in the open as what he is. More vital still is to uphold your place, that which grounds everything that is [true], the Being of all beings. It is for bravely fighting to uphold t/his place that Lord Talbot is honoured by his enemies, [Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part I, Act IV, Scene vii.44.] whereas the one who overcame through flight is deknighted by his own commanders and sent into exile. [Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part I, Act IV, Scene i.15f.] Thus, the importance of place.

22 Shakespeare, Richard II, Act I, Scene i.74.
treasures an ontological understanding of truth as what is unconcealed, every battle is a battle for what is true. In short, every conflict concerns the truth, for truth is quite simply polemos.

[9] One may argue about who is true in the opening of Richard II, but what is unequivocally stated are these two propositions, ‘Thomas Mowbray is a traitor’ or ‘Lord Bolingbroke is a traitor.’ Apparently traitor is the property \( p \) given to both these men. The predicate ‘traitor’ attempts to describe what this man essentially is. What is important to notice in what ensues, is that in a trial by ordeal there is never given proof of the existence of these predicates. That is, there is no obligation to provide an argument showing that this property \( p \) does or does not belong to \( x \). Essential proof seems almost entirely irrelevant to the medieval mind. There is given no other proof that \( p \) belongs or does not belong to \( x \), than that \( x \) does or does not exist, is or is not unconcealed. In the chivalric battle for love there is given no other proof of love other than that this man is unconcealed and the other is not. Concretely, when we have two propositions, ‘Palamon loves Emily’ and Arcite loves Emily, or ‘no one loves Emily higher than Palamon,’ and ‘no one loves Emily higher than Arcite,’ it is obvious that this property \( p \), ‘no one loves Emily higher,’ cannot at the same time belong to both Arcite and Palamon. So there will ensue, as Shakespeare is well aware of, a trial by battle, an ordeal where love is ‘proved,’ that is, ‘tried and tested,’ which is still the meaning of the Norwegian ‘prøve.’

[10] One would think that Palamon and Arcite would have to defend this property and prove that this predicate truly belongs to this subject. But, as is shown, there is no other proof given than the unconcealment of the subject itself, \( x \). For when \( x \) appears, he has proven that this property, ‘no one loves Emily higher,’
belongs to him. This he has not showed by speaking more loudly of his emotions or by giving her more splendid gifts, but by simply Being unconcealed. For, as the dying Arcite says, after he has been struck down from the horse parading through the streets of Athens to proclaim his victory over Palamon, as he now lies dying, ‘I was false.’ As Shakespeare undoubtedly maintains an ontological concept of what is true, this means simply that. ‘I am not. My body can no longer uphold anything that is true.’ The profundity of this unfamiliar sense of Being is proven by the fact that no one runs around looking for evidence of $p$, whether it is, as in The Two Noble Kinsmen, ‘love,’ or, as in Richard II, ‘high treason.’ Neither does one seek witnesses that can corroborate nor material that can collaborate the proposition, the verdict that ‘$x$ is $p$.’ They are solely focused on $x$. The unconcealment of $x$ alone will prove its possession or non-possession of $p$. That, for example, $x$ is truly in love, will be established by the fact that he is still there, for otherwise, they conjecture, if he was not truly in love, $x$ would not be with her, but he is, so he must be truly in love.

[11] This logic, however simple, is immediately confusing.

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\begin{align*}
\text{x is } p \text{ or } y \text{ is } p & \quad \text{x is } p \text{ or } y \text{ is } p \\
\text{y is not} & \quad \text{y is not} \\
\text{x is } p & \quad \text{x is not-}p
\end{align*}
\]

These inferences depend on an intrinsic and immediately perceived relation between certain properties and Being and other properties and non-Being, which means that Being will announce the presence of positive predicates of unconcealment, whereas non-Being will announce negative predicates of concealment, conversely, that some properties will further unconcealment/Being

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whereas other properties will further concealment/non-Being. This means, for example, that when two are accused of high treason, the death of one will prove that he was a traitor, while the Being of the other will prove that he was not. Similarly, the Being of one will prove that he was in love while the non-Being of the other will prove that he was not. The following is a concrete example from The Two Noble Kinsmen,

Palamon is in love with Emily or Arcite is in love with Emily
Arcite is not
Palamon is in love with Emily

This unfamiliar syllogism is expressive of an existential logic, [th]is inference based on a true logic of Being, and not a predicative logic that merely considers the possession or non-possession of certain properties after [th]is or the existence of [th]is being has been taken for granted. Just as easily as this positive example seems, superficially, to confirm our notions of logic, there appears the negative example, which totally and immediately, even effortlessly, destroys any traditional or predicative sense of logic and gives us a glimpse of another logic, a logic of Being. For if we proceed with an example where the predicate itself is not a positive but a negative attribute, we will see that logic runs into, encounter unforeseeable obstacles, or that this logic destroys our habitual sense of deduction. The example is taken from the opening of Richard II,

Bolingbroke is a traitor or Mowbray is a traitor
Mowbray is not
Bolingbroke is not a traitor

This illustration, which we somehow expected to confirm our habitual notion of logical inference, leaves us amiss, stranded at the end of an inference. It is obviously and precisely the traitor who will not be and the one who is not a traitor who will. This suggests that some properties are identified as promoting life or
Being, whereas other properties are not. We may even sharply distinguish between properties of concealment and properties, perhaps even *ideas*, here taken in the original and Platonic sense of the *essential* idea, of unconcealment. The *essential* distinction will ensure that those who carry predicates of concealment, or rather - if we are to avoid dualism and truly think Neoplatonically, *not* carry properties of unconcealment - will sicken or die, whereas the one who bears and brings forward properties of unconcealment will live to acquire all the Aristotelian excellences.

[12] To no little extent does this way of thinking display its Neoplatonic origin, a trait which may easily be recognized in the theology of Augustine and the philosophy of Plotinus, where what is *good* is and what is *evil* is not, where the good is unconcealed and the evil is concealed, the one light, the other dark. If you suppose that this way of thinking is as alien to Shakespeare as it is to us, you must surely not have read Shakespeare. For *Henry VI, Part I*, considered to be his first play,\(^\text{24}\) is clearly nothing but a battle between the forces of concealment and the forces of unconcealment, and, so prolonged is this battle that the drama can hardly be called a play. In the end, the black magic whore, Joan of Pucelle, having slept her way into the corrupt hearts of the French nobility and cursed her way onto the stake, is lead to the podium where she is finally burned after having renounced her own father.\(^\text{25}\) Nowhere is the Neoplatonic trait in Shakespeare’s works more evident than in *Henry VI, Part I*, which, with its clear division between *black* and *white* magic, identifies certain properties with life, and other properties as life-denying. For having these properties you will, in the end, like Joan of Pucelle, be entirely, utterly concealed, sooner rather than later.


We can take another example, which follows an ancient logic of unconcealment, which only on few occasions, like snowy pinnacles, pierce through the false and foggy landscape of Shakespeare’s land. Again, if anyone thought this logic was unknown or immaterial to Shakespeare, it should be said that this logic of unconcealment grounds the final duel between Edmund and Edgar in *King Lear* as well as the closing duel between Macduff and Macbeth as evidently as it grounds the duel between Joan and the Dauphin in the opening of *Henry VI, Part I*.26 Looking more closely at the duel between Edmund and Edgar, we discover not only the relationship, but the intrinsic tie between certain properties and Being and other properties and non-Being. The inference is as follows:

- Edmund is false or Edgar is false
- Edmund is *not*
- Edgar *is* not false

What we discover is a contradiction between what is false and Being, which Shakespeare is fully aware of, even makes a conscious effort to display. For in the end he lets, as so often, the false be *overcome* by what is *true*.27

The ontological understanding of truth does not only display an unbreakable sense of the ground of all beings, that is, that without which nothing

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27 If you would like to view the same logic under a different aspect, you could say,

- Edmund is false or Edgar is false
- Edgar is not false
- Edmund is *not*

or,

- Edmund is false or Edgar is false
- Edmund is false
- Edmund is *not*
could have any properties. On closer inspection, what is expressed in this logic of the concealed and the unconcealed, is a certain and unmistakable connection between some properties and life and other properties and death, the basic principle that some properties will promote one’s life whereas other properties will not, finally, that God will in the end be there to hand out deserts according to the properties that one has acquired or been given, a judgement or a final act of unconcealment/concealment, from which there is, in the end, no escape. Let us have a look at the duel in Henry VI, Part I, where the young Joan encounters the Dauphin, and convey what the spectators believe will be unconcealed through

*Joan is* the saviour of France or Joan is not the saviour of France

Joan

It is astonishing that the mere unconcealment of this, the fact that Joan survives the duel with the Dauphin, proves the presence of the predicates that this claims to be in possession of. Obviously we are on the verge of another logic, which does not belong to us, a logic we are unfamiliar with or a logic so familiar that it is overlooked, a logic whose forms and expressions have yet to be finalized, a logic of Being. This logic is part of the very fabric of Shakespeare’s plays, even where, as in Hamlet, the art of the presentation destroys this existential logic of unconcealment. For King Hamlet lives up to an old logic of unconcealment which Prince Hamlet and the whole Danish Court are soon about to destroy. But the trace of the old logic of unconcealment is still there, and exposed at great length in the exposition of the trial, the judicious duel between King Hamlet and King Fortinbras that
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precedes all the events in *Hamlet*. Let me formalize the syllogism that leaves nothing in the dark:

King Hamlet is the ruler of Denmark or King Fortinbras is the ruler of Denmark.  
King Fortinbras is not.  
King Hamlet is the ruler of Denmark.

[15] We know that in an either-or-syllogism, all complex propositions are true except one where both elemental propositions are false. It is, of course, easily noticed that in these examples as in life, the truth of any of these propositions cannot be guaranteed or proven prior to or before the actual battle or ordeal occurs. In a grand sense, life is such an ordeal, which means not only that both propositions may be true, but that it is *Being* itself prior to any being that decides what is *true*, what shall, what will be unconcealed or not. What we learn from this logic is to appreciate the basis of all predicates, the Being [of beings] that makes all properties possible, that without which they could not be or nothing could have any possessions. It also makes clear that these properties are something that follows upon or after Being, which is, that which, in the first place, *is*. What is acknowledged in all ordeals and in all trials by battle, is that it is the *body* that upholds whatever properties [th]is person has, be they intelligible or corporeal, it is [th]is that upholds whatever [th]is is. The medieval *Zeitgeist* is clearly expressed in the practice of ordeals, which Shakespeare presents on numerous occasions and in a language that apparently knows the vocabulary of unconcealment, is never unclear about the priority of [th]is over what [th]is is, of that without which these properties would fall to the ground like a bird's without wings.

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Nearing a preliminary conclusion, to anticipate the road ahead, it is perhaps opportune to present syllogisms for Hamlet and Falstaff, which, as we shall see, follow a completely different logic, namely a logic of concealment, a gathering into presence of what is concealed,

- Falstaff is a coward or Falstaff is not a coward
  - Falstaff is a coward
  - Falstaff is

and,

- Hamlet is mad or Hamlet is not mad
  - Hamlet is mad
  - Hamlet is

For when Hamlet no longer appear to be mad, he soon dies. What Shakespeare has done, in this present and disjointed age, is simply to equate what being essentially is with madness and cowardice. That is, Shakespeare has turned on its head the commonplace notions of the properties that promote Being and which do not. It would appear that Shakespeare has incorporated and imperceptibly personified these vices, thus making Hamlet and Falstaff appear less as personifications and more alive, enabling all spectators to look at what they like best, themselves. It is quite clear that it is irrelevant to society whether Hamlet is really mad or only looks mad, for it is obvious that it is the masque of madness that keeps him alive at the court as much as the masque of death keeps Falstaff alive on the battlefield. For almost immediately after Hamlet throws away the masque of madness, he is no longer alive, but to everybody’s surprise when Falstaff throws away the masque of death, he is.
§5.2 The Body of Truth

There are different kinds of ordeals, or, as Hexter gives the Oldgermanic name for it, ‘ordal,’ the memory of which is still carried by the German ‘Urteil,’ which today simply means ‘proposition’ or ‘judgement.’ It is the same word Kant uses in his Critique of Judgement, namely, Kritik der Urteilskraft. But the old ‘ordal’ carries a meaning which ‘Urteil’ does not. For what the old ‘ordal’ means is that something would have to be brought forth, something would first have to appear, for something to be said. Without this having been unconcealed, nothing would or could be said, as there would be nothing to speak of, and this, without which there would be nothing to speak of, is called true. The judicious ordeals by fire, water, poison and combat were introduced from the north by the Normans with the conquests that began around 800 A.D. In his supremely entertaining book on The History of Duellingen, Millingen relates a practice among the Norwegians that was not imported to the south, namely holmgang. This duel was performed on a holme or an islet, with the tribesmen circling in Viking ships, looking towards the one which the battle was about to un-conceal. For, in the end only one would remain outstanding, only one man would overcome.

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1 Hexter, Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature, pp. 3-4.
2 Hexter, Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature, pp. 3-9.
3 Millingen, The History of Duellingen, p. 339. Shakespeare displays an almost transparent sense of this logic of un-concealment, when he, in his first play, lets Lord Talbot praise the brave Salisbury as the ‘mirror’ of martial men, [Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part I, Act I, Scene iv.74. Emphasis added.] to declare with pride, ‘in thirteen battles Salisbury o’ercame.’ [Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part I, Act I, Scene iv.78]. Even if Heidegger speaks of truth as polemos, it is still surprising to find that in his final testament, Identity and Difference, he speaks of Ankunft and Überkommnis, arrival and overcoming, when he again attempts to add another dimension to his exposition of the ontological difference, [Heidegger, Identity and Difference, pp. 64-65]. Evidently, Heidegger attempts to add an experiential dimension to the ontological difference, a logical sense of Being unconcealed, of having been granted that place which from Salisbury, and from all sooner or later, is taken away.
4 It is astonishing to find that the current use of the word ‘holmgang’ in Norway, confirms Nietzsche’s history of European decadence, as it today signifies an argument or a debate, a mere fight with words. The different ordeals did however have a real history before what announced
What does ordal, ordeal, Urteil have to do with Shakespeare and the true production of Being? No answer is more self-evident, no question more easy to answer. For Shakespeare adopts and presents, throughout his plays a form of trial by ordeal which was more common and lasted longer, and was common hundreds of years longer than any of these trials, that is, the trial by combat. And if one thinks that the ‘trial by combat’ at the time of Shakespeare was already an anachronism, it should be noted that the last time the right to wage battle, to challenge your opponent to a duel in order to uphold your rights or honour, occurred as late as 1817 in England. And if one believes that the duel was merely an outmoded institution or simply a fashionable dramatic convention employed to spice up the play, there would, of course, be no reason for Andrea Alciati to condemn the practice in Avignon in 1529, and, certainly, no reason for Francis Bacon in London to write a charge against this ‘barbaric practice’ almost a hundred years later, in 1614. Evidently, there would be no reason for Bacon to write this injunction, if the practice of duelling did not exist. One should remember

these real practices became metaphors: The two most common kinds of trial or judicious ordeal or prove, were ildprove or trial by fire and vannprove, trial by water. There was also a trial by poison, which is not likely to have been a common practice in the North as there is no common word for [th]is practice today. The common use in Norwegian of words which are all taken from the practice of ordeals, holmgang, ildprove, vannprove, does of course, indicate the common, if not widespread, use of the practice itself. In the ordeal by fire the accused would walk on glowing hot iron ploughs, or be asked to carry burning coal, and if burned, she would prove her guilt, if not, her innocence. It was believed that a sign of guilt would not fail to appear. Thus, showing the [un]truth, she would be found guilty, to be false, by unconcealment of [th]is blackened wound. The most common kind of vannprove, trial by water, would be to tie the hands and feet of the accused and throw the accused into the water, the river or a well. The guilty party would soon sink, the innocent would float, the idea again being that the true will inevitably appear, and God would not fail to further the unconcealment of the one who is [true]. In the case of trial by poison, the accused would be found guilty if she was to fall sick or die, for it was invariably believed, that the false would not fail to be concealed as much as the true would be kept in unconcealment, by God. For a general introduction to the history of the different kinds of ordeals by combat, water, fire and poison, see, Millingen, The History of Duellingen, ‘Chapter III. The Origin of Duelling,’ pp. 21-43, and Hexter, Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature, pp. 3-9.

5 Coltman Clephan, The Tournament, p. 168.
6 Green, Andrea Alciati and his Books of Emblems, p. 7.
that even if Queen Elizabeth discouraged the practice of duels, as it opposed her sole right to bear arms, the privilege to use military force, it was in her time and in Shakespeare’s, still *lawful* to challenge. The judicious practice did however fall into disuse after Henry VIII, who is quite tellingly the last King to hold *tournaments* that are more than show and display. For under Queen Elizabeth, who controlled her courts as much by entertainment and fashion as by the explicit use of power, the tournament was soon integrated into the *spectacle* that was part of the cult of the Virgin Queen.\(^8\) Attempting to find justification in God, Bacon opens *The Charge* by saying, in effect, that the practice of duels is to take up arms against the Lord himself and the one who is his substitute on earth, His Majesty the King. ‘For the mischief itself, it may please your Lordship to take into your consideration that when revenge is once extorted out of magistrates’s hands contrary to God’s ordinance, *mihi vindicta, ego retribuam.*’\(^9\) And suddenly, as if the tables of history had been turned, as if History itself had turned around at the bar, Bacon states that it is the Law of the Monarchy that is given by God, and not every man’s *right* to uncease himself, with or without arms. Even if Bacon acknowledges that ‘To wear a sword’ is ‘a right enjoyed by Gentlemen,’ he does not hesitate to discourage the proliferation of this right. Thus, protecting the Monarchy, Bacon may indeed be said to neglect us all, if not he, like his own student, Thomas Hobbes, secretly believed in a *civil contract* whereby all authority

\(^8\) The lawful practice of judicious duels had been successfully discouraged by Queen Elizabeth, without her making any alterations to the law where this right remained, as Coltman Clephan observes, on ‘the statue book’ until 1818, when the law was finally repealed. [Coltman Clephan, *The Tournament*, p. 168.]

is given the Absolute which guarantees the safety of us all.\(^{10}\) Arguing against the practice of duels, Francis Bacon, like so many in the Renaissance, invokes the ancients for advice and good example, and points out that the practice of *duelling* was imported from the barbarous north and never practiced among the virtuous Greeks or Romans, from which all good people seek advice as if from a previous and Golden Age.\(^{11}\)

The three clearest examples of *judicious* duels in Shakespeare’s plays, are certainly, the one referred to in *Hamlet* between the Old King Hamlet and King Fortinbras, who fought a *fair* battle in which King Hamlet was finally unconcealed.\(^{12}\) Another judicious duel is the one that opens *Richard II*, where Bolingbroke has challenged Lord Mowbray, although it should immediately be

\(^{10}\) Discouraging the practice of duels, Bacon says, as he speaks for the Monarchy, that it may lead to trooping, and from there, to the unwarranted seizure or usurpation of land or property. ‘It may grow from quarrels to banding, and from banding to trooping, and so to tumult and commotion.’ [Bacon, *The Charge Touching Duels*, in *Francis Bacon - A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, p. 305.] ‘It may cause sudden storms in Court, to the disturbance of his Majesty, and unsafety of his person.’ [Bacon, *The Charge Touching Duels*, in *Francis Bacon - A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, p. 305.]

\(^{11}\) Both Millingen, Coltman Clephane and Hexter concur when Bacon says that the practice of the judicious duel was imported from the north by the Goths, although Colman Clephane prefer to call them, ‘Normans.’ [Bacon, *The Charge Touching Duels*, in *Francis Bacon - A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, p. 309. Millingen, *The History of Duelling*, ‘Chapter III, The Origin of Duelling,’ pp. 21-43, Coltman Clephane, *The Tournament*, p. 146, and Hexter, *Equivocal Oaths and Ordeals in Medieval Literature*, pp. 3-9.] When reading Bacon’s *The Charge touching Duels*, one should bear in mind that the right to a judicious duel belonged to all gentlemen, and that this right was not removed from the statute books until 1818, [Coltman Clephane, *The Tournament*, p. 168.] that indeed this law survived long enough to see the first revolver duels in 19th Century America. But in Europe, this right and this practice to assert oneself and one’s honour by combat was gradually taken away from the time of the reign of Elizabeth I and onwards [Coltman Clephane, *The Tournament*, p. 166.] The main issue was, as it still is today, whether there should be an Absolute Power of legislation and sanctioning belonging to the King or State or Government alone. Bacon emphasizes the crucial point, that to defend *duelling* is in effect to claim the right to set up a rival *law* [Bacon, *The Charge Touching Duels*, in *Francis Bacon - A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, p. 305.] For, as Bacon says, attempting to discourage this practice forever by wilfully distorting the issue, and with the sole intent of giving all powers to the Monarchy, ‘Every man shall bear the sword not to defend themselves but to assail, and private men begin once to presume to give law to themselves, and to right out their own wrongs, no man can foresee the dangers and inconveniences that may arise and multiply thereupon.’ [Bacon, *The Charge Touching Duels*, in *Francis Bacon - A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, p. 305.]

said that, like Queen Elizabeth herself, King Richard interrupts the duel and forces both parties into exile. We would have to look for Shakespeare’s adaptation of Chaucer’s *A Knight’s Tale*, that is, to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, to find a judicious duel that is also the climax of the tragedy itself, a duel, which, like any true ordeal, does not fail to unconceal the one who is [true]. Of course, these are merely the *judicious* duels, the *injudicious* duels abound in Shakespeare’s plays, and of all unlawful duels not one is more memorable and more consequential than the one between Romeo and Tybalt. For Romeo, having transgressed the law, having taken the law into his own hands, having executed a right which truly no longer belongs to a gentleman, kills Tybalt in an injudicious duel, for which he is sent into exile. For Romeo is - by the King, who has, in this play as in life, all rights to the *lawful* execution and use of violence - sent into an exile of which we all know the tragic consequences, the separation in life and the unification in death of *Romeo and Juliet*.

[20] Of all Shakespeare’s plays there is only one opening with a judicious duel, namely *Richard II*, where we all expect the trial by combat to bring forth the true and bring down the untrue. Shakespeare’s *Richard II* is the story of how Henry IV [1399-1413] succeeds Richard II [1377-1399] to the throne. Set in a time which,
according to the chronicles, was in turmoil, the succession of Kings often rapid and
violent, it is not surprising that Henry IV enters the play as Lord Bolingbroke and
already in the beginning, before the King, is accused of high treason by his fellow
gentleman and knight, Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of Norfolk. One could present
arguments for and against these accusations. To defend oneself one could call on
witnesses, deliver testimonies or invoke gods, but common in disputes over land,
that is, in civil cases, and equally in criminal charges of treason, one had the right
to invoke a *trial by combat*, a duel, a practice that was not uncommon when Queen
Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558.19

Let us see what happens in *Richard II* after Bolingbroke has challenged the
Duke of Norfolk by throwing down his gage.20 The Duke of Norfolk picks up the
glove, which he shows to the King and his court, before he turns to his adversary
and declares, ‘I take it up, and by that sword I swear, Which gently laid my
knighthood on my shoulder, I’ll answer thee in any fair degree, Or chivalrous
design of knightly trial. And when I mount, alive may I not light/If I be traitor or
unjustly fight.’21 And what does Lord Bolingbroke answer, ‘Look what I speak,
my life shall prove it true.’22 Bolingbroke does not forget to add the deprecating
‘false Mowbray’23 in the presence of the King, and with mutual accusation of
falsity and cowardice, each cursing the other for *Being* untrue, the King prepares
the lists at Coventry. When Bolingbroke accuses Thomas Mowbray, the Duke of

19 Coltman Clephan, *The Tournament*, p. 116 and p. 166. If one still insists on confusing Bacon with
Shakespeare, one has of course, failed to consider that in 1614, not long after Elizabeth’s reign,
Francis Bacon did write, as Attorney General, an official injunction *against* the practice of duels,
*The Charge Touching Duels*.
Norfolk, for being false, it is obvious that the understanding of truth here is not something derivate. No proposition, no intellect, no picture is called true, for truth is not a relation, but is the mark of that which is [unconcealed]. ‘True’ is not the one who asserts, brings forth correct opinions or propositions adequate to what is already given, but the one who after the battle is and remains outstanding. We shall bear in mind, that by simply appearing, someone or something is trumpeted as true, as it steps out in to the light, into the clearing, into the open. There it is said that some people shine more than others, as Shakespeare speaks of the bright King Henry V, shimmering like a star to guide his followers, and some people may appear more obscurely, like Falstaff and his companions, ‘the moon’s men.’

Like the spectators, we are all eager to know who the true man is. And are not our expectations high? Who looks the truer man? Can we see the true man shining forth more clearly than the other, as Heidegger says of Achilles in his lectures on Parmenides, where he, quoting from The Iliad, marks out that even long before the chariot race begins, Achilles appears to be the truer man. There are indications, signs showing obscurely, only partly unconcealing who the true winner is, i.e. will be. For as much as pseudos, what is false, means partly, aletheia, what is true, means completely. And, like a bud indicates a flower, a seed a bulb, a branch a tree, so too the Greek experience of what is false, so does pseudos indicate aletheia, the false what is true, what is partly unconcealed what is fully unconcealed. But what happens in the duel between Lord Bolingbroke and the

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26 Heidegger, *Parmenides*, pp. 128f.
27 Heidegger, *Parmenides*, p. 29f.
28 Heidegger, *Parmenides*, pp. 32 and 43f. We may from [th]is Greek perspective, speak of flowers of unconcealment, flowers of truth, and buds of falsity. For to the Greeks, the experience what is
Duke of Norfolk? Who appears in the clearing unconcealed? Not one, for the King throws down his warder and stops the fight, which was his prerogative. King Richard simply announces his judgment, a decision which by both parties, by both Knights, is considered un-fair, an unjust removal of their given rights as Knights to fight and uphold their saying with their true bodies. The King orders them both to exile. Lord Bolingbroke for ‘twice five summers,’ and Thomas Mowbray to the indefinite, the ‘dateless limit of thy dear exile.’ Bolingbroke returns to wage war, to topple Richard II and finally become Henry IV, but only after Richard II is cowardly killed in the Tower of London, the Tower said to have been erected by Julius Caesar in the town he named Trinovantum, or New Troy.

King Richard’s interference in the ordeal reflects the now absolute powers of the Monarchy, where the right to execute violence, as Max Weber would later say, only belongs to one. This absolute right to wage war, to command combat, does not fail to fatally change the course of events in Romeo and Juliet, where Escalus, Prince of Verona, halts the battle between the Capulets and Montagues, orders the tragic banishment of Romeo who seeks exile in Mantua. It is the unfortunate exile of Romeo, which leads Juliet in desperation to follow the plan of

false is similar to the experience of seeds, buds and branches, which may or may not be, become unconcealed as flowers, bulbs or trees.

Shakespeare, Richard II, Act I, Scene iii.151. We shall not convey what later happens, only say that Mowbray dies in Christian field killing infidels on his Crusade to the Holy Land, as he dies in Venice, or as it is said of the glories of the battlefield of unconcealment in Shakespeare, Richard II, Act IV, Scene i.90, ‘banished Norfolk fought For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field, Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross, Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens: And, toiled with works of war, retired himself, To Italy, and there at Venice gave, His body to that pleasant country’s earth, And his pure soul not his captain, Christ.’ Shakespeare, Richard II, Act IV, Scene i.92.

And on this occasion, we should point out, as we appear to be moving in circles, that Snorri Sturluson claims, in the opening of Edda, ascendancy from Troy, that after being conquered by the Greeks, the Trojans migrated North, to Norway, until they finally came to Iceland, where Snorri wrote down the saga of his own people, in Edda. Snorri Sturluson, Edda, p. 3.

Certainly it corresponds to Queen Elizabeth’s aversion to the duel and anticipates King James later ban in 1619.
Friar Lawrence to feign her own death to thereby avoid marriage with Paris. But not all duels in Shakespeare’s plays are interrupted like the duel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke or the duel between the Capulets and the Montagues. Some or most are indeed fought, like the duel between Macduff and Macbeth at the end of Macbeth, or the duel between Edgar and Edmund at the end of King Lear or the duel between Prince Harry and Thomas Hotspur at the end of Henry IV, Part I - all duels or ordeals by combat that does not fail to finally, in the end, secure what to Shakespeare appears to be almost the inevitable outcome, the unconcealment of the true. But there is another sense in which Shakespeare’s presentation of the duel reflects the times, when he in Pericles presents the tournament as what it truly had become during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, merely a spectacle. And perhaps it reflects the times, and shows how much the institution of knighthood was already seen as an anachronism, when Shakespeare attacks what appears to be the easiest and commonest target of ridicule, the knight in Twelfth Night.

[24] Appearing more foolish than any fool, no knight appears more hilarious than Sir Andrew in Twelfth Night. It is not without reason that he is accused of ‘breaking the peace,’ when he is seen dancing the catch. It is also a sign of the times that when Sir Andrew Aguecheek is challenged to prove that he is a true knight, he does not silently draw his sword, but lets Sir Toby try to defend him with an argument. Rather pretentiously, Sir Toby declares to his unconvinced niece, Maria, that if she does not believe that Sir Andrew is a true knight, she

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32 The plan that will later have such fatal consequences, is presented by Friar Lawrence in Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Act IV, Scene i.89.
33 Shakespeare, Pericles, Act I, Scene ii and Scene iii.
34 Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene iii.65
should know that Sir Andrew plays the violin and can speak 'four languages without a book.'\(^{35}\) It is obvious that civil society exerts different demands on its citizens, and that the true qualities of the battlefield appear to be superfluous to civilian society. Instead of fighting for appearance, the rules of the theatre have changed.\(^{36}\) No longer does one need dexterity with weapons or prowess in battle to be unconcealed. One does now argue and use wit to conquer, and in that art, Sir Andrew admits, he falls short, or as he declares with much regret, ‘O, had I but followed the arts.’\(^{37}\)

§5.3 Shakespeare’s True Betrayal

[25] We find that the knight in Shakespeare’s plays, almost as often as he is praised, is a common type of ridicule, as is the case with Sir Andrew in Twelfth Night who ends up dancing the jig to prove his knighthood.\(^{38}\) Another knight of ridicule is the living anachronism of Owen Glendower of Wales in Henry IV, Part I, who still thinks he lives in the age of Merlin.\(^{39}\) Even Hamlet’s own ideals are but anachron to the age in which he lives, and what is untimely, is not his life, but his ideals and his learning. A contemporary of Shakespeare, namely Sir Francis Bacon, Count of Virulam, is the first to point out in his critique of Aristotle and the schoolmen, that what was taught at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge,

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\(^{35}\) Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act I, Scene iii.25.

\(^{36}\) Again, one may, etymologically, if that is to give any guidance or understanding, speak of ‘the looking place,’ not only the place where we come to watch what is concealed, but the place where this is itself unconcealed, in the playhouse or on the battleground. Cf. Heidegger, Parmenides, p. 147 and in Michael Ewans’s introduction to Aeschylus, Oresteia, p. xix.

\(^{37}\) Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act I, Scene iii.92. This scene is not without bawdy intent, as Sir Andrew is both ‘put down’ by Maria’s wit, similarly he ‘falls short’ of persuading her, for had he mastered the art of persuasion, he would almost certainly, and indeed, not figuratively, been able ‘to accost her.’ Sadly, Sir Andrew is not trained in this new art of persuasion, that belongs to a society so unlike the one in which he was brought up to live.

\(^{38}\) Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, Act I, Scene iii.15ff.

\(^{39}\) Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, Act III, Scene i.
and perhaps no less at Wittenberg, corresponds to an age long since gone, the primary reason for this anachronism being the untimely dependence on Aristotle whose ideas about the self-sufficiency of true science makes Bacon refer to this science as no more than a sexual vice that leaves no progeny. Unquestionably, Shakespeare has given Hamlet untimely ideals and anachronistic learning, with no bearing on his life, hence opening up a gulf, an abyss to which no life could possibly correspond. But what makes Hamlet tragic is that he perceives the difference between these two worlds, so much so that he himself embodies the crossing of these incomparable worlds of books and lives, of ideals and actions. By contrast, Cervantes’ Don Quixote [1619] has not torn a page away from his perceptions, his experiences has not made him tear a single page from his chivalric


41 Cf. Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, Book One, in *Francis Bacon*, ed. Brian Vickers. As we learn with almost total surprise from Sears Jayne’s *Plato and the English Renaissance*, Plato was hardly known at the time of Shakespeare, almost completely unheard of in the English Renaissance [Jayne, *Plato and the English Renaissance*, pp. 135-137]. Even Bacon knows almost nothing of Plato, whom he merely considers to be a harmless mystic. In the English Renaissance Plato is not much more than a rumour. One attributes titles to his corpus that are not his, and even the best of men confuse the pseudonymous with Plato’s true works, *Alchibiades* with *Republic*. And, as Jayne shows, *Sophist* was unknown, not even mentioned by name. Jayne even goes so far as to particularly speak of The Elizabethan Age, as the Platonique blackout [Jayne, *Plato and the English Renaissance*, pp. 135-137]. These acknowledgements do not add a little legitimacy to our argument. For as is claimed throughout this thesis, whereas a Neoplatonic preconception of the Being of beings is essential, is true or truly unconcealed, as was also showed concretely in the opening paragraph of this chapter, the Platonique preapperception of Being is inessential. Not unexpectedly there is something that resembles a ban on Plato during Elizabeth’s reign. More fundamentally, there is a discrepancy between ideals and lives, nowhere more concretely exposed than in the case of Shakespeare, who marks this passage from a Neoplatonic preappreception of truth to a Platonic - without, of course knowing anything of Plato - where there is given Being to that which inessentially is, or essentially is not, the ontological difference, the Being of beings. If now anyone thought our speech did not live up to its promise, point out that we were to speak of the anachronism of Aristotle and not of Neoplatonism, he must surely have failed to understand that Neoplatonism is Aristotle’s Wirkungsgeschichte. Nothing stands further apart than Plato and Aristotle/Neoplatonism. For whereas the one asserts that the untrue/false/non-Being is, the other asserts that it is not, and there cannot be found greater disagreement than between one who thinks that [th]is is and another that [th]is is not.

42 There are two anachronistic elements that are concretely to be observed: the anachronistic taste for the Virgilian *epos* and the anachronisms of the chivalric ideals of bravery, honesty, etc. Speaking of the anachrony of chivalry, it is, of course, a sign of the times, as Rosencrantz informs us, ‘that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goosequills and dare scarce come’ to the theatre, as the knights are afraid that they may be{come} subject to satire and ridicule.[Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.351].
The True Production of Being

romances, whereas Hamlet, recognizing the abhorring difference, can easily tear away the pages of this anachronistic book - and it is likely that Shakespeare, like Bacon, could have imagined Hamlet holding a book by Aristotle in his hands or one of the chivalric romances - page by page, crumble the pages and throw them on the floor. And when Polonius, the caretaker of all anachronisms as well as all formalisms at Elsinore Castle,\(^{43}\) approaches him and asks for the matter and meaning of what he read that lies so crumbled on the floor, Hamlet does cry out to Polonius, ‘Words, Words, Words!’\(^{44}\)

[26] Truly, this is the cry of inadequation, for either is his life inadequate to his learning or his learning inadequate to his life. That Shakespeare is perfectly aware of all contemporary anachronisms, the untimeliness of the times, is again made clear when he presents the trial of Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night*.\(^{45}\) In Shakespeare’s oeuvre, no knight is more ridiculous than Sir Andrew Aguecheek. What is ridicule is not merely an individual, but a whole institution, for, as is well known, the

\(^{43}\) It is safe to say, that we would have a stronger sense of Being in Denmark, if the name of this place had not been altered, if it instead read Kronenborg Slot or Helsingør Castle.

\(^{44}\) Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.194. Intentionally, we have turned the anachronism on its head, for it is obvious that it is a man with a taste for *antiquity* that throws a *modern* satire on the floor. Hamlet is most likely reading a satire, of which he immediately complains that it lacks ‘honesty.’ [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.204]. It is not arbitrary when Polonius observes that, ‘Though this be madness, yet there is *method* in’t.’ [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene.ii.207. Emphasis added] There certainly is, for Hamlet does persistently and *anachronistically* long for an *honest method* of [re]presentation in a time when, as Hamlet realizes, honesty itself had become and anachronism [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene i.111-115]. Hamlet recognizes this ‘honest method’ in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.454-529.] a masterpiece of literature too ‘caviary to the general,’ [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.447.] that is, as Tony Tanner translates, ‘too choice for the multitude.’ When the prince himself begins to recite ‘Aeneas’ tale to Dido, [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.454-529.] he does not expect to satisfy the taste of the times, which, as Hamlet points out before he falls into another rapture of [theatre] criticism,[Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene ii.1-47.] was only open for ‘a jig or a tale of bawdry,’ [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii..511.] obscenities and dances without which the spectator would soon fall asleep.[Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.512.] Shakespeare does obviously not think highly of his audience as he presents numerous such obscenities and dances, perhaps only to satisfy their tastes. To this palate, ‘the honest method’ of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which is his last play, appear to be not much more than an act of bad conscience, a final effort to relieve the next generation of all the mistakes he made when he was young, to again erect the true ideals of chivalry, honesty and bravery, that has so long been lost.

tournaments soon deteriorated to *play* and *spectacle* after Queen Elizabeth ascended the throne, making the institution of knighthood into an anachronism in less than a lifetime. Although Sir Andrew is both tall and moneyed, it is hardly enough to convince a doubting Maria that he is *truly* a knight. So, Sir Toby has to find a better way to *prove* the man’s knighthood, and Sir Toby, trying to come up with something to persuade Olivia’s maid, draws out nothing less than an argument, which I am sure made all contemporary spectators burst into laughter. For defending Sir Andrew’s knighthood, Sir Toby says, ‘Fie that you’ll say so! He plays o’th’ viol-de-gamboys, and speaks three or four languages without a book.’ No one can doubt Shakespeare’s intention, in what he must surely have perceived as both false and peaceful times, when he leaves us with Sir Andrew dancing the jig to *prove*, once and for all and *without a word*, his knighthood.

Before we continue to map out Shakespeare’s true betrayal, we should pause for a moment to think of Shakespeare’s final words to posterity, the last words of the last play he ever wrote, before his pen fell silent. To claim, in this light, that *The Two Noble Kinsmen* stems from another hand than Shakespeare’s, that is, Fletcher’s, would of course fail to see the most apparent coherence from beginning to end in Shakespeare’s authorship. Even though the contention is disputed, most commentators find reason to believe that Shakespeare wrote substantial parts of the *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. In his thorough and laudable introduction to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Eugene M. Waith speaks of a division of labour between Fletcher and Shakespeare when he writes, ‘Shakespeare, the senior partner, writing the entire first act and the first scene of the second, introduced the characters of both plots, wrote all the scenes of the main plot in the last act, and some scene of both plots in Acts 3 and 4.’
the truly unconcealed Henry V in *Henry VI, Part I*, the funeral of a man whom in [th]is life was truly unconcealed in battle,\(^{50}\) so Shakespeare’s works ends with the duel between Palamon and Arcite in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*.\(^{51}\) In the concluding stages of this play, Pirithous describes how Arcite, celebrating his victory, was ‘trotting the stones of Athens,’\(^{52}\) until he saw the horse suddenly, ‘Cold as old Saturn, and like him possessed/With fire malevolent\(^{53}\) …’ disroot his rider whence he grew.’\(^{54}\) When seeing the dying Arcite being carried in, Palamon cries out, ‘O miserable end of our alliance!/The gods are mighty, Arcite. If thy heart,/Thy worthy, manly ear, be yet unbroken,/Give me thy last words. I am Palamon,/One that yet loves thee dying.’\(^{55}\) Love is here nothing but a desire to let the other be unconcealed, even if I were to be vanquished, I desire you to truly appear before me.\(^{56}\) But Arcite, a dying man, returns the gesture of love as he gives away the

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\(^{50}\) For the praise of Henry V, see Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part I*, Act I, Scene i.1-56.


\(^{54}\) Shakespeare, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act V, Scene iv.76.


\(^{56}\) Those who raise the question as to why Shakespeare would chose to collaborate on this play with the young and upcoming playwright Fletcher, must certainly have looked passed the evidence. For
prize of combat, ‘Take, Emilia,/And with her all the world’s joy. Reach, thy hand -
/Farewell; I have told my last hour. I was false.’

As in any trial or ordeal, to be false does simply mean to not be unconcealed, not that there was a discrepancy between words and lives, intellect and thing, propositions and whatever it might be that we compare our propositions to before deciding that they are false. For even if the battle did bring him forth, life did not unconceal him as Emily’s lover. Whence, Arcite was false, only falsely did he appear as Emily’s lover. In the final act of Shakespeare’s final play, when he is about to name that which unconceals all lovers to all, Shakespeare cannot resist the opportunity to express another contradiction. As King Theseus says, ‘Never Fortune/Did play a subtler game: the conquered triumphs,/The victor has the loss.’

As we witness Shakespeare’s presentation of Palamon’s and Arcite’s invocation of their governing divinities Mars and Venus as they pray for unconcealment, we do not forget that the supplication of the widowed queens to Theseus for their sons’ lives, is a prayer for the same, a prayer for Theseus to show pity, that is to keep their sons in unconcealment. Theseus grants this petition, truly showing that the virtues of pity, compassion and mercy, are all virtues that keep the unfortunate or the transgressor unconcealed. Pity is one of several chivalric virtues that Mr. Waith speaks of in his thoughtful and weighed introduction to The Two Noble Kinsmen. On one particular point, however, namely the contemporary significance of ‘pity,’ I do honestly disagree with Mr.

what is obvious is that Shakespeare wants to end were he began, in true concealment, for he knew, that in the middle, so many of his plays, appeared to be false.

59 Shakespeare, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Act V, Scene i.
60 Shakespeare, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Act I, Scene i.25-235.
Waith, as it is quite clear that *pity or compassion* has nothing to do with ‘the chivalric tradition of extraordinary politeness,’ as Mr. Waith suggests, but rather with the virtue or power to keep manifest or unconcealed, of keeping *fthlis*, like a God, in the clearing. Although Eugene M. Waith has written an excellent introduction, he does nevertheless *not* see the *necessity* of why Pity should be called ‘godlike’ by the Third Queen. It is obvious that this godlike quality has nothing to do with ‘ethics’ or ‘true humanity,’ but, as the whole play shows, with the holiness of Being unconcealed. For it is clear that you become like a god by doing what God does, that is, unconceal. In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, no one shows more clearly than Shakespeare that by emulating God you become as God is. Showing pity, by sparing the lives Arcite and Palamon, Theseus truly becomes like a god, that which keeps *fthlis* unconcealed, in unconcealment.

[29] Plays like *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VI, Part I*, ties, as if with one single true rope, a knot around the Shakespearean corpus, goes a long way to show that Shakespeare presents ideals and realities in which we do not, perhaps cannot recognize ourselves. It has to be added, that this says as much about our lives as it says about his times. From the testimony of Shakespeare’s last work and his first, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VI, Part I*, it would appear that Shakespeare mourns a long lost age of light, the passing of the Age of Chivalry as much as the writers of the *Malleus Maleficarum* [1484], quoting St. Thomas [d. 1270], could mourn the long lost Age of Miracles. For far from being Dark, the Middle, the Chivalric Ages were to Shakespeare, a bright, shimmering Age of

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Unconcealment. There is an enormous difference between the moon-men of *Henry IV, Part I* and the sun-men of *Henry VI, Part I*, a marked difference between Falstaff and Talbot, between the young Prince Harry and King Henry V who through many trials had to prove himself to be true. For so corrupt are the ways of the young Prince Harry that his father, King Henry IV desires, indeed hopes for his exchange, the substitution of him and the ‘gallant Hotspur.’ For as clearly as Henry V, at the opening of *Henry VI, Part I* is praised as a star, a sun-knight, Shakespeare lets Falstaff and the young Henry, be declared as anti-knights, ‘Men of concealment,’ as ‘Gentlemen of the shade,’ who steal away into the night to become ‘the moon’s men.’ It is not unintentional that Shakespeare lets Falstaff, who in jest accuses Prince Harry for being able to corrupt a saint, includes himself among ‘the sons of darkness.’ And proving that everything in this play is topsy-turvy, and like the times of *Hamlet*, truly ‘out of joint,’ Shakespeare lets Falstaff offer an ironic prayer, where he, praying for unconcealment, desires, ‘hopes’ that he will ‘prove a false thief.’ But the only

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66 In *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, there are three scenes which give crystal clear images to these light ages, to this Age of Unconcealment, ‘the supplications of the widowed queens to Theseus,’ [*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, 1.1.25-1.1.235] ‘the invocations of their tutelar divinities by Palamon and Arcite,’ [*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Act/Scene, 5.1.] and ‘the death of Arcite,’ [*The Two Noble Kinsmen*, 5.4.85-5.4.137] all which Professor Eugene M. Waith praises, along with Thomas de Quincey, as some of the most beautiful scenes within all of Shakespeare’s plays. [Waith, Introduction to *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, pp. 9-10.]


72 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene v.188.

73 Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*, Act I, Scene ii.159. Emphasis added, as ‘prove’ is used in the above sense of what is unconcealed, that which, because it is, cannot be said to be entirely false. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, Question One, Article 1 and Article 10.
thing they ‘prove,’ is that they are ‘true-bred cowards,’\(^74\) no more valiant than wild ducks.\(^75\)

Throughout Shakespeare’s works, there is no clearer presentation of cowardice than when four men flee in the face of two. That this episode is not a coincidental but intentional \textit{trial of truth} is made perfectly clear, by the previous exchange between Falstaff and Prince Hal, and the latter’s hidden intent to test or try Falstaff. For Poins and Prince Henry expects Falstaff and his men to be nothing but ‘true-bred cowards.’\(^76\) Poins even anticipates the ‘incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper.’\(^77\) Before they meet, however, Falstaff has already bemoaned the times, but not without a smile and a whistle, when, as if confirming this topsy-turvy world where everything is turned upside-down or inside out, he says, ‘A plague upon it when thieves cannot be \textit{true} one to another!’\(^78\) They are all, even the knighted are no better than highwaymen that ‘worshippest Saint Nicholas,’ the saint of falsehood, or as the Chamberlain says of Gadshill, ‘…thou worshippest Saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.’\(^79\) But that cowardice and lies and falsity is as much at the heart of [th]is play as it lies at the heart of \textit{civil} society, is not really what is at issue. What is, is how real all these lies make all these men appear, how we are made to trust their Being because they appear \textit{to be} so falsely. How much Being is not granted Falstaff when he appears as a ‘true thief,’ a ‘false friend,’ a ‘coward knight,’ a man endowed

\(^{78}\) Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act II, Scene ii.27.
\(^{79}\) Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act II, Scene i.66: Editors note: Saint Nicholas was reckoned the patron of all travellers, including thieves. Emphasis added.
with more oxymorons than other men have titles. But Falstaff objects, saying ‘Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt your grandfather, but yet no coward.’ To which Prince Hal openly replies that one should leave judgment to the Lord, ‘Well, we leave that to the proof.’ Evidently Prince Hal expects Lord Falstaff to show his cowardice, and uses the word ‘proof’ in a sense akin to the one used to describe the outcome of a judicious duel. For proven is that which is unconcealed. However, as Falstaff is very well aware of, whether or not he is essentially a coward, if he remains standing he cannot but be, in the most fundamental sense, true [to life]. For, as St. Thomas suggests, no one would be, were they entirely false. But is there then anyone in Shakespeare’s corpus who in this sense confess to Being false? Of course not, for that would, as Derrida rightly remarks, be impossible.

Nowhere is Shakespeare’s ontological concept of what is false, that is, how what is essentially false, truly shows us what is, expressed more clearly than in Henry IV, Part I, where the false character of Falstaff appears for the first time in all his splendour. It is perhaps noteworthy that Falstaff reemerges from a play which does not present an ontological understanding of what is false, that is, from Shakespeare’s first play, Henry VI, Part I. Shakespeare appears to have changed. The most likely reason would not be that Shakespeare suddenly had changed his ideals, which are, as we have pointed out strikingly coherent and almost unchangeably medieval and anachronistic, but what has probably changed is

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80 Cf. Sonnet 66, where it becomes clear that oxymoron is based on the experience of a contradiction.
82 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Truth, Question One, Article 1 and Article 10.
84 See particularly the scenes where Falstaff flees the battlefield,[Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part I, Act II, Scene ii.105] and where he is stripped of his knighthood [Shakespeare, Henry VI, Part I, Act IV, Scene i.1-42].
Shakespeare’s experience of his audience, which were not perhaps easily seduced by idealities, by what is merely *true* in a Neoplatonic or ideal sense. Shakespeare therefore lets Falstaff reappear to dominate the whole stage where he earlier was merely an aberration. An anomaly who deserved no more than exile, now becomes, as Mr. Bloom remarks, not only the Queen’s favourite character, but also our one and only hero.85 These considerations are quite superficial compared to the understanding of what the reappearance of Falstaff effects, which is to *subvert*, not only the common and chivalric ideals of medieval society, but more fundamentally to change our apperception of the Being of beings, to accustom us to an ontological understanding of what *is* false, which simply means, that no one is experienced as more *true*, no one appear to be more profoundly than Falstaff, and [th]is simply because no one *is* more false.

[32] It is a stark contrast between the two plays where Falstaff features, that he in the first is banished and in the other is brought to the height of the battlefield by no less than the future King himself, the now brave Prince Harry, whose trial or ordeal, the whole play of *Henry IV, Part I*, is. For, during the battle of unconcealment, in this ordeal, Falstaff is the coward that flees, hides or pretends to be dead, and as he flees from the battlefield of *Henry VI, Part I*,86 he does not only save himself but becomes Talbot’s *false* confederate. For *not* maintaining his position,87 he is later both dishonoured and deknighted in front of his fellow knights, whereas Talbot is explicitly honoured as the champion of truth and for bravely maintaining his place, is created earl of Shrewsbury.88 There is no greater

contrast to the dishonoured Falstaff, who saved himself by flight,\textsuperscript{89} and for thus not appearing, for not maintaining his place it is almost natural that Talbot, stripped of all his titles, is sent into exile.\textsuperscript{90}

It is obvious that Shakespeare leans towards a Neoplatonic understanding of truth in his first and his last plays, in \textit{Henry VI, Part I} and in \textit{The Two Noble Kinsmen}, that is, towards an understanding of what \textit{is} as what \textit{essentially} appear to be true. It is equally clear that Shakespeare’s poetology, in many, if not most of his plays, betrays [th]is ideal of unconcealment. It is therefore clear, but to a modern man in many ways concealed, that the concept of falsity, most clearly displayed in Shakespeare’s earlier plays, like \textit{Henry VI, Part I}, but equally in his last play, \textit{The Two Noble Kinsmen}, is \textit{not} an ontological understanding of what \textit{is} false. We shall attempt to present, as logically as possible, what a non-ontological understanding of what \textit{is} \textit{false} means, and we proceed as negatively as possible by initially saying, ‘The ontological understanding of what \textit{is} false is not Neoplatonic.’ It should have been demonstrated by the presentation thus far, and is yet to become clearer, that whereas Shakespeare’s explicit \textit{ideals} convey a Neoplatonic understanding of truth, his \textit{presentation} undermines his efforts to uphold [th]is Neoplatonic belief, as what \textit{is} [true/real], in most of Shakespeare’s plays, \textit{is} experienced only as the \textit{negation} of these \textit{ideas}, ideas, furthermore, that his characters are \textit{unable} to incarnate. In the \textit{Platonic} view, this negation does not produce a lack of Being, but paradoxically a more profound sense of Being, whereas from a Neoplatonic perspective it does not. This is why we find ourselves in agreement with Mr. Bloom when he says that only superficially could we regard Shakespeare’s characters as

\textsuperscript{90} Shakespeare, \textit{Henry VI, Part I}, \textit{Henry VI, Part I}, Act IV, Scene i.45.
personifications, for they are regardless of what they essentially represent. More specifically, they only appear to be as the negations of the ideas they [re]present to the other. It is therefore impossible for men and women like Falstaff and Hamlet, Viola and Sebastian, Romeo and Juliet, to become lifeless allegorical representation because they are simply not perceived as what they essentially are, to a large extent only perceived as what they are not.

Of course, an allegorical representation of virtues and vices rests on the Neoplatonic belief in reality-producing ideas, which, through procession and return, gathers all beings into Being through inessential and non-existent or phenomenal mirrors [of existence], or quite simply, khora. The particular subject is only seen through this phenomenal mirror, and comes only alive through its khora, mirror or clearing, through which the essential idea comes alive. However, Shakespeare shatters these Neoplatonic dreams. As he prepares, even conditions his audience, to apperceive the Being of beings as that which is without any properties, and not essentially as what is concealed or unconcealed, but what is and remains, hidden. It is the same apperception of the Being of beings, that from which all properties has been taken away, that remains at the heart of Dionysian Theology. Of course, [th]is opens up a cleft between Pseudo-Dionysius, on the one hand, and Proclus, Iamblichus and Plotinus, on the other, as they all, more or less, identify the Being of beings with this procession and return of ideas, which are more real than their inessential mirrors.

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91 Bloom, *Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human*, pp. 4-5.
93 St. Thomas emphasises the crucial point in Pseudo-Dionysius’ ontology, by pointing out that whether the angels are ‘spotless mirrors’ and men are ‘dark mirrors,’ in both cases are they mirrors, that which occasions all essential characteristica to come true through [th]is. Cf. Thomas,
Neoplatonist would be as false as to identify Shakespeare as the same. For both Pseudo-Dionysius and Kant, and Shakespeare in between them, apperceive the Being of beings inessentially, as that which is and remains without attributes, and can therefore not be associated with the basically and fundamentally essentialistic perspective of the Neoplatonist, which to us, regardless of whether this perspective is true or not, regardless of whether this philosophy of procession and return from the highest peak to the deepest valley is validated, it remains clear that [th]is understanding, [th]is preapperception of Being is totally and fully unfamiliar to modern men and women who, like Shakespeare, apperceive the Being of beings regardless of its essential characteristic, [th]is without what [th]is is.94

[35] Nowhere is the ontological understanding of truth - as that which quite simply is - expressed clearer than in the concept of truth as polemos or war. This idea of truth as polemos is so simple that it does not even need to be understood to have a Wirkungsgeschichte, as it is based on the fact that whomever is out-

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Truth, Question 8, Article 3. For evidence of a more essential approach to the Being of beings, see Proclus, The Elements of Theology, Iamblichos, The Egyptian Mysteries and Plotinus, The Enneads. 94 Shakespeare’s successful presentation crushes his medieval ideals. More often than not Shakespeare’s presentation of [th]is contradicts his own explicit ideals, if it is not true that the deal of un Concealment only belongs to his characters, and never to the author. The untrue is true, only what is inadequately [re]presented creates what to us is apperceived as [real], what is hidden. The false is more [real] than the true, the inadequate more [real] than the adequate. A case in point is Prince Hamlet who looks with jealousy on Prince Fortinbras. Having similar aspirations, Hamlet never envies the young prince, does not wish any harm upon a man he admires for being willing to take up arms in a foreign land ‘to wage battle for an eggshell,’ [Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act IV, Scene v.53.] to fight for nothing, while he, Hamlet, having so much to un conceal, ends up concealing all. Again, the explicit ideals of Shakespeare’s drama, the true ideals contradicts his presentation, or rather, his presentation contradicts the explicit ideals trumpeted through the mouths of most of the characters, except perhaps Falstaff, to whom concealment is not only a strategy for staying [alive], a stratagem for Being, but also, an ideal for a living nowhere more tellingly presented than when Falstaff on the battlefield, at the height of the battle, pretends to be dead. [Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, Act V, Scene iv.75] For whereas the explicit ideals more often than not speak of and for a true understanding of Being, of being unconcealed in-differently as what you essentially are where [th]is idea upholds you in un Concealment, Shakespeare’s actual presentation favours, more often than not, the concealed apperception of the Being of beings. So we could say that the ideals within the play speak apart against its own mode or way of presentation or the presentation against its own ideals. But the ideal is unreal and only the destruction, the transgression of [th]is ideal, creates from within these ruins, the apperception of something that is - to a modern man.
standing, whomever *over*-comes, *sur*-vives, *is* [true]. Shakespeare expresses [th]is ideal of unconcealment and of truth as *polemos*, indirectly but clearly when he, in *Hamlet*, lets the false and murderous King Claudius through diplomatic and cowardly means convince the weak, old and barely seeing King of Norway, to persuade his nephew Prince Fortinbras of Norway *not* to wage war against Denmark, that is, to avert the renewed engagement in a *true* battle of unconcealment.\(^95\) That Prince Fortinbras does not hold a very high opinion of the virtues of womanly Denmark, even King Claudius himself reveals.\(^96\) The young Prince Fortinbras is willing to take up arms against Denmark, not only to rectify the rights of a father defeated in a true battle of unconcealment, but more so to uphold true ideals of unconcealment in an age of cowardice. For even though King Fortinbras was conquered and vanquished in a judicious battle, in a trial by ordeal by King Hamlet, and thereby had to give up, concede his rights to the land of Denmark, Shakespeare shows that [th]is battle for unconcealment is unending, that [th]is ordeal never ends.\(^97\)

[36] Shakespeare’s plays are riddled with gloves, almost with as many running away from as accepting the challenge. At the end of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* we

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\(^95\) Cf. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, Scene ii.27.
\(^97\) Although Shakespeare would easily have recognized that the corrupt tastes of men have not changed much since he made his plays to accommodate this taste for corruption, it is nevertheless remarkable that what we consider to be Shakespeare’s major plays have all characters which by medieval standards, according to all knightly virtues of honour and honesty, generosity and courtesy, would be considered, and by Shakespeare are explicitly called, ‘cowards.’ In [th]is Gallery of Cowardice, where none would be represented did they not have something to hide, did they not give the impression or apperception of Being hidden, ranks, in Shakespeare’s theatre, first among equals: Falstaff, Hamlet, Iago, Macbeth, Romeo and Edmund. For by Medieval standards, perhaps by any, Falstaff, Hamlet, Iago, Macbeth, Romeo and Edmund, are all cowards, have all earned the right to be called ‘cowards.’ It is astonishing to notice how many times the words ‘coward’ or ‘cowardice’ may be expressed by Shakespeare without Harold Bloom being able to notice that it is not meant as a superlative, but actually meant to deride, belittle, to mock the fat man in front of his audience. Notice especially Mr. Bloom’s praise of Falstaff and Hamlet as gods and immortals, how he praises Falstaff as ‘the eternal god of my imaginings,’ identifies Hamlet’s influence as only second to Jesus. [Bloom, *Shakespeare – The Invention of the Human*, p. xxi].
witness that Laertes and Hamlet are invited to a fenceplay before the King, where the winner will not gain the right to be unconcealed and the loser have it taken away, but, as this is play and not truly an ordeal, the winner will have a precious pearl dropped into his cup of wine, as King Claudius says, ‘Richer than that which four successive Kings/ In Denmark’s crown has worn.’ On [th]is false occasion we shall notice that what appears as the grand finale of Shakespeare’s Hamlet, is not a true duel of unconcealment, as we so often have seen culminate Shakespeare’s plays, like the true battle between Edmund and Edgar at the end of King Lear, the duel between Macduff and Macbeth closing Macbeth. So unlike Chaucer’s A Knight’s Tale and Shakespeare’s own The Two Noble Kinsmen, Hamlet does not only end with play, but with foul play, where all the false players are finally undone by their own machinations. What irony is not intended by Shakespeare in the final act when he lets Hamlet, the anti-Knight be killed in a mock duel. For not only are Queen Gertrude and King Claudius, false, but Hamlet equally appears falsely. When Hamlet appears to be mad, the audience is almost in as much disruption as Ophelia, who cannot decide if Hamlet fakes - a suitable word in this fenceplay - that he loves her or if he fakes that he does not. After the tragic death of Ophelia, Hamlet announces to her brother Laertes that he was truly in love. However, there cannot be found one next to Ophelia’s grave who does not believe he speaks falsely, as Queen Gertrude and King Claudius exclaim seeing the bewildered lover, ‘He is Mad,’ ‘This is … madness,’ which he perhaps still fakes.

[37] To follow the logic of Hamlet: in a play where the main character is an anti-knight it is almost too obvious that the play itself should end with an anti-duel.

98 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act V, Scene ii.274.  
That Hamlet is meant to be experienced as the personification of an anti-knight is made unambiguously clear when Shakespeare gives him, like a child, leave to deny responsibility for all his actions. To Aristotle, Hamlet would certainly have looked more like a passionate woman than a reasonable man. This opinion is not easy to deny when we hear Hamlet simultaneously renounce all responsibility and all honour by confessing to Laertes before the fenceplay begins, that it was not-Hamlet who wronged Laertes, who killed his father Polonius, the Kings Chamberlain, and drove Polonius’ daughter and Laertes’ sister, the fair Ophelia, to her death.\footnote{Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act IV, Scene vii.164.} For Hamlet claims that Hamlet had been taken away from Hamlet by madness, and that which in ecstasy acted was not-him. How cowardly does not Hamlet make non-Hamlet responsible for something he could not possibly have done. Thus to renounce one’s actions, leaves, as it were, not only the man without spine, but all his actions scattered in the open were they no longer belong to him, but to that which he in ecstasy claims to have been possessed by. But how deep will not the Being of this being sink when it becomes known that the ecstasy, which brings everything [without subject] to light, was merely pretended, that he directed his performance; his gait, his gestures, his trembles, his jests, his laughter, his play, much like a director from behind the scene, a director who finally shows no other desire than to dissociate himself from the Company of all his players. We should not hold Hamlet’s renunciation against him. For when he disowns his own actions, he certainly creates the false but sublime apperception of that which dissociates its self from its appearance, the apperception of Being kept in the dark, hidden away from everything men may properly see. In this light it comes to mind that Foucault observes that the birth of the [modern] prison and the birth of [modern]
subjectivity occur at the same time. We could almost say that by disowning his own actions, and leaving everything, himself completely in the dark, Hamlet may have anticipated [th]is confluence. Not that Shakespeare is unaware of it, for he lets Hamlet declare in mock anguish, ‘Denmark’s a prison.’ To which Rosencrantz replies in jest, ‘Then the world is one.’ One should not from this exchange falsely draw the hasty conclusion that Shakespeare is a hermetic, which he certainly shows himself not to be when he lets Hamlet, from within the prison cell of subjectivity, admire the free man as he passes by outside. When Hamlet catches a glimpse of Prince Fortinbras on his way to Poland to fight for an eggshell, Hamlet certainly displays a desire to break away and out into the open, to take part in the battle for that which unconceal all beings to all, namely nothing. But, as if to prove a point, for Hamlet there is no escape from the dungeon of subjectivity except through death. Certainly, Shakespeare would have destroyed this character much earlier, as easily as Hamlet destroys his ideals, had he not so effortlessly and forcefully produced the apperception of the Being of beings, convinced the audience that everything they see before them, is.

In the end Hamlet gets more than it deserves, a true end to a false play. For who enters at the end, when Hamlet is dying, to reestablish true order and harmony, but the shining knight on his white horse, Prince Fortinbras of Norway, a true fort in bras. Encountering the false battlefield within the castle, Prince Fortinbras signals the reestablishment of true ideals of unconcealment, but more

102 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II, Scene ii.248.
103 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act IV, Scene v.53.
104 Through the comparable failure of his first plays, Shakespeare must certainly have experienced that the ontological difference easily escapes a true presentation. For it is Hamlet’s false self-[re]presentation, which convinces everyone except King Claudius, that makes the spectator infer the apperception of what is [true], from the perception of what is false.
so, true lives, when he is given the keys to the Danish kingdom by the dying Hamlet himself.\textsuperscript{105} For when all are dead, and there is nothing rotten in Denmark alive, on the dung of [th]is corruption, the death of the Prince of Denmark and the entrance of the Prince of Norway signal the sprout of better, perhaps \textit{truer} times to come. As Prince Fortinbras looks upon the dead lying in the Hall at Elsinore Castle: King Claudius, Queen Gertrude, Lord Laertes and Prince Hamlet, he says, ‘Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this, Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.’\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{105} Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act V, Scene ii.355-358.

\textsuperscript{106} Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act V, Scene ii.402. Having reached [th]is end, one should perhaps offer a few reflections on why \textit{Hamlet} needed to end so tragically. It is perhaps opportune to make a note on the difference between \textit{reading} beings and the Being of beings. For [th]is purpose no man is better fitted than Hamlet, who excels in the one art as much as he neglects the other. Unlike any other character in any of Shakespeare’s plays, Hamlet has the cunning, the ability to read minds, to read other beings as easily as other people read books, to know what the other is thinking \textit{before} they have uttered a word. Hamlet’s ability to study people’s physiognomies as if they were printed, is for example evidenced when he says to Guildenstern, ‘You were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks.’ [Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act II, Scene ii.285. Emphasis added.] More than any other character, Hamlet relates to the other, and this is perhaps one, if not the only, way in which Hamlet may resembles his author, who knows the mind of all his character’s \textit{before} they have uttered a word. As [th]is reader says to Guildenstern, ‘Man delights not me; nor woman neither, though by your \textit{smiling} you seem to say so.’ [\textit{Hamlet}, Act II, Scene ii.317.] When Ophelia \textit{returns} his loves letters, the profound [Hamlet] has no passion to unconceal. He has no other desire than to reveal the mind of the other, when he says, ‘Ha, ha! Are you honest?’ [\textit{Hamlet}, Act III, Scene i.103] But in the exchange that follows the performance of \textit{The Mousetrap}, Ophelia finds time to ridicule his profundities. Making an ironic remark on his powers of exposition, she says, ‘You are as good as a \textit{chorus}, my lord.’ [Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act III, Scene ii.252-253. Emphasis added.] But still, as Hamlet desires \textit{to be} the more profound intellect, \textit{to be} recognized as the most subtle wit, he seems compelled to emphasize that what he reads is \textit{not} words, but \textit{looks}, \textit{smiles}, \textit{bodies}. As he replies to Ophelia, ‘I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the \textit{puppets} dallying.’ [\textit{Hamlet}, Act III, Scene ii.252-253. Emphasis added.] After \textit{The Mousetrap}, nothing is more natural than that there should appear a fellow \textit{reader} to interpret King Claudius’s face. For Hamlet asks Horatio and all spectators alike, ‘Didst perceive?’ [\textit{Hamlet}, Act III, Scene ii.293. Emphasis added.] Evidently, unlike reading books, there is not much pleasure in reading people alone, neither to keep your readings to yourself. And when King Claudius frankly asks Hamlet if he knows the \textit{purposes} they have for sending him away, he answers by using a metaphor that perhaps betrays his conceit as the \textit{reader} above all readers, ‘I see a cherub that sees them.’ [\textit{Hamlet}, Act IV, Scene ii.47-48.] The \textit{cherub} is an angel of knowledge, number two in \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy} of Dionysius, only surpassed in glory by the \textit{seraph}, the angel of love. And, as St. Thomas comments on the angels in \textit{Truth}, ‘According to Dionysius, higher angels, such as the Cherubim, have higher and more universal knowledge. Lower angels have only particular and inferior knowledge. [Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Truth}, Question Eight, ‘The Knowledge of Angels,’ Article X, p. 367.] Having perceived so much, it never discontinues to baffle, that he does so little and so late. Only after Prince Hamlet of Denmark meets Prince Fortinbras of Norway, do we understand why Hamlet knew so much and did so little. It is not ‘some craven scruple/Of thinking too precisely on th’ even’, but ‘besial oblivion.’ [\textit{Hamlet}, Act IV, Scene iv.40. Emphasis added.] For even if Hamlet is an excellent reader of \textit{[human] beings}, he is hardly able to apperceive the \textit{Being of beings}, to uncover that \textit{plot} which Prince Fortinbras and his twenty thousand men are willing to die for, [\textit{Hamlet}, Act IV, Scene v.61. Emphasis added.] that \textit{place} which, like any Thermophylae, unconceals all \textit{living...}}
The True Production of Being

and dying beings to all. Unlike many Romans mentioned by Cicero in The Nature of the Gods, unlike almost any Greek in Homer’s Iliad, Hamlet is incapable of reading any of the signs given. For whether a bird flies or falls, whether a cock cries or a crow crows, it means nothing to Hamlet. As is the case when Hamlet is preparing for the duel with Laertes, and discussing with Horatio which of the two men is the most capable, Horatio seems content to let his friend proceed with the duello, saying, ‘Nay, good my lord’ - but then there appear something to contradict his validation: a sparrow falls to the ground. [Hamlet, Act V, Scene ii.215.] Certainly, Horatio stares or shivers, whereas Hamlet calmly says to his scholarly friend, ‘It is but foolery, but it is such a kind of gain/-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.’ [Hamlet, Act V, Scene ii. 216.] And Horatio, the scholar of Wittenberg, knowing how easily a lie - if not pseudos - may save a man’s life, says, ‘If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will/forestall their repair hither and say you are not fit.’ [Hamlet, Act V, Scene ii.218-219.] But Hamlet replies as if Cicero was allowed, like a ventriloquist, to speak sarcastically through him, ‘Not a whit, we defy augury. There is a special/providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,/‘tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now;/ if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is/ all. Since no man of aught he leaves know, what/ is’t to leave betime’s? Let it be.’ [Hamlet, Act V, Scene ii.220-225.] It would not take a scholar like Horatio to interpret [th]is sign, to perceive what is unconcealed, nor to understand that Shakespeare had anticipated its revelation from the beginning. For already in the opening of the play, when speaking of what the unconcealment of the ghost of King Hamlet bodes, Horatio, an able interpreter of signs who shows himself a worthy student of history, speaks of the end of a great man, when he suggests, ‘A little ere the mightiest Julius fell./The graves stood tenantless.’[Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I, Scene i.114-115.] Undoubtedly, Hamlet reads beings as acutely as he is numb to reading the Being of beings, which is like a foreign language to him. The paradox is, however, that Shakespeare, through [th]is neglect has produced the most profound apperception of that which is [neglected], what is concealed, namely the Being of beings. For that which is neglected within the play is observed within the theatre, that which dies at the hands of the player is resurrected by the audience who give live to that which is ignored, that which otherwise would suffer oblivion. For, as Shakespeare very well knows, there is no Being without the spectator.
§6.0 The History of What is False
§6.1 The Topos of What is False
§6.2 The Function of What is False
§6.3 The Paradox of What is False

I intend to explore The False Production of Being in this chapter, by focusing almost entirely on the concrete production of the negative ontological difference in Shakespeare’s plays. In doing so, we will engage, historically and systematically, with those who before us have caught a glimpse of this false production of the Being of beings. Thus we hope to pay homage to tradition, not by slavishly or mechanically repeating it, but by allegorically developing the work that previous philosophers have left undone. We shall approach The False Production of Being from two different angles, thus making sure that our concrete considerations will not be without theory, and our abstract considerations will not be without ground or lack the support of experience. For even the grandest sketches of architecture, as for example the drawings of Piranesi, often fail to impress us if its buildings are not already erected, if the construction is not already there to be admired. It is therefore fortunate for the concrete display of The False Production of Being, that a building already exists, Shakespeare’s Theatre. The attraction of this theatre is hardly Juliet’s balcony, nor Hamlet’s Castle. Neither is it the Caesarean Tower of Trinovantum, where King Richard II is assassinated. Albeit such places, in Verona, Helsingør and London, may capture the historical
imagination, it will not hold the spectator for long, if Shakespeare’s theatre did not
give eyes, voice and hands to what we apperceive as more than what they carry
forth, the ontological contradiction, the Being of beings, which is nowhere more
effectively produced than through Shakespeare’s false production of Being. It is
important for us to notice how Shakespeare lets his characters recognize the false
by name. However, we are not primarily concerned with opinions about false
appearances, opinions or judgments about what is false, but the function of what is
false. We will progress from the rather superficial deliberation on the meaning or
topos of what is false to the function of what is false, before we finally expose the
interplay, even the contradiction of meaning and function, to catch a glimpse of the
paradoxical production of Being.

§6.0 The History of What is False

[2] Th[is is the most abstract part of [th]is chapter, where we do not intend to
paint the landscape, not even map out the terrain, but proceed to glide into orbit,
hoping that the reader will appreciate the sense of detail when we return to the
concrete exposition. Concerning the meaning of what is false, there are many
positions, running from Plato, Aristotle, Dionysius, Thomas, Kant, Nietzsche, to
Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Russell. It is obvious that some of these positions
disregard or neglect what is false and some emphasize the eradicable impression of
the existence of what is false, some focus on what is essential and some on what is
inessential, nowhere more clearly than in the beginning of this philosophical
tradition, where, in Plato’s Sophist, the stranger, an anonymous guest who is
believed to personify Plato himself, states the paradox that ‘What is not in some
The False Production of Being

Way is and what is in some way is not.\(^1\) Aristotle, who traditionally is believed to be Plato’s student, but whom scholars argue was only acquainted with Plato’s philosophy through hearsay,\(^2\) is the first in a long scientific tradition, which extends to this day, in which the false is neglected almost once and for all, and nowhere is this neglect more forcefully expressed than when Aristotle, in straight opposition to Plato, says, *the ‘false … does not exist.*\(^3\) If we are to immediately grasp the essential and inessential fronts in the battle for the concept of what *is* [false], we need to see that in the history of philosophy, one Neoplatonic position, which begins with Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* if not with Parmenides’ poetry, totally discards what *is* false. The influence of this tradition, which runs from Parmenides through the philosophies of Aristotle, Augustine and Plotinus, is contradicted by another tradition, which we will call Platonic. Beginning with Plato’s *Sophist,* \[th\]is competing tradition, which runs through Pseudo-Dionysius to Thomas, Shakespeare and Heidegger, finds it impossible to deny *that* the false in some way *is.*\(^4\)

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\(^2\) See Friedrich Solmsen’s sharp differentiation between the Platonic art of ‘dialectical diaeresis’, which aims at definition, and Aristotle’s ‘dialectical syllogism’ which proceeds *from* definition, on the ground on a definition already found to be established by *endoxa,* the opinions of the best or the many. See, Friedrich Solmsen, ‘Dialectic without the Forms,’ in *Aristotle on Dialectic,* ed. G. E. L. Owen, p. 57. See also Paul Woodruff’s remarks on the lack of influence exerted by Plato’s theory of mimesis in *Republic* on Aristotle’s use of *mimesis* in *Poetics.* [Woodruff, ‘Aristotle on Mimesis,’ in *Essays on Aristotle’s Poetics,* ed. A. O. Rorty, p. 74-75].

\(^3\) Aristotle simply says, ‘We call things false … either because they themselves do not exist, or because the appearance which results from them is that of something that does not exist.’ [Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* Book VI, 1024b24-26].

\(^4\) The philosophy of Pseudo-Dionysius, who knows both Plato and Aristotle, and in many ways marks the end of antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages, signals at the same time the end of the philosophies of the ancient world and the beginning of the philosophies which are to carry the Christian world all the way to the Renaissance. Pseudo-Dionysius is perhaps the major, at least the most commonly read Christian Philosopher of the Middle Ages except Augustine, as is witnessed by for example the numerous references to Dionysius by St. Thomas who may opt for either of the two positions. For as clearly as Pseudo-Dionysius affirms that what is not *is,* Augustine holds on to the Neoplatonic view that what is not is *not.* The common view is to identify Pseudo-Dionysius as a Neoplatonic philosopher. If this was true, the answer to whether or not Dionysius identified the false with Being would of course be self-evident, for *if* he did follow or adhere to the position of Plotinus, as is expressed in the inspired *Enneads,* he would have to assert that only *what*
Aristotle speaks, in Poetics, of ‘the art of framing lies,’ meaning the paralogism, the [false] inference from what is to what is not, saying in effect that this inference gives us a sense of depth, a more profound sense of Being.\textsuperscript{5} Again we have, already in Aristotle, recognized the premature, and perhaps only half-hearted, understanding of the false production of Being, Aristotle’s reference appearing no more clear than a god giving indications through bird-song or the colour of the sky at sunrise. Obviously, what Aristotle suggests but does not follow up except in a concealed manner, is a more profound sense of Being produced through the presentation of what is false. It is quite remarkable that Aristotle’s reference in the Poetics is to a book where one man does not only speak falsely, but appears falsely at the same time, not only speaks of what is not, but also appears as what he is not. More remarkable still is that the one whom he speaks falsely of is himself, who does not appear, but remains hidden. It is, of course, paradoxical, that the Greeks are considered to be visual people,\textsuperscript{6} when their major poet, the one who educated the whole of Greece, is said to have been, ‘a blind man.’ For as is obvious, what Plato could have called the father of the art of appearance-making,\textsuperscript{7} the father of making what is not appear [to be],\textsuperscript{8} was indeed, as both Aristotle and

\textsuperscript{5} Aristotle, Poetics, 1460b20.

\textsuperscript{6} Heidegger, Parmenides, p. 145.

\textsuperscript{7} Cf. Plato, Republic, Book II, 377d, Plato, Republic, Book X, 598d, Republic, Book X, 606e.

\textsuperscript{8} Plato, Sophist, 236c-237a and 265b-268d.
Plato agrees, Homer, of whom Aristotle says, ‘Homer, more than any other has taught the rest of us the art of framing lies in the right way. I mean the use of paralogism. Whenever, if A is or happens, a consequent, B, is or happens, men’s notion is that, if the B is, the A also is – but that is a false conclusion.’

As we will attempt to offer an exposition of what Aristotle says, and what is said is nothing but a fragment, it is perhaps only right that we should give an ear to what he says in extenso.

‘Accordingly, if A is untrue, but there is something else, that on the assumption of its truth follows as its consequent, the right thing then is to add on the B. Just because we know the truth of the consequent, we are in our own minds led on to the erroneous inference of the truth of the antecedent. Here is an instance, from the Bath-story in the Odyssey.’

For us it is only important to say that the paralogism, the false inference which Aristotle is speaking of is this, the false inference, or the inference to what is false, made by Penelope in the presence of Odysseus whom she does not recognize and who does not reveal his identity, but appears as a stranger telling the story of how he, as the nameless brother of Idomeneus, who was not present at his arrival, had to welcome Odysseus to his palace at Amnisus where Odysseus was forced to seek shelter for his men and his ship for 12 days.

The stranger is finally able to put an end to Penelope’s doubt when she falsely infers that the man in front of her knew Odysseus as he entered Amnisus to seek shelter from the winds. This is the kind of paralogism Aristotle has in mind when he indicates that Homer produces the inference to something that is not from something that is. But, what Aristotle fails to see, is that the means by which

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Odysseus successfully produces the false impression of or inference to the existence of a being, is the same which, aimed at the reader, produces the apperception of the Beings of beings. For, to the reader, the difference between what is said [to the character] and what is shown [to the reader], what is said and what is not, truly appears so that whereas Odysseus presentation appears to have an object that exists for Penelope, indeed, it has none, a difference perceived by the spectator but not the character. Penelope gets falsely rid of her doubts by testing the stranger, the disguised Odysseus who, cunningly, is testing the faithfulness of his wife. What Penelope in effect is thinking, although wrongly, is [th]is.

[6] What makes Aristotle’s approach insufficient for a true Poetics, is that the poet is not Odysseus but Homer. Aristotle takes Odysseus to be the poet and Penelope to be the reader, whereas in fact, Homer is the poet and I am the reader, and a poetics is made to persuade the reader and not the character about the Being of [th]is being. This mistake shows truly the insufficiency of Aristotle’s approach in Poetics, for he only sees how the false impression of the existence of another being is produced, but not that through this impression of what is but is not, through the perception of what is untrue, follows the apperception of [th]is, which appears to not have these qualities, the Being of beings. [Th]is, the Being of beings is produced, not to Penelope, but to the reader, to you and me. Which is why you and I may cry when reading these lies, this presentation of what does not exist, for we do, for to us, both Odysseus and Penelope appear to be, so much more, as Odysseus is concealed to Penelope or Penelope appears to listen to a stranger who she does not believe until he shows awareness of the sign of her love she gave to Odysseus before he sailed off and away twenty years ago.
And if this sign of a beloved could mean so much to her, that it could make his story appear to be true, how much more would not his presence. And so it might be true that the father of all lies, and all rhetoric, is Odysseus, and the father of Odysseus, Homer. And hence Homer is, as suggested by Plato in the Republic, the father of all lies. But, as much as Plato speaks derogatory of the man who invented the art of lying, the art of making what is not appear to be, we are more likely to praise the one who invented the art of producing the Being of beings, in much the same way we would never blame Shakespeare for being immoral, as, for example, Doctor Johnson does in his introduction to the 1765 edition of his works, for being able to produce the false apperception of the same, the Being of beings.

But again, let’s have a closer look at the paralogism of Penelope, this fallacious inference, which is, as we have said, an inference from what is to what is not, reminding the reader yet again, that Aristotle does never fully understand or shows any sign of understanding that the perception of what is not produces, to the reader, the apperception of what is. Penelope’s paralogism: [Premise 1] If this stranger truly entertained my husband Odysseus twenty years ago at his palace at Amnisus on the Island of Crete, he must know what Odysseus was wearing. [Premise 2] This stranger knows that Odysseus was wearing a thick, double purple cloak and the bright brooch I gave to him. [And from these two true premises the

12 For implication that Homer is the father of all lies, see Plato, Republic, Book II, 377d, where Socrates catches Homer lying about the gods when he asserts that the gods are capable of lying. For if it was true it should not be said, or if said, as Socrates encourages his listeners and Plato his readers, it should be said only to a few, and kept from the many. For the basis of the opinion that Odysseus is the father of rhetoric, and Homer the father of Odysseus, see the first book of The Iliad, where Odysseus shows that whereas one may command one’s inferiors to war, one has to persuade one’s equals.

fallacious inference is made to the *false conclusion:* This stranger did truly entertain my husband at his - brother’s - palace 20 years ago.\(^{14}\)

[9] Or: *If* this stranger entertained my husband at his palace at Amnisus, he must know what he was wearing. This stranger knows what Odysseus was wearing. Hence it follows, the fallacious inference is made, that this stranger entertained my husband at his palace. This is a fallacious inference, an inference from a being that is, i.e. the brooch on Odysseus cloak, to a being that is not, Odysseus’ host whom she believes is sitting in front of her. For even though Penelope thinks that she knows *what* this person that is sitting in front of her, facing her, is, she does not.\(^{15}\) What Aristotle fails to mention is that what is accomplished through this presentation, what Homer forces the reader imperceptibly to do, is to make an inference from Penelope’s *true* recognition of the brooch, to her false judgment that the man she’s facing was Odysseus host. But more fundamentally, the reader makes the inference from this *misperception* to the apperception of the ontological contradiction, the concealed, the imperceptible Being of *[th]is* being, which it is now almost impossible to deny.

[10] As *scientists* we need to be aware that we are likely to be prejudiced against what is false. As *good* scientists we need to discard these prejudices. Clearly, one can understand a tradition more easily by what it avoids. It is obvious that our tradition, the tradition of modern philosophy ranging from Descartes, through Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, and down to the 20\(^{th}\) century of Wittgenstein, Russell and beyond, there is almost not a word about what *is* false. If we discard of our

\(^{14}\) Implied is the fallacious premise: Only my husband could possibly remember/know what he was wearing 20 years ago.

\(^{15}\) Homer, *Odyssey*, Book XIX, 164-260, pp. 289-293.
own prejudices about the false as easily as our own philosophical tradition has
thrown away the false after it has been identified, we will realize that in keeping
what is false, we have kept something that remains invaluable to man. For even
though one may immediately remove all false perceptions/apperceptions, it is
impossible to remove that which immediately makes these
perceptions/apperceptions, singularly false. And whereas one may discard what is
false one cannot discard that which makes these perceptions/apperceptions false
without being left with nothing.

[11] There are many ways to express what is false, and before we consider the
philosophers that support our argument and those against it, we should perhaps
already now enumerate some of the different ways we may encounter what is false.
But before we do, we should say that the false would not produce a sense of Being,
the profound apperception of what is, if our lives were not false, if we were not
accustomed to Being false. For we have, hold, bear or bring forward; false
appearances, as Nietzsche says, to please our neighbours;\textsuperscript{16} false opinions, as
Aristotle says the many have of poetry;\textsuperscript{17} false perceptions of what is sensible,
according to Descartes’ methodical gaze,\textsuperscript{18} false hopes about the future denounced
by Löwith in \textit{Meaning in History};\textsuperscript{19} false apperceptions of our selves and our souls,
according to Kant,\textsuperscript{20} false interpretations of hieroglyphs as a pure and perfect
picture-language, as identified by Eco\textsuperscript{21} and long before him by the German

\textsuperscript{16} Nietzsche, \textit{Untimely Meditations}, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator,’ p. 127.
\textsuperscript{17} Aristotle, \textit{Poetics}, 1447b12-15.
\textsuperscript{18} Descartes, \textit{Discourse on Method (and Related Writings)}, Part 4, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{19} Löwith, \textit{Meaning in History}, 1949.
\textsuperscript{21} Eco, \textit{The Search of the Perfect Language}, ‘Chapter 7, The Perfect Language of Images,’ pp. 144-177.
emblem scholar Albrecht Schöne.\textsuperscript{22} Finally, we may carry false names, as the author of \textit{The Mystical Theology} who stole his name from Dionysius, the Greek judge who was converted by Paul at Aeropagos,\textsuperscript{23} and we may have false notions about the decadence of the future and the Golden Age of the past as Plato does in \textit{Theaetetus} or, we may dream of the perfectibility of the future and abhor the decadence of the past as Hegel does in his \textit{Phenomenology}, where the beginning is truly nothing and the end \textit{is} all.\textsuperscript{24}

[12] We will speak of that which is excluded from philosophy, speak of what is false, and [th]is we shall do with one aim only, that is, to later demonstrate the creative and poetic use of what \textit{is} false in the production of Being. We shall not object when Heidegger says that the understanding of truth as \textit{adequatio}, the correspondence of statements or thoughts to something that is already given or positive, leads to the neglect of the Being of beings,\textsuperscript{25} that the concept of truth as \textit{adequatio} or \textit{homoiosis} leads to a certain kind of blindness, which Heidegger speak of as the withdrawal of Being.\textsuperscript{26} One does no longer understand that there would be nothing given, nothing \textit{true}, was it not \textit{first} unconcealed. What Heidegger believes is neglected through the understanding of truth as \textit{adequatio} is that beings are \textit{first} unconcealed. But even though we agree with Heidegger so far, we are

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{22} Albrecht Schöne, \textit{Albrecht, Emblematic und Drama im Zeitalter des Barock}, 1968.

\textsuperscript{23} We could, for that matter, mention ‘Plato’ who is only recognized by the nickname he acquired as a wrestling champion, for ‘platon’ simply means ‘broad,’ and hardly anyone knows today the aristocrat by his true name. However, it may be, if we are to follow Socrates’ argument in \textit{Cratylus}, that since Plato was \textit{truly} broad, he was the incarnation of the idea ‘broad,’ which, more than anything, was his true name. For true is, as is Socrates argument towards the conclusion of \textit{Symposium}, only what is universal, never the singular that may stand out as irreplaceable.


\textsuperscript{25} Cf. The ‘Introduction’ to \textit{Being and Time}, where Heidegger says, ‘everything depends on staying clear of any concept of truth construed in the sense of ‘correspondence’ or ‘accordance’ [\textit{Übereinstimmung}], [Heidegger, \textit{Being and Time}, ‘Introduction,’ in \textit{Basic Writings}, p. 79]

\textsuperscript{26} Cf. Section 44 in \textit{Being and Time} where Heidegger exposes ‘the derivativeness of the traditional concept of truth.’ [Heidegger, \textit{Being and Time}, ‘Section 44: Da-sein, Disclosedness, and Truth,’ S.213/p.197. Emphasis added].
\end{footnotesize}
forced to call attention to that he is himself guilty of neglecting *The False Production of Being*. We consider the philosophical neglect of what is false, where ‘false’ is, most generally, understood in an epistemological sense, as that which is inadequate to my perceptions/apperceptions, as a neglect of the question of Being. In Heidegger’s case, however, we consider it as a neglect of the concealed mode of Being.

[13] There has throughout the history of philosophy been a general neglect of what *is* false. We could easily name the exceptions that comes to mind, the first being Plato’s *Sophist*, the second, Aristotle’s reference to Homer in *Poetics* and his almost awesome classification of falsity in *Metaphysics*.27 Surprisingly however, and completely contrary to our first impression, Aristotle’s classification of falsity is the clearest example of the neglect of what *is* false. We discover to our astonishment that the neglect of what *is* false starts with the classification of falsity in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Similarly, his suggestive, elliptical reference to the art of framing lies in Homer’s *Odyssey* is also an example, contrary to what one would first be inclined to believe, of such a neglect of what *is* false.28 For Aristotle’s classification of what is false fails to indicate that also the false gives us an apperception of what *is*. Aristotle does not pose the problem of falsity, but rather presents an argument, in *Metaphysics*, to *avoid* the problem of what *is* false by simply saying that the ‘false … does *not* exist.’29 As we shall see, nothing could be further from the truth than saying that the false does not exist. And, we shall sum up our defence, by letting St. Thomas, who appear to perpetuate the Aristotelian

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tradition, sum up the position we are speaking against, when he says that nothing that is, is entirely false.\footnote{Cf. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Truth}, Question 1, Article 1 and Article 10.}

[14] Having noted the philosophical neglect of what is false, we should look at the ways in which Shakespeare uses what is false to produce a more profound sense of Being. Perhaps we should open with \textit{King Lear}, where the false Edmund makes the true Edgar flee without reason from his father Gloucester, thus confirming the false suspicion thrown on him by his half-brother [Edmund].\footnote{Shakespeare, \textit{King Lear}, Act I, Scene ii.} It is obvious to see that just like Homer, Shakespeare knows the art of framing lies. For instance, in the case of Gloucester, what is important is not only Gloucester’s inference from what is true to what is not true, but the spectator’s inference from what is not true to what is [true]. From the events that begin the action of the subplot in \textit{King Lear}, we can easily recognize and formalize the following invalid syllogism, that is, a syllogism from what is true to what is false. It is the following syllogism that persuades Gloucester, in the opening acts of \textit{King Lear}, to pursue a baseless course of action. For the changes in the fates and fortunes of Gloucester and his son Edgar are based on nothing, an incident that never occurred. And this is what Gloucester is led to think about his own son, [Premise 1:] \textit{If} Edgar is guilty of attacking Edmund and \textit{if} Edgar is guilty of conspiring to kill his own father, Edgar will run away. [Premise 2:] Edgar runs away. [Conclusion:] Edgar is guilty of attacking Edmund and of conspiring to kill his father. But what is again more important than the character’s perception of what is not [true], is the spectator’s effortless inference to what is [true]. For, as we have said, and will continue to say
again and again, from the character’s perception of what is untrue, the spectator is made spontaneously to infer to the apperception of what is true.

[15] Here again we see how our ways depart from Aristotle, how this poetics differs from that of Aristotle, how this poetics goes one step beyond, indeed that this poetics is not a poetics of beings, that affirms or denies the existence of beings, but The Poetics of Being. For whereas Aristotle is concerned with the character’s inference from what is true to what is not true, we are focused on another, a different paralogism, the spectator’s false inference from what is not true to what is true. It is therefore obvious that we take a step beyond Aristotle’s Poetics.

From what has been said it is also obvious that this poetics does not contradict the poetics of Aristotle, does not confront or only follow in the footsteps of Aristotle, but takes Aristotle’s Poetics one step further. But perhaps it is possible that this next step was already taken by Aristotle himself in the Second Book of the Poetics, which to this day remains unknown and unread, in which many believe that, to this day, lies buried his explication of the concept and the theatrical effect of catharsis.

[16] We will not proceed to show how effective the false is in the production of the Being of beings without assistance. The philosophers, from whom we will find direction by elucidating the effect of what they generally examined in isolation, are the following; Plato, Aristotle, Pseudo-Dionysius, Thomas, Nietzsche, Heidegger. Through the assistance of these philosophers we will not only understand what is false, which they considered discretely, but more so, that the effect of any false presentation is to produce the emphatic apperception of the Being of beings. Hence we will easily, not only recognize but understand the effect of Being produced by
Shakespeare in plays as different as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. For through the false self-apperception of Sly as the Lord, through Ophelia’s false perception of Hamlet as mad and through Lord Gloucester’s false apperception of Edgar as Tom-a-Bedlam, all these men are given life, and conversely, if these men were not false, we believe they would hardly be considered to be at all.

[17] In the history of philosophy there are, to my knowledge, only four philosophers who inquire into or present falsity without prejudice and thinks philosophically about what *is* false, that is, they do not take what *is* false for granted. They are, if you will, in historical order, Plato, Thomas, Nietzsche, Heidegger. Pseudo-Dionysius is by all considered a theologian, and Aristotle does not pose the problem of falsity, but rather presents an argument in *Metaphysics* to avoid the problem of what *is* false by simply saying that the ‘false … does not exist.’ As we shall see, nothing is further from the truth than saying that the false does not exist. It is perhaps important to know that of the works on falsity which were available and published or made public by the authors themselves, we would have to take away the most recent works, for Heidegger does only treat falsity, the problem of what is false, at any depth or length in his lectures on *Parmenides*, which were not published until after his death, in 1982, but held in Freiburg as early as the winter semester of 1942/43. Nietzsche’s unprejudiced presentation and attempt to think what *is* false, which Heidegger, in his lectures on *Nietzsche*, considers to be an extremely important essay, ‘On truth and Lies in a Nonmoral

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33 *Parmenides* is as a whole is Heidegger’s most concrete exposition of what is true and false - *aletheia* and *pseudos* - to the experience of the Greeks belonging to pre-Pleatonic culture.
Sense,' remained similarly unpublished in Nietzsche’s lifetime and was not made available until 1903 from the publication of Nachlass in 1903/1920. The third to present the problem of what is false is St. Thomas, who did not even find time to write a book on the issue, but, rather tellingly, presented the problem of what is false in his lectures on Truth. The problem of what is false is addressed in what looks more like notes than proper lectures. The scholastic style of the lectures is mirrored in the style of the transcription, which although having the pleasant form of always including the thesis he is speaking against, which rhetorically, or if you will, politely, always gives the first argument to its opponent, it is nonetheless true that these series of lectures, conducted at the Universities of Paris and Cologne, cannot match the beauty of St. Thomas’ On Being and Essence where the singularity of what is false is [also] expressed. The only complete treatment of what is false is indeed Plato’s Sophist, which speaks for itself.

[18] It is possible to see Nietzsche’s philosophy as a first intimation of an understanding of the false production of Being, although this is only half the truth, for nowhere is the false production of Being emphasized more emphatically than in

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35 See Introduction and Notes on Texts by Daniel Breazeale, pp. lvi and lii, in Nietzsche, Philosophy and Truth - Selections from the Notebooks of the Early 1870s. It should perhaps be added that this essay remained, like so much of Nietzsche's writings, not only unpublished, but unfinished.
37 Thomas Aquinas, On Being and Essence, in Selected Writings, pp. 30-49. The editor and translator of St. Thomas’ Selected Writings, Ralph McInerny says of De Veritate, ‘Although the written product is far from being a transcript of the public disputations, its literary form bears the impress of its origin. A question, a proposed answer and the difficulties to that answer. The master must not only respond to those objections but develop arguments on behalf of his own position. This was the genre Thomas adapted to his Summa Theologicae. The so-called Disputed Question on Truth of Thomas that has come down to us is a collection of some twenty-nine such disputations. What they certainly have in common is the time and place of their production: Paris, during the three years Thomas’s first stint as a regent master, 1256-9.’ Ralph McInerny, in, Thomas Aquinas, Selected Writings, p. 163.
Plato’s *Sophist*. Nevertheless, Nietzsche speaks of the uses of falsity in the struggle for life. To Nietzsche, all truths are not only untruths, that is, basically illusions, but the false, even the lie is itself, first to most people and then to the few - as in his early days he only considered the aristocrats among us capable of truth, he later deemed only the highborn capable of being false - more productive of life than what is merely true. To Nietzsche, the true does even speak against life, against Being. Therefore, the neglect of what *is* false is understood as a neglect of Being. For, according to Nietzsche, why would anyone be true, why would there be an ideal of truth if secrets, disguises and lies, further man’s life. It would be a sin, an offence against Being, if false appearances and false statements produce life in abundance, while truth cuts life short. Taking this position, Nietzsche involuntarily and unknowingly reiterates Falstaff’s announcements in *Henry IV, Part I*. Falstaff would rather pretend to be dead on the battlefield to save his life than to die honourably as a true hero, for while the latter *is* not, the former, *is*.40

Nietzsche speaks of a natural inclination towards being false, in what Heidegger calls an immensely important essay, *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* [1873], where Nietzsche says,

‘As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation, which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves – since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horse? or with sharp teeth of beasts of prey. Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendour, wearing a

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38 As evidenced, Plato speaks of the sophists art as the techne of ‘weaving what is and what is not together’ in order to persuade his listeners that what is not *is*. Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, 240c, Complete Works, p. 261. It is this art, Plato, more definitely calls the art of unlikeness-making, for whereas the philosopher represents essential and true likenesses, the sophist makes something that is unlike anything that essentially exist, appear to be. Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, 266d-267b.


mask, hiding behind convention, playing a role for others and for oneself—
in short, a continuous fluttering around the solitary flame of vanity—is so
much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing which is
less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could
have arisen among them.”

[20] We will continue the investigation where Nietzsche turned away, clarify
where Nietzsche only expressed an intuition, only had a vague impression of the
false production of Being. There is, of course, a Nietzsche, a young Nietzsche who
is unscathed by his later perspectivism, a Nietzsche unscorched by his later Will to
Power, a Nietzsche beyond relativism which can be found in *The Birth of Tragedy*
and *Untimely Meditations*, but also, in the remarkable essay, *On Truth and Lies in a
Nonmoral Sense*, as well as in the *Notebooks from the Early 1870s* where Nietzsche
speaks highly of truth—in an ontological sense—of the weak and the strong, that
only the strong dares to be true, and that in the struggle for life, the weak have a
desire to be false. Later, in *Twilight of Idols/Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche would
change his position, turn and face himself and say, only the strong dares to be
false, the weak are always true. But throughout his corpus, from the beginning to
the end of his life, Nietzsche is astounded by how a drive for truth, a veridical drive
could develop in a world of lies. As Nietzsche says in an unfinished essay from the
early 1870s, ‘The pathos of truth in a world of lies.’ And ads in bewilderment,
‘How is it that there is any pathos of truth in this world of lies? From morality.
The pathos of truth and logic. Culture and the truth.’ How this ideal of truth
developed in this world of lies is still is still astounding, and is a question that we
will leave unanswered. However, Nietzsche gets us back on track by expressing two

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44 Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth*, ‘The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle between Art and
Knowledge,’ p. 57.
words in the same breath, two thoughts in one sentence, ‘false’ and ‘Being,’ and we would say that the false still gives us a stronger sense of Being than the true could ever do, that is, the false produces a more profound sense or apperception of Being, so much so that when Kant says that the apperception of Being is necessarily an illusion, it is hard, difficult to not agree.45

§6.1 The Topos of What is False

[21] Before assessing the function of what is false in the production of the Being of beings, we shall show the almost universal expression of what is false in Shakespeare’s plays. From these observations, it will be clear that Shakespeare’s preoccupation with falsity, borders on an obsession, too true to pass us by. Just to name a few instances of false play: There is the extraordinary false pilgrimage of Helena in All’s Well that Ends Well which ends with her false death,46 the paradoxical prayer whereby Falstaff asks to ‘prove a false thief’.47 And if Helena and Falstaff featured in Measure for Measure, they could have confessed, like Claudio, to a false friar or they could have heard this false priest expound an apophatic sermon,48 and this false confession to be witnessed by, as the Divine himself says, ‘Millions of false eyes.’49 However much the false stand to lose by being named, we can nevertheless see how dominant, even overwhelming, the figure of falsity is in Shakespeare’s plays, from a few explicit, but memorable

45 Nietzsche says, in one of his early essays, On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense [1873], that falsity is productive of our Being, that the false is more useful in promoting our lives than truth is, and that shying away from what is false, we corrupt our own lives. What Nietzsche actually says, as he does in one of the Untimely Meditations, ‘Wagner in Beyreuth,’ is that in general people are too coward to be true. Later, he expressed himself differently, saying, in fact that in general people are too coward to be false, the latter position being taken or expressed in Twilight of Idols/Beyond Good and Evil.
46 Shakespeare, All’s Well that Ends Well, Act IV, Scene ii.50-60.
47 Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, Act I, Scene ii.159.
48 Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, Act III, Scene i.5-4.
49 Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, Act IV, Scene i.60.
encounters. In *Macbeth*, it is no less than the son of Macduff, soon about to be slaughtered, who mirrors Hamlet’s saying, that ‘To be honest, as this world goes, is to/be one man picked out of ten thousand.’\(^{50}\) Being engaged in a conversation about the false with his mother, the son asks the naïve Lady Macduff, ‘must all be hanged that swear and lie?’ ‘Every one,’ Lady Macduff answers, to which the son asks in earnest, ‘Who must hang them?’ Lady Macduff, ‘Why, the honest men.’ To which the son finally concludes the exchange by saying, ‘Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there/are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest/men and hang them up.’\(^{51}\) Soon after, following a command by King Macbeth who himself has sworn to be false,\(^{52}\) Lady Macduff is brutally killed along with her children. And being killed, what are these innocent children accused of if not what they are not, namely traitors.\(^{53}\) For if they were killed as what they were, it is safe to say that their deaths would be entirely unconvincing, but now, as their deaths are justified by an appeal to what they are not, their death’s appear to be as true as their lives. For, from the misperception of what [th]is is, we again infer to the apperception of [th]is, the Being of beings. That is, the misperception of what they essentially are, traitors, provides the occasion for the profound apperception of [th]is, of that which does not have these properties, but nevertheless is brutally killed.

[22] The spectator has perhaps long anticipated these horrific events, for before King Duncan arrives at Macbeth’s Castle, Macbeth speaks of how he will ‘play

\(^{50}\) Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.178.
false."\(^{54}\) Being perhaps excited to the point where he no longer trembles, Macbeth announces his false appearance before it arrives to greet the unknowing King, ‘I am settled, and bend up/Each corporal agent to this terrible feat./Away, and mock the time with fairest show:/False face must hide what the false heart doth know.’\(^{55}\) One should not be surprised then, when this man sees ‘a false creation’ flying,\(^{56}\) no more that he, in the wake of King Duncan’s death, displays ‘false sorrow.’\(^{57}\) It is not unexpected that all good men flee\(^{58}\) from this ‘bloody stage,’\(^{59}\) where the innocent are left as defenceless prey for the wicked, and all that remains for a few good men like Macduff, is the depthless sorrow for what they loved but abandoned. It is the same knight who pronounced the world a ‘bloody stage,’\(^{60}\) that appear to inform Macduff of the slaughter of his wife and children while he was away.\(^{61}\) For when Macduff asks Ross, ‘How stands Scotland?’ his reluctant answer is that it is, ‘Almost afraid to know itself!’ that Scotland, ’cannot/Be called our mother but our grave, where nothing/But who knows nothing is once seen to smile.’\(^{62}\)

[23] In the end the false are not only overcome, but, in what is believed to be Shakespeare’s first play, again showing the almost obsessive persistence of this *topos* throughout Shakespeare’s entire production, the false are burned on the stake. For in *Henry VI, Part I*, Shakespeare lets the English burn the French

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whore, the false witch, Jean. And as Shakespeare ends his first play, the intent is crystal clear, as he makes Joan cast a black spell of concealment, which proves that she is, beyond doubt and above all objections, guilty of witchcraft. For apposite to all prayers of unconcealment that abound in Shakespeare’s plays, Joan of Pucelle throws a darker spell as she is lead to the stake, not only on those who have condemned her, but on her own father, for whom she leaves nothing but a curse. And so Shakespeare ends the play where the lecherous sorceress, the false witch is burned along with her unborn child.

[24] We are not here to condemn anyone for being false, neither to judge whatever is ‘rotten in … Denmark,’ nor to accuse anyone for making Scotland into a ‘bloody stage,’ but rather to inquire into the effects of what remains, in Shakespeare’s most popular works, a false presentation of Being, a presentation which in effect, however much it upholds and in the end carries forth ideals of unconcealment, ends up undermining the experience of Being as unconcealed and leads us to, accustoms us, not only, if at all, to a false way of life, but to Being concealed, to the experience of life as what is hidden. For where nothing is hidden, there appear to be no life, no beings [alive], not the Being of beings. We are led to where we, more systematically, will continue our investigation. For we shall not

65 In *Henry VI, Part I*, Shakespeare shows that he is supremely aware of the difference between white and black magic, and that Joan of Pucelle is clearly presented as a necromancer. For what Joan is burned for at the end of *Henry IV, Part I*, the French are accused of already at the beginning of the play. The difference between the white and the black arts is easy to comprehend. It was, as Kittredge shows, commonplace to believe in the Elizabethan Age, that as the white arts unconceals, so the black arts conceals. As the white arts may project, may bring into light, so one may influence through the black arts to be, to become utterly concealed. So it becomes perfectly understandable, when the Duke of Exeter, in an attempt to explain the untimely death of the brave Henry V, accuses the coward France, ‘shall we think the subtle-witted French/Conjurers and sorcerers that, afraid of him,/By magic verses have contrived his end?’ Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part I*, Act I, Scene i.25-27.
speak morally or condemningly of what is false, nor in any prejudiced manner, but rather, continue to answer this very simple question: Which presentation produces most immediately, effectively and without a trace, the ontological contradiction, the apperception that what comes to appear before us is? No doubt we are not asking for the meaning of what is said or presented, but its function. For however we judge or value what is false, regardless of how low our estimation of what is false may be, it is truly beyond doubt that the false is more effective in producing the apperception of the Being of beings. And it is *The Poetics of the Being*, into which we now continue to inquire.

[25] We shall not merely expose the places where the ‘false’ is mentioned by name, nor are we simply interested in the character’s high or low opinions about what is false. Rather, we are almost solely concerned with the effect of providing, like Shakespeare, a false [re]presentation. We do not seek the opinions of Shakespeare or of any of his characters, but something more fundamental, the function of a false [re]presentation, which more often than not, not only corrupts the explicit ideals of the play, but more fundamentally, its sense of Being. If one were to hold a low opinion of Falstaff, however forceful one’s condemnation may be, one could not deny that almost no one produces the apperception of Being more effortlessly, more effectively, and more endurably than Falstaff. For the false produces, imperceptibly, and repeatedly without ever tiring its audience, a more profound sense of Being that, moreover, immediately destroys the ontological aspirations of any Neoplatonic idea or ideals.

[26] Nowhere do we more clearly recognize the scales of Being, the double and mutually inextinguishable contradiction of Being than in Shakespeare’s plays. For
within the battle for true unconcealment there appears suddenly and incomprehensibly the will to imperfection, the will to be entirely concealed, to appear as what you are not or not appear as what you are. Falstaff even has to conceal that he is on order to be, for only as he pretends to be dead on the battlefield, does he save himself in [th]is true theatre of unconcealment. Like an omen, as if History had premonitions of its own future, the appearance of Falstaff on [th]is stage signals the coming of the Dark Ages of modernity, the gradual extinction or withdrawal of beings from their own clearing, where no one any longer takes pride in Being truly unconcealed. In this light, it would be surprising if, as Rosencrantz reveals to Hamlet, ‘that the world’s/grown honest.’ But, as Hamlet says, ‘your news is not true.’ With few exceptions, the men and women of Shakespeare’s plays are all disguised, characters for whom dissimulation seems but a way of life. Even Hamlet himself is but entirely concealed. Perhaps the only one more obscure than either Falstaff or Hamlet, is Romeo, who appears in the dark beneath a balcony, behind a masque or in exile, and finally, as if seeking [th]is place all along, is found to take his own life when he is already in the grave.

[27] The testimony of Francis Bacon, who more than once has been confused with Shakespeare, is difficult to doubt. In his Essays, Bacon professes that there is no longer an ideal of appearing without difference, to be indifferently true, but a propensity in man to love a lie for its own sake, even a desire to be secret. And

68 Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, Act V, Scene iv.75.
69 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II, Scene ii.239-242.
70 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II, Scene ii.239-242.
71 Bacon says, ‘It is not only the difficulty and labour which men take in finding out of truth, nor again that when it is found it imposeth upon men’s thoughts, that doth bring lies in favour, but a natural though corrupt love for the lie itself. One of the later school of Grecians, examineth the matter and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant, but for the lie’s sake. But I cannot tell.’ [Bacon, Essays, ‘Of Truth,’ p. 61. Emphasis added].
there is, as Bacon remarks, no secrecy without some kind of dissimulation, that is, without being false. We could add, that with the unexpected arrival of men such as Machiavelli, Bacon and Grazian, in states as diverse as Florence, England and Spain, there is enough historical proof to suggest that, from the Renaissance on, modern men were taught to be false, to be secretive, to appear distinct from what they essentially are, sometimes even to distinguish themselves from who they are, that is, to some degree be concealed. According to Shakespeare, nothing seems closer to the hearts of Elizabethans than being false, and if the spectator has enjoyed a similar education, nothing is easier than to identify with Romeo, Falstaff or Hamlet, men who are but almost entirely concealed, whose selves, throughout each play are kept, almost entirely in the dark.

However much Shakespeare is obsessed with what is false, it seems to be the case that he had no natural inclination for being false, but was inspired by the Italians he came across, that the false art of Being was patiently learned through his numerous adaptations of the Italian novella. To support the view that Shakespeare did learn the art of falsity from the Italians, we may point out that [th]is art is absent in what is considered his first two works, namely Henry VI, Part I and The Comedy of Errors, plays where not one willingly appear to be false, and if one does, like Joan of Pucelle, she is finally burned on the stake. To avoid the impression of seeming unnecessarily decadent, there was in the English as well as the French translations of the Italian novellae inserted moralizing introductions

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72 Bacon, Essays, ‘Of Simulation and Dissimulation,’ pp. 76-78.
73 Some of the novellae that Shakespeare made adaptations of for the stage are presented in Pamela Benson [ed.], Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare. Among the novellae Shakespeare used is Boccaccio’s Decameron [1350], Day 3/Nouvella 9, which was translated into English by William Painter, in The Palace of Pleasure, 1566, as the Tale of Gileta of Narbona, and adapted by Shakespeare in All’s Well that Ends Well, 1602-03. For a chronology of Shakespeare’s plays, see for example, Harold Bloom, Shakespeare - The Invention of the Human, p. xvi.
and addendums. However, this did not help avoid a tirade of accusations against Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure* and similar novellae and their proliferation into English. As Ms. Pamela Benson says in her ‘Anthology of Criticism,’ in a beautifully selected volume, *Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare*,

‘When the translations of *novelle* were first published, the moralizing passages with which they seem to bristle did not please English moralists. They associated the books with the evil that they believed Italy to incarnate. In the following passage Roger Ascham in *The Schoolmaster* (1570) seems to be referring to Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure*: he speaks most eloquently of the damage he fears the novella can do: “These be the enchantments of Circe’s … Ten sermons at Paule’s Crosse do not so much good for moving men to trewe doctrine, as one of those bookes do harme with inticing men to ill living. Yea, I say farther, those bookes, tend not so much to corrupt honest living as they to to subvert trewe religion.”’

[29] Nothing is more evident in Shakespeare’s plays than that Shakespeare allows the unconcealed, the true to finally step forward, to overcome and the untrue to finally be concealed. In *King Lear* we see the true Edgar finally conquer the false Edmund in the trial by battle and in *Hamlet* the true Prince Fortinbras is finally given the keys to the Kingdom of Denmark by the false Hamlet, accepting his fate, as he is dying, just as in *Macbeth* the false and deceiving Macbeth is finally overcome by the true Macduff. In all cases, in all plays, the true remains out-standing on the battlefield, towards the end of the play. What should be equally obvious is that Shakespeare’s art denies his own ideals. We could speak of Shakespeare’s true betrayal, and if these ideals belong to Shakespeare

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74 In the English and French translations of the Italian novella, there were, as Pamela Benson marks in ‘Anthology of Criticism,’ a tendency to insert moralizing comments and embellishments to the stories, which were often thought of as obscene. Pamela Benson [ed.], *Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare*, p. 349.

75 Pamela Benson, *Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare*, ‘Anthology of Criticism,’ p. 346.

76 *Shakespeare, King Lear, Act V, Scene iii.*

77 *Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act V, Scene ii.355-358.*

78 *Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act V, Scene viii.53.*
himself, of Shakespeare’s self-betrayal, as it is obvious that Shakespeare’s art of presentation betrays the ideals represented.

[30] Even though it finally is so, that Shakespeare in the end makes those who further [th]is ideal of unconcealment victorious, it is even more evident that Shakespeare’s false presentation undermines his true ideals, that the art of presentation subverts the ideals [re]presented, just like Hamlet betrays his. However, we are not to speak of [th]is betrayal condemingly, but rather, without prejudice, attempt to understand that without [th]is betrayal, the betrayal of [th]is true ideal of indifference whose angel is Dominion,79 we would hardly have seen the play at all. For as obvious as Shakespeare’s presentation is false, it is Shakespeare’s use of [th]is false and inadequate presentation, that makes us see his plays again and again. If they were true, they would hardly be seen at all. This is the fortune of Shakespeare’s first and Shakespeare’s last plays, Henry VI, Part I and The Two Noble Kinsmen, which in four hundred years have been staged but a few times, most likely, because these plays were too true, and therefore not fit to please more modern tastes.80

[31] In The Two Noble Kinsmen, as we have pointed out, are some of the most beautiful scenes of unconcealment in Shakespeare’s plays: the supplication of the widows, the prayer for and subsequent battle for unconcealment by Emily, Palamon and Arcite, and the intervention of the Goddess of Love to unconceal the

79 As Dionysius says in The Celestial Hierarchy, A Dominion is an angel of indifference, the spirit of appearing essentially without difference. According to Dionysius, the Dominions are the fourth of the nine angelic hierarchies, and these angels are mirrors/khorae of indifference, through which men may become, at least strive to become, indifferent from their ideals. Cf. Dionysius, The Celestial Hierarchy, 237C, Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works, p. 167.

80 See, for example Waith’s ‘Introduction’ to The Two Noble Kinsmen, where he remarks, ‘The stage history of The Two Noble Kinsmen is very brief.’ Waith, ‘Introduction’ to Shakespeare, The Two Noble Kinsmen, p. 30.
true lover Palamon after he has failed to unconceal himself in battle. In *King Lear*, on the other hand, we have some of the most suggestive scenes of concealment. Are we not baffled, already in the beginning, when Edgar runs away from nothing to falsely ‘prove’ the [non-existent] conspiracy to kill his father. More evocative still, and more false, is the encounter in the raging storm where *not*-Kent, *not*-Lear and *not*-Edgar are finally led into the safety of a hut by a fool. Perhaps we should rather speak of the *non*-meeting between Kent and Lear and Edgar, as neither appears to recognize the other, and they all interact with each other’s masques, personae. At the same time they seem to perform a secret discourse that all along creates, for the audience, the apperception of that which is *not* apperceived, the Being of these beings, which are so completely concealed.

[32] It is a welcome coincidence that unknowingly brings the blind Gloucester and his son together. Perhaps no scene in the works of Shakespeare is more pleasing and sad than the encounter between the blinded Gloucester and the disguised Edgar, where Poor Tom leads his unknowing father from the heath to the very brim of the cliffs of Dover. Maybe it is because Edgar has forgiven his father. For Edgar shows a poetic kindness towards a father that has banished him and hunted him down like an animal. But this is only emotional speculation, moral conjecture, which is superficial, almost irrelevant, when contrasted to the *primary* constitution of Being. For however suitable ethical and sentimental reflections sometimes are, we may and do apperceive *that* a man *is* regardless of whether we have feelings for him or not. Whereas Heidegger speaks of ‘the happening of truth,’ we will convey ‘the happening of untruth’ which reveals another aspect of

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Being, not what is *unconcealed*, but what *is* concealed. Compared to what *is* false, it is obvious that we all experience what *is* true as shallow, only what remains, what *is* false as truly profound. In Shakespeare’s oeuvre the most famous cases of *this* happening of untruth are undoubtedly Edgar’s *conspiracy*, Desdemona’s *infidelity*, Juliet’s *death*, Gloucester’s *fall* and Hamlet’s *madness*. These events are unquestionably the most memorable, make the deepest and most lasting impression, makes it almost impossible to think that what is presented before us *is not* [true].\(^{82}\)

[33] Showing that Shakespeare is completely and fully aware of the profundities of what *is* untrue, the sublime happening of untruth, we should listen to what Edgar says immediately after Gloucester falls from the cliff. What is presented is, of course, another *unhappening*, described, only a relation to a *non*-occurrence, the fall that never occurred. And when trying to locate where the witness to this non-occurrence may be, Edgar answer his bewildered father, ‘Gone, sir, farewell. And yet I know not how conceit [that is, *imagination*] may rob/The treasury of life, when life itself/Yields to [that is, *allows*] the theft.’\(^{83}\) What is meant is as easy to understand, as it is to translate. What Edgar says is simply that the imagination is incapable of stealing a man’s life, *if* life itself *steals away* from the imagination. Again Shakespeare presents life as a transgression, as what is inadequate to man’s imagination, beyond a man’s comprehension, his perceptions and reflections. *[Th]is* inadequacy is not only spoken of but presented, not only reflected upon but enacted. And in *[th]is* enactment or as the enactment of *[th]is* inadequacy, life

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\(^{82}\) We will continue to use *untrue* and *unreal* interchangeably, however it may ring unfamiliar to more modern ears. The alienation of the concept of truth is clearly expressed, can be clearly and negatively understood when one does *not* immediately understand the same when one says, untrue and unreal, true and real, when untrue and unreal are no longer synonyms.

\(^{83}\) Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene vii.41-44. Comments added.
stands out as what is truly unimaginable. It is /th/is [ground] which Gloucester
cannot or is unwilling to think of which nevertheless comes to presence before the
audience, [th]is inadequacy of imagination/perception and the world, for it is the
shortcomings of the imagination, the perceptual/perpetual void in which the world
disappears or is made to disappear, that to the spectator constitutes life, constitutes
Being to the spectator. To Shakespeare life becomes unimaginable, life becomes
what is unimaginable, Being beyond the reach of the character’s grasp until it is
too late and /th/is, that which has been neglected or overlooked appears to take
revenge, to reappear unknowingly. For whether or not I am aware of /th/is or what
[th]is is, [th]is will never be inconsequential, never fail to effect me. And it is in
apperceiving life or Being as what is unimaginable, as that which, indeed, within
the play is not apperceived by the character, that the spectator for the first time
identifies with the character, for they realize that even their lives are susceptible to
/th/is, to that which they cannot comprehend, that is and remains unimaginable,
the Being of beings.

[34] In all cases life is, to Shakespeare, what is unimaginable. [Th]is is not only
spoken of abstractly, but presented concretely, for it is [th]is, the unimaginable,
that which the character does not think of, the unthought and therefore the
unknown, which makes Romeo kill himself, [th]is, the unimaginable, that makes
Ophelia kill herself and again [th]is, the unimaginable, that makes Othello kill
Desdemona, but it is also [th]is, which remains unimaginable and the character is
completely unaware of, which makes Old Lord Gloucester rise from his feet,
resurrected from [th]is fall, as if carried by an angel flying by to catch him in the
air as he threw himself off the cliff at Dover. For nowhere is the apperception of
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the Being of beings or this ground, the ground unconcealed more firmly, created more insistently than when it is not perceived, if you were to think, like Gloucester, that you are flying.

[35] That life is unimaginable and that the Being of beings is apperceived as the effect of this inadequacy to Shakespeare, is not a far-fetched interpretation grabbed out of thin air but what is closest at hand, is confirmed again when Edgar says, ‘Had he been where he thought,/By this had thought been past.’84 That is, if Gloucester had been where he thought he was, that is, truly perceived, he would by now be dead. That is, if Edgar is telling the truth, Gloucester will die. [Th]is inadequacy, which Shakespeare is fully and completely aware of, is here what saves Gloucester’s life. The untruth saves Gloucester’s life as easily as it kills Desdemona. But whether or not the untruth kills or saves, dooms or resurrects, it is the untruth which persuades the spectator of the Being of these beings, convinces the spectator that the one who rises from the ground to again gasp for air, to catch a first clean breath of air is resurrected, saved as much as the one stabbed and catching her last breath is really dying, is truly catching her last breath, that the man who catches his first and the woman catching her last breath, truly are.

§6.2 The Function of What is False

[36] We will separate between meaningless and numinous experiences, recognizing that they are both an invariable part of Shakespeare’s tragedies. As Shakespeare makes the friar lament after he discovers the body of Hamlet in Capulet’s sepulchre, ’A greater power than we can contradict/ hath thwarted our

84 Shakespeare, King Lear, Act IV, Scene vi.44-45.
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Following Schopenhauer and Adorno, the experience of the meaningless is simply, as ‘meaning’ here is confused with ‘intention,’ the experience of that which transgresses a particular man’s intentions, that which he does not understand, that which overcomes or overwhelms him, his hopes, dreams or expectations, to such a degree that no trace of personality can be found in what appear before him, no trace of subjectivity can be found in what is objectified. Coming face to face with a meaningless event, it is what is suddenly made known that makes man tremble. For now, we shall loosely define the numinous, without yet attempting a strict definition, as the experience of something unknown in front of which almost any man would stand truly amazed and tremble or run away. The numinous fascinates Shakespeare throughout his writings, from the almost overwhelming appearances of Joan of Pucelle and Lord Talbot in, what is believed to be Shakespeare’s first play, *Henry VI, Part I*, to the appearance of the bearded witches that opens *Macbeth* and the armoured ghost that begins *Hamlet*. As we proceed, it will become evident that our focus is not so much the meaningless or numinous experiences per se, but how Shakespeare produces the apperception of the Being of those who are subject to these experiences.

There is a marked difference between, on the one hand, the meaningless experience of Ophelia hearing of the death of her father Polonius, of Laertes hearing of the death of his sister Ophelia, of Macduff hearing of the horrifying slaughter of his wife and children, of Romeo experiencing the ‘death’ of Julia, and, on the other, Hamlet’s numinous experience of the ghost of his father and the tremors witnessed by an affrighted Ophelia, Hamlet’s numinous experience of the

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ghost next to an unseeing mother, Macbeth and Banquo as they are haunted by the three witches on the heath and Macbeth’s numinous experience of the ghost of Banquo in the presence the unknowing Dukes. The first are instances of experiences of what is meaningless, the other of what is numinous.

Of all meaningless events, of all encounters with what is meaningless in Shakespeare’s plays, no scene is more persuasive than the scene where Romeo encounters the ‘death’ of Juliet, which is incomparably more persuasive than, for example when Macduff hears of the slaughter of his children88 or Laertes hears of the death of his sister, 89 and [th]is quite simply because she is not dead. Everyone will notice two things when watching Romeo and Juliet. First of all, that that the final scene of Romeo and Juliet is fundamentally similar to Ovid’s story of Pyramus and Thisby, 90 where also the children of two feuding families meet in secret, attempt to find their love in concealment, hidden away from all men’s eyes, and that they similarly find their end when mistaking what is dead for what is not, that Pyramus kills himself having no better proof than a tear from Thisbe’s red dress, and Romeo kills himself when he discovers Juliet lying, eyes closed, in the sarcophagus. Romeo’s encounter with Juliet’s death is so convincing, simply because it does not fail to give proof of another kind than what is perceptible. As he himself sees the dead appear before him, Romeo’s mind is fixed on the dead, the final appearance of his beloved, his perceptions cannot be but adequate to this lifeless phenomenon. However, his mind is inadequate to the noumenal [personality], the substantial unity of that which does not appear to be alive, and hence, is twice hidden, twice concealed. Again the apperception of what is not

88 Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act IV, Scene iii. 159-240.
89 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act IV, Scene vii. 163-194.
90 Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book IV, pp. 95-98.
[true] creates the apperception of what is. In Kantian terms, Romeo has no idea about what appears before him, who she really is.\textsuperscript{91} Everything Romeo thinks about Juliet corresponds only to the masque of death that she is wearing, a phenomenal masque of death that, although it will soon become her own, does not express what Juliet is, but what she is not. And if we were to seek out and truly find that which corresponds to Hamlet’s composite, synthetic idea about Juliet, we would search in vain. All Hamlet’s [composite] ideas about Juliet corresponds to nothing, are adequate to nothing that exists, are merely inadequations to which no phenomenon that exist could ever be found.

As we shall soon see, there is another difference, more fundamental to tragedy than the difference between the numinous and the meaningless is to the task of persuading the spectator that what comes before her is. For the experience of the spectator and the character is not the same, and the spectator experiences this difference that produces the Being of that character, that event that untruly appears before her. Ophelia’s death personifies the meaningless event, as much as Juliet incarnates it. That is, Ophelia is merely the masque of the meaningless, its surface, which any disastrous event may carry forth the experience of, while Juliet is its depth. And it is for this incarnation of what is meaningless that Romeo kills himself, and becomes, as Schopenhauer points out, without ever giving the [true] reason, the clearest example of a meaningless event in the history of modern drama.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{91} Kant has an inessential concept of ‘idea,’ a concept for which there could not possibly correspond a phenomenon. Personality, Substantiality, Existence are, in this sense, ideas. Cf. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A327/B384, p. 371.

\textsuperscript{92} Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, Book III, §51, p. 161. This is the [true] reason, that Schopenhauer does not find time or opportunity to give: Being perceived or apperceived as what you are not, produces the apperception of your Being much more persuasively than if you are only
There is a basic difference between, on the one hand, the experience of what is meaningless – as it is defined by Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Representation* and Adorno in *Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason* - on the other, the experience of the numinous presented by Rudolf Otto in *The Ideal of the Holy, Das Heilige*. Both are experiences of [what is] unexpected, that which by being unconcealed do transgress our expectations. The meaningless is the overwhelming experience of what is unconcealed beyond our thoughts, intentions or desires, be it the suicide of a sister [Laertes], the slaughter of a wife [Macduff]. They both tremble, Laertes and Macduff, but they tremble in the face of what they know. The tremor, even stupor, of Macbeth is of a different kind, for he shivers in the presence of what he does not know, he shivers when encountering what is numinous. The numinous is, according to Rudolf Otto, the experience of that which transgresses our concepts and perceptions, but which we nevertheless have been given an apperception of, where there is no promise to abort or suspend [th]is inadequation, as the numinous is the experience, the apperception of that which no human intellect, no concepts can ever be adequate to. It is [th]is, the immediate acknowledgement of what we cannot possibly know, our spontaneous awareness of [th]is difference, that makes us tremble, or, as Shakespeare says, makes us stand out as truly ‘amazed.’ However, there is no immediate transference of the theory of the numinous from life to theatre. Even [th]is difference between the experience perceived or apperceived as what you are. Now being perceived or apperceived as what you are not, you appear to be dissociated from your self. What you are dissociated from is, however, not your self, but what you are essentially perceived as or substantially apperceived as. The self remains. Or, if you think [saying] self is [saying] too much, more than there is ground for, we could say that [th]is is dissociated from it apprehension, so alone [th]is [ontological difference] remains.

93 ‘Amazement’ does to Shakespeare name what is truly incomprehensible, what the subject had not anticipated or could never have imagined or had any notions of if not [th]is was unconcealed. Cf. Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, Act III, Scene ii.148/151 and Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act III, Scene ii.344.
of the meaningless and the numinous is shallow, would only make possible a superficial theory of theatre - an assessment of theatre confined to the perception of phenomena - compared to that which makes the characters that experience the numinous or the meaningless come alive [before the audience].

[41] According to Adorno, tragedy is not believed to be a superior art because it renders life more meaningful, but rather, because it renders life meaningless. Nothing appear, again according to Adorno, to the bourgeoisie to be more profound, deeper than what is meaningless, and as nothing [is] more meaningless than tragedy, this makes tragedy, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, its philosophical representatives and literary spokesmen, among them Schopenhauer and Schiller, the most profound expression of humanity.94 For, as Adorno says, the bourgeois is the hypostazation of depth, the crowning of everything irrational, and nothing appear to be deeper to the bourgeoisie than when man does not recognize his own image in the [hi]story that appears before him, not his own subject in the events that suddenly appear to be out of control and now seem to determine what to Adorno always begins every story, triggers every event, the subject, which to the bourgeoisie remains hidden, and to Adorno remains the hidden but negative potential for man’s self-empowerment.95 No genre is more expressive of what is purposeless and meaningless than tragedy, which sees its crowning achievement in expressing that life is without purpose … that life has no greater, no deeper meaning than when it appears to be without purpose … prolonging man’s self-imposed subjection to a power it hypostatises beyond its control, be this power called Fate or Fortune, Devil or God, Nature or Economy, if you will, the Being of

95 Adorno, Negative Dialectics, p. 116.
Beings, which Adorno sees as the latest, the most obscure and alluring, as Heidegger’s contribution to man’s self-imposed enslavement to the powers that be.96

[42] It is admirable that Adorno, like Schopenhauer, finds that some of the most profound tragedies produces the impression of what is meaningless, and that the meaningless, which to Schopenhauer produces a feeling of resignation in the face of destiny or Fortuna, produces a profound sense of depth.97 What Adorno does not notice, being too preoccupied with the content of the drama and therefore looking away from or neglecting its form, already taking for granted that what is perceived or represented [on stage] in the theatre is, is that even though the audience will be inclined to believe in a performance/play which presents the meaningless or the numinous, as it is close or remains close to their own experience of life, there are nevertheless even more glorious dresses the meaningless and the numinous have to wear in order to be persuasive, to convince us that what appear before us is. Both Schopenhauer and Adorno take for granted that the numinous or the meaningless, by itself, will make theatre more attractive, will persuade us that [th]is is. To Shakespeare this is not enough. For in Hamlet’s encounter with the ghost, what creates the apperception that [th]is is, is obviously doubt, as it is in the scenes where Macbeth, or for that matter, Hamlet, looses his mind in the presence of the ghost, the perception of what is [untrue], the misperception of the ghost, which is neither seen by Hamlet’s mother nor Macbeth’s court, which makes the misperceiver as much as the misperceived, stand out as alive. They

96 It is Adorno’s high regard of Heidegger as an intellectual enemy, as expressing the most sophisticated expression of what is irrational, and thus crowing the bourgeois tradition of hailing/praising what is meaningless, that makes it necessary for Adorno to attack Heidegger in *Negative Dialectics*.

appear to be not because they perceive what is, but because they perceive what is not, and, from the perception of what is not, we do again infer to the apperception that [th]is is. Obviously, when speaking of the meaningless, both Adorno and Schopenhauer take [th]is for granted.98

[43] The final scene of Romeo and Juliet is perhaps the most persuasive example of the meaningless production of Being, not simply because it represents a meaningless event, but more fundamentally, because [th]is meaningless event never occurred. Hence, we are coming face to face with an untrue event, grounded in the misperception or misapperception of what [th]is is. If such misperceptions or misapperceptions were to be formulated as propositions, these propositions would, as Aristotle remarks in both Categories and Metaphysics, describe something that does not exist.99 Apart from Romeo and Juliet, another memorable scene, where we again are brought to experience the heartbreaking consequences of an unevent, occurs when Hamlet, in tremor, passes before a shattered Ophelia. What happens is not only that Ophelia is brought to witness what to her is a meaningless event, incomprehensible, but the appearance, if not persona, of Hamlet is made alive as Hamlet feigns the numinous tremors, as Hamlet presents himself as what he is not. For again, from the perception of what is not [true], we make the inference to the apperception of what is [true]. The untrue event is taken from Hamlet, Act II, Scene I, where Polonius addresses Ophelia as she enters.100

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98 In The Idea of The Holy, Rudolf Otto’s does generally take for granted the Being of that which is represented numinously.
100 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II., Scene i.74f.
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings fouled,
Ungartered, and down-gyvèd to his ankle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a looks so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors – he comes before me.

Polonius  Mad for thy love?
Ophelia  My lord, I do not know,
But truly I do fear it.\textsuperscript{101}

But to truly witness the depth of an unevent, the profundities of an unhappening,
we should not leave [th]is theatre before Romeo is brought face to face with the
meaningless death of Juliet. Being as he is exiled to Mantua, Romeo is dreaming
ecstatic dreams of Juliet that are soon to be shattered.\textsuperscript{102}

Romeo  I dreamt my lady came and found me dead
(Strange dram that gives a dead man leave to think!)
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips
That I revived and was an emperor.
Ah me! How sweet is love itself possessed,
When but love’s shadows are so rich in joy!

Enter Romeo’s Man [Balthasar, booted].
News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?
Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?
How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet?

[Balthasar is silent, Balthasar does not speak, Balthasar is unwilling
to speak. May we speak of Balthasar’s silence.]
That I ask again,

[Confirming Balthasar’s silence]
For nothing can be ill if she be well.

Man  Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.
Her body sleeps in Capel’s monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred’s vault
And presently took post to tell it to you.
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

Romeo  Is it e’en so? Then I defy you, stars!
Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and paper
And hire post horses. I will hence tonight.

Man  I do beseech you, sir, have patience.

\textsuperscript{101} Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act II, Scene i.74f.
\textsuperscript{102} Shakespeare, \textit{Romeo and Juliet}, Act V, Scene i.6ff.
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Your looks are pale and wild and do import
Some misadventure. 103

[44] It is more persuasive to hear Romeo encounter the death of Juliet than to see Laertes hearing the news of his sisters death, Ophelia, simply because Romeo perceives what is untrue, whereas Laertes perceives what is not untrue.

Fundamentally, whereas one inappereception - the perception of death - is [true], the other is not [true]. Similarly, what makes Hamlet’s encounter with his father’s ghost more effective, more persuasive than Macbeth’s spiritual encounters, is not that we in the one case have a manly spirit appear with a beard and the other female spirits with beards, but that Hamlet, later, appear to feign, to fake the effect of a numinous experience, namely, [th]is trembling. Whereas both Hamlet and Macbeth may doubt what they see with their own eyes, more fundamentally, their shivering bodies does maintain the positivity of [th]is experience, signal that their bodies trust in the reality of what their minds cannot [yet] comprehend. For tremor - the mysterium tremendum - symbolizes an experience of what is dissimilar, the apperception of what is unlike its phenomenal appearance, an appearance that is inadequate to what [th]is truly is. And, more terrifying than to witness, as Ophelia, the meaningless unconcealment of a trembling man, is to experience that which Macbeth’s tremor is truly inadequate to. For more horrifying than any apparition, is that which this unlikeness conceals.

[45] About the numinous experience as an inference from what is not [true] to what is [true], from what is seen to what is not seen, a deduction from what is unconcealed to what is concealed, even to what cannot be unconcealed, the noumenon, Otto explains, with reference to Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, that

103 Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Act V, Scene i.28. Brackets added.
the numinous is like the noumena what is inferred to. Whereas the apparition is what appears and adequate to the apparition is the *tremendum*, the *tremendum* is inadequate to what does not appear, the *mysterium*.\(^{104}\) Otto claims that what stirs the mind to experience, to apperceive [th]is difference, is a certain comportment, usually discovered in weak and susceptible bodies, which makes possible that certain phenomena may stir the inference from what is seen to what is unseen, from what is known to what is unknown.\(^{105}\) It is obvious that Otto has not himself completely understood the way in which his analysis differs from Kant’s. For whereas the phenomenon to Kant is a likeness, the phenomenon presented to Otto, the numinous apparition that appears before the trembling man, is an unlikeness, the one appearing as what it is, the other appearing as what it is not. And, as we shall stress throughout this thesis, the inference to what is hidden is immensely more rapid when faced with what is untrue. For whereas each familiar phenomenon to Kant is true to its condition, the noumenon, be it called, Self, Soul, 

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\(^{105}\) Otto speaks of the numinous experience as ‘a peculiar interpretation and valuation of sense data.’ [Otto, *The Idea of The Holy*, p. 113] Even though the numinous does not denote the perception of something we can sense, it begins with, even has to begin with, an inference from what we can sense to what is insensible. As Otto is surprisingly clear, we shall let him speak for himself. ‘The proof that in the numinous we have to deal with purely *a priori* cognitive elements is to be reached by introspection and a critical examination of reason such as Kant instituted. We find, that is, involved in the numinous experience, beliefs and feelings qualitatively different from anything that ‘natural’ sense-perception is capable of giving us. They [i.e. the numinous experiences] are themselves not perceptions at all, but peculiar interpretations and valuations, at first of perceptual data, and then - at a higher level - of posited objects and entities, which themselves no longer belong to the perceptual world, but are thought of as supplementing and transending it. And as they are not themselves sense-perceptions, so neither are they any sort of ‘transmutation’ of sense-perception.’ [Otto, *The Idea of The Holy*, p. 113] Otto writes, ‘In the famous opening words of the *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kant] says: ‘That all our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt. For how is it possible that the faculty of cognition should be awakened into exercise otherwise than by means of objects which affect our senses? … But, though all our knowledge begins with experience, it by no means follows that all arises out of experience.’’ [Otto, *The Idea of The Holy*, p. 112f.] Otto issues this comment, ‘The numinous is of the latter kind. It issues from the deepest foundation of cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses, and, though it of course comes into being in and amid the sensory data and empirical material of the natural world and cannot anticipate or dispense with those, yet it does not arise out of them, but only by their means. They are the incitement, the stimulus, and the ‘occasion’ for the numinous experience to become astir.’ [Otto, *The Idea of The Holy*, p. 113].
God or Cause, the unfamiliar phenomenon, or the recognition of what presents itself untruly, giving that there is, as Kant says, no hidden essence, would trigger the immediate inference to this hidden condition, and thus produce the apperception of the Being of beings.

We shall notice, in the passing, that there is a common expression for the experience of both the meaningless and the numinous, namely trembling. Now, again, we shall see, that what makes Romeo’s encounter with Juliet’s death more convincing, more persuasive than Laertes encounter with the death of Ophelia, is not that the one shivers more than the other, but that one perceives what is not [true], whereas the other perceives what is [true], and as we have said, we [continue to] make the effortless inference from the perception of what is not [true], to the apperception of what is [true]. If one for a moment thought that we perceived the scene where Romeo faces the death of Juliet as more persuasive because we know Romeo more than we know Laertes, this is simply not true. For we do not only seem to know Romeo less than we know Hamlet, but we know Romeo even less than we know Laertes. For in all of Shakespeare’s plays, no character is more shadowy, more hidden than Romeo, who slips between our fingers, a lover behind a mask, a man married without witnesses at night, an exile known to no one [not even his parents], a lover in the dark hardly perceived, no more than a whispering shadow among the trees, a man who disappears, like a ghost before dawn. We shall notice, that, as the cock cries, Romeo takes his cue to leave. For of all of Shakespeare’s characters, no one is more secret than Romeo. And if you for a moment think that you know less about Hamlet than you know of Romeo, you

106 Cf. Adorno, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, p. 207.
107 As Romeo says when he sees the dawn break above Juliet’s balcony, ‘More light and light – more dark and dark our woes.’ Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Act III, Scene v.36.
have failed to consider that we all know Hamlets ideals, whereas of Romeo’s we
know nothing.

§6.3 The Paradox of What is False

[47] We shall in this paragraph go on to present the paradox of what is false, the
insight that the false is more true, the untrue is more [true] than what is true.
Obviously, even a reader, who does not or is not immediately able to define the
concepts of truth here used, does however immediately understand the meaning of
the two different concepts of truth expressed in the same sentence. For [th]is
simply means that the untrue is more real whereas the true is less. Our interest is
hardly in the places where the false is spoken of as such, for when the ‘false’ is
mentioned by name, it is not properly ‘false’ and has merely become the
superficial mark of something that was unknown, but is no longer unknown. The
seal of what is false has truly been broken, and does no longer protect the
unknown, which persuades any witness of the existence of that which remains out
of reach, of that which is not grasped or only grasped, superficially, as what it is
not. Quite clearly, the places where Shakespeare or any of the characters actually
explicitly speak of what is false, do not produce the ontological contradiction,
which is most effortlessly affected/effected when the false is not acknowledged and
[th]is is misperceived, imperceived, inapperceived or misapperceived. Looking up
the words ‘false’ or ‘falsity,’ in The Concordance to Shakespeare is only of very
limited use, even runs counter to our intentions. The belief that such a
concordance would immediately show us something valuable, is exactly what would
impede, be a major obstacle to the discovery of the production of the Being of
beings in Shakespeare’s works. For the false does not keep its true powers of
persuasion when it is discovered and named. We could even say that the false loses its powers of persuasion as soon as it is dis-covered. For as soon as it becomes known, what is false does no longer effortlessly produce the apperception of the Being of beings. The false is only as long as it remains undiscovered, unknown, unnamed, and when the false is truly discovered, it bears a false name. It is maintained throughout this thesis that the false is apperceived as truer than what is true. Having here used two different concepts of truth in one and the same statement, one epistemological and one ontological, this merely means that the inadequate perception of what [th]is is produces a more profound apperception of [th]is, which being, as it were, incomprehended, produces a greater sense of depth, and through [th]is depth or as [th]is depth, the apperception of the Being of beings.

By appearing as what he is not, that is, loyal, Macbeth produces the secret that he is. [Th]is secret is without content. That is, I cannot apperceive what the secret is, only say that what is perceived is untrue. And, from the perception of what is untrue, in the epistemological sense, I infer to the apperception of what is true, in the ontological sense. This is of course a false inference, for I cannot simply say that what[ever] is false compels me to infer to what is [true], that whenever [th]is presents itself or anyone presents [th]is as what it is not, I will be forced to, and [th]is without force, so effortlessly that [th]is inference appears to be indifferent from my own nature, to infer to the Being of [th]is being. But that is exactly what we assert, that part of our composition is to, naturally and without effort, make the inference from the perception of what is untrue in the epistemological sense, to the apperception of what is true, in the ontological sense, in short, that all inadequations, every inadequate expression of what [th]is [being]
is, will make me involuntary believe that [th]is [being] is. In [th]is sense we can say that the false is equally true, or even, that the false is more true, that the false shows me, even more profoundly, what is [true], for it shows [th]is without properties, without anything to grasp or reach out for the existence/presence of except [th]is, and nothing to remember except that which brings forward the thought that what [th]is is has been forgotten.

[49] We shall not disregard the inference from the non-existence of what is perceived to the existence of what is apperceived, to what is however false it may be, but rather say that [th]is invalid inference, from the perception of an untrue appearance, to the apperception of something truly hidden is, of course, entirely false. That the unhidden is untrue leads me to believe that the hidden is [true], that there is something truly hidden. Likewise, not forgetting the difference with which Macbeth appears to the spectator within the theatre and the character within the play, we could say that the inference, however effortless or natural, from the perception of an untrue persona to a true person, that is, an existing person, from the perception of the inadequate [re]presentation of [th]is being to the apperception of the Being of [th]is being, is both invalid and false. There arises the question as to whether [th]is ontological inference is valid or invalid according to the standards of traditional logic. If we were to test or try [th]is argument according to the standards of traditional logic, which it evidently supersedes, we could again say, that we make an inference from, whether [th]is is fully comprehended or simply expressed, Macbeth is loyal, to Macbeth is. For loyal is not a predicate that belongs to Macbeth, and for this predicate [loyal] to not belong to him, he must certainly, be.
We do agree with Kant, that we cannot and do not simply discard with inferences because they are false. We even have to agree with Kant when he says that we can only have false impressions of what is. That is, whenever a cognition exceeds phenomenal description and attempts to describe is, it will always fail, or rather, it will never be able to prove is, only assert that without is condition I could not make any assertion at all. Contrary to what Kant says, we will say that only false/untrue assertions lay is immediately bare, whereas true assertions cloud is foundation, is condition. That is, for both true and false statements/assertions there will be a condition, be is called, self, cause, God, but is condition, which we necessarily have an apperception of in any perception, will nevertheless only be laid bare, appear in full much like a flower in bloom, if is assertion is inadequate to what is. Then, and only then, will the false foundation be laid bare. Or we could say, elaborating on Kant, that only false assertions, that is, assertions that show inadequately what we are, could lay bare the illusory, in Kant’s sense of what is beyond phenomenological description, foundation of what we all are insofar as we may apperceive is, the Being of beings. We should perhaps notice that when Kant speaks of subject, world, God as transcendental ideas, and the subject more singularly as substantiality, personality, ideality, he does so from the epistemological perspective that considers any proposition for which there is no adequate phenomenological proof to support or validate a proposition or phenomenological description, to be illusory. In short, is - the Being of beings - is beyond phenomenological description.

108 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A335/B392.
Again the main point is that the inference from what is untrue to what is true does not create the apperception of what is unconcealed, but what is concealed. In this sense, what is essentially false will invariably show me what is true. One could say that what we achieve through this inference from the perception of what is false to the apperception of what is true, is seemingly that we returned to where we begun, to negate the apperception of that which first appeared without properties, be this called, \( \textit{Anschauung} \), the unconcealed or nothing. We may appear to have come full circle back to where also Hegel begins, that is, with \( \textit{Being} \), and with this being, with nothing. For, as Hegel says, in the beginning, ‘Being is Nothing.’\(^\text{109}\) [Th]is is simply not true, for as Kant’s \( \textit{Anschauung} \) and Hegel’s \( \textit{Nichts} \)/Nothing presents merely the naked apperception of that which is unconcealed, whereas through these false deductions, we make the inference to the Being of what is concealed. Truly, we have through this ontological inference simply negated the apperception of what Kant calls ‘Anschauung,’ and Hegel, ‘Nichts,’ negated, through this false inference, the apperception of that which to Heidegger is first unconcealed. What we achieve through the inference from what is untrue to what is true, have created or been led to the apperception of, is this, that which is concealed, and whereas the first, that which is negated, may appear convincing enough the other is truly profound. Hence, we inquire into the depths of Being. We shall finish as we began, with a concrete exposition of this negative ontological experience, returning to find Lord Gloucester as he is looking for the way to Dover.

\(^{109}\) Hegel says in \textit{Logic}, ‘But this mere Being, as it is mere abstraction, is therefore the absolutely negative: which, in a similar \textit{immediate aspect}, is just Nothing. [Hegel, \textit{Logic}, ‘Chapter VII, The Doctrine of Being,’ § 87, p. 127."
It is an unseeing man who encounters a son in disguise on the heath, when the blinded Gloucester meets Edgar, whom he does not recognize, never apperceives, asking the stranger, ‘Know’st thou the way to Dover?’ The unrecognized son answers, as he denies his own existence, ‘Give me thy arm:/Poor Tom shall lead thee.’ Concerning the presentation of what is not, no description in Shakespeare’s oeuvre is more convincing than Poor Tom a-Bedlam’s evocative description of the waters far beneath the cliff before the fall and his equally inspired description of the monster looking down from the edge of the cliff after the fall, nothing more false. As Edgar asks after the resolution, and no one more falsely,

Edgar  ‘Upon the crown o’ th’ cliff, what this was that
Which parted from you?
Gloucester  A poor unfortunate beggar.
Edgar  As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelked and waved like the enrigèd sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men’s impossibilities, have preserved thee.’

What we shall bear in mind when we listen to these descriptions is not that they are ‘poetic,’ but rather their poetic function which is to produce the hidden Being of the storyteller and the eyeless Being of the one offered such false representations. This point is too easily missed if one gives too much attention to the meaning of what is said and neglects its function, which is, as it is so often to Shakespeare, not only to speak with eloquence but to produce the apperception of the Being of beings.

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110 Shakespeare, King Lear, Act IV, Scene i.80-81.
111 Shakespeare, King Lear, Act IV, Scene vi.67-74.
Poor Tom describes lyrically what he sees from the [non-] edge of the Cliff of Dover,

‘The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark
Diminished to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge
That on th’ unnumb’red idle pebble chafes
Cannot be heard so high. I’ll look no more,
Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.’

These would be fair descriptions if Edgar was not standing in the middle of the plain fields, if he did not present himself as Poor Tom. But he does, and through the false perceptions that he evokes, and by himself being inappercieved, Edgar makes the spectator apperceive the Being of beings, as we draw inferences not only from the imperception of [th]is [heath] to its unconcealed existence but also from the inappercieption of [th]is man [Edgar] to his concealed Being, again making the false inference from what is untrue, to what is.

Edgar’s description is not only a testimony to man’s powers of imagination, to the freedom of the imagination to go beyond what is merely true, but more so, this imagination has, what is not often if at all acknowledged, a function which is quite contrary to the superficial freedom that its words seem to express, words which appear to be uttered in total disregard of what might appear before them. However, the acknowledgement of the negative freedom of the imagination to express what does not exist, to go beyond the expression of what is merely there, hides the fact that the expression of what does not exist, does not only evoke the perception of what is not there, but more fundamentally, produces the profound apperception of what is there, that [place] - even the negation of that [place] - from

which not even the storyteller nor the imagination can escape without making its own expression impossible. So in its empty freedom, the description or presentation of what is not, produces what is, irrevocably what makes [th]is presentation, the presentation of what is not possible, in the first place, that the one who expresses what is not, and the one listening to what is not, is there.

[55] Edgar’s description is both beautiful and compelling and if we have any imagination at all, we will not fail to have a strong inner impression of what Edgar has, through logos, evoked the image of. There is only one rub, his description is inadequate to what is there, and it is through [th]is inadequacy Gloucester falls and is resurrected, for Gloucester falls from an aporia, a place that simply does not exist. Not only does Shakespeare let Poor Tom guide Gloucester to the brink of the cliff to there experience, with the wind blowing in his face, an aporia, a place from which it is impossible to proceed, to go any further or even jump, but Shakespeare lets Gloucester fall from that place which it is truly impossible to fall from, a place that does not exist. And from this place that does not exist, Gloucester does not only proceed, but he walks away unharmed as if nothing had happened. But it is impossible to claim that nothing did. Therefore Being appears to be unthinkable, transgressing a poor man’s thoughts and emotions, only expressed as the negation of what [th]is man may falsely perceive or apperceive. What appears to be, in all cases, is that which is unthinkable, that which [th]is person does not think of or that which through [th]is man’s imagination or reflections has not been expressed, or that which is only expressed as the negation of what [th]is man falsely perceives or apperceives.
More patiently, we come to realize, that when Edgar is describing what is far beneath the cliff of Dover, that what is there, what which we can see, if anything is presented, is never described and that these fields near Dover, appear to be only because they are not described, and as such remain truly indescribable, because they transgress Gloucester’s imagination, and hence become truly unimaginable. That difference, rather than its elimination, produces the apperception of the Being of beings, the apperception of that which is unconcealed, that which remains, which is unimagined, unimaginable, is. A similarly false presentation occurs in the interrogation of Parolles towards the end of All’s Well that Ends Well, which also produces the apperception of what is unconcealed. For the false but essential presentation that is without referential subject creates the apperception of what is unconcealed as much as the false presentation of that which has a referential subject, produces the apperception of what is concealed. For the purpose of the production of the Being of beings, it is rather irrelevant that Gloucester is blind and Parolles is blindfolded. For the false perception of that which does not exist creates the profound apperception of what is unconcealed as much as the false perception of what is is creates the profound apperception of what is concealed.

Just as the cliff of Dover is profoundly unconcealed through its non-existence, as it is and remains imperceived, so is the enemy camp where Parolles, in All’s Well that Ends Well, thinks he is being interrogated by the enemy, whose incomprehensible tongue makes him fear for his life, but also speak the truth. It is, of course, that is very imperception, the perception of that which is sublimely

113 Shakespeare, All’s Well that Ends Well, Act IV, Scene iii.123-326.
shallow, which gives Being to that which, before our very eyes, is not unconcealed. For what is obvious, is that [th]is imperception, produces the apperception of [th]is as unconcealed, whereas any inapperception produces the apperception of [th]is as concealed. And so it becomes clear that each figure produces correspondingly but paradoxically the Being of that which is not perceived or the Being of that which is not apperceived. Gloucester senses this imperception, that which is neither perceived nor apperceived, saying, ‘But have I fall’n or no?’ To which Edgar answers affirmatively, and never have man spoken more falsely, ‘From the dead summit of this chalky bourn./Look up a-height: the shrill-gorged lark so far/Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.’ To which Gloucester, looking either up or down? says, ‘Alack, I have no eyes.’

[58] Had Gloucester never thought he had been standing on that cliff which is not there, and had not Edgar, so evocatively, described the ocean below that does not exist, the spectator would never have believed that the one rising from the fall he never made, would be. And so we could say that if Edgar had told the truth, not only would Gloucester have been dead, but we would never considered him to be dying, had he merely crashed into the rocks below. And so it is, not only that untruth kept [th]is man alive, but the untruth produced the Being of the man which appear before us. For if his thoughts, his perceptions, his apperceptions were ever adequate to [th]is or the phenomenal masque, did ever correspond to this person or persona, not only would [th]is life be over, but it would indeed never have begun, as he, to the audience, would never appear to be. So whether or not untruth saves or kills, it is the untrue representation that most convincingly, most

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114 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene iv.60.
effortlessly creates the apperception of that which, according to Hegel, lives and
dies. And thus Shakespeare has accomplished the production of the contradiction
that lies at the core of every life, that which to Hegel is most fundamental to every
being, the Being of beings. For it is, as Hegel says in his Logic, undoubtedly true
that the same being lives and dies.\textsuperscript{115}

[59] Imperception is never an obstacle, but, paradoxically, an undeniable
inspiration for the apperception of what is, the production of the Being of beings,
the ontological contradiction. Again [th]is appears as what is unimaginable, the
world appears as what is indescribably a transgression. And it is /th/is
transgression, which the world is, which sometimes keeps us alive, and sometimes
kills us. As much as it saves Lord Gloucester, it kills Desdemona. For it is [th]is
difference, between what we imagine and what is unimaginable, the mind’s
inadequate perception of what [th]is is, or for that matter, the inadequate
apperception of /th/is, that makes not only Romeo kill himself when seeing Juliet in
the sarcophagus, where she appears to be dead but is not, but also makes Othello
reach out for a pillow which he places on Desdemona’s face to make her forever
speechless, turning the wedding-bed into a death-bed.\textsuperscript{116} Undoubtedly, it is /th/is
difference which makes us all weep as we believe, the spectators truly believe, that
both Romeo and Desdemona are really dying, and that Gloucester is really saved.
It is above all else, [th]is difference, the expression of [th]is inadequacy, which
deeply hypnotizes the audience/spectators with the production of [th]is notion or

\textsuperscript{115} As Hegel says in Logic, ‘But the truth of the matter is that life, as life, involves the germ of death,
and that the finite, being radically self-contradictory, involves its own self-suppression. Hegel,
Logic, ‘Chapter VI, Logic Further Defined and Divided,’ §81, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{116} Shakespeare, Othello, Act V, Scene ii.83.
relativism will always fall short of producing the apperception of what is, what to
us appear to be [real], as [th]is sense of reality is produced by the transgression,
even the destruction of any [real] perspective. [Th]is apperspective, [th]is
difference between our own perspective and what [th]is perspective fails to
acknowledge the essence or existence of, is what sometimes keeps us alive and
sometimes kills us, but, in both cases, whether [th]is - the apperspective - kills us or
keeps us alive, it is [th]is difference that produces the apperception of the Being of
beings, which, in any case, remains indescribable. For in theatre as in life, the
inadequation kept Gloucester truly alive, or as Edgar says to his father, ‘men’s
impossibilities has preserved thee.’\footnote{Shakespeare, \textit{King Lear}, Act IV, Scene vi.74.}
§7.1 The Topos of Dissimilarity
§7.2 The Function of Dissimilarity
§7.3 The Paradox of Dissimilarity

C7 EXPOSÉ

[1] In this chapter I will trace Shakespeare’s use of the figure of dissimilarity, which remains as unrecognized as the commonplace of love is known by all. Shakespeare adapts, for his own purposes, the figure of dissimilarity, to produce, like Pseudo-Dionysius, the apperception of what is hidden.1 Like Dionysius, whom there is clear evidence Shakespeare knew through his theory of the angelic hierarchies, Shakespeare produces the apperception of what is mystical. Just as we shall in the next chapter see how Shakespeare applies the figure of *aphairesis*, or more concretely *elision*, in the production of Being, a method nowhere more clearly presented than in Dionysius’ *The Mystical Theology*, so will we in this chapter realize how he applies another Dionysian figure, dissimilar similarity to produce the same end, the apperception of the Being of beings. I will not only show that Shakespeare produces [th]is end, but that he is conscious of [th]is production. Showing [un]true craftsmanship, Shakespeare displays three different variations on [th]is same dissimilar figure. Firstly, the apparent homage to tradition, where Shakespeare presents spirits as dissimilar creatures. Whether it is one of the fates

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or a monster, the intention is the same, to produce, through this dissimilarity, the perception of an unlikeness, which in turn produces the inference from the negation of the appearance, to what is hidden. Shakespeare does, rather cleverly, produce another variation, for in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, he not only transforms appearances but the *perception* of appearances and through this cognitive transformation, one again perceives a dissimilarity which produces the inference to what is hidden. Thirdly, and for the third time within the same play, Shakespeare challenges his audience to witness a dissimilar production. Paradoxically, no performance is experienced as more real than *Pyramus and Thisby*, no players more convincing than the mechanics, and nowhere is the audience, more effortlessly persuaded to confuse theatre and life, the stage and the world, thus again showing, the true mechanics of Being.

§7.1 The Topos of Dissimilarity

[2] Pseudo-Dionysius is the first to attempt a thoroughly systematic and logically consistent investigation into the interpretation and production of the apperception of spiritual beings. Unlike St. Thomas, Pseudo-Dionysius does not speak directly about what angels are, but starts by asking how they are perceived. Going through the evidence of the scriptures, Pseudo-Dionysius finds that angels, spiritual beings are presented, as they appear, with incongruous images, as unlikenesses, dissimilar similarities, that they are perceived falsely, or quite simply,

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3 Whereas St. Thomas acknowledges that all men’s formal properties are universal, that the individuating principle for all singular men is *matter*, St. Thomas believes that angels need not be incarnated to be individuals as every angel remains indifferent from its form, and no angelic form is similar to another. Cf, Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, ‘Chapter 4, Essence in Separated Substances,’ *Selected Writings*, p. 41. *This* indifference from itself and *this* difference from all other angels, confirms, to St. Thomas, that angels do not [accidentally] carry bodies for their own sake, but for ours.
as *what* they are not. In other words, they - these spiritual beings - appear as *what* they are not, and through the perception of *what* they are not, we apperceive *that* they are, as we again make an inference to the Being of beings. We witness the *material* expression of an unlike-likeness when the appearance is phenomenally distorted from or phenomenally inexpressive of *what* it essentially is and the difference is acknowledged or the distortion seems apparent. When the appearance does not self-evidently announce or give any signs that its self-presentation is different from *what* it essentially is, we may formally witness the expression of an unlike-likeness, where I acknowledge that what I *essentially* perceive is without Being, without yet ceasing to exist, rather, reinforcing the apperception of the existence of that which cannot be identified with these properties. Illustrations that mark out the differences are not difficult to find.

Concerning the material expression of an unlike-likenesses, no episode in Shakespeare is perhaps more telling than the horrific apparitions of the ghostly messengers, the harbingers of the future that, in a concealed manner, announces the end of *Macbeth*, not to mention the appearance in the beginning of *Macbeth* of the three bearded witches. But no play is perhaps more populated by these dissimilar appearances than *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.4

[3] I will not follow the many trails into Shakespeare’s drama searching for whatever trace of mysticism or shadow of magic there may be in any of his plays.5

Rather, we shall enjoy the most spectacular, the most magical of all Shakespeare’s

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4 A man in disguise, is only formally and not immediately and perceptibly an unlike-likeness, if the disguise is not detected, whereas a monster or an angel, as they are, like ghosts, presented immediately and perceptible as *what* they are not, a man with wings or a man with the head of an ass, are.

plays, and remind ourselves that this play is one of two for which there is no original source. Like Love’s Labours Lost, the story of A Midsummer Night’s Dream has no single source, and one is tempted to say that this is not only the most extraordinary but perhaps the most personal of all of Shakespeare’s plays. In this play, the gods, the fairies, the monsters, abound, as if springing from a magical well. As always, Shakespeare is clearly not an original. Evidently, one can only make nothing from nothing, and Shakespeare’s use of the commonplace of dissimilar similarity is here as evident as his use of the commonplace of love. However, whereas we are accustomed to recognize the one topos, most of us are unable to recognize the other, which makes it all the more effective in the production of the ontological contradiction, the Being of beings.

[4] Love in A Midsummer Night’s Dream is a commonplace so obvious that one is inclined not to think of it, which is, of course, why commonplaces work, because the audience consider them as their own or indifferent from themselves. As Shakespeare shows time and time again, nothing is easier than for man to be captured by himself, for man to be seduced, perhaps even caught, by his own nature. In this sense we could agree with Harold Bloom, that no one knew ‘human nature,’ if we are allowed to call what is historically malleable and without history shapeless, ‘nature,’ better than Shakespeare. If we are to liken man to the flute that Hamlet was so unwilling to be, Shakespeare certainly knew what flute he was playing. As Hamlet, perhaps speaking for all audiences, demonstrates to Guildenstern, ‘Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call

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6 Tony Tanner, Introduction to A Midsummer Night’s Dream, in, William Shakespeare, Comedies, Volume 1, p. cxxxv.
7 As well as being the most spiritual of Shakespeare’s plays, it is certainly the most hilarious.
8 Bloom, Shakespeare, The Invention of the Human, ‘Shakespeare’s Universalism,’ p. 15.
me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.'

If the audience confronted Shakespeare with the same objection, we are quite confident that his answer would have been, ‘I doubt you are right.’ For however unwilling a man may be to be seduced by his own nature, nature is not something man may easily escape without seizing to be.

One of the commonplaces that nourish a *Midsummer Night’s Dream* is the general belief that love is blind. This commonplace is most magnificently, and perhaps most influentially, presented by Apuleius in *The Golden Ass*, where the unseen Cupid captures the heart of the unseeing Psyche and then only escapes the wrath of Cupid’s mother, Venus, by being hidden. We can easily gather the sprouts of this commonplace from Shakespeare’s works, as for example in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, where Helena says that ‘Love looks not with the eyes.’ The name of the unseen ‘Cupid’ being declaimed by Oberon, The King of the Underworld, who, on this night of transformations, casts a love spell on his wife, Queen Titania, to show once and for all that every lover is prone to the most ridiculous misperceptions, no more rampantly than when Titania falls in love with half an ass. For casting the spell on his wife Titania, Oberon says, ‘May ye love whatever appear.’ It would appear that Shakespeare continues the experiments with love we find in equal measure in *Twelfth Night* and *Romeo and Juliet*, trying to establish whether or not true or false lovers are more persuasive, whether true

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or false love is more effective in producing the Being of beings. Clearly, in *Twelfth Night*, Olivia’s love for ‘Cassius,’ the disguised and unrecognized Viola, and later, Olivia’s love for ‘Cassius,’ the unrecognized or inappreciated Sebastian, seem more persuasive to any modern audience than Arcite’s or Palamon’s true and undisguised love for Emily in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* could ever be, perhaps even more persuasive than Romeo’s true, but hidden, love for Juliet. For had Romeo not been false to Rosaline we would not believe he was truly in love with Juliet, and if Romeo and Juliet did seize to not show their love, if they suddenlydeclared their love to the world, it is doubtful whether they would appear to be, in love, at all.

For the substantial commonplace of love there is another formal commonplace, which is overlooked by the spectator as easily as he recognizes the first, namely dissimilar similarity. In fact, the spectators within the theatre, are as much cast under the spell of the commonplace of dissimilar similarity, as the characters, within the play, are kept under the spell of love, the spectators, within the theatre, as much ravished by dissimilar similarities as the characters are moved, as Plato would say, erotically, by what they love. The argument of this chapter is fairly simple and we shall proceed analogically. One could easily justify the exclusion of Shakespeare from the history of rhetoric, by referring to his

14 ‘False love’ is either a love of what is untrue or what is untrue, a love of that which does not carry this masque of predicates or a love for that masque of predicates for which there appear to be no subject or for which the subject has been taken away or removed. Considered from the point of view of the lover, false love is either love that is not expressed or that expression of love for which no subject essentially or that expression for which no adequate feeling nor sincere emotion does exist. So indeed there are, at least, four expressions of false love. We shall not dwell on the commonplace of love, only remark the obvious that, in the production of the ontological difference, false love rather than true love is much more successful in attaining its true end, the apperception of the Being of beings.

15 Clearly, throughout the play Romeo never shows his love for Juliet in public, and for this transgression, he dies, violently, as if love was reinforced by the strength of guilt.

16 Plato, *Symposium*, 211c.
meagre use of the word ‘rhetoric.’ What one has thereby proven is that Shakespeare is not engaged in a discourse on rhetoric. However, anyone who does not express the word ‘rhetoric’ can of course use rhetoric, anyone who does not speak of ‘symbolic theology’ can in fact use symbolic theology. In fact, the one who does not use the word ‘rhetoric’ is often more successful, more effective at reaching his persuasive aim, his affective goal, than the one who does, if not one seeks, like Plato, the final triumph of rhetoric through its denunciation. Similarly with Shakespeare’s adaptation of Dionysius’ symbolic theology, more specifically, his use of the inadequate figure of dissimilar similarity, an inadequation that never fails to reach its end: to produce the apperception of the Being of beings, the ontological contradiction. For dissimilar similarity, unlike likeness, is a device formalized by Pseudo-Dionysius, to both interpret and express, to understand and produce the apperception of what is concealed, the mystical, quite simply what is [hidden]. What Pseudo-Dionysius then offers is not only a hermeneutics for what is [hidden], but also a poetics. It is as easy to identify Shakespeare’s application of the method of dissimilar similarity, as it is to spot Aristotle’s use of dialectics in On the Heavens. If Aristotle does not mention the word ‘dialectics’ in the presentation of his axiomatic argument in On the Heavens, one should not be surprised that Shakespeare does not speak of ‘dissimilar similarity’ or ‘unlike

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17 In fact, Shakespeare’s place in the history of ‘rhetoric’ seems comparable to the instances he used the word, which is not too often. For anyone interested in the exact number the reader is referred to Marvin Spevack, A Complete and Systematic Concordance to the Works of Shakespeare, Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagshandlung Hildesheim, 1968.

18 See the anti-rhetorical opening of Socrates’ Apology in Plato, Apology, 17a-b.

19 It is, of course, difficult to locate the non-use of any one term in Aristotle’s On the Heavens, and for ‘dialectics,’ we can do no less than refer to all its chapters.

20 I am specifically referring to the influential and dialectical argument in On the Heavens where Aristotle demonstrates, dialectically, the existence of ether, that is, the quintessential element of which all heavenly beings are made. For proceeding dialectically, that is, from opinions that are self-evident to the many or the superior few, Aristotle claims that it is undoubtedly so that to all movements there is a corresponding element, hence, a quintessential element adequate to the circular movement of all heavenly beings. Cf. Aristotle, On the Heavens, 268b12-269b16.
likeness,’ concepts that define a certain procedure for presenting what is invisible, a method for expressing what is concealed, more widely known as symbolic theology.21

[7] As Ernst A. Gombrich makes clear, Dionysius’ *Symbolic Theology*22 was extremely influential in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance,23 exerted no little influence on the plastic arts, and, as we shall see, *[th]is* method, which at the time of Shakespeare had been a commonplace for theologians and artists for more than five centuries, clearly underpins and guides some of Shakespeare’s most persuasive plays, if not the success of the dramatic performance. Speaking first more generally of the influence of Dionysian elements on the Shakespearean corpus, we find an unmistakable Dionysian scent in the soliloquy where Macbeth deliberates whether or not to kill the sleeping King, where whispering he accuses himself indefinitely of having ‘no spur/To prick the sides of [his] intent.’24 For Macbeth is anxious that the *angel of knowledge* will disclose the horrible crime,

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21 Obviously there are more profound ways to recognize correspondences, if you will, *Wahlverwandtschaften*, than by recognizing names. A machine could recognize a name. Similarly, a machine could think that having found ‘dialectics’ in Plato, Aristotle and Hegel, he had found something similar. Evidently, what we are studying is not the different applications of the same word, but similarities of thought, presentation and expression. Diving into the actual reading of the different books of Plato’s *Sophist*, Aristotle’s *Analytics* and Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the reader soon discovers that ‘dialectics’ is a *homonym*, that one and the same word expresses entirely different methods, as easily as different words may be attempts to express the same thought. At other times, similarity is not expressed by words in isolation, as if we were only able to recognize a thought in isolation and never the pattern or structure created by these words or the worlds which these structures or patterns creates the perception or apperception of. Plainly, there are similarities of structure or process, and this structure may be without name, that is, itself not be the object of a discourse however much its structure carries forward its presentation through its use. It is therefore not difficult, for example, to recognize the dialectical mode of presentation in Aristotle’s *On the Heavens* however much the word ‘dialectics’ is never used, and not even mentioned.

22 We use the name ‘symbolic theology,’ knowing very well that it refers to a doctrine and not a body of work. And if indeed it does refer to a book, this book may never have been read. Surely, it is no longer extant. See Paul Rorem’s Comment to Letter Nine, in Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p. 280n, and his comments to the reference made by Dionysius in *The Divine Names*, Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, p 57n.


that ‘heaven’s cherubim horsed/Upon the sightless couriers of the air,/Shall blow
the horrid deed in every eye.’

Shakespeare’s reference to the cherub as an all-knowing angel of unconcealment is likewise made in Hamlet. In the exchange between King Claudius and Hamlet, Shakespeare lets the first speak of purposes, and the other, a cherub that sees them all. Regardless of whether Hamlet, like a true sceptic, is simply suggesting that he, like an all-knowing cherub, knows the purpose of the King of sending him away, it is evident that Shakespeare knows his cherub.

There is however another, more persuasive Pseudo-Dionysian element in Macbeth, which reminds us quite clearly of the Hermetic Symbolism that Giordano Bruno expressed in his final writings, and that Ficino, already in his Theology was advocating, offering, as he did, not only the first translation of the Hermetic Corpus, but a new translation of Dionysius’ The Mystical Theology. For the English there was, however, never any need to wait for a Latin translation of The Mystical Theology or a lecture tour by Giordano Bruno to obtain an understanding of spiritual phenomena as dissimilar similarities, as the theory had been widespread in the West for more than 700 years and had been available in the clearest English more than 200 years before either Bruno or Shakespeare were born. Symbolic theology, which dominated European minds for centuries, and

26 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act IV, Scene iii.48. For the cherub or cherubim as an angel of knowledge, see, Pseudo-Dionysius, The Celestial Hierarchy, ‘Chapter Seven: Concerning the seraphim, cherubim, and thrones, and theirs, the first hierarchy,’ The Complete Works, 205B, p. 161.
28 See evidence of Eriugena’s Latin translation of the Greek text to Dionysius’ The Mystical Theology, where Michael A. Selles explains: ‘In 827 C. E., the Byzantine emperor Michael the Stammerer sent a gift to the Frankish king Louis the Pious. His gift was a copy of the Greek writings attributed to an Athenian companion of St. Paul, Dionysius the Aeropagite. …Charles the Bald, the successor to Louis the Pious, commissioned the Irish scholar John the Scot Eriugena (810-
whose theory is presented in the clearest English in Denis Hid Divinite - a book as popular at the beginning of 16th century England as De Mystica Theologia remained compulsory reading for so many novices across the convents on the continent - is no less than the art of presenting what is concealed through dissimilar similarity, the art of presenting, producing and interpreting what inevitably remains, what is concealed through dissimilar symbols, where the producer and the interpreter are aware that what is hidden is different from its image, distinct from its essential presentation. As the perceiver is barred from comprehending, from grasping what [th]is essentially is, he is lead to the apperception of what [is] and remains [in]essentially hidden, the mystery of the Being of beings.29

[9] The symbolic presentation of the prophesying spirits in Macbeth, bears a striking resemblance to the spirits that Giordano Bruno speaks of in his lectures.30

The spirits of [un]concealment that these witches, these fates conjure up in

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29) to prepare another version. Eriguena translated all the major surviving texts attributed to Dionysius.’ [Selles, Mystical Languages of Unsaying, p. 34.] Of the importance of these translations, one cannot speak more pregnantly than David Knowles, whom in The English Mystical Tradition, says, ‘On the topic of mystical theology Dionysius’s short treatise of that name was destined to have an immense influence, for it exactly filled … a gap in the teaching of the Western Fathers.’ [Knowles, The English Mystical Tradition, p. 29].

29) Suspending the decision of whether Shakespeare was Catholic or not, and disregarding that the Pope, following the royal propaganda and under the auspices of the Privy Council often was without disguise presented as the Devil/Satan, regarding Shakespeare’s religion, we shall not need to mention that his father most likely maintained his allegiance to the pope throughout his life, as Stephen Greenblatt does in his book on Hamlet in Purgatory.[Greenblatt, Hamlet in Purgatory, pp. 248-49, 254.] His aunt, being a nun, most likely was one of many recusants in a region, as David Knowles notes in his thought-provoking history of the dissolution of the monasteries,[I believe Knowles mentions Shakespeare’s aunt somewhere in Bare Ruined Choirs - The Dissolution of the English Monasteries, although I have been unable to rediscover the statement.] which according to the statistics remained for a long time silently Catholic, as A. G. Dickens concludes in his careful study of the Reformation in different parts of England, Late Monasticism and the Reformation, ‘Where did Protestantism Most Readily take Root?’, pp. 117.] To show that Shakespeare was not a religious man, it would be especially irrelevant, and highly and self-evidently anachronistic, to assert that Shakespeare’s plays are without moral, or that Shakespeare’s bawdy plays have no sense of decency or morality except towards the end, when the plays have reached their end, to support the view that Shakespeare was not a Christian or does not adhere to a particular kind of creed or theology, when it is obvious that Shakespeare nowhere falls pray to the modern prejudice of confusing belief with religion, of confusing ethics and theology, never confounds God with man’s transient and ephemeral perceptions of what man, quite flimsily or fortuitously, defines, at one time or another, as ‘right,’ ‘just’ or ‘good.’

Macbeth are presented as dissimilar similarities, symbolic apparitions through which future fates or fortunes are unconcealed to us, to Macbeth, through the apparition of a head armed with a sword and a shield, a bloody child and a child crowned with a tree in his hand. Shakespeare is aware that there are different ways to experience ghosts, spirits or angels. The healthy if not Montaignesque scepticism of Hamlet makes him, for a while, until the ghost returns to haunt him in his mother's chamber, believe that he saw something that does not exist, whereas Macbeth, less convinced of his own doubts, believes he has perceived what to him remains incomprehensible, something whose essence he cannot simply fathom, whose essential appearance is clearly false, but whose existence he is unable to deny. Hamlet even fakes the experience of the mysterium tremendum to the naïve Ophelia, as he for a while believes the spectre is only the projection of his own guilt, whereas Macbeth, without the assistance of Banquo or his wife, seems unable to shake off the tremor of its impression without assistance. On two occasions Banquo and Macbeth’s wife are forced to pull him out of amazement, the tremble being only the physiological residue that remains after he is no longer stupefied, after [th]is is no longer there to be misperceived/misapprehended.

Perhaps profoundly, Derrida asks in The Gift of Death, ‘What does the body wish to say when it trembles?’ Giving an answer where Derrida does not

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31 Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act IV, Scene i.50ff.
32 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene iv.102-137.
33 In effect, Hamlet says that what he saw, this spectre was only true to his imagination, for cowardice does cleverly convince him that [th]is has no Being without him, which is, of course, as Kant reiterates, always the secret of the Being of beings, that there is no Being without me.
34 On the difference between tremor and stupor in the apperception of what is spiritual or ghostly, see, Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, p. 26. Obviously, Shakespeare has fashioned different ghosts for different spirits, the one ghost appearing, as Horatio says of King Hamlet, exactly as he did in life, a mere replica of what he was down to his very armour, which even there, from beyond signifies the same, a readiness for war. [Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act I, Scene i.39-59].
provide one, we could say that the body wishes to express that which the soul cannot essentially comprehend, but whose empty apperception it cannot yet deny. To [th]is inessential apperception there would sometime belong no other feeling than boundless nausea, no other sign of what is hidden would surface than the phenomenal tremors of the apperceiver, who may become as stupefied as Hamlet is when seeing the ghost of his father enter his mothers chamber at Elsinore Castle. Of course, if Hamlet, like a modern sceptic, merely doubted, as he does in the beginning of the play, the existence of the ghost that appears before him, he would not shiver. But he does, and [th]is time without dissimulation. Again we reach the point of stammering, like Heidegger who, according to Gadamer, more stutters than speaks when he attempts to unconceal the Being of beings. To set the apperception of spirits in perspective we have to say that the sceptic would never tremble. The sceptic would not tremble in the face of what he does not know. He is used to not knowing, not knowing has become part of his constitution. To the sceptic, a ghost could never be the ‘object’ of fear. For if the existence of the ghost or the spirit is merely doubted no one would ever tremble.

[11] In Macbeth we witness a spiritual spectacle, the three spirits that appear to tell the future, be they called fates or witches. In line with the current or contemporary understanding of how these spirits should be fashioned, Shakespeare has made them appear as what they are not, for these fates/witches appear with beards much like angels appear with wings throughout the bible, dissimilarly, not because witches actually have beards or angels have wings, which

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36 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene iv.102-137.
37 Gadamer, Heidegger’s Ways, pp. 135, 19.
38 There are indeed indications that Shakespeare was visited by an angel, but as nothing can be known about [th]is visitation, whereby the dissimilar appear as what it is not, to horrify the many and gladden the few, there is no need to elaborate, indeed, it is impossible.
is, as Pseudo-Dionysius points out, only the the belief of the mob, but because we are meant to infer from these incongruous images, the perception of these monsters, to the existence of beings who are different from their appearance, to apperceive that, indeed, this is different from its appearance. Clearly, I am invited to infer from the perception of what is untrue, that there are simply no women with beards, no men with wings, to the apperception of what is [true], to that which does not have any of the properties which this appears to have. This mode of presentation, which is repeated by Shakespeare later in Macbeth when he lets these three witches evoke to Macbeth the three harbingers of the future who also appear dissimilarly, follows a Medieval tradition, prolonged well beyond the Renaissance, of presenting that which is, spirits, through incongruous symbols or images. Undoubtedly, the theory of presenting this, spirits through incongruous images or unlike likenesses or dissimilar symbols is presented most forcefully, logically and systematically by the theologian who began this tradition, and who still at the time of Shakespeare was, in the Catholic church, the most revered of all theologians except Paul, namely, Dionysius the Aeropagite.

40 Shakespeare, Macbeth, Act IV, Scene i.68-93.
41 Although Dame Frances Yates does not acknowledge it, it is of course striking that the way in which Shakespeare presents the three fortune-telling spirits in Macbeth is similar to imagery used by Giordano Bruno in his last published work, [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, pp. 331-337] and although we only note the similarity, it is perhaps, as Mrs. Yates suggests, less than an historical coincidence that Bruno went on a lecture tour of England, to Oxford, in 1583 to present his spiritual theories. Unlike Yates, we are not thereby suggesting or indicating a casual connection between Bruno and Shakespeare, not suggesting that Shakespeare was among Bruno's audience at Oxford, but clearly stating that the commonplace of using incongruous symbols to express what is spiritual or ghostly, was certainly adopted by Shakespeare.
42 Why was St. Dionysius the most highly regarded of all theologians, second only to St. Paul, before Luther's Reformation corrupted his authority and the Catholics, the Counter-Reformation, countered by scattering angels across the domes of all churches in Europe to reemphasize his baroque authority? It is simply a matter of succession, as Dionysius was believed to be the first theologian after Paul, the convert of St. Paul at Aeropagos in Athens, the very man who went out to preach the gospel in a philosophical manner more suitable to Greek tastes. However, as Lorenzo Valla discovered in 1538 through his text-critical studies, finding no references to Dionysius before
Now we have to clarify the difference between the Dionysian and the Shakespearean procedure [from the beginning]. The most obvious difference is that Shakespeare does not, never speaks of the end of his productions, what he already from the beginning attempts to produce the apperception of, while Dionysius explicitly states the end *discursively* already from the beginning.

Whereas Dionysius non-objective is *universal*, Shakespeare’s non-objective is *singular*. Whereas Dionysius attempts, in *The Mystical Theology*, to speak universally of God, of what *is* and remains hidden, and therefore speaks of *it*, which remains after all predicates have been taken away, be they perceptual or intelligible, Shakespeare, like St. Thomas, expresses what is *singularly* hidden by compelling his audience to infer that which in/to every appearance remains hidden. To St. Thomas *this* remains essentially hidden simply because nothing can be reduced to *what* it essentially is, or its quiddity. For whereas properties are universal *this* is not [universal], that which has or incarnates these universal properties cannot be universal.\(^43\) Having acknowledged that Dionysius, in *The Mystical Theology*, speaks of what *is* universally hidden, we also have to understand that in his *Symbolic Theology*, rather than speaking universally, he speaks *singularly* of [th]is hidden Being. That is not surprising, for whereas Dionysius in *The Mystical Theology* refers to the *one* God, in *The Symbolic Theology*, or, more precisely, in the works in which this lost work is summarized, that is, *The Celestial Hierarchy* and *Letter 9*, he speaks of the *many* angels.

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\(^43\) Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, in *Selected Writings*, pp. 38, 41.
The Production of Being through Dissimilarity

[13] The difference between symbolic and mystical theology has to be stressed again, for whereas Dionysius in *The Mystical Theology* speaks of it, of what is universally hidden, in *The Symbolic Theology*, he speaks of how to interpret and produce the impression of what is singularly concealed. Having noticed this difference between the singular and the universal, we should on the other hand not exaggerate the difference between the two theologies. First of all because they both speak of what is as what is concealed, and, perhaps even more fundamentally, that it, which remains when we deny the world all sensual and conceptual properties, is exactly what returns, what reappears, to make up the foundation of this singular being, be it an angel or a man, whose Being is concealed. We should also note that the procedure of *aphairesis*, of removal, may as easily be applied to achieve this singular end, as it is, in *The Mystical Theology*, employed to produce the understanding, at least the apperception of what is universal, namely, God, the Being of all beings.

§7.2 The Function of Dissimilarity

[14] Let me point out the unfamiliar familiarity of Shakespeare’s creatures, but not without first giving a word of caution. As modern men, we do not simply forget Kant’s ridicule of Swedenborg in *Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics*, nor Kant’s continued mockery of those who appear to have seen or experienced angels in *Prolegomena*. Kant truly believes that nothing may be apperceived beyond what Adorno, in his measured lectures on Kant, rightly calls

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44 This forewarning appears as early as 1766 in Kant, *Dreams of a Visionary Explained by Dreams of Metaphysics*, ‘Part I, Fourth Chapter: Theoretical Conclusion From the Whole of the Considerations of the First Part,’ in *The Philosophy of Kant*, pp. 14-18.

‘the metaphysical block,’\textsuperscript{46} which bars all men from experiencing what is essentially hidden. Evidently, the experience of what is dissimilar, be it ghosts, spirits, powers or angels, was never given to Kant, and being inclined to generalization, he erased centuries of human history, with no other justification than his own limited experience. In contradistinction to centuries of human history he even changed the definition of ‘experience’ itself by excluding everything that may not, perhaps cannot, phenomenologically be described.\textsuperscript{47} For Kant did not consider history, which is the historein of experience, to be significant compared to the transcendent conditions of any experience, the transcendent conditions that, moreover, makes the experience of anything like angels, spirits, powers or Gods, essentially unavailable to man.\textsuperscript{48}

\[15\] If one for one moment believed that \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream} is familiar to us, it is evident that [th]is familiarity has nothing to do with what is essentially

\textsuperscript{46} As for the metaphysical experience implied in the Kantian block, see Adorno, \textit{Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason}, pp. 110-12, 175ff.

\textsuperscript{47} For Kant’s definition of ‘Erfahrung’ or ‘experience’ and how it is differentiated from ‘Anschauung’ or ‘sense,’ see Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A51/B75. We should remind the reader that Kant also emptied the world ‘idea’ of all its contents, which means, he simply stole the Greek, the Platonic idea and removed all essential attributes. Cf. Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A327/B384.

\textsuperscript{48} When attempting to make a judgment about the essential composition of the universe, man encounters, according to Kant, the cosmological antinomies, which make no final decision about either its components, its causes, its limits, its necessity, possible. However, even if Kant makes no judgment about what is either revealed or hidden, neither giving the final word to the empiricists following Hume nor the rationalists following Leibniz, he nevertheless, and without exception, presents the Being of beings, whether as Subject, World or God, as entirely hidden, unavailable to perception, in Kant’s sense, unavailable to Erfahrung or phenomenal experience. Still, what is hidden is within the reach of Reason, which almost necessarily sense what is beyond the phenomenal experience as noumenon, be [th]is apperceived as Subject, World or God. It is important to notice that Kant considers the transcendent ideas of Subject, World and God [Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, A335/B392] as ‘regulative principles’ for the use of Reason,[Kant, \textit{Critique of Pure Reason}, ‘Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic: On The Regulative Use of The Ideas of Pure Reason,’ A643/B671-A668/B696, esp. A643/B671-A644/B672] thus showing, once and for all the normative basis of his ontology. For ‘the metaphysical block’ is not one given by nature, but one ascribed to by man. We should also note that when speaking of soul as a distinction or condition that cannot be denied in any [act of] cognition, Kant does, of course, reiterate Descartes’ argument without making the mistake of hypostatizing that which is hidden, as Karl Ameriks justly remarks in his enlightening \textit{Kant’s Theory of Mind – An Analysis of the Paralogisms of Pure Reason}, as either permanent, identical or substantial. See, Ameriks, \textit{Kant’s Theory of Mind}, xxix.
[re]presented but with the method of presentation itself, not the beings it [re]presents, but the sense of Being it conveys. For all these gods, angels, spirits and powers, do appear abundantly before us in what continues to be one of Shakespeare’s most popular plays. That the spectator almost regardless of what is essentially represented may experience what appears before him as real, as not merely representations but divulging a glimpse of life itself, is nowhere more clear than in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, whose essential content would have alienated the spectator completely, had it not conveyed an experience indifferent from life itself, an obscure notion of what is [hidden]. A few illustrations of what is likely to alienate the spectator, but does not, showing again how essential considerations are almost irrelevant for the establishment of the Being of beings, the production of the apperception of what is, will suffice. To modern and enlightened men, nothing is familiar about Oberon’s spell, when he conjures up the experience of love at first sight for his wife, Titania, by saying, ‘May ye love whatever appear.’49 Perhaps even Helena’s God forsaken experience is today unfamiliar to most, when she humbly admits that ‘The more I pray, the lesser is my grace.’50 But most strikingly unfamiliar, of course, are all the fairies and monsters, the demigods and nymphs that populate this play, inhabit this drama, where Oberon is only the King of all unfamiliar beings.

[16] Even when Shakespeare speaks mythologically, he expresses the hidden charms of the play, what attracts the audience and makes the spectator stay, when he lets Helena at length speak of the blind, the unseeing Cupid.51 And being surrounded by so many unfamiliar beings, what does Shakespeare do but abandon

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49 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act II, Scene ii.26ff.
50 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act II, Scene ii.89.
51 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act I, Scene i.234.
his characters in the *dark*, to *there* separate the lover from the beloved, making a young couples urge to make ‘the double backed monster’ on *A Midsummer Night* into nothing more than a *Dream*. For where do these lovers hope to be unified, but in the *dark*, confused landscapes of the forest, where one loses sight of the other, of anything visible, to be ravished, misled, intoxicated and provoked by the gods and the fairies that remain *imperceived* by the character, but through *[th]is* imperception become alive. For no one appears more alive than the imperceived. For when the pure animistic personifications, like Dew and Fire, dance around the enchanted in *[th]is* dark forest, and the demigods whisper in their ear, and neither is seen, but all move the unseeing, *[th]is* forest becomes truly enchanted, not by spells, but by the magic of all these *imperceptions*.52 It is a fundamental trait of the presentation of these dissimilar creatures throughout the play, that they all, except Bottom, who experience a physiological metamorphosis, for a while becomes one of these spirits, that these half-creatures remain *unseen*, imperceived.53 It is, however, through these imperceptions that these creatures are incarnated, for the imperception of *[th]is* will not fail to produce, and *[th]is* most convincingly, the profound apperception that *[th]is* is alive.54

52 See for example, Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act II, Scene i.186.

53 We should notice that except for Bottom after he has become a monster, no one, no character within the play, is able to *perceive* the gods, the fairies, which throughout the play remain invisible to all except to the spectators *[within the theatre]*. Again we encounter another Shakespearean variation on the same figure of inadequation. Whereas one normally would persuade the spectator to make the inference from the perception of what is untrue to the apperception of what is *true*, in this case, the spectator is led to infer from the non-perception of what *is* [true], to its apperception. But, as is said, as much as inapperception produced the apperception of what is *concealed*, imperception produces the apperception of what is *unconcealed*, of that place which no being may escape without seizing to be.

54 There is a difference between imperception and inapperception. Whereas we apply *imperception* where there is a total lack of *perception* of that which presents itself, we speak of *inapperception* where one does not *apperceive* the soul, subject or substance of that appear to have these properties. We could therefore say that apperception of what is *[true]*, any untrue apperception or inapperception produces, as through substitution, the apperception *that* *[th]is* is, the Being of that being which does *not* have these properties or to whom these properties does not belong. However,
We shall attempt to grasp how Shakespeare produces the apperception of what is [hidden] by letting Titania, the Queen of the Underworld, fall in love with an ass, become intoxicated by the beauty of Bottom the Weaver in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Obviously, Titania falls in love with a monster, for after his metamorphosis Bottom is half an ass and only half a man as he walks around with the hairy face of a mule and the two legs of a human being. [Th]is is obviously an attempt by Shakespeare to produce the apperception of what is hidden through a dissimilar [re]presentation, whereby what is, is apperceived as different from its essential appearance, distinct from how [th]is is essentially perceived. Clearly, Shakespeare succeeds as we all unknowingly, almost inevitably, make the inference from not only Bottom’s false appearance, but Titania’s false perception. Shakespeare is again towering one figure of inadequation on top of another to the point where the phenomenal, that is, essential being becomes almost entirely irrelevant, no more than what you look away from to apperceive the hidden Being of the misperceiver and the hidden Being of the misperceived, the Being of Queen Titania and Bottom the Weaver.

Evidently, Shakespeare has stolen this monstrous ass from one of the truly remarkable pieces of literature, Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*, which by some, and for long, was believed to have been written by the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus and not the Platonist Apuleius. About such monstrous and angelic
appearances through ‘incongruous’ images,\textsuperscript{58} we may say, as does Pseudo-Dionysius, that they are \textit{concrete} attempts to express or offer the apperception of what \textit{is}, and sometime has to remain, \textit{hidden}. Concerning the interpretation of such incongruous images, of such dissimilar appearances, where Bottom certainly is one, what Dionysius says, in his \textit{Symbolic Theology}, is that when confronted with a symbolic appearance or a symbolic presentation, the mind is adequate to the appearance, but inadequate to what \textit{is} hidden. Not knowing what is \textit{essentially} hidden, we would rather say that we perceive what \textit{is} untrue, and through the perception of what \textit{is} untrue, the awareness of properties that do \textit{not} belong to [th]is, we apperceive what \textit{is} [true], but hidden. It is, in both cases, the shortcomings of our perceptions or the appearance, which \textit{inadequately expresses} what [th]is \textit{essentially} is, that again and again, and effortlessly, makes us infer to the \textit{existence} of that which we do \textit{not know} what is. And from the awareness that the apprehension of the essence of [th]is is inadequate to what [th]is is, we apprehend the Being of [th]is being whose essence we know nothing of, or at least whose essence Titania knows nothing about. And again, from the essential inapprehension, the misperception of what [th]is is, the inability to apprehend, to perceive what this essentially is, we apperceive the existence of [th]is [being].\textsuperscript{59}


\textsuperscript{59} As has to be noted again and again, Pseudo-Dionysius does not only offer a \textit{hermeneutic} for the interpretation of dissimilar symbols but also a \textit{poetology} for its production, but not without assuring the reader, his beloved Timothy to whom his major writings are addressed, that one is,
After the spell of Oberon, which naively makes Titania fall in love with the first thing she perceives, the Queen of the Underworld wakes up to fall in love with Bottom, who now walks around not only with the name but with the face of an ass. The affair between Titania and Bottom is certainly a pastiche of Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*, does not fail to evoke the memory of the obscene Book 10, where the dame who plays Pasiphae finally has her way with Lucius. Titania is as much infatuated by Bottom as the lady ‘playing Pasiphae’ in *The Golden Ass* cannot get enough of the big ass. However, only the first is truly in love, and [th]is difference makes one episode come across as a fable and the other as real. Again the spectator is compelled to make the inference from Titania’s untrue perception of Bottom’s beauty, to the apperception that he is [true]. For Titania is under a spell whereby she perceives what is not essentially [true], namely Bottom’s beauty. And again, from witnessing the perception of what is not [true], the spectator involuntarily infers to apperception of what is [true]. After the spells of Puck and Oberon, hardly anyone in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is perceived as what they essentially are. The change in perceptions are not, not even in the case of the infatuation of Titania, due to a change in what is perceived, which throughout, to the beholder, remains the same, but depends on a change of judgment, a sudden reversal of perspective whereby the beholder values, evaluates what he perceives as distinctly through these symbols, given the apperception of what is hidden, inscrutable, impenetrable, the Being of beings.

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60 Pasiphae is, according to legend, the mother of the minotaur. Cf. Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, Book X, 19-23, pp. 184-186.
61 We should notice the marked difference between the lady that falls in love with Lucius and how Titania falls in love with Bottom. For whereas both Lucius and Bottom appear as what they are not, Asses or Monsters, the lady in *The Golden Ass* falls truly in love with what she perceives, whereas Titania, would not fall in love if she was not transformed, if she did not untruly perceive Bottom’s essential beauty. [Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act III, Scene i.149] For where the Lady in *The Golden Ass* falls in love with what she truly perceives, no matter how much she remains a deviant, Titania falls in love with what she falsely perceives, and this false perception is not due to some objective transformation or disguise but to a transformation of the subjective, the perceptual faculties.
dissimilar from what it is. For what is magically affected is a transformation of the common sense, the sensus communis.62 Whether the reason for the untrue perception is subjective or objective, what remains is the same, namely that we are made to infer from the untrue perception of what essentially is, to the apperception of what is [true]. In [th]is case, it is obvious that the emphasis is on the perceiver and not simply the perceived. When Titania openly adores Bottom’s beauty,63 admires his singular eloquence,64 Titania simply perceives what is not true, and from the perception of what is not true, we are again, repeatedly, even unknowingly, made to infer to the apperception of is, not only the Being of the misperceived, but also, the Being of the one who perceives so falsely.

[20] We may conclude this section by saying, with the confidence that stems from so numerous misperceptions, such bounty of false perceptions, that the whole of A Midsummer Night’s Dream is simply a conscious experiment by Shakespeare to produce the apperception of the negative ontological difference by offering crystal clear perceptions of what is essentially untrue, not [only] through the objective means of disguise and dissimulation, but more so through the subjective means of altering the mind, by magically transforming the perceptual faculties. In the Induction to The Taming of the Shrew, we have a similar and recurring figure, and in both cases we are made to infer, from the perception of what is untrue, to the apperception of what is [true]. That is, when Sly perceives the luxury that untruly belongs to him and Titania admires the eloquent speech of Bottom, we suddenly, as if by some effortless magic, apperceive the Being of the subject that

63 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act III, Scene i.149.
64 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act III, Scene i.149.
perceives so untruly as much as the Being of that which is so untruly perceived. For in the end as in the beginning, nothing is more true than what is untrue.

[21] Similarly with the transformations that occur throughout *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. We may be amused when Lysander suddenly falls in love with Helena, whose skinny, tall figure he in the opening had been openly mocking. As if the world was suddenly turned on its head, Hermia becomes worthy of ridicule. For Hermia is given the unfortunate experience of being misperceived, misjudged nowhere more disturbingly than when Lysander cries out, ‘Get you gone, you dwarf.’ What is hilarious in this play is that hardly anyone is perceived as what they essentially are. Shakespeare is, of course, supremely aware of his construction of these misperceptions, as can be gleaned throughout the play with all its persistent focus on *eyes*. What is effected through these spells, these [perceptual] transformations, is nowhere more clearly stated than when Hermia in anger cries out what could be the motto of the whole play, ‘O hell! To choose love by another’s eyes.’

66 Shakespeare’s conscious experiment with the sudden, the magical metamorphosis of the perceptual faculties is evidenced in the play’s obsession with visual metaphors. More often than not, phenomena only provide the occasion for the false perceptions that effortlessly lead the spectator to make the inference to that which is imperceivable, the Being of beings. Let us draw attention to the many *eyes* through which Shakespeare watches his audience in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*: ‘Cupids Archery,’ may easily hit the ‘apple’ of a lovers’ *eye*. [Act III, ii.104-105] For often, what I see is merely a projection of my own desires, as ‘with half a wish the wisher’s eyes be pressed.’ [Act II, Scene ii.65.] To change the perceptual faculties of another, I would perhaps, for better or for worse, ‘Anoint his eyes,’ [Act II, Scene ii.261] and ‘streak her eyes,’ [Act II, Scene ii.257.] And if I did, I could ‘see things with parted eye,’ [Act IV.i.192] or I could continue to solely seek ‘the pleasure of mine eye,’ [Act IV.i.173] And if I found a woman to perceive things falsely, I could always blame ‘This hateful imperfection of her eyes,’ [Act IV, Scene i.66.] And if I saw truly many sad things, I could sleep and ‘shut up sorrow’s eye.’ [Act III, Scene ii.435] And with my eyes closed like Psyche’s I would perhaps know that, ‘Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind./And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.’ [Act I, Scene i.234-235.] but if I saw my beloved she would more engild ‘the night/Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.’ [Act II, Scene ii.187-188] But it would not be easy to find my love ‘in the tempest of my eyes,’ [Act I, Scene i.31] and if I did, it would perhaps occasion nothing better than ‘idolatry.’ [Act I, Scene i.109].
§7.3 The Paradox of Dissimilarity

The ontological paralogism we are speaking of is different from Kant’s,68 even different from the paralogism mentioned by Aristotle in the Poetics.69 First of all, Aristotle says that we are accustomed to infer what is untrue from what is true. Aristotle is here concerned with the fact that we often, if not habitually, make an inference from what is essentially true to what is not essentially true. The false inference brought about may, for example, have the formal structure of confirming the consequent, for believing that the consequent is true we may falsely believe that the antecedent is true. In general this syllogism makes it possible to infer what is not from what is, what is not true from what is true. The logical form of this invalid inference to what is false, need not concern us here, because Aristotle is solely occupied with what is essentially false and what is essentially true, whereas we are concerned with the inference from the perception of what is not true to the apperception of what is true, or quite simply this ontological contradiction which is either concealed or unconcealed through this inference. The ontic paralogism exposed by Aristotle is the possible, the false inference from what is true to what is not true.70 The Kantian paralogism is the inevitable, the necessary but illusory inference to what grounds all phenomenological perceptions.71 Distinct from the paralogisms identified by Aristotle and Kant is the inference from the perception of what is phenomenologically false to the apperception of what is [noumenologically] true, that personality who is substantially apperceived as a

69 Aristotle, Poetics, 1460a20.
70 Aristotle, Poetics, 1460a20.
71 See especially, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A341/B399. The fundamental structure of Kant’s negative presentation of the concealed, most clearly conveyed in Prolegomena, most extensively in Critique of Pure Reason, does resemble the method of producing the apperception of what is concealed through dissimilar similarity, unlike likeness.
living being, however much [th]is impression is false. Let us see how Shakespeare achieves [th]is end of producing the apperception of what is [hidden] in his adaptation of Ovid’s famous love story of Pyramus and Thisby in A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Bearing in mind that the trope of incarnation we are about to illustrate, and which Shakespeare uses with such ease is the most difficult to grasp, we ask the reader to show as much patience with the explanation as he shows immediacy when being seduced by [th]is figure into believing that what appear before him is. We should again name the figure before the illustration, dissimilar similarity, but without yet again attempting definition let us look at the scene were the mechanics are preparing and the spectators are awaiting the performance of the play of Pyramus and Thisby.

[23] Deep in the woods outside Athens the mechanics, the artisans who more than anyone would know the meaning of poiesis, the virtue of having a techne, are practicing the play of Pyramus and Thisby, which they will offer as a surprise gift to King Theseus and his court on midsummer night. As with all plays, as mimesis superficially appears to be the virtue of drama, one would expect the mechanics to

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72 Concerning the singularity of the noumenal apperceptions, of whether or not they are a necessary addition to what is generally apperceived or not, one would have to add the following: Whereas you cannot deny that there is something to behold, you can deny that what is apperceived is [alive]. Therefore only Subject, World and God reveals the added, the transcendental depth of the noumenon, and the depth of subjectivity is only revealed by substantiality, simplicity, personality and existence – i.e. the paralogisms of pure reason – inferences without which one would hardly consider a man to be a living man or a man at all. Only when one we add personality, substantiality and ideality to the subject encountered as one phenomena among others, do we definitely and singularly apperceive [th]is man as a living, a thinking being. Without [th]is singular apperception of the noumenon, there would only be one [thing] apperceived. The difficulty however is not to apperceive that there is anything at all, but among all things, which one gives the impression of life and which does not; among all performances/plays, to understand why one being/character appear to be alive and another does not. For if all we did apperceive was the noumenon and only [th]is was apperceived, there would be no difference between the apperception of a dead and a living man. However, there is. For some men appear to be alive, while others do not.


74 For the practice for and performance of this play within the play of Pyramus and Thisby, see Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act I, Scene ii, Act IV, Scene ii and Act III, Scene i,
attempt verisimilitude, but they don’t. For the artisans notice likenesses that they
think may prove unbearable to their courtly audience, [re]presentations which they
fear might unsettle the high-born spectators, as for example, a lion about to tear
out the heart of Thisby before she manages to escape only to leave her red,
shattered, torn scarf behind to be found, to be picked up by a devastated Pyramus,
who on this evidence alone, raises his sword to kill himself.\textsuperscript{75} You would expect
them to attempt verisimilitude, but they don’t. As Bottom says, ‘We cannot leave
the killing out, but we can say, that I Pyramus is \textit{not} actually killed, and, to assure
them, I would tell them that “I Pyramus am \textit{not} Pyramus, but Bottom the
weaver.”’\textsuperscript{76} Thus, Bottom tells us that he is unlike what he represents, an unlike-
likeness or dissimilar from that with which he is supposed to represent. Similarly
Bottom tells Snug the joiner, who is supposed to represent the lion, that he has to
tell the audience that he is \textit{not} a lion, to avoid creating fear.\textsuperscript{77} Again, the symbol,
the actor, states that he is \textit{unlike} what he represents, the symbol is presented as
different from \textit{what} is symbolized, in short, the actor confirms that he \textit{is} an unlike-
likeness. However, this exposition remains merely a distraction, does totally lack
direction if we do not, if we fail to consider the effect of presenting such unlike
likenesses, such dissimilar similarities. Evidently, similar to a mystical tradition,
which presents angels as men with wings, these dissimilarities are consciously
presented to evoke the apperception of what \textit{is} hidden, or quite simply what
appear to be \textit{alive}.

[24] How does Shakespeare begin and end his adaptation of \textit{Pyramus and
Thisby}, but by letting one of his characters complain about how Ovid’s story may

\textsuperscript{75} Ovid, \textit{Metamorphosis}, Book IV, p. 97.
\textsuperscript{76} Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream}, Act III, Scene i.20.
\textsuperscript{77} Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream}, Act III, Scene i.43. Emphasis added.
be performed almost without a single word. 78 Evidently, there is a difference between theatre and dumbshow, which Shakespeare uses to let his characters speak with discontent about the irreality of that which is led to appear without a word. Shakespeare has to make his actors speak, and through this speech transform what appear to be similarities into dissimilar-similarities. This, in turn, achieves the end of producing the apperception of what is concealed, the appearance of that which no longer is like but unlike what it is meant to represent. 79 The players, Bottom and his company of mechanics, express themselves explicitly as inadequate representations, and stress repeatedly that they are unlike likenesses, dissimilar similarities. They are simply too anxious to frighten their courtly audience. Therefore, the mechanics think it necessary to say that they are not what they are perceived as. Surprisingly, what is false in this performance is not the spectator’s perception, but the players’ self-perception, for they perceive themselves as that which they are afraid to look too much like: the moon, a lion, a wall, a dead man, in their staging of the love and death of Pyramus and Thisby. What is [untrue] in this case, is not the perceptions of the spectators, but the self-perception of the players. We could say that in this case, the figure which makes these mechanics come alive like Pinocchio, is that we are made to, however falsely, infer from the self-perception of what is untrue, to the apperception of what is [true]. And what makes the scene, these scenes so exceedingly hilarious, is the remarkable difference between what they think they are perceived as, and what they actually are perceived as. Hilarious is [th]is

78 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act V, Scene i.61-65.
79 Again, you could say, Shakespeare has to make his actors speak, and thereby, through their voices which negates their appearance, or even, voices which even speak against their own appearance, the appearance of that which upholds the voice [which speaks], the ground of the very voice whose appearance is being negated, make present dissimilar similarities that produces the unseen Being of what is presented.
inadequate self-perception, and strangely, it is [th]is inadequate self-perception which makes us apperceive nothing but the self, to which this discrepancy is a witness, and in the face of which we laugh. For even though the man in the moon is ridiculous, it is difficult to doubt that he is.

It would seem that the whole mechanical scene is directed by Shakespeare to make fun of those who think of theatre as only a stage for what does or what may possibly exist. Shakespeare knows all along that it is not the adequate representation of what [th]is is, never veri-similitude, but rather the inadequate representation of what this is, that makes us believe that [th]is is. No one likes this scene less knowing that its representations are inadequate or contradictory, no, we love it more because its representations are completely inadequate. King Theseus may even anticipate what we all later think of the performance, that it is like ‘hot ice and wondrous strange snow,’ in short that it is entirely unfamiliar, and not without posing the ontological riddle in Shakespeare’s place, ‘How shall we find the concord of this discord?’ For paradoxically, when witnessing these unfamiliarities, we effortlessly make the inference, and Shakespeare was not unaware of [th]is inference, from the perception of what is untrue, to the apperception of what is [true], without ever knowing what [th]is is, only that [th]is is different from what we perceive it to be. We are left with nothing but the negative impression of [th]is being different from its untrue appearance.

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80 Aristotle’s definition of drama is that it stages not what is but what may possibly be. Aristotle, Poetics, 1451a36.
81 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act V, Scene i.59.
82 Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Act V, Scene i.60.
83 Both being inadequations, the difference between falsity and dissimilar similarity, is that what is false cannot be discovered without losing the right to its name, whereas a dissimilar [re]presentation has to be discovered to deserve its name. A dissimilar [re]presentation is therefore a conscious way to both produce and apperceive, both interpret and make the apperception of that
Conversely, when Hamlet announces that the players will play something ‘like the murder of my father,’ we may already know, if the players live up this promise, that the result will not be apperceived as real, that the players will be experienced as no more than representations and the play never come true. However, if the players, already from the beginning, were to announce that they would play something ‘unlike the murder of my father,’ we could anticipate that the play would be experienced as real. From a mimetic perspective this may sound incomprehensible, but this is nonetheless what occurs in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream,* where Bottom and his Company of Mechanics, clearly states, and later make their audience strikingly aware of, that they have no intention of displaying anything like *The Tragic Story of Pyramus and Thisby,* that indeed, they will perform the same story but make sure that the audience never mistakes the representations for the represented which stands out as entirely unlike what they do not even intend to express adequately. If we compare *Pyramus and Thisby* with *The Mousetrap* in *Hamlet,* it is easily seen that the one play effortlessly produces the apperception of the Being of beings while the other play does not. Again we are speaking of that which unnoticeably is taken for granted, that which, although always experienced immediately, is hardly ever spoken of, that which in itself remains unnoticed, but nevertheless is what make us lean forward or close our eyes, and if not experienced would make us walk away, were we not brought face to face with the Being of beings. In *Hamlet* it seems apparent that we, in the staging which is hidden, which Dionysius called it, and we simply, and without any aspirations of knowledge, call *itjis.*

[Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Act II, Scene ii.607-608. Emphasis added.] Compare to Hamlet’s mimetic understanding of art as ‘the mirror of nature,’ *[Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Act III, Scene ii.21] which he holds, of course, so unlike his author, who gallantly gives time for Hamlet to emphasize the veracity of the play to Horatio even before the play begins.[Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* Act II, Scene ii.77-79] Shakespeare does not miss the opportunity to ridicule this mimetic sense of art, when he in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* lets Bottom the Weaver advice his company, ‘Let not him that plays the lion pare his nails.’ *[Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream,* Act IV, Scene ii.40]*
of *The Mousetrap*, only are brought forward to see the meaning, only are leaning forward to grasp the meaning of the play. For the play’s function does not seem to extend beyond the mere meaning of the play, its intention only to reveal to the spectators what essentially happened to King Hamlet, to possibly reveal a deception.\(^85\) Therefore, as likenesses, nowhere do these boy players come alive, as they are only perceived as what they intend to be, mere representations, like likenesses. So it would seem that Shakespeare in this case, in the staging of *The Mousetrap*, does not achieve the end of animating the play, of producing the apperception of the Being of beings.

[27] As we remember Wittgenstein’s mute adoration of that in front of which man must remain silent,\(^86\) and equally recall the praise that concludes Heidegger’s *Letter on Humanism*, that language is to Being no more than clouds are clouds in the sky,\(^87\) nothing is more evident than that both Wittgenstein and Heidegger praises that which is unconcealed without a word. Conversely, nothing is more easily discerned than Shakespeare’ depreciation of the same, a depreciation consistently expressed throughout *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, but with a slightly different accent in *Hamlet*, where the most renowned, if not infamous, of all theatre critics denounces the staging of ‘inexplicable dumbshows,’\(^88\) and at the same time regrets the current impossibility of presenting that which is [to the many], the Being of beings, persuasively, without spectacle.\(^89\) That Shakespeare

\(^{89}\) Hamlet says to one of the boy-players whose beard has grown since they last met, ‘I heard the speak me a speech once,/ but it was never acted, or if it was, not above once, for/ the play, I remember, pleased not the million; ‘twas/ caviary to the general.’ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene ii.444-447.
consistently mocks the Ovidian dumb show may be gleaned from the way he both opens and shuts the play of \textit{Pyramus and Thisby.}\textsuperscript{90} For the last words of Francis Flute, who has made clear to his audience that he is \textit{not} Thisby and that what he will soon thrust into his bosom is \textit{not} a knife, declares, after discovering the lifeless Pyramus, ‘O Pyramus, arise!/Speak, speak. Quiet dumb?/Dead, dead? A \textit{tomb}/Must cover thy sweet ... lips.’\textsuperscript{91} Even before the opening of the play, Philostratus, master of the revels, the ceremonial at the Athenian Court, presents the argument of the play to King Theseus, depreciating the dumb character of the play, a presentation whose lips are sealed almost before they are opened, ‘A play there is, my lord, some ten words/ long,/Which is as brief as I have know a play;/But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,/Which makes it tedious. For in all the play/there is not one word apt, one player fitted./And tragical, my noble lord, it is.\textsuperscript{92} Philostratus does even try to discourage Theseus from seeing the play, as he expects ‘nothing,’\textsuperscript{93} from the performance of these ‘hard-handed men.’\textsuperscript{94} To the King’s delight, however, his expectations are soon disappointed, for they truly speak and by speaking they become, as Theseus soon realizes, \textit{true}. For when the Wall \textit{speaks}, and we mark how Shakespeare deliberately distances himself from

\textsuperscript{90} Before the performance \textit{Pyramus and Thisby} is deprecated as a play almost without a single word. [Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}, Act V, Scene i.61-65] During the play, Shakespeare allows the spectators to mock the unintelligible but O so mimetic performance, as they say, ‘Well, \textit{roared}, Lion. Well \textit{run}, Thisby. Well \textit{shone}, Moon.’[Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}, Act V, Scene i.266-268].

\textsuperscript{91} Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}, Act V, Scene i.326-332, Emphasis added.

\textsuperscript{92} Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}, Act V, Scene i.61-65. Should we suggest Pyramus says, ‘I love you,’ and Thisbe answers, ‘I love you,’ and the final words are whispered by Pyramus when he says, ‘\textit{Meet me in the woods},’ before they part, never to see each other alive again.

\textsuperscript{93} Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}, Act V, Scene i.76-78.

\textsuperscript{94} Shakespeare, \textit{A Midsummer Night's Dream}, Act V, Scene i.72.
the Ovidian dumbshow, we hear King Theseus in delight exclaim, ‘Would you
desire lime and hair to speak better?’

[28] We recognize a recurring figure of inadequation in Shakespeare’s works.

[Th]is figure is not applied for its own sake, but with the aim of producing the
ontological contradiction, the almost irrefutable apperception of the Being of
negative beings. We have, in general recognized the animating figure to be the
spectator’s inference from the character’s perception of what is untrue to the
spectator’s apperception of what is [true]. In this case, in *A Midsummer Night’s
Dream*, we have the peculiar twist, a significant variation on this figure. For
whereas the spectators perceptions within the play are adequate to what they
perceive, that is, never is Snug the joiner by the spectators perceived to be a lion,
nowhere is Snout perceived to be a chink in the wall or Quince to be the man in
the moon, never does Francis Flute the bellows mender look like Thisby, and
nowhere does the spectators stand in danger of mistaking the representation for
the represented. Even though this is the explicit, unequivocal meaning of what
the spectators within the play say, Shakespeare’s presentation corrupts [th]is
meaning, for the effect of the presentation is exactly opposite to what is said. That
is, whereas the players say that there is nowhere any danger of them mistaking the

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95 Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act V, Scene i.165. When Pyramus draws nearer to
the wall, what do the mechanics do but contradict the King’s request for ‘Silence! Shakespeare, *A
Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act V, Scene i.168. For while Pyramus is waiting to hear the voice of his
beloved Thisby, Shakespeare can yet again not resist to ridicule, the plainness of a true mimetic
representation, letting Pyramus perform an ode to the night that mocks silence itself, he declaims,
‘O grim-looked night! O night with hue so/black!/O night, which ever art when day is not!/O night,
O night! Alack, alack, alack./I fear my Thisby’s promise is forgot!’ Shakespeare, *A Midsummer
Night’s Dream*, Act V, Scene i.169-172.
99 For the preparation for and performance of *Pyramus and Thisby*, see, Shakespeare, *A Midsummer
Night’s Dream*, Act I, Scene ii, Act III, Scene i, Act IV, Scene ii and Act V, Scene i.
representation for the represented, the symbol for the symbolized, that is in fact exactly what is the effect of this performance, affected through [th]is presentation. Fully aware that the effect of the performance to the spectators within the theatre is exactly the opposite of the effect of the performance within the play, Shakespeare must surely have had a big laugh. Shakespeare must have had even more fun of the spectators within his theatre than the spectators within the play had of the mechanics, realizing that he through this inadequation, through dissimilar similarity, was able to influence the spectators as effortlessly as the moon affects the tide.

[29] Superficially there appear to be no inadequate representations or appearances in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In the case of *Pyramus and Thisby* there appear to be no inadequations: the mechanics are never perceived as what they are not, namely, a virgin in love [Thisby], a lion, a chink in the wall, the man in the moon. The inadequation of this scene is rather entirely and peculiarly hidden, for what is inadequate in this instance is not the perceptions of the audience within the play, but the self-perception of the actors, who actually mistakes the representation for the represented and even stand in danger of mistaking themselves for that which they represent. Their self-perception is hilariously inadequate to how they appear, objectively to the spectators within the play. What happens and causes even louder laughter for the one who wrote the play, and to [th]is day seems to witness [th]is effect from his grave, is that the spectators within the theatre are unknowingly persuaded to commit exactly the same mistake they laugh at the mechanics for committing. That is, of mistaking the representation for the represented. For the spectators within the theatre are
suddenly and *unknowingly*, so undiscernibly that they do never expect it to happen, are to such a degree left in ignorance that they leave the theatre without ever knowing that they have been played like mechanics, that they unknowingly handed over themselves, and that Shakespeare - as in a cosmic and recurring joke - has made the audience point at and laugh at themselves. Unknowingly the spectators do exactly what they laugh at the mechanics for doing, namely mistake the symbol for the symbolized, And suddenly, through the mechanics of inadequation, through [th]is dissimilar presentation, the audience within the theatre suddenly believe that these mechanics really are. And so puzzled are often the audience during the performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, that their uneasy bodies seem to be aware that they are being played although *they* are not. Surely, the only time the spectators laugh louder than the playwright is when Bottom jumps around and farts like an ass. Of course, from Shakespeare’s standpoint, he would have hoped his spectators were more like flutes than asses, as they certainly would be much easier to play.
§8.0 The Battle for Nothing
§8.1 Saying ‘Nothing’
§8.2 Showing Nothing
§8.3 Being Nothing

C8 EXPOSÉ

[1] There appear to be three ways to produce the apperception of the ontological contradiction, which we have to distinguish in this chapter: saying ‘nothing,’ showing nothing, Being nothing. From the very beginning our hunch was that saying ‘nothing’ would immediately and without effort produce the apperception of what is unconcealed. As it turned out, the effect of saying ‘nothing’ depends on whether ‘nothing’ is perceived as an affirmation or a denial of the speaker’s own perceptions or apperceptions, that is, whether ‘nothing’ is expressed truly or falsely. For whereas the false expression of ‘nothing’ creates the apperception of what is concealed, the true expression of nothing creates the apperception of what is unconcealed. By showing nothing through indefiniteness one does, however, immediately and without second thoughts produce the apperception of that which is unconcealed, and we shall witness a grand illustration of this indefinite production of the Being of beings in the opening of All’s Well that Ends Well. Finally, elision is seen as the progressive or violent road to the inessential or non-essential cognition of this, where denying this progressively all attributes, creates the apperception of what is concealed. In the presentation of The Production of Being through Nothing, I will not exclude the
invaluable assistance of those who have confronted [th]is problem before us, as have Martin Heidegger philosophically and Rosalie Colie historically by tracing the literary *topos* of nothing from its origin in Antiquity to its vogue in Renaissance and Baroque literature.¹ Invaluable as their assistance may be, it is however clear that neither Ms. Colie nor Herr Heidegger understand, as does Shakespeare, the ontological function of nothing, that nothing immediately and most effortlessly produces the apperception of the Being of beings.² It is *th/is* production, the production of what *is* either concealed or unconcealed through nothing, we shall trace in this chapter.

§8.0 The Battle for Nothing

[2] There is clearly a battle for nothing in the history of philosophy, where the main combatants fighting over nothing are Levinas and Heidegger, and long before them, Plato and Parmenides.³ We will not simply speak of the priority of nothing, but of the effect of expressing - saying, showing or Being - nothing. Heidegger merely reiterates what Hegel announced a hundred years earlier, that nothing is *first*.⁴ The problem is not simply solved by, as Plato does in *Sophist*, to disclose the basis of nothing as the *not* of every negation, to display the ‘no,’ the

² In our elaboration of the function of nothing as indefinability, we will first need the assistance of Aristotle and von Wright to point out and define its meaning. The meaning of indefinability is not however something we will ponder, but take for granted, as we are consistently looking out for and tracing its effects. See, Aristotle, *de Interpretatione*, Chapters 1, 2 and 10, and von Wright, *The Logic of Negation*, pp. 3-8.
³ John D. Barrows’ recently published *The Book of Nothing* shows the actuality of nothing. [Barrow, *The Book of Nothing*, London: Vintage, 2001]. Plato’s *Sophist* shows us the beginning of the struggle when Parmenides is quoted as saying: ‘Never shall this force itself on us, that that which is not may be; While you search, keep your thought far away from this path. [Parmenides, Fragment 7, 11.1-2, as quoted in Plato, *Sophist*, 237a, *Complete Works*, p. 257.]
’not’ as the ground of nothing.\(^5\) Neither is it, which speaks in a similar vein, like for example Levinas, to say that every negation is secondary to what is negated, and that no thing is derivative and cannot be thought without some thing, hence nothing is secondary and not what is first.\(^6\)

[3] It is in the handsome dialogue of the *Sophist* that the Stranger from Elea has to admit that he does not understand what nothing is.\(^7\) However, if Plato had allowed Socrates to appear in this dialogue, he could have pointed out to the Stranger, that ‘Nothing is darker than what is dark or lighter than what is light.’\(^8\) Leading us into nothing, we could take Heidegger as a guide, reminding ourselves along the way that according to Aristotle, Plato’s *Sophist* concerns itself with what, according to Gadamer, made Aristotle so attractive to the young Heidegger,\(^9\) namely, the fortuitous, which, again according to Aristotle, resembles nothing.\(^10\) We could, however, remind ourselves of what Heidegger says in his inaugural lecture at Freiburg, *What is Metaphysics?*, I believe from 1929, where he attempts to transgress the bounds of metaphysics, and hence overcome the priority of the ontic over the ontological, of that which precedes the perception of this thing, namely the apperception of nothing. For like someone clearing the road or the land, Heidegger makes way for nothing, for the apperception of the clearing that

\(^{5}\) Plato, *Sophist*, 257b-258e, esp. 258e.

\(^{6}\) On the secondary nature of nothing, see for example, Levinas where he argues against Heidegger, in Levinas, *God, Death, Time*, ‘Beginning with Heidegger’, p. 129.

\(^{7}\) Plato, *Sophist*, 243b-c.

\(^{8}\) Plato, *Republic*, Book V, 479c-d.

\(^{9}\) Although Heidegger already early was given a copy of Brentano’s exposition of the concept of Being in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, entitled, *Concerning the Multifarious Meanings of Being [Seiende] in Aristotle*, it was Aristotle’s exposition of phronesis or practical knowledge which to Heidegger turned out to carry ontological weight. [Gadamer, *Heidegger’s Ways*, p. 22].

\(^{10}\) Cf. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book VI, Chapter 2, esp. 1026b14.
precedes all appearances, the *khora* that awaits, like the most generous host, all phenomena.\textsuperscript{11}

\[4\] To get a clearer understanding of the difference between Heidegger’s exposition of nothing and its effects, and to mark out how our analysis of nothing differs from Heidegger’s, we shall first of all notice the different effects of saying ‘nothing’ and saying ‘khora.’ Everyone understands ‘nothing.’ We are however not looking out for merely the *meaning* of nothing, but the *function* of saying, showing or Being nothing. We are not then, and neither is Heidegger, interested in nothing for its own sake, but interested in nothing as it makes room for or a place for the Being of beings. Rather than Being unconcealed, we could say that nothing *unconceals*, makes place for the apperception, if not the Being, of [th]is prior to what [th]is essentially is. Heidegger’s reflections on nothing does in no small amount resemble the way *khora* is thought by Plato in *Timaeus*,\textsuperscript{12} although we shall see there is a noticeable difference between *khora* and nothing. Let us say, ‘nothing is different from nothing,’ and ‘khora is different from khora.’ Even though we may find one man in the world, who has given deep and sustained thought to the similarity of these statements, that he may find the two statements to have the same *meaning*, it is nevertheless obvious to all that the immediate *effect* of these statements, of expressing ‘khora’ and expressing ‘nothing,’ is entirely different. For whereas anyone is immediately effected when I say, ‘nothing is different from nothing,’ there cannot be found many who think of anything when I say, ‘khora is

\textsuperscript{11} *What is Metaphysics?*, Heidegger’s inaugural lecture at Freiburg, is nothing but an attempt, through its deliberate, perhaps even thought-provoking exposition of *nothing*, to free itself from the essential grip of metaphysics.

\textsuperscript{12} Plato, *Timaeus*, 48d-52e.
different from khora.'\textsuperscript{13} We shall therefore investigate the commonplace of nothing, for evidently, although being the place of all places, khora is \textit{not a commonplace}.

Ms. Colie shows us that the paradoxist tradition culminates with an encomium to \textit{nothing}, where one, in praise of nothing, may declare that ‘\textit{Nothing} is richer than diamonds and gold.’\textsuperscript{14} This is a faint echo of Socrates, who, with the assurance of being unaware of his own self-betrayal, in an aporetic defence of dualism, declaims in the \textit{Republic} that, ‘Nothing is darker than what is dark or lighter than what is light.’\textsuperscript{15} Surely, if \textit{nothing} unconceals all beings, one could not disagree if it was claimed, that ‘Nothing is sacred in war.’\textsuperscript{16} But it would sound entirely unfamiliar to most listeners, and fail to affect the audience, if we were to say, as does Plato implicitly in \textit{Timaeus}, that ‘\textit{Khora} is richer than precious stones,’ or ‘\textit{Khora} is nobler than the blood of Kings.’\textsuperscript{17} What we have displayed here, is

\textsuperscript{13} As we said in Chapter 2, \textit{Philosophies of Unconcealment}, this is precisely what Derrida attempted to show, by exposing the anachronism of khora, the Being of beings as it appears to unconceal, to be unconcealed. Anachronically, \textit{Being} is always different, even from itself, however much each \textit{being} remains \textit{essentially} the same. Moreover, \textit{khora} is prior to any \textit{being}, \textit{[th]is} antecedent to \textit{what} \textit{[th]}is is, even prior to the possibility of the very substantiality of \textit{[th]is}. As Derrida says, ‘The khora is anachronistic: it ‘is’ the anachrony of being, or better: the anachrony of being. It anachronizes being.’[Derrida, \textit{Khora}, in \textit{On the Name}, p. 94].

\textsuperscript{14} As Ms. Colie says, ‘There were … many \textit{nihils} written in the Renaissance, of which the most famous was the Latin poem published by Jean Passerat, professor of rhetoric at Henry III’s Palace Academy in Paris. This poem was published, reprinted, imitated, and annotated throughout the next fifty years. Nothing, Passerat informs us, is richer than precious stones and than gold; nothing is finer than adamant, nothing nobler than the blood of kings; nothing is greater than Socrates’ wisdom.’– indeed, by his affirmations, \textit{nothing} is Socrates’ wisdom.’ [Colie, \textit{Paradoxia Epidemica - The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox}, p. 224. Emphasis added].

\textsuperscript{15} Plato, \textit{Republic}, Book V, 479c-d.


\textsuperscript{17} The two statements that follow are implied by Plato, when he, in the \textit{Timaeus}, likens \textit{khora} to \textit{gold}, of course, not only because of its malleability, but due to its immense value, as it is what unconceals the Being of all beings. [Plato, \textit{Timaeus}, 50a.] If \textit{khora} and nothing are interchangeable, would that mean that \textit{khora} is sacred in wars, that \textit{khora} is richer than precious stones, that \textit{khora} is nobler than the blood of kings? Precisely, for nothing would be more \textit{sacred, richer or nobler} than that which upholds the \textit{Being} of all beings. As Aristotle would say in \textit{Metaphysics}, \textit{Prima Philosophia} would be the supreme, the superior, the noblest of sciences \textit{if} it is the science that inquires into what is highest or first, be \textit{[th]is} the \textit{Being} of beings or God, the sciences, \textit{ontology} or \textit{theology}. Cf. Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics}, 982b8-983a11.
that the effect of nothing is not restricted to its meaning, but clearly encompasses its function, which is, again and again, untiringly and without ever offering a sense of repetition to the perceiver - so effortlessly, we could say, that the impression of repetition is erased - to produce the apperception of the ontological contradiction. And so it appears that no dogma is truer than *creatio ex nihilo*.

[6] Standing in a Christian tradition that, in contradistinction to all Greek beliefs, worships a God that creates from nothing, Mr. Wilson Knight suggests that Shakespeare, similar to a god, makes Being from nothing, not only upholds, but ensures the effect of the old Christian dogma. In his thoughtful book, *The Christian Renaissance*, Wilson Knight speaks at length of Shakespeare’s use of nothing,18 saying,

‘The spiritual alone is a ‘nothing’ - a usual Shakespearean word for the ‘spiritual’ - it has no place, no meaning, no value until given this body. This thought is implicit widely both in Christianity and Shakespeare, extending beyond aesthetic theory. ‘Nothing’ represents the dark and mysterious world of spirit.’19

Admirable as Wilson Knight’s efforts are, we are forced by the compelling evidence of tradition to point out that Wilson Knight’s understanding of *nothing* is, as his understanding of *place*, quite insufficient, if not wholly and entirely mistaken. For having read any philosophical exposition of *place* or *nothing*, be it by Aristotle in *Physics* or by Hegel in his lectures on *The History of Philosophy*, one would find that nothing is, like place and time, not part of the material body but inseparable from its existence, indistinguishable from its appearance or its self-disclosure. *Nothing* is rather like the *immaterial* categories of *place* and *time*, which Heidegger made a lasting effort to *not* distinguish between, that which makes

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anything come true.\textsuperscript{20} It is therefore entirely false to point out, as Wilson Knight does, that nothing ‘has no place,’\textsuperscript{21} that nothing does not take place, when place is the only thing that nothing has or occasions the apperception of.

Furthermore, since ‘nothing’ and ‘place’ is that which make the presence or unconcealment of anything possible, it is also mistaken to colour nothing and say that ‘nothing’ represents ‘the dark and mysterious world of spirit,’\textsuperscript{22} when it is apparent that nothing is transparent, if not it is, as Plato suggests in \textit{Timaeus}, like gold, that which brings [th]is to light, makes each phenomena shine.\textsuperscript{23} It may even be true to say, as Socrates does in the \textit{Republic}, that ‘Nothing is darker than what is dark or lighter than what is light.’\textsuperscript{24} What we are about to point out, is not that Shakespeare does not makes use of nothing [in the production of the Being of beings], only that Wilson Knight’s understanding of nothing contradicts our philosophical heritage and is a valuation or colouring of nothing which is at odds with or contradicts our entire philosophical tradition, a tradition which Shakespeare himself, moreover, makes himself the caretaker of.\textsuperscript{25}

Georg Henrik von Wright, the most illustrious of Wittgenstein’s students, speaks very clearly of negations in his paper from 1959, \textit{The Logic of Negation}. Here von Wright, against the tradition of logic propounded by Bertrand Russell,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Heidegger says that ‘Aristotle’s interpretation of movedness [is] the most difficult thing Western metaphysics has had to ponder in the course of its history.’ [Heidegger, \textit{On the Essence and Concept of physis in Aristotle’s Physics B}, in \textit{Pathmarks}, p. 216. Emphasis added.] However, as Hegel points out, movement implies place, [Hegel, \textit{History of Philosophy II: Plato and the Platonists}, p. 163.] and place cannot according to Heidegger be understood fundamentally as anything but the clearing of that which is unconcealed, \textit{aletheia}. Hence, the most difficult thought would not be kinesis, but that which grounds kinesis and hence all movements, namely place.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Wilson Knight, \textit{The Christian Renaissance}, p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Plato, \textit{Timaeus}, 50b.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Plato, \textit{Republic}, Book V, 479c-d.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Cf. Chapter 2, \textit{Philosophies of Unconcealment}.
\end{itemize}
speaks of different kinds of negation, what is merely a negation and what is a negative affirmation. Distinguishing clearly between weak and strong negations, von Wright writes against the then common or dominant view, which he considers to not be very carefully considered, that there is only one kind of negation. Like Aristotle, von Wright recognizes that there are at least two kinds of negations, in effect a denial and an affirmation, one which he calls a ‘weak negation’ and the other which he calls a ‘strong negation,’ the strong negation being also an affirmation of that $x$ whose properties has been denied existence, that $x$ which does not have a property $p$. On the other hand, a weak negation is merely a denial of the compound ‘$x$ is $p$.’ For ‘$x$ is not $p$,’ means either, in the strong sense, that you affirm that $x$ which has not the property $p$, even affirm the existence of that $x$ which does not have this property $p$. In a weak sense, it means that both $x$ and $p$, more specifically, the compound ‘$x$ is $p$,’ has been denied [existence].

As Aristotle instructs us in de Interpretatione, an indefiniteness shows us quite simply nothing, the statement ‘It is not-this,’ leaves us with nothing to grasp. For it is self-evident that there is no necessary inference from ‘It is not-this’ to ‘It is that,’ that it is logically invalid to infer from ‘this is not a woman,’ to ‘this is a man,’ as [th]is might as well be a kangaroo or an elephant. Even a negation for which there does exist a commonplace contradiction, where an historical dichotomy has been established, the inference from ‘It is not black’ to ‘It is white,’ however
culturally or habitually we may be disposed to make such an inference, is evidently logically invalid as [th]is may well be blue or green. But of course, prior to [th]is actually having the opposite essential attributes, it would have to be, and we assert that through a negation, what must first be affirmed, if through an essential negation its opposite attribute is implied, is its Being.

[10] It is obvious, that when Aristotle points out that a negative affirmation shows us nothing, Aristotle has made a simplification, an abstraction of language from its use, for I may at one time indicate a woman and say, ‘This is not a man,’ and, at another time, indicate a boy and say, ‘This is not a man,’ and saying this my utterance will not have failed to be immediately effective/affective. It is perfectly reasonable to express this indefinition, if the end is to produce the apperception of the Being of beings or what is unconcealed indefinitely as the apeiron, or that which is undetermined, but yet unconcealed singularly. Contrary to Anaximander/Heidegger, St. Thomas calls the general category ‘indeterminate’ and the singular, the determined, this. The singular is the determination of the essential idea, which is incarnated in or through this, which is, to Thomas, not merely a particular, as this is always in excess of the idea incarnated, the existent always in excess of its essence. In On Being and Essence Thomas maintains that the essential concept is always incorporeal, inevitably indeterminate, that is, empty and essential, is not or remains indeterminate without this incarnation, without this determination.28 And why is a concept by necessity indeterminate? Because concepts are by nature general while the determinate is singular, and [th]is difference cannot be done away with. But, as we maintain, it is not only possible to

28 Cf. Thomas Aquinas, On Being and Essence, in Selected Writings, p. 36, where Thomas explicitly says that the ‘genus is undetermined’ and the species indistinct if not ‘designated by matter, which for composite substances or natures is the ‘principle of individuation.’
have an inessential apperception of [th]is, but also possible to produce [th]is apperception. In short, this is Thomas' apeiron, ‘This is not a woman,’ ‘This is not a man.’ Through indefinition, we are witnessing the unconcealment of [th]is which is afforded by an inessential presentation, where [th]is, if it appears, is allowed to be unconcealed as what it is not, even prior to having any essential characteristics, appear as inessentially Da. We do agree with Aristotle, that in the absence of an appearance or prior to any appearance, a priori an indefinition has neither meaning nor reference and shows us therefore nothing. However, when [th]is is allowed to appear, an indefinition provides the frame through which [th]is is unconcealed, through which [th]is may or may not appear [to be], indefinitely.

§8.1 Saying ‘Nothing’

Neither Rosalie Colie, who thoroughly and eloquently investigates the uses and abuses of nothing in the Renaissance, nor Martin Heidegger, who in nothing does not see a literary motif but an ontological Erfahrung, the first notion of Being signalled by the Kierkegaardian anxiety when faced with nothing, investigates its true function. Clearly, the function of nothing is to produce the apperception of that which to Hegel may even be prior to any apperception, namely Being. For, as Hegel says in Logic, and Heidegger later reiterates, ‘Being is nothing,’ which simply means that it cannot be placed as a thing among other things. However admirable their works are, neither Colie nor Heidegger recognizes that the true

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30 Heidegger, What is Metaphysics?, in Pathmarks, pp. 80, 88, 89. Anxiety is contrasted to the fear of a particular being. Hence anxiety is the first trace of a notion of the ontological difference, the Being of beings.
function of nothing lies not in the paradoxical meaning it produces,\textsuperscript{32} nor in the anxiety it provokes,\textsuperscript{33} but rather in its capacity to immediately and without effort, even undetected, create the apperception of the Being of beings.

\textsuperscript{[12]} It is, of course, clear that Heidegger expresses ‘nothing’ in an attempt to avoid metaphysical representation of objects, of what essentially is already given. If Being is nothing, as Heidegger says in his inaugural lecture at Freiburg,\textsuperscript{34} could we infer from this, that if the Being of beings appears to have been forgotten that we have forgotten nothing?\textsuperscript{35} That is precisely what I will not maintain in this chapter, where I assert that nothing is more immediately available to apperception, where we present the negative production of [th]is as either concealed or unconcealed, through the surprisingly undetected means of nothing under its different aspects or forms; ‘nothing,’ indefiniteness and apahairesis, if not quite simply, saying ‘nothing,’ showing nothing and Being nothing. We will specifically focus on\textit{All’s Well that Ends Well} and\textit{King Lear} to find illustrations for that which immediately, and almost without a trace, appears too difficult to imagine, but nonetheless never fails to achieve [th]is end, namely, nothing. We will, as in previous chapters, not merely, if at all, focus on the possible meanings of nothing, but rather, on its effects, on how nothing immediately creates the apperception of the Being of beings.

\textsuperscript{32} E.g. Colie, \textit{Paradoxia Epidemica}, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{34} See David Farrell Krell’s ‘Introduction’ to \textit{What is Metaphysics?}, in \textit{Basic Writings}, p. 90-91.
\textsuperscript{35} Like Kierkegaard, Heidegger suggests that if anxiety does not ‘manifest nothing,’ nothing is like a chasm, overlooked. [Heidegger, \textit{What is Metaphysics?}, \textit{Pathmarks}, p. 88.] David Farrell Krell observes, ‘What is metaphysics? Metaphysics is interpretation of beings and forgetfulness of Being and that means neglect of the essence of Nihil.’ [Farrell Krell, ‘Introduction’ to \textit{What is Metaphysics?}, in Heidegger, \textit{Basic Writings}, p. 91].
Nothing is not easy to handle, and Plato makes an attempt, in the *Sophist*, to make nothing more manageable by tracing its origin or *arche*. Since Plato traces the origin of ‘nothing’ back to ‘not’, it is evident that the topos of showing *nothing* through indefiniteness should be presented consequent to the topos of saying ‘nothing,’ as no one would look for the cause if they had not first experienced the effect. Tracing nothing back to its roots, it becomes clear that nothing is either a kind of denial or a negative affirmation, an indefiniteness. The final incarnation of [th]is figure of inadequation, namely *elision*, shows how the apperception of *nothing* is created through a *process*, where one not only denies [th]is [being] one or more attributes, but denies [th]is [being] *all essential characteristica*, to the point where even the understanding of character, which, of course, is *essentially* defined, becomes meaningless.

Within one and the same chapter we will present three figures of incarnation, three aspects of the same nihilistic topos: saying ‘nothing,’ showing nothing and being nothing, that all succeed in producing the apperception of the Being of beings. We also become gradually aware that nothing, in all three cases, produces the apperception of the ontological contradiction differently. In the first instance, showing *nothing* through indefiniteness produces the apperception of the Being of beings as unconcealed, whereas through *elision* or *aphairesis*, the opposite is clearly the case, for denying all properties to [th]is, denying everything that

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36 Plato, *Sophist*, 257b-258e, esp. 258e.
37 As the investigation proceeds, we will become gradually aware that indefiniteness, the true expression of ‘nothing,’ and denial are different aspects of the same figure, or rather, specifically, the negative and the positive aspects of the same figure. Von Wright makes the distinction between strong and weak negation, indefiniteness, the true expression of ‘nothing,’ being a *strong negation* as it affirms the existence of that whose properties are being denied, *denial* being a *weak negation* as it denies the existence of that which is *essentially* denied. See, Georg Henrik von Wright, *The Logic of Negation*, pp. 3-9.
[th]is is or may possibly be, all that is left is the apperception of [th]is, which is truly concealed/unconcealed. The third trope or aspect of nothing, actually saying ‘nothing,’ does however produce both the concealed and the unconcealed, depending on whether ‘nothing’ is a denial or an affirmation, that is, if nothing is true or false. The false expression of nothing, where ‘nothing’ is a denial of what is, produces the apperception of that which is concealed, the existence of that whose true properties or existence has been denied. For, as we maintain throughout this thesis, the spectator makes the effortless inference from the character’s inapperception or misperception of [th]is, created by the [false] denial of [th]is or what [th]is is, to its existence. It is likewise clear that when ‘nothing’ is an affirmation, or rather, when nothing is truly expressed, as when answering the question, ‘Do you feel anything?’ ‘I feel nothing,’ that what is left is not only the place where these feelings may or may not be unconcealed, the blank through which these feelings may or may not appear. That is, when saying ‘nothing,’ I have not only denied the existence of any or all feelings, but I have equally affirmed the existence of khora, of nothing or that place through which these feelings may or may not appear, so, even where ‘nothing’ appears to be a denial, that is, when it appears to deny an attribute, an event, an occurrence, it is in fact simultaneously an affirmation of the singular possibility for whatever attribute, event or occurrence that is being denied.

[15] We could easily say that even prior to any historical investigation, nothing is a commonplace, although it is safe to say that this commonplace has, as Ms. Colie shows in her marvellous book Paradoxia Epidemica, a history, and that just
like not, ‘nothing’ is a language game. We could, of course, attempt to think
nothing as it immediately [is] available to everyone, but we shall emphasize that
nothing is immediately available except through tradition, that nothing, like all
other words are part of a language game which sustains not only their meaning
but, more importantly, their function. The Book of Nothing shows that nothing has
a tradition, but even more so does Paradoxa Epidemica, which exhibits the vogue
of nothing in the Renaissance. As Rosalie Colie says in the introduction to her
splendid study of paradox, ‘nothing’ was crucial in Renaissance thought. As
Wittgenstein suggests in Philosophical Investigations, like all other words, not is a
language game. In contradiction to Wittgenstein we will however suggest that
‘not’ has not one but three primary meanings: as that which transgresses the limit
of the particular or that which has not reached the limit of a particular telos, and
finally that which obliterates the essential perception of what is particular
altogether.

[16] As easily it is to recognize that the aside, so commonplace in the Elizabethan
drama, has become an unbearable anachronism, we notice that the Elizabethan
convention of nothing is very much alive, that nothing is not a convention that has
discontinued to immediately effect and spontaneously bemuse, even carry away its
audience. Even though some of the conventions of Elizabethan literature may seem

39 Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. ix.
40 Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Fragments 547-556.
41 For a view on what is outmoded in the Elizabethan conventions of drama, see T.S. Eliot’s
comments on Mr. William Archer’s book, The Old Drama and the New, Heinemann, 1923, in Eliot,
‘Four Elizabethan Dramatists,’ Selected Essays, 111. As an example of such an outmoded
convention, Mr. Eliot chooses to mention the now ridiculous convention of the aside, which to most
115.
outdated, we could say that nothing is ever outdated, or better, that nothing is never out of fashion. There is evidently an Elizabethan convention of nothing, extending all the way back to Antiquity, which Shakespeare exploits in his production of the ontological contradiction. While Paradoxa Epidemica may enlighten all its readers about this nihilistic tradition,42 one does not there gain any knowledge of the effect that nothing has, which is, almost irrepresibly, to produce the apperception of the Being of beings. The artlessness of Shakespeare’s plays may some times even be ascribed to his extensive use of nothing, which often produces the apperception of what is indistinguishable from our selves, the ontological contradiction. It is therefore safe to say that so long as we continue to be affected by nothing, King Lear will never be anachronistic, or, rather, King Lear will not become an anachronism until we are no longer affected by nothing.

[17] Rosalie Colie recognizes in Shakespeare’s tragedies what she calls a ‘remarkable use of nothing.’43 Distinguishing between ‘the ‘nothing’ of the bawdy play, the metaphysical ‘nothing’ of the rhetorical paradoxists, and the psychological sense of not-being,’44 she even recognizes, with great sense of refinement, a possible in-difference between nothing and love, that ‘love poetry often has recourse to the notion of ‘nothing.’45 Rosalie Colie even points to the unfamiliarity of Shakespeare’s use of nothing, when she reveals that ‘part of the fun of that grim comedy, Much Ado about Nothing, is in the sexual reference of the

42 Making a swift panorama of the history of nothing, Ms. Colie says that ‘the major philosophers of Greece were wary of ‘nothing,’’ that ‘Platonic plenism and Aristotelian horor vacui denied existence to ‘nothing,” and that ‘Christian orthodoxy followed them in this respect, canonizing a single divine creatio ex nihilo at which nihil was transformed … by the blast of God’s mouth into omnis, the cosmos.” Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 221.
43 Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 233.
44 Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 233.
45 The explicit reference is to Shakespeare’s use of ‘nothing’ in Sonnet 72. Colie remarks that throughout The Sonnets Shakespeare uses ‘nothing’ ‘in contrast to the notion of his beloved’s intrinsic worth and worthiness.” [Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 229].
word ‘nothing,’ now fairly submerged, which spoke at once to the Elizabethan ear.46 To see how concretely Shakespeare looks at nothing as the place, the khora of unconcealment, Colie even remarks that, ‘Shakespeare managed, in Hamlet, to make ‘nothing’ refer to a great deal more than the female genitalia, though that fundamental vulgarity lay at the base of much of the play’s ‘nothing,’ as well as at the base of much of the play’s action.’47 For when Hamlet bawdily asks if she thought he meant ‘country matters’ when asking to place his head upon her lap, Ophelia answers, truly or untruly, affirmatively or in denial, ‘I think of nothing, my lord.’48 And, feeling encouraged rather than spurned, Hamlet continues his advance, saying, ‘That’s a fair thought to lie between maid’s legs.’ ‘What is, my lord?’ says Ophelia, ‘Nothing,’ says my Lord Hamlet.49

It sounds, as Rosalie Colie says, almost self-evident when King Lear declares, ‘Nothing will come of nothing.’50 We should not, however, take literally what Shakespeare has written tongue-in-cheek. The reason why Colie does not detect the contradiction between the meaning expressed and the function effected/affected, is that she solely, like most humanistic scholars, remains focused on meaning. Therefore, the function, in relation to the audience, escapes Colie, perhaps precisely because she excels in the execution of her historical craft. As a scholar Rosalie Colie is fundamentally trained, like most humanists, to read and interpret meaning, whereas for reading Being, she has no more practice than anyone who has not yet been made aware that she is inclined to, almost by necessity, to apperceive the ontological contradiction. Not surprisingly, nothing

46 Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 232.
47 Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 232.
48 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene ii.120.
49 Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene ii.120-124.
50 Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 221.
works more effectively on those who do not detect it, which is most of us. That nothing escapes the attention of its audience, without therefore seizing to make an ineradicable impression, makes almost anyone entirely defenceless against someone who, like Shakespeare, uses nothing to impress on his listeners the negative notion of the ontological difference. Evidently, Shakespeare exploits the *techne* of nothing, precisely because it is the epitome of an art that does not leave a trace of the instruments used to reach its end, the apperception of the Being of beings.

[19] To some extent Rosalie Colie is aware of the poetic potential of nothing, the implicit contradiction of meaning and function, when she says, ‘All affirmations about “nothing,” it turned out, might be taken as analogous to God’s original act of Creation, bringing ‘something’ out of ‘nothing’ - or, contradicted the truism of King Lear.’51 The truism of King Lear being, of course, that ‘Nothing will come of nothing.’ We shall speak of the paradox of nothing, how the inapperception of [th]is produces its apperception, how the imperception of what [th]is is, produces the apperception of its existence. One of the clearest examples of how Shakespeare, by allowing one of his characters to say ‘nothing,’ produces the apperception of that which *is* denied through denial, occurs when after the second apparition of King Hamlet’s ghost, a horrified Hamlet indefinitely asks his mother, ‘Do you see nothing there?’ To which the Queen answers by/in denial, ‘Nothing at all; yet all that *is* I see.’52 By thus saying ‘Nothing,’ Queen Gertrude truly *denies* Hamlet’s perception of the ghost of his father, whom the Queen calls, *nothing* but ‘the very

51 Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, p. 223. Emphasis added
coinage of your brain/This bodiless creation of ecstasy.'\textsuperscript{53} What we realize by listening to Queen Gertrude’s almost hysterical denial of Hamlet’s perception of King Hamlet, is that only an expression of ‘nothing’ that truly denies the speakers own perceptions or apperceptions, will create the apperception of that which is concealed, whereas conversely, the denial of a phenomenological perception creates the apperception of the phenomenon as unconcealed. The example also shows how highly conscious Shakespeare is of the inference from what is not perceived to its apperception, how triumphantly Shakespeare is aware of the ontological function of the inadequate expression of ‘nothing’ as a trope of incarnation. Undeniably, we do see the ghost of Hamlet, but our perceptions are denied, considered to be nothing, and it is the denial of our own perceptions, which makes what we perceive appear to be alive.

\textsuperscript{[20]} We shall not object to Rosalie Colie’s splendid presentation of the commonplace of nothing in the Renaissance and beyond, a presentation to which we have nothing further to add and could not be without, a presentation indispensable to our studies. But what we have to tell the reader is that however admirable Colie’s studies of the topos of nothing is, she has, while focusing on the meaning of nothing, entirely and totally neglected its function, which is to produce the Being of beings. [Th]is would have been easy to forgive if the function did not contradict the meaning expressed, but when the function of nothing contradicts its meaning, it seems almost unforgivable to neglect its function. Rosalie Colie is not reading the paradox of poetic creation into what she so finely discerns when she says, ‘By his rash deed, King Lear has in fact reversed God’s great act of Creation:

\textsuperscript{53} Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act III, Scene iv.138-139.
he has brought ‘all’ to ‘nothing,’ turned form back into chaos. Rosalie Colie shows how persistently she neglects the production of Being through nothing, for the effect of the presentation is exactly contrary to its meaning. By removing all his properties, [th]is man appears to be, and none appear to be more than King Lear when he is, as he yells out into the storm, nothing. Ms. Colie has however an intimation - as if in a dream - of the paradoxical function of nothing, as is quite clear when she says, ""Nothing" paradoxes tend to turn inside-out; beneath the linguistic paradox of “nothing” in this play lies the moral anomaly reversing the first meaning of the paradox, for King Lear is not, as we painfully learn with him, “nothing.” Nor is any man, no matter how close to nothing he may come. Similarly, when she says, speaking of nothing, ‘Not only is the logical problem raised, of affirming what is “not,” but also, by the affirmation, “nothing” seems to be transformed exactly into ”something,” a positive entity. The true function of ‘nothing’ is either to produce what is concealed or what is unconcealed. For, nothing produces the singular reference which it appears not to have, whether [th]is singular reference is concealed or unconcealed. That is, even though nothing is essentially empty, it does produce the apperception of that which no essence can be without – if it aspires to be more than an impersonal, unincarnated or abstract idea - that without which nothing could be essential, namely the ontological contradiction, which is either concealed or unconcealed depending on whether the expression of ‘nothing’ is true or untrue. For the true expression of ‘nothing’ creates the apperception of what is unconcealed as much as the untrue, the false expression of ‘nothing’ creates the apperception of what is hidden. And it is

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precisely by noticing *nothing* that Brabantio, in the opening scene of *Othello*, gives Being to the one who is *not* there, the one whom he does *not* find when he is encouraged to look for Desdemona, and ends up with nothing. It is paradoxically, the fact that Desdemona is *not* found that creates, without content, the apperception of her place, that she is *not* there, that produces the empty possibility for her presence, the pure apperception of Desdemona’s place.\(^{57}\)

[21] ‘Nothing,’ immediately seem to turn into its opposite, by instantly creating the apperception of the Being of that which is denied. That Shakespeare himself is completely aware of the difference between the meaning and the function of expressing ‘nothing,’ becomes clear, when Shakespeare lets the Fool say, ‘Can you make no use of nothing, Nuncle?’ to which King Lear answers, ‘Why, no, boy. Nothing can be made out of nothing.’\(^{58}\) Proving again how the function of what is said is opposite its meaning, after deridingly reminding King Lear how he has given all his titles away for nothing,\(^{59}\) the Fool, affirms [th]is indefinite, [th]is fortuitous existence when he points to the King and says, ‘Now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now: I am a Fool, thou art nothing.’\(^{60}\) Rosalie Colie reminds us that Edgar, after he is forced to disguise himself as Poor Tom, similarly says, ‘Edgar I *nothing* am.’\(^{61}\) The meaning of this simple statement is perfectly clear, ‘I am *not* Edgar.’ However, this statement is *untrue*, and even if ‘nothing’ is falsely expressed, it does not fail to produce the opposite of what is expressed, namely the existence of that being whose existence is being denied. But whereas a true expression of nothing simply creates the apperception of what is

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\(^{57}\) Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act I, Scene i.


unconcealed, the untrue expression of ‘nothing’ creates the apperception of what is concealed. As we have seen, the function of saying ‘nothing,’ is the exact opposite of its meaning, for the apperception of the Being of beings is created for that existence whose Being is denied. More concretely, the false apperception or the inapperception of Edgar, that is created through his disguise, where Edgar is even on the verge of not being able to apperceive himself, of denying himself completely, creates again the profound apperception of the Being of that which is inapperceived, if not only denied.

[22] We will not need many illustrations to show how the function of nothing is entirely contrary to, works in the opposite direction of the meaning expressed, for whereas non-Being is expressed through nothing, the function is to create the apperception of the Being of beings. Of all uses of nothing in Shakespeare’s works, none is perhaps more memorable than the encounter between King Lear and his daughter Cordelia in the opening of King Lear. For where King Lear expects to hear an expression of Cordelia’s affection and admiration for his person, all he hears is, ‘Nothing.’ As King Lear says, begging his dearest daughter to continue, ‘Nothing can come of nothing. Speak again.’62 It is clear that the function of nothing is entirely opposite, even diametrically opposed to its meaning, which is why we may call nothing the figure of instant reversal, for it creates the exact opposite of what is expressed. Whereas King Lear warns Cordelia, before she present her testimony to the glory of her father, that ‘Nothing will come of nothing,’63 that she stands to lose everything if she says, ‘Nothing,’ and she soon does, it is evident that it is precisely the expression of ‘nothing,’ and later the

62 Shakespeare, King Lear, Act I, Scene i.92.
63 Shakespeare, King Lear, Act I, Scene i.92.
removal of her inheritance, the disinheritance of Cordelia which makes, through
aphairesis, nothing come true, that produces the apperception of the Being of
Cordelia, which appear to be not despite, but because she has been stripped of her
privileges and disinherited, not despite but because she has truly displayed no
feelings nor admiration for her father. It is therefore Cordelia’s expression of
‘Nothing,’ this embarrassing lack of respectful display which she presents in front
of the courtiers, that leads not only to an instant change of fortune, but gives her,
in exact contradistinction to what is said, Being, as the attributes of what appear
before us are taken away.

[23] Rosalie Colie marks, ‘All Lear’s troubles come from Cordelia’s firm
‘Nothing, my Lord,’ in answer to her father’s formal request for a record of her
affection. Edmund starts the troubles in Gloucester’s family with exactly the same
words, ‘Nothing, my lord,’ in answer to his father’s request for a report on the
false letter in Edmund’s hand. Both Cordelia and Edmund, for quite different
reasons equivocate with that traditionally equivocal word “nothing.”’ And neither
lies.’64 Superficially we would disagree with Ms. Colie and assert that while
Cordelia speaks truly, Edmund lies, and that without acknowledging fifthly
difference it would escapes us that whereas the false expression of ‘nothing’
produces the apperception of what is concealed, the true expression of nothing
generally produces the apperception of what is unconcealed. In [th]is case we must,
more profoundly, agree with Ms. Colie, for as Lord Gloucester is aware of what is
falsely denied [as nothing], the false expression of ‘nothing’ is turned into an

64 Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, p. 471.
indefinition, an indefinition through which this letter \emph{is} unconcealed, as much as it falsely appeared, was unconcealed under the door.

[24] As often as not Shakespeare uses nothing \emph{truly} but indefinitely to affirm what is \emph{not}. Cordelia obviously affirms that she has \emph{nothing} to say about her father, and by thus expressing ‘Nothing,’ Shakespeare makes the spectator \emph{immediately} infer to the apperception of what \emph{is} unconcealed, to the one whom she says ‘Nothing’ of, namely King Lear. However, Cordelia’s ‘Nothing’ hides her low estimation of her own father, so ‘Nothing’ is expressed falsely, is an attempt to hide her own judgment. By thus expressing ‘Nothing,’ Cordelia without effort gives the spectator, as well as all those witnessing what she is unwilling to speak of, the apperception of what \emph{is} concealed.\footnote{To confirm what she is unwilling to speak of, whether it is the true judgment of her more pragmatic sisters or the depreciation of King Lear’s wits, that by saying, ‘Nothing,’ she is indeed close to lying, Cordelia says, as she is about to make her exit, ‘Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are, \’And, like a sister, am most loath to call/Your faults as they are named.’ [Shakespeare, \textit{King Lear}, Act I, Scene i.271-273. Emphasis added].} To expose the final contradiction of meaning and function of saying ‘nothing,’ we need to proceed more patiently. When King Lear asks Cordelia, ‘What do you have to say?’ he expects to hear how highly he is loved by his daughter. Cordelia answers, ‘Nothing,’ King Lear replies, ‘Nothing will come of nothing.’\footnote{Shakespeare, \textit{King Lear}, Act I, Scene i.92.} However much \emph{nothing} is the meaning of what is said within the play, and even if nothing in [th]is case is true, as Cordelia truly ends up with nothing, this expression is, of course, immediately contradicted, and Shakespeare is well aware of [th]is, by the effect of the presentation, where indeed, saying ‘nothing,’ more effortlessly than silence, creates the apperception of the Being of beings. For when Cordelia says, ‘Nothing,’ she does not only deny that she has any feelings for her father, but more so, she affirms the place, the blank
through which these feelings may or may not be unconcealed, and so, what is affirmed by saying, ‘nothing,’ is again what Hegel would say Being is already in the beginning, ‘Nothing.’

To sum up we can say that the effect of expressing ‘nothing,’ depends on whether ‘nothing’ is expressed truly or untruly, affirmatively or in denial. Evidently, the untrue expression of ‘nothing’ produces the apperception of that which is concealed, whereas the true expression of ‘nothing’ produces the apperception of that which is unconcealed. If one through ‘nothing’ denies the perception of the essential but true characteristics of [th]is or if one denies the true apperception of [th]is, the effect is nevertheless the same, namely, the apperception of what is unconcealed. If ‘nothing’ denies the essence or existence of any being, if [th]is is falsely denied by calling it ‘nothing,’ we are simply, and without effort, made to infer from the imperception or inapperception of [th]is to its concealed existence. Finally, we would have to say that whether truly or untruly, an affirmation or a negation, ‘nothing’ produces the opposite of what it states, namely, Being. It is remarkable that [th]is effect is achieved so spontaneously, almost thoughtlessly achieved, that one never needs to ponder at the means to arrive at the end. This suggest that ‘nothing’ is a commonplace so immediately available to all, so undistinguishable from our composition, that it may well be indifferent from what is more fundamental than the meaning of our lives, our

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68 ‘Nothing’ is not necessarily a denial of all characteristica generally or tout court, but a denial of particular and essential attributes. When ‘nothing’ is expressed truly as an affirmation, ‘nothing’ is tantamount to an indefinitioin, a negative affirmation. As we shall soon see, it also has the same effect, to produce the apperception of what is unconcealed. ‘Nothing’ is, when it is true no more than a negative affirmation that affirms [th]is indefinitely by denying its characteristics, its attributes. When ‘nothing’ is untrue, however, that is, when ‘nothing’ conceals something, the untrue expression of ‘nothing’ creates the apperception of what is concealed, as when one is asked, ‘Did you see anything,’ and, denying what you saw, you say, ‘I saw nothing.’
Being. And if the commonplace that produces [th]is effect is so close to our hearts, even more is the place which it produces the apperception of.

§8.2 Showing Nothing

[26] The function of nothing in drama, is not to make anything particular, evidently, as a particular is an instance of the universal which is defined by what it essentially is, but to make possible the experience or apperception of the Being of [th]is singular [being]. Plato lets the Stranger in the Sophist think that the origin of nothing is negation or denial, and that nothing is secondary to that something which nothing negates.69 At least for a while, until Theaetetus and the Visitor become so baffled, so entangled by the investigation that they have to admit that they know neither what Being nor non-Being is.70 However difficult the exposition, the analysis of nothing is, looking at a negative affirmation, an indefiniteness, we see how effortlessly we arrive at the apperception of nothing through negation. We could take as our example, the simplest illustration, the negative affirmation, ‘x is not-p,’ to witness how the apperception of nothing is produced, but we will not proceed abstractly without first mentioning Shakespeare’s most well-known, if not infamous, indefiniteness. Evidently, what distinguishes a grand playwright from a good playwright is that he makes something out of nothing, that he, like a god creates ex nihilo.

69 Plato, Sophist, 257b-258e, esp. 258e.
70 Plato, Sophist, 243b-c.
The most famous indefiniteness in Shakespeare’s oeuvre is surely Othello’s opening statement, ‘I am not what I am.’\(^{71}\) Saying this, Iago has not only signalled how self-conscious he is of his own appearance - as an instrument, as a means to end, as a device for machinations - but has, even more, given indications to how consciously Shakespeare goes about producing the apperception of the Being of beings. For, as was said, the only difference between a false statement and an indefiniteness is knowledge, for knowledge transforms a false perception, a false proposition into an indefiniteness. For whereas the untrue perception of what [th]is gives the spectator an apperception of [th]is as truly concealed, the awareness that these attributes, these properties does not belong to [th]is, makes the perception of what [th]is is into an indefiniteness whereby the predicates with which [th]is man or woman is associated are taken away, and, knowing nothing else, nothing else remains.

We include indefiniteness among the figures that most effortlessly produce the [negative] apperception of the Being of beings. Evidently, nothing is nowhere more affective than when nothing is not detected. Clearly, nothing is not likely to reach its end, to be consumed by its own ontological function, if nothing is [detected], that is, if nothing is reified.\(^{72}\) Elaboration on what is actually expressed, but more so affected, when Othello says, ‘I am not what I am,’ we could start by confirming what is self-evident. Not-\(p\) obviously denies the existence of \(p\), and by saying that \(p\)

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\(^{71}\) Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act I, Scene i.62. We should not be surprise to hear Viola makes the exact same confession to Olivia in Twelfth Night, ‘I am not what I am.’[Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act III, Scene i.143. Emphasis added].

\(^{72}\) About our immediate inability to grasp nothing, Ms. Colie says, ‘Even for logicians and rhetoricians, the twinned ideas of infinity and nothing are technically dangerous; since they are so wild, at the loose edge of conceptualization and of discourse, nullifying – literally, ideas of order and ordination, nullifying logical and rhetorical formulations. Certainly the two notions resist domestication within the mind.’ Colie, *Paradoxa Epidemica*, p. 222.
is not, we do of course have to admit that we have said even less of x, if it is true that not-p is a denial of p. That is, if, as Russell says in The Problems of Philosophy where he simply states The Law of Contradiction, ‘Nothing can both be and not be [at the same time].’ If, however x is affirmed through the negative affirmation ‘x is not-p,’ and if it is true that not-p denies the existence of p, and not-p is not simply a definition of the limits of p, where p is not denied, but an assertion of what is beyond the limits of p, either through lack or excess, privation or abundance, but that when denying p we have said that p is not, having said that ‘x is not-p,’ it becomes clear that we have said nothing of x or that x is nothing, which is precisely what Aristotle says, that a negative affirmation, an indefinition shows us nothing.74

[29] As much as Shakespeare successfully produces the apperception of what is hidden, he equally masters the art of producing the apperception of what is outstanding, the apperception of what is un concealed. Beginnings are crucial, and in the beginning of All’s Well that Ends Well, Shakespeare produces, so contrary to Twelfth Night where everything is concealed, the impression of what is un concealed. In All’s Well that Ends Well we are brought to witness the ecstasy that precedes hypostasy, the ekstasis that precedes hypostasis, the un concealed that is prior to [th] is Being concealed. In a primary sense therefore, Shakespeare produces, in the opening of All’s Well that Ends Well, the apperception of what is outstanding, men and women who appear to have transgressed beyond the bounds of concealment, lingering in [th] is fortuitous clearing, indeterminately, indefinitely as undead.75 We could say that in concealment, as in a cocoon, every moment,

74 Cf. Aristotle, de Interpretatione, 16b11-25, esp. de Interpretatione, 19b5-10.
75 That nothing appears to be hidden in the beginning, the opening of this play can perhaps explain why All’s Well that Ends Well, as Harold Bloom points out, is hardly ever staged, as it is obvious
every appearance, every saying and every thought remains hidden, concealed before it is unconcealed. In this sense, all appearances, every phenomena are ecstatic, in ecstasy before it is grounded or anchored by an inference to what is concealed, be this called, hypostasis, hypokeimenon, substance or soul. This, Being is unconcealed before it is concealed. For, in a primary sense, in an original sense, what is not unconcealed would not be. It is this ecstasy that Shakespeare produces the apperception of through inadequation, more precisely, the inadequate figure of indefiniteness. For, as Aristotle says, an indefinite presentation shows us nothing, provides no more than a frame for each phenomena to appear as what it is not.\footnote{Aristotle, \textit{de Interpretatione}, 19b5-10.}

In the opening of \textit{All’s Well that Ends Well} there appear four personae on stage: an elderly Lady accompanied by her Son, an elderly Lord and a young Lady. All are nameless, appearing in black on a black stage where they would disappear did they not have pale, powdered faces, masques. The elderly Lady, whom it is true we know nothing of, says, ‘In delivering my son from me I bury a/Second husband.’\footnote{Shakespeare, \textit{All’s Well that Ends Well}, Act I, Scene i.1. If anyone thinks that we proceed too slowly or too minutely with our investigation, we will only point out, that it is always the pretence to know, the unwillingness to not know that halts every inquiry, but also, that thinking speeds up when we slow down, when we attempt to think less, when we dwell at the beginning, we think more.} It is obvious that the Countess, who is executing the funeral of her husband, awaiting her son to leave, likens his departure to the death of her husband. The meaning is clear. What we shall do is to make the reader aware of the function of providing such a sombre opening. For it is obvious that Shakespeare’s presentation provides, in contradiction to the meaning expressed, a...
clearing for these characters to appear as beings among beings, an opening, a place through indefinition.

[31] Obviously, the son resembles the father only in this, that he will soon, against his mother’s will and wishes, be concealed. However, having not yet departed, he appears before his mother as unconcealed, having not yet suffered the cognitive death of imperception, been buried by his own non-appearance. As Bacon says, so contrary to Heidegger’s ontological exposition of death in *Being and Time*78 and in opposition to Derrida’s anachronistic treatment of death in *Aporias*,79 ‘Death makes all men equal.’ Evidently, the countess is as unwilling to see her son leave for Paris, to serve His Majesty The King of France, as she was to see her husband die. This is however expressed, not in the absence of the one who is about to leave, but in his presence. The proposition becomes a negative frame through which [th]is young man may appear to be unburied, to have escaped the cognitive grave of imperception, of being imperceived. Hence the son, who is still there without a name, stands out as unburied, as unconcealed, if you will, entbergt, and there is produced the apperception that [th]is man is. The apperception of [th]is remains moreover indefinite, for he appears as [th]is indefiniteness much like Anaximander, through his shocking non-poetry,80 presents the apeiron, not as concealed, but as the place through which anything is, all things are, indeterminately unconcealed.81

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80 We recall that Anaximander was the first to write philosophy without the use of verse, the first to establish a long line of Logographoi, the Scribes of Reason. See, Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, 1927.
81 Heidegger would say, maintaining death as a negative principle of Being, that it is death that makes everyone stand out as singularly unconcealed as it is death that makes each man’s life, the essential project of Dasein, inevitably incomplete. Da-sein ends in ‘unfulfillment,’ *Being and Time*, Section 48, S. 244/p. 227.] and this ‘unfulfillment’ belongs to me, for ‘No one can take the
According to Anaximander, each phenomenon, each appearance gives a glimpse of what is concealed, but only after it is first unconcealed, indefinitely, indeterminately as the *apeiron*. Heidegger interprets *apeiron* not as something hidden, but as that through which any phenomenon, indistinctly, prior to what it is, prior to its *essential* distinction, hovers as yet undetermined, as the *apeiron*.\(^82\) It is not difficult to recognize that Shakespeare, through indefiniteness, produces the apperception of what is unconcealed. Undeniably, [th]is young man stands out as unconcealed, indeterminately, he is the *apeiron*, [th]is prior to its essential distinction, prior to [th]is taking on its essential masque that more often than not keeps [th]is from being discovered. Speaking metaphorically, which we only do hesitantly, using metaphor as a heuristic device, we could say that indefiniteness creates the apperception of light at the end of a tunnel. In [th]is light, even, *as* [th]is light, man hovers fortuitously, as the *apeiron*. Having not yet suffered the cognitive death of imperception, [th]is appear to be saved from the immemorial death of non-perception, and therefore it appears to be *true*.\(^83\)

\[^{33}\] *Th/is* negative production of Being is not random. For in the beginning of *All’s Well that Ends Well*, Shakespeare introduces, in only five sentences, merely four lines, three deaths: the actual death of a perished father, the cognitive death of a departed son [through sudden and potential imperception], the potential death of a King suffering from an incurable illness. Evidently, death is not arbitrarily related to the presencing of these beings, to the apperception of the Being of these other’s dying away from him.’ [Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Section 47, S. 240/p. 223. Emphasis added].

\(^82\) Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, pp. 82-106.

\(^83\) Obviously, the concept of truth applied in this paragraph is *not* epistemological but ontological, in the sense that what stands out is experienced as real, as Being there, and [th]is self-disclosure is experienced, apperceived as a negation of what is not revealed.
beings. For it is by being apperceived as indefinitely *Da*, that these men and women appear as *living* beings, that the play appear to confront the spectator with the *happening of truth* through which these men and women appear before us as unconcealed.⁸⁴ To make the unconcealment of these beings more precarious than it already is, Lafew, the old Courtier, contradicts himself without any reservations. For as clearly as he in one sentence speaks of the King of France as a true pillar of unconcealment that graciously upholds the Being of all his subordinates, in the next, and without giving a thought to this contradiction, he reveals that the King has now not only fallen ill, but equally abandoned all physicians and all hope for survival. The *virtu* of the King, which was believed to be the underlying *power* of unconcealment in the Kingdom of France, is suddenly enfeebled, transformed into the emptiness of a moral *virtue* that has no power, *is* without virtue. What *is* surprising, is not that the King is forced to face that which he will not, death, which will close the gap in which he, like all beings, *is* unconcealed, but that with his death, the life of all his subjects, all those who depend on [th]is alliance, will suddenly *be* without ground.⁸⁵

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⁸⁵ When commenting on the subject matter of Plato’s *Sophist* Aristotle points out that its subject matter is the fortuitous, clearly that which Shakespeare here produces the apperception of. Cf. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book VI, Chapter 2, esp. 1026b14.
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fortuitousness of this gap of unconcealment, the precariousness of existence, is only made graver, when the Countess, says, ‘This young gentlewoman had a father.’ But how does she describe her father, but to simply say that he was a physician, adding naively, that if this physician was alive, nature would be immortal, and ‘death should have play for lack of work.’ Implied is not only that immortals would have to play to be dead, but that death is, at any one time, more than play for anyone who cannot claim immortality. Again Shakespeare directs our gaze towards the ephemeral clearing where his company, like all men and women, ecstatically, are unconcealed, as they stand next to a grave of utter concealment.

We are tempted to continue, but knowing that the time the reader is unconcealed is limited, we will end our exposition of Shakespeare’s indefinite presentation of the ontological contradiction in the opening of All’s Well that Ends Well here. However, we cannot leave out that Helena is soon about to ‘die for love,’ and that already in the next scene, where Helena asks Parolles how a girl should best protect her virginity, Parolles answers bluntly, that ‘He that hangs himself is a virgin, virginity murders itself.’ Again, the reader is assured that in this play, death is neither expressed nor understood symbolically, but as that which each one of its personae negates, to thereby stand out as alive. It is therefore not coincidental that, in the end, Bertram only returns to his beloved Avignon from his Italian exile after he hears the news of Helena’s death. Having sworn to

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86 Shakespeare, All’s Well that Ends Well, Act I, Scene i.19. Emphasis added.
87 Shakespeare, All’s Well that Ends Well, Act I, Scene i.23.
88 Cf. For Heidegger’s remarks on the ecstasy of Being, similarly, his critique of the superficialities of Sartre’s existentialism, see Heidegger, Letter on Humanism, in Basic Writings, pp. 230-231.
89 Shakespeare, All’s Well that Ends Well, Act I, Scene i.98.
90 Shakespeare, All’s Well that Ends Well, Act I, Scene i.145-146.
make the *not* eternal,\textsuperscript{91} to never give Helena any children, Bertram returns only to find that he has *unknowingly* made her pregnant. For having been conceived in the dark, a dead woman finally appears to be with child on this stage, to close [th]is theatre, to shut this ‘looking place,’\textsuperscript{92} about to unconceal another one, to unconceal [th]is as it was in the beginning, as an indefinite light appearing in total darkness, *Being* the negation of everything that [it] *is not.*\textsuperscript{93}

It is paradoxical that precisely in the beginning of the play, in the opening of this *theatre* or that *looking place,* when those who appear before us should seem most superficial, as merely masked, when we are disposed to mistrust the Being of all appearances, that they appear *to be* most profoundly. However, it is a regular mark of the Shakespearean play to produce unreal ends, the relief of unreality, as much as real beginnings, to make the beginning more real than the end, the end more unreal than the beginning.\textsuperscript{94} By having [th]is effect on his audience, Shakespeare is, of course, entirely unHegelian, for to Hegel, the beginning is as unreal as the end is not.\textsuperscript{95} But, we ask, what is it that Shakespeare produces the apperception of in the beginning if not the very same that Hegel identifies *as* the very beginning, that which, completely empty of any essential characteristica and apperceived as *nothing,* is, namely *Being.*\textsuperscript{96} If Shakespeare produces the

\textsuperscript{91} Shakespeare, *All’s Well that Ends Well,* Act III, Scene ii.23.
\textsuperscript{92} For the etymology of the Greek theatre as ‘a looking place’ opposed to the Roman auditorium or ‘hearing place,’ see, Michael Ewans’s ‘Introduction’ to Aeschylus, *The Oresteia,* p. xix.
\textsuperscript{93} Helena enters this final stage in Shakespeare, *All’s Well that Ends Well,* Act V, Scene iii.304.
\textsuperscript{94} Maintaining an ontological concept of truth, we could even say that Shakespeare produces untrue ends as clearly as true beginnings.
\textsuperscript{95} For Hegel on untrue/unreal beginnings and true/real ends see, Hegel, *Phenomenology,* ‘Preface: On Scientific Cognition,’ esp. §12, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{96} In ‘Doctrine of Being,’ Hegel says that Being through predication soon ‘lose that integrity and simplicity it has in the beginning,’ as ‘these beginnings are nothing but empty abstractions.’ Hegel, *Logic,* §87, p. 128 To those who may object and say that there are no such beginnings without *thinking,* Hegel makes the argument, ‘It be replied that Being and Nothing are both of them thoughts, so that thought may be reckoned common ground, the objector forgets that Being is not a
apperception of what is already in the beginning, which is exactly what he does, Shakespeare does at times produce the apperception of nothing.

[37] Heidegger says in his lectures on Nietzsche, that what appears to be the end of apperception is what in the beginning makes any perception possible, for the unknown is not what is last but what is first, Being not the end but the beginning. Even though the apperception of the ontological difference appears to be the result of an inference, and therefore to be consequent to the being perceived, consequent to what is essentially perceived, Being is not the end but the beginning. For what is to apperception the end of a process of cognition, is to Being the beginning of all processes, and hence, what we attempted to approach, what we thought was the end of an inference, is already there, Da from the very beginning. However, what Heidegger fails to acknowledge, is that the apperception of this beginning is produced more or less effectively. One of the means of producing the apperception of the ontological contradiction is indefiniton, the negative framing through which this is allowed to appear as unconcealed, to appear as if it was already there, Da from the very beginning. Clearly, what to art is an end, which may or may not successfully be attained by poiesis, which is unattainable without techne, is in life already unconcealed in the beginning. The apperception of life is not however produced without a certain techne, and knowing what is first and what is last, and knowing how successfully Shakespeare creates the apperception of this end, we could speak of All’s Well that Ends Well and the Beginning of Philosophy, if

particular or definite thought, and hence, being quite indeterminate, is a thought not to be distinguished from Nothing.’ [Hegel, Logic, ‘The Doctrine of Being,’ §87, p. 128].

‘Philosophy’ is the activity whereby one attempts to grasp or comprehend what is first,⁹⁸ what is there, already Da from the very beginning.

[38] It is clear that Shakespeare in the opening of All’s Well that Ends Well, have decided to present the characters indefinitely, to make them all singularly appear, as apeiron allows [th]is to appear, indeterminately. For these characters appear as negative appearances, indeterminately shunning away from death by simply Being unconcealed. By doing so, what is mystical, unexplained, ineffable in the opening of [th]is play, is not what they hide or that they are hidden, but that they appear. Through yet another inadequation, Shakespeare has created the simple astonishment at their appearance. For through indefiniteness or negative affirmation, Shakespeare has made frames where they appear as negations of what in the end conceals all, death. In the light of Shakespeare’s indefinite presentation, these phenomena appear to be, mystically, their simple appearance what cannot be explained. We could have spoken of mystical appearances, for they all appear, and this time in the light, as what they are not, namely dead. That each and every one of us is beyond the grasp of death by simply appearing, by Being unconcealed, is at the heart of Heidegger’s inessential idea of the ontological contradiction as he presents it in Letter on Humanism, where existence is understood ecstatically, as ekstasis. Heidegger maintains that Being is not merely what is posited by the will, as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche assert,⁹⁹ nor is it the concealed substance or soul of each appearance, the noumenon that accompany every phenomenon, as Kant

⁹⁸ Metaphysics, Prima Philosophia or First Philosophy, is philosophy exactly in this sense, the study of what is highest or first, perhaps the beginning and the end, the Gods and the Being of beings. Cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book I, Chapter 2. Book IV and Book XII, Chapter 7.
⁹⁹ Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Idea, Nietzsche, The Will to Power.
would maintain, but rather, each being stands out as the negation of its own concealment, and by thus standing out, \textit{this} appears truly or simply to be.\footnote{Cf. Kant, \textit{Prolegomena}, §§31, 33, 57.}

§8.3 Being Nothing

When I began research for this project, I intended to show that Shakespeare had read Dionysius the Aeropagite or \textit{The Cloud of Unknowing}, whose author translated \textit{The Mystical Theology} into Middle English as \textit{Denis Hid Divinite} in the 14\textsuperscript{th} Century.\footnote{Unknown, \textit{Denis’s Hidden Theology}, translated and with an introduction by James A. Walsh in Unknown, \textit{The Pursuit of Wisdom and Works}, by the author of \textit{The Cloud of Unknowing}, pp. 49-97.} As it turned out, that was not an easy enterprise. We found only two authors who suggested that Shakespeare had read Pseudo-Dionysius, the one Tillyard, who believed that a passage in \textit{The Merchant of Venice} showed a great knowledge of Pseudo-Dionysius’ \textit{The Celestial Hierarchy}.\footnote{E. M. W. Tillyard, \textit{The Elizabethan World Picture}, pp. 56-57.} The passage that Tillyard indicates, which has an indisputable Dionysian flavour, is Lorenzo’s lofty speech to Jessica,

\begin{quote}
‘Sit Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold.
There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.’
\end{quote}

The other indication to Shakespeare’s familiarity with Pseudo-Dionysius was found in Frances Yates, \textit{Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition},\footnote{Yates, \textit{Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition}, p. 121.} a third was implied by Rosalie M. Colie in her spectacular study of a Renaissance literary
topos, *Paradoxia Epidemica.* Ms. Colie does not however speak superficially of angelic hierarchies, but more profoundly of negative theology, which will occupy us in what remains of this chapter as much as symbolic theology, another of Pseudo-Dionysius’ creations, did occupy us in the previous. Beyond the recognition of angels, evidence of Shakespeare’s affinity to the Dionysian tradition is found in the Duke’s *apophatic* sermon in *Measure for Measure,* which clearly is held in the fashion of negative theology. Being disguised as a friar, the Duke praises life in the following *apophatic* manner, as ‘not noble,’ ‘not valiant,’ as not itself, ‘not happy,’ and ‘not certain,’ and Being neither young nor old, life has neither ‘heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,’ The Duke concludes by offering an aporia, ‘What’s yet in this/That bears the name of life?’ No sermon could more evocatively awake the ghost of negative theology, which reaches its end by denying God his name, then to deny his attributes, before finally denying the existence of that which is nameless. There is similarly an element of *elision* in the graveyard, when,

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106 Ms Colie indicates in her wonderful study, *Paradoxia Epidemica,* that ‘the remarkable uses of nothing’ one find in Shakespeare’s tragedies is suggestive of a negative theological trait.[Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica,* p. 233]. However vaguely Ms. Colie conceptually considers ‘negative theology,’ she is certainly pointing in the right direction.

107 Concerning Shakespeare’s knowledge of the angels in The Celestial Hierarchy, we are first of all struck by his precise knowledge of the *principality,* what Dionysius defines as the angel of ‘princely hegemony,’[Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy,* Chapter Nine, 257B, *The Complete Works,* p. 170.] when he lets Valentine liken Love to ‘a principality,/ Sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.’[Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* Act II, Scene iv.151-152.] and how consistently Shakespeare have avoided to speak of the Seraph, the Angel of Love. The exclusion of the Seraph from Shakespeare’s works is especially striking when compared to how many times the Angel of Knowledge, the Cherubim – [Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy,* Chapter Seven, 205B, *The Complete Works,* p. 161] features in Shakespeare’s works: *Macbeth,* Act I, Scene vii.22; *Hamlet,* Act IV, Scene iii.48; *Cymbeline,* Act II, Scene iv.88; *The Merchant of Venice,* Act V, Scene i.62, *Sonnet 114,* *A Lover’s Complaint,* 319. Perhaps the last entrance, if it can be ascribed to Shakespeare, could explain why the Seraph has been left out. For the lover is seduced by one like the Angel of Knowledge, who knew so much and loved so little. Hence, the ‘Cherubin’ betrayed her.[Shakespeare, *A Lover’s Complaint,* 328.]

108 The Duke’s *apophatic* sermon can be found in Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure,* Act III, Scene i.5-41.


110 Compare to Pseudo-Dionysius, who, towards the culmination of *The Mystical Theology* says, ‘There is no speaking of it, nor name nor knowledge of it. … It is beyond assertion and denial. We make assertions and denial of what is next to it, but never it, for it is … beyond every assertion, and
upon his secret return from England, Hamlet picks up a skull, and, speaking in a
tongue that is as distinctly Thomasion as it is *apophatic*, Hamlet says ‘May not that
be the/skull of a lawyer? Where be his *quiddities* now, his qualities, his cases, his
tenures, and his tricks?’ However, what separates the living from the dead is, as
Shakespeare very well knows, that which unites all quiddities, that which keeps all
quiddities together, that which [th]is man is without, the *Being* of beings.112 Clearly
suggestive of a Dionysian tradition are also the remarks about transcendence that
Lafew offers in *All’s Well that Ends Well,*113 where Lafew pronounces what
Parolles calls ‘the rarest argument of wonder/that hath shot out in our latter
time,’114 when he says, ‘They say miracles are past, and we have our/philosophical
persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is
it/that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge,
when we should submit ourselves to an *unknown* fear.’115 Evidently, these remarks
could hardly have been presented without the framework of *negative theology.*

Not only is it evident that Shakespeare has a clear understanding of ghosts,
angels and gods as dissimilar similarities,116 but, more so, he is also aware of the
process of *aphairesis,* that when taking away all the properties from [th]is, and, as
it were, lay it bare, the apperception of the ontological contradiction will ensue. It
should perhaps be noted that if there is an essential difference between heavenly and creaturely beings, it would reside in *if* they are, as Dionysius says, that these heavenly beings cannot be essentially known, whereas man essentially can. The difference may be explained by, as St. Thomas indicates, that angels are beings *without essence* whereas man almost appears to be *nothing* without essential characteristics. No play is more forcefully expressive of this negative theological trait than *King Lear*, although we are the first to acknowledge that there is in *King Lear*, unlike *Measure for Measure*, where there is a pronounced attempt to deliver an *apophatic* sermon, not so much a question of discourse, but more so, of a *process of elision*, an elusive progression, marked by the action itself. That Shakespeare is fully conscious of *if* is progressive *elision/elusion*, is, of course, evident when he lets King Lear, in the storm speak of man as *nothing* after he has taken away everything that *if* man may essentially be. That Shakespeare is fully aware that he not only presents spirits but men as dissimilar similarities, is obvious when he lets King Lear, after he has heard the news of his daughter’s death, wander around as *what* he is not, namely, a man dressed in flowers, a flower man. This signifies, as Shakespeare very well knows, not *what* *if* man is like, but rather, what *if* man is *unlike*, namely *nature*. And, as *if* is unlike-likeness,

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117 On the basic unknowability of the heavenly angels except through revelation, see Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, Chapter One, *The Collected Works*, pp.145-147. On St. Thomas demarcation of men from angels and the principle unknowability of angels as they are, according to St. Thomas, without essence, and therefore unpredictable, ungraspable, see, Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, ‘Chapter 5, Different Beings, Different Essences,’ in *Selected Writings*, p. 45, where it is said, ‘The proper accidents of immaterial substances are *unknown* to us.’ [Emphasis added.]

118 The Duke does himself deliver this *apophatic* speech towards the end of *Measure for Measure*. Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act III, Scene i.5-41.

119 Whereas the concept of *aphairesis* is applied to an *apophatic* discourse or to a conceptual process whereby all perceptual and intelligible qualities are denied all beings, to life as a whole or everything that is, the concept of elision is applied to mark the gradual chiselling away or the violent removal of all perceptual and intelligible properties from an *individual* being, who, through *if* process of elision is rendered *elusive*, and thus appear to be [alive].

120 Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act IV, Scene vi.79.
as [th]is dissimilar-similarity, King Lear wanders as a spirit among spirits, or simply, as a man among men, quite simply alive.

[41] The first and foremost example in Shakespeare’s plays of the negative production of Being through *elision*, the gradual removal or violent ab-straction of many or all properties from an individual being, is clearly *King Lear*, whose visible signs of Kingship are all given or taken away from him. Then, after having given away the visible signs of his authority, his royal powers, his intelligible qualities are soon removed, even his intelligence seems soon to falter. Before he dies, King Lear is *nothing* but [th]is ontological contradiction, that which everything has been taken away from, experienced as that which *is* simply alive. On the heath, in the storm, when he appear to have lost everything, King Lear himself says to the miserable men of his company, before tearing off his clothes, that without *p*, without *q* and without *r*, ‘thou art the thing itself.’121 Offering an encomium to nothing, King Lear cries out to Poor Tom-a-Bedlam who stands uncovered on the heath in the storm,

‘Thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than *this* Consider him well. Thou ow’st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here’s three on’s are sophisticated. Thou art the *thing itself*; unaccomodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings! - Come, unbutton here [*Tearing off his clothes.*]122

Borrowed are, of course, all the properties we pride ourselves with, for we appear to live, *to be* alive even *without* them, which is again to show, or Shakespeare shows again, the priority of that which upholds *the integrity* of these properties. And,

having announced himself as *nothing*, King Lear says to the freezing Poor Tom, before they enter the hovel, to seek shelter from the wind and the rain, ‘I will keep still - quiet like the winds - with my philosopher.’\(^\text{123}\) That there really is no sense of communication in this scene, is clear from the fact that whereas King Lear is begging to be enlightened on questions of *natural philosophy*, Poor Tom addresses questions of *moral philosophy*, where he inadvertently sees himself as illustrating vices, confesses to sins he has *never* committed and King Lear has never asked to be confessed. However, admitting to sins or transgressions he *never* made, we do again apperceive [th]is man’s Being, as he again presents himself and is perceived as *what* he is not, if at all King Lear listens to what he says. This is, of course, the hidden or second sense, in addition to Being the incarnation of nothing, in which Poor Tom *is* a philosopher, for he does not, never does he, like Augustine before him and Descartes after him, merely speak of false perceptions, he *is* what is perceived falsely.

\[^{42}\] Again the formula is simple; not knowing the predicates creates the apperception of the Being of the subject, not knowing *what* [th]is is, produces the apperception of [th]is as concealed or unconcealed. We could even speak of purification through loss of identity, a ritual process through which all properties are taken away and ‘I’ am laid bare, a negative, an *elisive* process which is never more sad, no more purifying than in *King Lear* where the King is left with nothing, dancing around in the tempest with only what nature immediately can bring. For King Lear may grab a flower here, tear off a garment there, as easily as his daughters, Goneril and Regan, plucked away everything that belonged to him; his

\(^{123}\) Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act III, Scene iv.179. We should perhaps quietly add that King Lear here uses ‘philosopher’ in the contemporary, the premodern, sense of ‘scientist,’ one who possesses the virtue, and perhaps enjoys the favours, of *scientia*, *episteme* or *knowledge*. 
land, his majesty, his army. [Th]is *elusive* process of taking away and leaving what remains *concealed* with next to nothing, does not only show how vulnerable we are to the vicissitudes of life and the wrong-doings of others, the ill effects of our own bad judgments. If we also remove our own prejudices, we will see that [th]is *progressive elision*, whereby the properties that are indispensable to the essential identity of an individual being is hammered away, creates the apperception that *is*, which alone remains, or *that* from which everything has been taken away, *is.* ¹²⁴ More generally, we could speak of a figure of incarnation which Shakespeare uses extensively, that is, the production of Being through *loss* of identity, not without, of course, identifying this figure in Shakespeare’s works more concretely, which we will do in Chapter 9, *The Production of Being through Substitution*, with a special focus on Sly in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Superficially, we could say that the loss of identity we are speaking of is the incapacity to comprehend oneself *essentially*, that is to misperceive oneself, but, more profoundly, to lose oneself is no longer to apperceive one’s self, in your own place, to apperceive another.

There are two major traditions in the philosophical exposition of *nothing*, the one Platonic, giving Being to *what is not*, in strong opposition to the philosophy of Parmenides,¹²⁵ which later takes on the garb of Neoplatonism where only what *essentially* is, is granted existence. The Neoplatonic position is expressed most clearly and influentially in the philosophies of Plotinus and Augustine, but equally in the works of Iamblichus who by most is considered the last grand philosopher of

¹²⁴ Another man, who gives away everything, but only for a few days, as if the play was no more than an extended Saturnalia, is Vincentio, the Duke in *Measure for Measure*.

¹²⁵ See the puzzling and sustained critique of Parmenides’ position in Plato’s *Sophist*, esp. 241d-242c. Parmenides doctrine of Being is quoted at the outset by Plato in *Sophist*, 237a.
Antiquity. Evidently, Plotinus, Augustine and Iamblichus heed Parmenides’ warning to never think that what is not is. Within the Neoplatonic tradition, Being is considered as that which essentially encompasses everything that is, and that which does not partake in Being, any essential idea, is within this tradition certainly considered to be nothing. [Nothing] is devalued as non-Being, merely considered a privation or lack of Being. Heidegger, obviously in sharp contradistinction to this Neoplatonic position, continues the tradition of Plato as expounded in the dialogue of the Sophist, by granting Being to what is not. Heidegger already politely announces his debt in the programmatic quote that opens Being and Time, which is, indeed taken from Sophist, where Heidegger quotes the Visitor’s sudden bafflement, when faced with the question of what

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126 See for example, Iamblichus’ renowned The Egyptian Mysteries and Proclus’ lesser known, The Elements of Theology, translated and commented by Mr. Dodds, 1933. The Neoplatonic element is clearly present in the theurgy of both Iamblichus and Proclus, that is, a theory of how the cosmos is connected and may be influenced, perhaps magically, through essential likenesses, some visible, others invisible.

127 If one should object and say that Plotinus as well as Iamblichus point out a Being above all beings, [Iamblichos, The Egyptian Mysteries, p. 34, Plotinus, The Enneads, Ennead V, Book 5, Chapters 1-13.] consider the nature of what is beyond the intellect, namely the One, which, although granting Being to everything that is, is above being,[Plotinus, The Enneads, V.5.6.] inefllable, it is clear that one has failed to considered what the One grants being to. The essential perspective or approach to the Being of all beings is made readily available to the scrutiny of all when Plotinus says, ‘Just as there is, primarily or secondarily, some form or idea from the monad in each of the successive numbers - the later still participating, though unequally, in the unit - so the series of Beings following upon The First bear, each, some form or idea derived from that source.’ [Plotinus, The Enneads, V.5.5.] ‘This produced reality is an Ideal-form - for certainly nothing springing from the Supreme can be less.’[Plotinus, The Enneads, V.5.6] It is in this light almost irrelevant to point out further that Plotinus considers the Being of individual ideas. For what provides the ground, the Beings of all beings, is, as both Plotinus doctrine on matter as an in-substantial mirror [Plotinus, The Enneads, III.6.7] and his doctrine of individual and essential substances that preexist their projection into this world, [Plotinus, The Enneads, V.7, ‘Ideal Archetype of Individual Beings.’ Emphasis added.] entirely and completely essential. It is forgotten that what is considered to have being is an individual idea. And to Plotinus ideas are essential, whereas to Kant they are not.[Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A327/B384].

128 Considering the non-Being of what is not, Ms. Collie exposes one of the main representatives of this Neoplatonic position, ‘Augustine, generalized the problem of evil into ‘defect,’ into ‘privation.’ emptiness, or lack, of God. So the devil, in Augustine’s scheme, is not, has not being …’ [Colie, Paradoxa Epidemica, p. 235.] Like vice, nothing is merely a privation. And, as vice is a lack of virtue, nothing is a lack of any ideal or essential Being.

129 The Neoplatonic disposition to only consider what beings essentially are, is continued by the scientific search for the essence of every being, a probing crowned at Heidegger’s time by nuclear physics and today by the genome project.
Being and non-Being is. The false assurance with which the Neoplatonist neglects, removes nothing from the face of the earth, to thereby consider his position superior, can be ascribed to an essentialistic doctrine of Being where everything that is, is what essentially is and otherwise [nothing], a position apparently reinforced by the Scientific Revolution.

[44] The point at which we identify Ms. Colie’s preoccupation with meaning, her essentially Neoplatonic predisposition and her consequent disregard for the Being, function or effect of the Shakespearean play, is when she interprets Macbeth as a figure that comes to signify nothing. Showing her true Neoplatonic disposition and no understanding of the contradiction of the meaning expressed and the function attained, Ms. Colie explains that Macbeth is quite simply nothing, because he fails to incarnate any essential virtues. ‘Macbeth speaks more truly than he knows, then, when he says, fearing Banquo’s insight into his mind, ‘To be thus is nothing’ – according to the Augustinian morality, to be “bad,” or wicked, is exactly to be “nothing.”’

Again Colie looks essentially at nothing, a perspective from which nothing disappears and its ontological function evaporates. Neglecting the effect of the Shakespearean presentation, Ms. Colie repeats the same point in her valuation of Iago, showing again that coherence does not prove that any doctrine or interpretation is true, when she considers Iago as a nobody, and therefore a clear candidate for non-Being, when it is precisely the misperception of Iago, that he is truly not like anything he is perceived as, neither loyal nor true, that most emphatically, creates the apperception of his Being.

\[^{130}\text{Heidegger, Being and Time, xix. Cf. Plato, Sophist, 244a.}\]
\[^{131}\text{Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, p. 235.}\]
\[^{132}\text{Colie, Paradoxia Epidemica, p. 246.}\]
Neither Hamlet’s *madness*, nor Macbeth’s or Iago’s *loyalty* essentially exist. But, as we have maintained throughout this thesis, it is the representation of *what is not* that most effectively produces the apperception of the Being of beings, a point which crucially escapes any interpretation that does not free itself from an essentialistic doctrine of Being. Considering the ontological effect without the prejudices of Neoplatonism, a persona that *lacks* essential being, and likewise, a man without true character, would appear to be more *true* than any man who is indistinguishable from or truly upholds his essential attributes. Is it not obvious, that apart from *what* the spectators know they are *not*, knowing that Hamlet is *not* mad and that neither Iago nor Macbeth is *loyal*, the characters within the play knows almost *nothing*. Obviously, Shakespeare cannot be placed within a Neoplatonic tradition of philosophy, which he superficially at times may adhere or express, but which his art, the success of his *techne*, clearly betrays. For the function or the effect of Shakespearean presentation is entirely opposite to what is represented. The Neoplatonic *meaning* of the play or *re*presentation is often obvious, as when Shakespeare lets Cordelia say, ‘Nothing,’\(^{133}\) or when Queen Gertrude replies to Hamlet’s ‘Do you see nothing there?’ by saying, ‘Nothing at all; yet all that *is* I see,’\(^{134}\) or Edmund answer his father Gloucester, while holding a letter behind his back, that he has ‘Nothing,’ behind his back.\(^{135}\) However, the function of the presentation does contradict the meaning, for the expression of ‘nothing’ creates the apperception of that whose existence has been denied, regardless of whether nothing is expressed truly or untruly.

\(^{133}\) Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act I, Scene i.91.
\(^{135}\) Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act I, Scene ii.32. Lord Gloucester lets us know once and for all that nothing cannot be hidden, but *is* always out in the *open*, when he says, ‘The quality of nothing hath no such need to hide itself. Let’s see. Come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.’ [Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act I, Scene ii.34-36].
[46] This is and remains a paradox, that a certain and inevitable twist of cognition, apprehension or apperception, a certain dialectical twist is always involved in the apprehension of what which appears or is presented as what it is not whereby it achieves an effect, which is quite clearly, in contradistinction to the meaning of the presentation. For again, the function of the presentation runs counter to the meaning represented, for the less Macbeth appear to be – within the play or to the characters within the play - the more he appear to be in the theatre - which is, of course quite paradoxical, though hardly a paradox Rosalie Colie has recognized in her otherwise fabulous book. Although Ms. Colie has recognized many other paradoxes, she has not recognized the most fundamental paradox, which is that the representation of what is not produces the apperception of what is. [Th]is shows that paradoxes are not merely riddles or puzzles meant for afternoon entertainment, but for something tremendously more crucial, to create or recreate most profoundly our apperception of what is, or that which nothing can be without seizing to be. It is stunning to hear Macbeth finally, having heard of his wife’s death, as he is about to enter his last battle with the certainty that he will not overcome, cry out,

‘Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player 
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage 
And then is heard no more. It is a tale 
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury 
Signifying nothing.’

136 Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act V, Scene v.24-28. Emphasis added. Again Ms. Colie repeats the same inconsideration of the ontological difference, if not the total neglect, of [the experience of] the audience, when she says, ‘After all the doing – the murdering, the suffering, the tyranny, the rebellion – “nothing” is literally what Macbeth gets. His kingdoms is no kingdom.’ Colie, *Paradoxia Epidemica*, p. 234.
It is a striking aspect of Shakespeare’s major plays that the main characters have, from the beginning of the play, lost themselves, that their selves have been taken away. Neither Hamlet nor Romeo appear in the beginning to be themselves. This is similarly true of King Lear and Macbeth. The one [King Lear] loses himself to madness, giving everything away in unnatural abundance, the other [Macbeth] to amazement, following a destiny marked off by creatures he cannot fathom. The third [Romeo] falls in love, loses himself completely, first to Rosaline, then to Juliet, and had he not died so young, he would almost certainly have lost his heart to a third. But the fourth [Hamlet] only appears to have lost himself, to have given himself away. Quite remarkably, the fourth [Hamlet] only appears to have, only gives the impression of having lost himself when he has not. Therefore, compared to the others, he appears to be much more profound. In all Shakespeare’s major plays, it is only Othello who appear to bear the name of a man who is indifferently himself, as Kittredge says, a heroic man who trusts his fellows, who believes that appearances are adequate representations of what the world is. Alas, in an attempt to keep his [sense of] self, he loses everything. For Othello is made to, already from the beginning, through the elaborate and patient machinations of Iago, perceive what is not [true], and from the perception of what is not true - Iago’s loyalty, Desdemona’s infidelity - the spectator is again made to infer to the apperception of what is [true], the Being of beings. We could even go so far as to say that adequatio makes Othello a killer, and that if he believed these [re]presentations were false he would certainly have saved his lover’s life. Therefore, it is not unnatural that he will finally renounce himself, condemn himself for being a ‘fool! Fool! Fool.’

137 Kittredge, An Address, p. 35.
138 Shakespeare, Othello, Act V, Scene ii.319.
Even Hamlet has to confess, to finally admit what everyone has noticed since the opening of the play, when he in the final scene comes face to face with Laertes, his accuser, in the duel that will prove his death, that when he killed Polonius and trashed Ophelia, Hamlet was *not* Hamlet. As Hamlet says to Laertes,

> ‘Was’t Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet. 
If Hamlet from himself be ta’en away, 
And when he’s not himself does wrong Laertes, 
Then Hamlet does it not.’

In the leisurely opening of *Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo is approached by his comrades who easily notice that he is beside himself, how completely unsociable Romeo is. This begs the explanation that Romeo gives to Benvolio, ‘Tut! I have lost myself; I am *not* here;/This is *not* Romeo, he’s some other where.’ Only after Hamlet has crashed the Capulet’s masquerade, and he appears to his comrades with the masque of a jester, does Mercutio find reason to say, ‘Now thou art sociable, now thou art Romeo.’

Shakespeare’s intentional *eironeia*, is of course that Romeo becomes himself, only becomes part of society, when he is beside himself, when he, like other men, is willing to wear a masque, when he appears with the desire to be recognized as ‘the very pink of courtesy.’

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139 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act V, Scene ii.234-237. Emphasis added. It is difficult to denounce subjectivity more passionately *and* at the same time produce the - false, illusory - apperception of its substance more effectively.
142 One can understand *irony* in the Aristotelian or the Kierkegaardian sense, simply as that which is depreciated or as that which dissociates or alienates [t]his from its properties through laughter. Only after the subject has securely established itself, did *eironeia* create laughter. The most *eironic* of all characters according to Aristotle, namely, Socrates, does not make us laugh, but rather wonder.[Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV, 1127b25] For, as Freud maintains, what is depreciated in irony is the subject, which is, in some sense disassociated from its properties, which are *too low* to identify it/with. What is considered *high* or *low* are, of course, *commonplaces*. The dialectics of laughter is simple. For nothing would fill the theatre with laughter if it did not play on these *commonplaces*, whether depreciating the *commonplaces* to *save* the subject or depreciating the subject to *save* the *commonplaces*, whatever they might be.
Romeo considered to be more sociable than when he appears with the masque of a jester, as the superior wit who considers life as no more than a transcendental joke that provides the grand occasion for all jokes to come true. On this occasion, Shakespeare does not resist the opportunity to exaggerate his social commentary when he likens the social masque to a ‘pump,’ a ‘sole,’ a shoe. Again the function of the analogy is more significant than the meaning. For through this analogy, not only does it appear that the world is turned upside-down through social conventions, that all social beings are no more familiar than antipodes, but also apperceived that at the heart of all beings is that singular jest, which ‘remains, after the wearing, solely singular.’ When Mercutio suggests that [th]is jest lies - like the noumenon - at the heart of all things, Hamlet can do no more, no better than to cry out, ‘O single-soled jest, solely singular for the singleness!’ If what has been achieved through these apophatic gestures is the apperception of what ‘remains,’ it is only fitting that Mercutio would call on Benvolio for help - to separate the inseparable, to distinguish what is indistinguishable - and say, ‘Come between us, good Benvolio! My wits faints.’ For if [th]is jest has reached its end, what has been effected is the apperception of that to which the Understanding is forever bound to be inadequate to: the Being of beings.

It is not often recognized that Romeo and Juliet fall in love while they are still wearing masques, nor that these masques does not conceal the faces of profound human beings, but create the false apperception of the profundity of these superficial social creatures. As if intentionally creating the mystery of their
love, their hearts are captured, they lose themselves while they are still wearing masques, long before they perceive each other’s faces.149 It is however impossible to lose oneself completely. More often than not, ‘to lose oneself,’ is a misnomer, a name given to something else. For having lost all my properties, [th]is self, or nothing but the apperception of my self remains. So, when Hamlet, in the opening of Hamlet, appears to be beside himself and Romeo, in the first scene of Romeo and Juliet, seems to have lost himself completely, what they have lost or what has been taken away is the immediate impression of what essential defines these men, what essentially makes these men recognizable, whereas the apperception of [th]is invariably remains. It is the same figure, which already in the beginning - of each play - persuades us that these men are. For [th]is is first perceived as what [th]is is not, or as what no one expects [th]is to be. And from the perception of what is not [true] or what is not true to our expectations, we do make - like all spectators - the inference to - the apperception of - what is [true]. The power of this figure is shown by how little it matters whether Romeo loses himself to Rosaline or to Juliet. One may furthermore reverse the figure, first take away the self and then provide it with properties it cannot truly claim to be in possession of, as we shall see in the next chapter, is abstractly the case with substitution, and concretely the case with Sly in the Induction to The Taming of the Shrew. Shakespeare applies two figures that complement each other, elision and substitution, for in order to be perceived or apperceived as another, the self or its attributes, the subject or its predicates, if not both, has first to be taken away.

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149 Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Act I, Scene v.
The figure of inadequation repeats itself like a wheel of fortune, endlessly throughout Shakespeare’s plays, so much so, that it seems almost impossible that this figure of inadequation was not discovered until now. But, of course, man saw the planets revolving around the sun in elliptical orbits for thousands of years before he finally ‘discovered’ that they did. What has been blocking the understanding of this figure of poetic production is quite simply that, as with the astronomical prejudices, man was too busy looking at himself, too busy observing the world from his own perspective. And, of course, if we perceive or attempt to understand Shakespeare’s plays through the subject’s self-consciousness or through the character’s self-perception, we are, of course deluded or misguided as much as Goethe was when he said that in Shakespeare’s plays everything is transparent. Laudably, Goethe added, if we are allowed to paraphrase, ‘… and yet I understand not how he made [th]is come true, how [th]is appear to be before me.’

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150 Goethe, ‘Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship,’ in Bate [ed.], The Romantics on Shakespeare, p. 68.
C9 THE PRODUCTION OF BEING THROUGH SUBSTITUTION

§9.1 The Topos of Substitution
§9.2 The Function of Substitution
§9.3 The Paradox of Substitution

C9 EXPOSÉ

[1] Substitution is a _topos_ much used throughout the whole of Shakespeare’s plays, from the beginning of _The Comedy of Errors_ to the end of _Henry IV, Part I_.

No place of substitution is more conventional, perhaps more infamous, than the _bed of substitution_, where one goes to bed with another who is _not_ apperceived or is apperceived as another. In _All’s Well that Ends Well_ Helena loses herself in Diana’s chamber without ever being apperceived by her own husband, Bertram, to whom she remains entirely hidden. No place of substitution is more intimate than the bed, where men and women arrive with the desire to be mistaken, to be apperceived as who they are not, and by _not_ being recognized, they create, as we shall see, effortlessly, the apperception of the Being of beings. Even in _The Comedy of Errors_, where not one character _desires_ to be another, it is nevertheless so, that willingly or unwillingly, mistaken identities produce the apperception of what is apparently contradicted, _identity_. In _All’s Well that Ends Well_ Helena does however desire to be apperceived as Diana, as much as Sebastian, in _Twelfth Night_ is happy to be mistaken for Claudio. However, no one is more willing to _not_ be himself than Sly is in the Induction to _The Taming of the Shrew_, and no one does so perhaps more convincingly than Sebastian in _Twelfth Night_, as he is married to one who thinks he _is_ another. Throughout all these substitutions we shall mark, that what is
confused are *not* appearances, what mistaken *not* phenomena, but souls, selves, substances. The *persona* remains the same. This is why one speaks of *substitution*, for not only is that which *is* confused but what *is*, through [th]is confusion, created the apperception of, something entirely *hidden*.

§9.1 The Topos of Substitution

[2] *The Comedy of Errors* is a story about two godly sons, indistinguishable by appearance, who were separated at birth in a calamitous storm, a misadventure which later leads to the unlawful appearance of the Syracusean tradesman Antipholus in Ephesus, where he is unknowingly mistaken for the brother he never suspects to be alive, Antipholus of Ephesus. We shall notice that Antipholus of Syracuse and his man, Dromio of Syracuse, only *appear* in Ephesus at the cost of death, that they both make an *unlawful* appearance, and through [th]is transgression their *khora* is already announced as all Syracuseans are prohibited by decree from entering [th]is *place*. So truly, already from the beginning, they are out of place, and their appearance alone is a transgression. But it is not appearances that are confused or mistaken in *The Comedy of Errors*, for the persona remains the same. What is confused is what cannot be perceived, namely substances, which remain *truly* unimaginable.

[3] We shall bear in mind that no one is more consciously aware than Shakespeare of what is at stake throughout *The Comedy of Errors*, namely the self, which contrary to the events themselves, is what is produced the apperception of.

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1 Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, Act I, Scene i.50.
3 Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, Act I, Scene i.25.
For as Antipholus of Syracuse goes into the streets of Ephesus and we enter the play, Antipholus announces what soon enough will become apparent, stating artlessly the topos of the play itself already from the beginning when he says, ‘I will go lose myself.’\(^4\) But what appears to be a mystic dissolution of self\(^5\) is in fact what creates the apperception of self to the spectator. For it is the loss of self, the self that is not recognized or falsely recognized, and at times seems almost irrevocably lost, that most emphatically produces the apperception of self. Paradoxically, the self lost within the play reappears within the theatre, the self that is taken away by the personae that populates the play, is kindly, effortlessly, and inconspicuously given back to the character by the spectator, who seems almost incapable of imagining any appearance without a self, no persona without soul or substance, when it has, after it has been taken away. For that which is removed from the play, is replaced within the theatre, and this reemerges from the depth seen through the surface of the persona as richer, fuller and almost impossible to doubt the existence of. We shall witness some of these encounters where this self, even this sense of self, appear to be almost entirely lost.

\(^4\) There are numerous places in Shakespeare’s plays where he adapts the commonplace of substitution. As we are aware, not only did Shakespeare inherit this topos from Plautus,\(^6\) but more recently from Boccaccio,\(^7\) whose stories, as everyone knows, were exceedingly popular during the reign of Elizabeth, a government that did not, to the regret of some, coincide with a taste for stories

\(^6\) Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors*, Act I, Scene ii.34.
\(^7\) Cf. Pamela Benson’s meticulous notes to Benson [ed.], *Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare*, p. 297.
more pedagogic or moral.8 Running through some of Shakespeare’s plays like the same river through different countries, the topos of substitution emerges in plays as different as The Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night, All’s Well that Ends Well, Measure for Measure and Henry IV, Part I, in some plays providing the source of life for the play, in others a welcome distraction. From the banks of [th]is river we see the topos of substitution driving the plot of Helena’s sweet revenge against Bertrand, her unwilling husband in All’s Well that Ends Well, a play based, as is well known on one of the favourites among Boccaccio’s many novellas.9 Perhaps we wont forget the two sons that lost and regained their identities in the romance of Cymbeline, the two young men that never apperceived themselves, and the ‘father’ that carried their secrets, their souls inside his chest, that they were princes and he was not their father.

What we shall notice, as the river of substitution floats by, is that even though Shakespeare exploits the figure of substitution fully in his adaptation of Plautus’ romantic comedy in The Comedy of Errors, he shies away from exaggerating the potential for substitution in what must surely have been the most beautiful presentation of the figure available to Shakespeare and written in his own time, namely The Story of Titus and Gisippus, the allegorical story of true friendship that opens Thomas Eliot’s The Governour from 1566. For it is obvious that Shakespeare did the same with The Story of Titus and Gisippus in the adaptation of The Two Gentlemen of Verona that he did to the, now lost, ‘Chronicle of Hamlet,’ that is, he twisted and turned the story until it became almost

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8 Benson, Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare, ‘Anthology of Criticism,’ pp. 346-354.
9 Pamela Benson explains, ‘The story of Gileta of Narbona’ appears in Painter’s Palace of Pleasure (I, 38). It is a close translation of Decameron III.9. … ‘Gileta of Narbona’ is the source of Shakespeare’s All’s Well That Ends Well.’ [Benson [ed.]. Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare, p. 300].
unrecognizable. In the remarkable and truly simple *The Story of Titus and Gisippus*, where Shakespeare for once fails to improve on his source, we witness how the meaning of the story runs counter to the way the ontological contradiction *is* produced. For if it is a story about changing places, of one woman unknowingly marrying a man who has taken her husband’s place, it is not because it is possible to do so but because it is *impossible*, that these personae come alive. Whereas one would immediately think that *Titus and Gisippus* is a story about one man taking the *place* of another, and by offering [th]is place showing true friendship, it is actually the *impossibility* of taking the place of another that ensures the reader that both characters come alive, that they both, individually and singularly, suffer *true* fortunes and *true* misfortunes.

Elyot’s story of *Titus and Gisippus* displays beautifully what is later to become integral to the Shakespearean art of unknowing. For it is the fact that the exchange remains *unknown* to the bride, that makes the substitution of grooms successful in creating the apperception of the Being of beings. For Sophronia has unknowingly married a subject whose soul or self she does *not* apperceive, and it is [th]is inapperception, which guarantees not only that [th]is story has depth, but that [th]is comes alive, the inapperceiver as much as the inappereceived. Witnessing how Sophronia unknowingly marries one she does not apperceive, the reader is, indeed, compelled, imperceptibly, to produce the Being of that which *not* apperceived. Clearly, the topos of substitution is more convincingly exploited by both Elyot and Boccaccio, as Shakespeare *avoids* presenting Valentine and

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10 *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1592-93) is partly a variation on *The Story of Titus and Gisippus*, which Shakespeare adapted from Elyot’s *The Governour* from 1566, and Elyot stole from Boccaccio’s *Decameron* from 1350. Cf. Pamela Benson’s meticulous notes to Benson [ed.], *Italian Tales from the Age of Shakespeare*, p. 297.
Proteus as remarkably similar, as masques without a difference, as spirits that can not be discerned by their appearance alone, but only through the apperception of something more than persona, the apperception of [th]is, be it called, substance, hypokeimenon or soul. The indifference of persona, the shallow cause of all substitutions, is, however, convincingly exploited by Shakespeare in *The Comedy of Errors* and in *Twelfth Night*.\(^{11}\)

[7] Nowhere is the superficial basis for the topos of substitution, the indistinguishability of appearances that provide the superficial ground for the inapperception or misapperception of [th]is, expressed more clearly than when the one Dromio says to the other Dromio towards the end of *The Comedy of Errors*, after the resolution, I look upon thee as upon a mirror image, or more precisely, ‘Methinks you are my glass, and not my/brother.’\(^{12}\) After the veil of unknowing has been taken away, and the substituted again are distinguished, the play no longer provides the spectator with an opportunity for making the immediate inference to that which, through substitution, remains hidden. The stage is suddenly materialized with its ‘wooden nullity,’\(^{13}\) as Herder would say, before the spectator, with the relief that only unrealities may provide, exits the theatre and enters his own life. For the resolution marks the end of the life of the play as well as it, again, marks the beginning of the life of the spectator.

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\(^{11}\) In *The Comedy of Errors* Antipholus of Syracuse is unknowingly mistaken for his twin brother Antipholus of Ephesus, Dromio of Syracuse mistaken for his twin brother Dromio of Ephesus, equally without knowing. For neither knows of the existence of the other. Surprisingly, it is the neglect of [th]is existent that heightens the spectators sense of its existence.


\(^{13}\) Herder, ‘Shakespeare,’ in *The Romantics on Shakespeare*, p. 47.
That Shakespeare is supremely aware of the shallow cause that triggers all substitutions, is again made explicit towards the end of *Twelfth Night*, immediately preceding the resolution, where the Duke upon seeing Sebastian entering for the first time in Olivia’s presence, exclaims, ‘One face, one voice, one habit, and two/persons - /a natural perspective that is and is not.’ As Antonio approaches his long lost friend, Sebastian, and his double, Shakespeare emphasizes again the shallow cause of all substitutions, that which makes the spectator infer from these mistaken images, these confounded *phenomena*, to the existence of what *is* truly unimaginable, the *personality*, ‘Have you made a division of yourself?’ Antonio does not only stress the identity of appearances, by saying, ‘An apple cleft in two is not more twin/Than these two creatures,’ he also struggles, asks for assistance, to make the inference to that which is imperceivable, to anchor the phenomenon *truly* in what is hidden, the noumenon, he asks, ‘Which *is* Sebastian?’ It is perhaps little wonder that Shakespeare, knowing perfectly well that the substitution is not of phenomena, but of something deeper, goes on to let his confused company, at [th]is hour of entanglement, speak of *spirits*. For facing an appearance indistinguishable from himself, Sebastian conjectures that it must be, ‘that deity in my nature, of here and everywhere,’ while Viola, who barely dares to address her own mirror image, says softly, ‘If spirits can assume both form and suit,/You come to fright us.’ However, Sebastian ensures Olivia, that he

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14 The indifference of personae triggers the substitutions that are made in *Twelfth Night*, where Sebastian unknowingly is mistaken for Cassius, who is, in fact his own sister Viola in disguise, a sister whom, moreover, believes that her brother is dead.
is neither an angel nor a ghost, but simply a spirit grossly clad,\textsuperscript{20} while the
astounded Duke, being almost convinced that what stands before him is \textit{real} and
not merely an apparition, exclaims that ‘the glass seems \textit{true},’\textsuperscript{21} while Olivia, to it
all, can only say that this is, ‘Most wonderful.’\textsuperscript{22} If we remind ourselves that at the
height of confusion, Viola also believes Sebastian is dead and that the Duke is
addressing Viola as his own secretary Cassius whose undisguised figure he will
soon fall in love with, we are witnessing such abundance of disguises, masques
covering masques, that one can easily hear a sigh of relief in the theatre when all
masques are finally uncovered and all beings disentangled. And taking a deep
breath, we are almost certain that only the indistinguishability of personae offers
the possibility of substitution. However, it does not.

[9] No place of substitution is perhaps more convincing than the one presented
in \textit{Twelfth Night}, where, in the same scene, that which is not apperceived or
misapperceived, is not only attacked, but loved, where one man is not only
attacked in the place of another, but soon after ends up marrying the striking
Olivia in another man’s place. For neither would Toby have attacked \textit{his}, if he
knew it was another,\textsuperscript{23} nor would Olivia accepted \textit{his} hand if she knew it
belonged to another man.\textsuperscript{24} It is that which is \textit{not} apperceived in Toby’s attack that
again makes us believe that \textit{his} man \textit{is}, For when he thinks he is attacking
Cesario, he \textit{is} attacking Sebastian, which \textit{is}, during the violent exchange of blades,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} More concretely Sebastian says, ‘A spirit I am indeed,/But am in that dimension grossly clad.’
\textit{Shakespeare, Twelfth Night}, Act V, Scene i.236-237.
\item \textsuperscript{21} \textit{Shakespeare, Twelfth Night}, Act V, Scene i.265. Emphasis added. ‘True’ is clearly used in an
ontological sense, affirming the \textit{existence} of that which appears before him.
\item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Shakespeare, Twelfth Night}, Act V, Scene i.225.
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{Shakespeare, Twelfth Night}, Act IV, Scene i.23f.
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{Shakespeare, Twelfth Night}, Act IV, Scene iii.32.
\end{itemize}
never encountered nor apperceived [by Toby]. Olivia does however interrupt the
duel, only to emphasize and deepen the misapperceptions when she steps forward
to intervene. For protecting the misapperceived/inapperceived, she curses her own
uncle back to ‘the mountains and the barbarous caves, where manners ne’er were
preached!’

Sebastian, who remains inapperceived, does not know who she is, knows not
who she is that appears before him. Showing truly that Olivia merely recognizes
his persona, that she does not know who has just chased her uncle and Sir Andrew
away with his sword, she addresses [th]is man by his false name, saying, ‘Be not
offended, dear Cesario./I prithee gentle friend,/Let thy fair wisdom, not thy
passion, sway/In this uncivil and unjust extent [display]/Against thy peace. Go with
me to my house.’ Even if Sebastian is and remains inapperceived, and she intends
to address another, he is more than happy to follow the beautiful persona of an
unknown woman. If he is anything, he knows perfectly well that he is only the
cause of her misapperceptions, knowing however much she appears to desire him
she desires another. However, Sebastian is never unwilling to lose himself, never
unwilling to be another, and before he runs after her, Sebastian even takes time to
leave this aside to the audience, ‘What relish is this? How runs the/stream?/Or I
am mad, or else this is a dream. Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep:/If it be thus
to dream, still let me sleep!’

Superficially, we would have to admit that there is another way to make
substitutions, to trigger the immediate inference to what is hidden, and that is to

26 Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act IV, Scene i.48-49.
27 Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act IV, Scene i.52-54.
encounter beings in the dark. The *topos* of changing bedmates, of unknowingly going to bed with one that is *not* apperceived, occurs most beautifully in *Measure for Measure*.\(^2^9\) We know not if Shakespeare was fond of [th]is topos, but, like Shakespeare, we know that his audience was. The topos is not, however, as in the Italian *nouvelles*, and that for obvious reasons, presented, as there in the theatre would not be much to see, and even behind curtains such a presentation would almost certainly have provoked the censorship of the Privy Council.\(^3^0\) Still, the substitution of bedmates drives the plot of both *Measure for Measure* and *All’s Well that Ends Well*,\(^3^1\) where one substitution occurs at *night* in a private garden and another in the *darkness* of a private chamber. Only in the resolution of *Measure for Measure* is the intimate substitution spoken of, where Mariana, veiled, steps forward to clear Angelo of fornication. Defending the man who unknowingly has shared her bed, Maria says, ‘I know my husband; yet my husband/ *Knows not* that he ever knew me.’\(^3^2\) Taking off her veil, Mariana approaches the accused Angelo, to whom she explains,

‘This is that face, thou cruel Angelo
Which once thou swor’st was worth the looking on;
This is the hand which, with a vowed contract,
Was fast belocked in thine; this is the body
That took away the match from Isabel,
And did supply thee at thy garden house
In her imagined person.’\(^3^3\)

\(^3^0\) As an institution, The Privy Council was in general more concerned with matters of blasphemy, to protect the new Anglican Church against the Papacy, than matters of obscenity. Cf. Gerald M. Pinciss, *Forbidden Matter - Religion in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries*.
\(^3^1\) A presentation would perhaps border on obscenity, a border which Boccaccio clearly transgressed in *Decameron*, Third Day, Ninth story, a novella copied in William Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure*, (I, 38), and providing the unmistakable and barely altered ground for Shakespeare’s *All’s Well that Ends Well*. For a meticulous presentation of some of Shakespeare’s essential origins, see *Italian Tales from The Age of Shakespeare* edited by Pamela Joseph Benson, and for this particular source p. 300.
\(^3^3\) Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act V, Scene i.207-213.
But this substitution did not occur accidentally. For in Act III of *Measure for Measure*, the false Friar advises Isabella to frame Angelo by setting up a false encounter between Angelo and Isabella in a garden at night, where they, in the dark, would passionately be able to confuse each other’s limbs. In the corners of this garden, Mariana takes the place of Isabella and makes love to the one who did not keep his promise to marry her, Angelo. Through this *transgression*, Angelo himself breaks the law, the same law according to which he condemned Claudio to death for secretly fulfilling outside wedlock what should belong to marriage alone.34

[12] Planning the secret substitution, the false encounter in the garden, Isabella says to the man disguised as a friar, that is, the unrecognized Duke,

> ‘He hath a garden circummured with brick,  
> Whose western side is with a vineyard backed;  
> And to that vineyard is a planched gate,  
> That makes his opening with this bigger key.  
> This other doth command a little door  
> Which from the vineyard to the garden leads.  
> There I have made my promise  
> Upon the heavy middle of the night.  
> To call upon him.’35

And as the substitutes, Isabella and Mariana, exit, the Duke says of this garden of substitution, confirming again how much Shakespeare tries to lure his audience with false flowers,

> ‘*O place of greatness, millions of false eyes  
> Are stuck upon thee; volumes of report  
> Run with these false and most contrarious quests  
> [cry for the hound on the scent]  
> Upon thy doings: thousand escapes of wit*’

Make thee the father of their idle dreams,  
And rack thee in their fancies.\textsuperscript{36}

Should we suggest that these ‘millions of false eyes’ belong to men and women,  
who openly or secretly desire to be another. For have we not all, at one time or  
another, had a desire to \textit{not} be our selves, to be another, a desire, which we all kept  
to ourselves.

\section*{§9.2 The Function of Substitution}

\footnote{36 Shakespeare, \textit{Measure for Measure}, Act IV, Scene i.60-66.}

Shakespeare adopts a taste for transformations from Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}, generally recognized in Shakespeare’s numerous disguises.  
However, when Shakespeare \textit{concretely} applies the figure of metamorphosis, as he  
does in \textit{A Midsummer Night’s Dream} by letting Bottom the Weaver be transformed  
into half a mule, to thereby evoke the two thousand year old memory of the  
adventures of Apuleius in \textit{The Golden Ass}, Shakespeare cannot resist the  
temptation to \textit{transform}, to distort the figure that he has stolen from Ovid. What to  
this day continues to baffle all audiences, whether high or low, educated or  
uneducated, is that what is transformed throughout [th]is play is not appearances  
but the evaluation of appearances. What \textit{is} thereby disclosed is not only the gulf  
between the world and ourselves, but we are given the impression of that which \textit{is}  
and remains beyond perception, that which we are made to infer to through the  
false apprehension of \textit{what} [th]is \textit{essentially} is. For when the Queen of all fairies,  
Titania, falls in love with the half-mule, and consider him the most attractive of all  
creatures, not only do we know that she is under the spell of Oberon, the King of  
all fairies, but that she, through the false perception of \textit{what} [th]is \textit{is}, effortlessly
makes available what remains hidden to all, the ontological difference, the Being of beings.

[14] It is safe to say that Shakespeare, by adapting the figure of transformation for his own ends, with the exception of the superficial metamorphosis of Bottom the Weaver, the monster through which Shakespeare pays homage to antiquity, ends up changing the figure almost entirely. What is changed in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* are not appearances but perceptions, or more precisely, the way these perceptions are valued by the common sense, the *sensus communis*, which, here, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is magically, we could almost say, *dramatically* transformed.37 One should never lose sight of Shakespeare’s aim on this night of misperceptions, which *is* invariably the same, whether through external disguise, transformation or a groundless change in the judgment of what is perceived, to produce the apperception of the ontological contradiction, which the spectator is forced to infer to so unnoticeably that he may consider what appear before him as indifferent from his own nature. Whether or not it *is* nature, these misperceptions leaves him with the impression of the ontological contradiction, when he from the false perception of what [th]is is, infer to the apperception that [th]is is.

[15] As we witness Viola disguise herself as Cassius in the opening of *Twelfth Night*,38 as we see Edgar masque himself as Poor Tom in *King Lear*,39 as we see

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37 For the Renaissance understanding of *sensus communis*, and the debt it bears to Aristotle, see Summers, *The Judgement of Sense - Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics*, pp. 71, 78, 108-109. We should perhaps add that at the time of Shakespeare, Aristotle was still the most influential philosopher at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and that Plato was hardly known. The domination of Aristotle could perhaps be gauged by the force with which his philosophy was attacked by Francis Bacon in *Novum Organon* and *The Advancement of Learning*.  
Imogen dress herself as Fidele in *Cymbeline*, as we see Vincentio cloak himself as the nameless priest, the divinity in *Measure for Measure*, we recognize that the simplest kind of *metamorphosis* is disguise. However, only a transformation of what appears to be indivisible, namely the self, would truly be simple, would truly astound. It is with no little amount of disbelief that we witness Sly in The Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* become persuaded that he is another, that he loses himself to such a degree, that he, at least superficially, appears to be a man almost totally devoid of substance. However, it is, as we shall see, this inapperception, more particularly, this self-inapperception, that most persuasively convince the spectator, that this man is.

Generally speaking, ‘metamorphosis’ is an event whereby one being quite literally takes on another form or simply changes its essential characteristics. However, it is never the form that truly fascinates in any transformation, but the formless that throughout this transformation remains unaltered. No metamorphosis makes us wonder at what has become dissimilar, but at what truly remains the same, triggering the perplexed to ask the question, ‘How could it be?’

We are not, and never do we believe Shakespeare was, interested in metamorphosis as anything other than what affords the inapperception of this, and through this inapperception offers the experience of the Being of being. For metamorphosis, and likewise disguise, may effect the inapperception of this. It is never the appearance, the transformation of the persona that truly fascinates, but rather,

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42 When Sly is no longer conscious of Being himself, but the Lord, he, paradoxically, comes true, that is, he is experienced as Being another. Again we maintain an ontological concept of truth, the indistinction between - the apperception of - what is and what is true.
that which remains unrecognized after the metamorphosis, that which, almost inevitably, appear through a predicative disguise or masque, namely *this*, the ontological contradiction. There is no disguise that is not a disguise of self, soul or substance. Even though the characters mentioned all appear to be perceived as what they are not; Viola as a man, Edgar as a beggar, Imogen as a man, Vincentio as a priest, it is not the change of essential characteristics that in any of these cases is significant. For if we look closer we will see that these characters are not apperceived at all, and that the change in essential characteristics, the alteration of persona, is merely the prelude to the inapparception of *this* that the disguise affords, again, that the actual inapparception of *this*, that the disguise offers, makes available the most profound sense of *Being* to the spectator.

[17] Thoughtfully considered, the depth that both metamorphosis and disguise affords is the depth of *inapparception*, a depth which is truly sublime as it provides the immediate opportunity for *this* to not be apperceived, and through *this* inapparception the dialectical urge to take the other’s place, to provide a sense of *Being* where there appear to be none. It is the non-recognition or unrecognition of *this*, that transformation and likewise disguise affords, that produces a more profound sense of *Being*. For whereas transformation, like any disguise, is a change of apparent properties, and therefore a change of what is and essentially can be perceived, it produces a sense of what is more profound through the inapparception it offers. That is, the transformation of persona, whether subject to metamorphosis or merely disguise, makes available the false recognition or unrecognition of *this*, which in both cases remains inapparceived. It is *this* lack of apperception that produces the notion of depth, a more profound sense of *Being*. 
[18] One could limit the understanding of what is false to the essential misperception of oneself or the other. Transgressing this superficial limit, we did expand our investigation to the misappreceration or inappreceration of [th]is, the condition for any perception. That is, we included in our investigation, what should be obvious in any theatre, not only misperceptions of what [th]is essentially is, but the misappreceration or inappreceration of [th]is, which likewise, if not more profoundly, produces a negative sense of depth, and therefore, Being. It is perhaps not surprising that we thought of opening this section as Shakespeare opens one of his plays, with someone who completely loses his sense of self, namely Sly, who in The Induction to The Taming of the Shrew, entirely and without second thoughts substitutes his self for that of another.43 The most profound kind of inappreceration is clearly not the inability or incapacity to apperceive the other, but the incapacity to apperceive oneself. If it did not occur, one would, of course, think it was almost, if not entirely, impossible, but the inappreceration of Sly in The Induction to The Taming of the Shrew should be sufficient evidence to convince the reader that it is not impossible to no longer recognize oneself. However, when Sly enters the bedroom in the Lord’s house in the second scene, it is clear that Sly has no intention of Being the Lord. For Sly clearly denies that he has any claim to the titles by which he is addressed, saying, ‘I am Christophero Sly; call not me ‘honor’

43 It is perhaps equally unsurprising that we in this Induction witness Shakespeare using at least two means of inadequation in conjunction, namely, indefiniteness and substitution, to not only give depth, but surface and opening to the Being of [th]is being to appear as concealed, to appear deeply within the frame of [th]is indefiniteness.
nor ‘lordship.’” Evidently he has to affirm himself, as if it was crucial, even to a tinker, to prove that he is not the Lord.45

[Sly] Sadly, in the rose-bath, as he’s drinking another ‘pot o’ th’ smallest ale,’46 Sly soon realizes that his identity is not much to fight for. Evidently, any sense of self is easily lost when there is not too much to lose. Nonetheless, Sly tries to fend off the other [identity] by protecting himself with properties that almost certainly belong to himself; ‘peddler,’ ‘cardmaker,’ ‘bearherd,’ ‘tinker,’47 all attributes which the servants, and the Lord himself, persuade Sly that he in his lunacy has dreamed up.48 For facing Sly, they ask in anguish the Lord to call his true properties back to his person, ‘Call home thy ancient thoughts from banishment/And banish hence these abject lowly dreams,’49 as if the lowest or commonest life came across with the lightness of a dream. It is the appeal not to his self but to these properties that finally makes Sly betray himself, for as the servant says, ‘[O, that once more] you knew but what you are!’50 Suddenly convinced that for the past fifteen years he has been sleep-walking, he bursts out almost causelessly, ‘I see, I hear, I speak,/I smell sweet savors and feel soft things.’51 And from these essential pleasures, which all the servants maintain truly belongs to

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44 Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, Scene ii.5.
45 Tony Tanner, whose name easily could have featured among the mechanics in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, introducing the collected works of Shakespeare in the Everyman Edition, remarks in his introduction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, that its epilogue appears to be missing, entirely lost to posterity. [Tony Tanner, ‘Introduction’ to Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, in Comedies, Volume 1, pp. liii and lxvii.] Might we guess that this epilogue would have ensured a lucky end, where Sly is given back his self? Not entirely. Perhaps we should consider this, that since *The Taming of the Shrew* was a comedy, Shakespeare would perhaps have omitted the epilogue purposely, knowing that his audience would not tolerate an unhappy ending. For judging from his newfound existence, it would seem that Sly would consider it a better fortune to lose himself, Being the Lord a better destiny than Being Sly.
46 Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, Scene ii.75.
48 Shakespeare, *The Induction to The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, Scene ii.29.
49 Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Induction, Scene ii.31-32.
him, he suddenly and willingly, makes the false deduction, ‘Upon my life, I am a lord indeed.’\textsuperscript{52} Acknowledging that the servants’ prayers for the restoration of his wits have finally been answered, he superiorly and without hesitation takes possession of his new identity, praising the false restoration of his soul, ‘Now, Lord be thanked for my good amends!’\textsuperscript{53}

Paradoxically, it is the false apperception which makes \textit{this} come alive, for that which is \textit{not} apperceived does not acquire less but a more depth by \textit{not} being discovered. Paradoxically, while the meaning of the play is that Sly loses his soul, it is precisely the opposite that happens within the theatre where Sly receives the soul he has lost so profoundly within the play. Suddenly the spectator believes that what is \textit{not} apperceived conditions everything that \textit{this} man \textit{is}. For the existence of \textit{th}is condition \textit{is} more persuasive when it is \textit{not} acknowledged, and leaves an even greater impression when it runs the risk of Being discovered, as if we all hoped it would not be discovered. When Shakespeare portrays the inapperception of Sly in the opening of \textit{The Taming of the Shrew}, he pays undoubtedly homage to Ovid, for nowhere has the profundity of inapperception been more influentially expressed than in Ovid’s story of Narcissus.\textsuperscript{54} As much as Sly is \textit{not} apperceived in the end, so is Narcissus \textit{not} apperceived in the beginning, and that proves his end. But whereas \textit{th}is lack of self-awareness leads Narcissus to his own death, \textit{th}is lack of self-awareness gives Sly, perhaps even \textit{not}-Sly, a new lease of life. But

\textsuperscript{52} Shakespeare, \textit{The Taming of the Shrew}, Induction, Scene ii.72.
\textsuperscript{53} Shakespeare, \textit{The Taming of the Shrew}, Induction, Scene ii.97.
\textsuperscript{54} Ovid, \textit{Metamorphosis}, Book III, pp. 83-87. It is not entirely arbitrary to speak of Ovid in a presentation of Shakespeare, for, as is commonly known, and became evident in \textit{Chapter 7, The Production of Being through Dissimilarity}, Ovid was as influential in the English Renaissance and as widely known as Plato at the time remained obscure. See Paul Barolsky, ‘As in Ovid, So in Renaissance Art, Renaissance Quarterly 51 (1998): pp 451-74, and Sears Jayne, \textit{Plato in Renaissance England}, esp. pp. 135-139.
whether [th]is lack of self-awareness leads one man to his own death and another to renewed life, it is in both cases [th]is lack of self-awareness that makes the spectator think that [th]is man is and the other is not, that one man truly lives and the other truly dies. 55 No story has, for centuries, fascinated man with the bottomless depth of its inapperception as has the story of Narcissus, perhaps because its true depth remained undiscovered. If there is a forgetfulness of Being, it is recognized by its inapperception, an inapperception, which is no more glaring than in the reception of Ovid's story of Narcissus. 56 Apparently, the inapperception of the character is only matched by the reader, who paradoxically, even profoundly, and to his non-knowledge, reflects the inapperception of the protagonist, is unable to penetrate the inapperception that should have belonged to the protagonist alone. Nowhere is the withdrawal of Being, the neglect of the ontological contradiction, expressed more clearly than when one thinks that Narcissus loves himself. For it is unreasonable to contend, even superficially, that Narcissus is guilty of self-love, for something he cannot be. If one does, one has failed to comprehend the most fundamental difference between that which can be perceived and that which cannot, the phenomenon and the noumenon. For Narcissus dies because he never apperceives his Self, and falls into the bottomless pit of [th]is inapperception.

55 The story of Narcissus presents another riddle. That is, however much I describe something, even perfectly, I am, as Kant would say and Hegel later emphasize, not part of the picture. Were my description of this phenomenon or its image even perfect, the substance, soul or self would not be part of the description, would remain indescribable. Being beyond what may phenomenologically be grasped, it is therefore crucial to acknowledge, as Kant does, that the Self of the other is always unknowingly my own, that the other has no Being without me. Kant says, ‘It is obvious that if one wants to have a presentation of a thinking being then one must put oneself in that being’s place, and hence must substitute one’s own self as subject for the object.’ [Cf. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A353, p. 391].

56 Ovid is the first to write down the myth of Narcissus in *Metamorphoses*, and, if anything, it gives him perhaps a rightful claim to what he lived and died for, namely fame.
Paradoxically, it is exactly this inapperception, that there is nowhere any sign of self-obsession, but an obsession entirely without self, that makes us believe that no one is more profoundly than Narcissus. For Narcissus does simply not apperceive what to most of us is unavoidable. Nevertheless, the spectator appears to be much like Narcissus in that he does not recognize himself in the phenomena that appear before him, incapable of self-recognition, self-apperception. Speaking in Hegelian terms, we could say that the spectator, like Narcissus, is incapable of re-cognizing himself in the other, of acknowledging his own subject in what appear before him, and that therefore he appear, again in Hegelian terms, to be almost totally devoid of spirit, that is, to be without self-consciousness. Unlike Hegel, we do not condemn this inability, this incapacity to recognize oneself, but would rather emphasize, that it is this non-recognition that provides the apperception of something more profound, the Being of beings. For the spirit is most sharply and immediately apperceived through its inapperception, and the one utterly incapable of such apperception would not fail to produce the impression of what is most profound.

Whereas Narcissus undoubtedly is the most shallow of all personae, there is no story with an affect more profound. If the reader, like Narcissus, is the most shallow, and we seriously doubt that there is anyone more shallow in the history of literature than the reader, he will not fail to provide the apperception of what is

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57 A similar case, again showing the true depth of inapperception, this time not the inapperception of self, but the inappereception of the other, is the ancient story where the beloved is transformed into a tree and therefore not recognized by the lover. It is again the non-recognition that makes this story profound. For the beloved is more profoundly apperceived after he has metamorphosed into a tree than he ever was before he was transformed. And, of course, as his lover sits under the tree, it becomes evident, that he appears to be truer through inappereception than he ever was when he was truly apperceived. Also, that we are using an ontological concept of ‘truth’ to point out, if not the in-difference between truth and reality, so at least the in-distinguishability between what we experience as true and what we experience as real, what is true in-distinguishable from existence.
most profound, the Being of beings. Again we encounter the dialectics of
inappreciation, again we stumble over the contradiction between what is
presented and what is effected, between the meaning of the story and what [th]is
story effects, for the effect is again exactly opposite to its apparent meaning. For it
is the fact that the reader does not recognize himself in the story of Narcissus,
which makes me believe that there is a self that remains unrecognized. The effect
of the presentation, within the theatre – taking ‘theatre’ here in an extended sense
as ‘the looking place,’ that place through which anything is unconcealed, be it the
pages of this book, the stage of this theatre or the ground of this pasture - is exactly
the opposite of what is represented within the play/story. Within the play/story
Narcissus is the most shallow, within the theatre he is the most profound. [Th]is
shows again what we would be missing if we did not acknowledge the contradiction
between the meaning of the play/story and its effect, for the effect of the play/story
is exactly opposite to its meaning. For whereas Narcissus does not apperceive his
own self, that is exactly what the reader/spectator does, and nowhere more
emphatically than when the character does not. Similarly in the case of Sly in the
Induction to The Taming of The Shrew, it is the obliteration of Sly’s sense of self,
the gradual extinction of self-awareness, of thinking he is another, [th]is sudden
and surprising inappreciation that suddenly guards, like ten thousand guards, the
apperception of the Being of beings as if it was an impenetrable palace, a harem
from which there is no escape.

[23] We could say that no one is shallower than Narcissus, but equally, that no
one is more profound. Oscar Wilde never understood the true implications of the
discovery he made when he asserted that the shallow are the truly profound, never
understood that the shallow, as is the case in his own *The Sphinx Without A Secret*, produces most emphatically the experience of the ontological contradiction, regardless of whether they hide something or nothing at all.\(^5^8\) It is therefore not surprising that Shakespeare’s plays abounds with shallow characters, nor that these shallow characters make Shakespeare’s theatre the most profound. For through everything they do not apperceive, and all their misperceptions, these characters suddenly and most enduringly come alive. For further proof of these shallow characters on Shakespeare’s stage, we need only point the reader to Sebastian, in *Twelfth Night*, who we find rejoice at his own inapperception, of Romeo, who does not apperceive his beloved Juliet as she lies in the open sarcophagus, and perhaps leaving the most enduring impression, Falstaff, whom in *Henry IV, Part I*, saves his life by being inapperceived, by playing dead on the battlefield. No one can deny that the one who pretends to be dead is truly profound. And without exception, never does the one who pretends to be dead deny the spectator the experience that he is truly, against all his intentions, alive. The one pretending to be dead cannot deny the spectator the experience that he truly is, nor can he deny him the experience that he is truly profound without taking away the experience of that which to both remains hidden, the Being of beings.

\[^{24}\] When Hegel, implicitly, states that I am the spirits of all propositions, the subject of all statements, he simply, but covertly, repeats Kant’s ignored dictum, that the Self of the other is always my own, that without me giving the other his

\(^{58}\) Wilde, ‘*The Sphinx Without A Secret,*’ in *Complete Shorter Fiction*, pp. 200-205.
soul, he has none. What both Kant and Hegel do, is to present in philosophical terms what is commonly experienced, what is commonly available to all. Hegel says that what inhibits or blocks the realization of the other as essentially, or at least substantially mine, is the inadequate notion of the subject as a point. For the understanding of the subject as a point makes, according to Hegel, the knowledge of the absolute subject impossible. Hegel says,

‘The way in which this movement has been brought about is such that it cannot belong to the fixed point; yet, after this point has been presupposed, the nature of the movement cannot really be other than what it is, it can only be external. Hence, the mere anticipation that the Absolute is Subject is not only not the actuality of this Notion, but it even makes the actuality impossible; for the anticipation posits the subject as an inert point, whereas the actuality is self-movement.’

What Hegel essentially says, is that there is no spirit without me. There is no other. The Spirit, Geist, X, Soul of the other is always my own. I am not only the subject, but I am the spirit of all possible propositions. It may appear that these predicates, these properties belong to another, but that is simply the way it appears, blosse Erscheinung, how it immediately appears to the subject before it recognizes itself, externalized in the other.

Immediately nothing appears to belong to me. Mediately, however, everything does, all predicates like all concepts, all essences and substances are mine, belongs to the activity of the Absolute Subject, the all-encompassing Spirit, whose movement I am. Hegel continues this movement in the Phenomenology of Spirit thus,

‘That the True is actual only as a system, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as Spirit, the most sublime Notion and the one which belongs to the modern age and its

religion. The spiritual alone belongs to the modern age and its religion. The spiritual alone is actual; it is essence, or that which has being in itself; it is that which relates itself to itself and is determinate, it is other-being and being-for-self, and in this determinateness, or in its self-externality, abides within itself; in other words, it is in and of for itself.\(^{61}\)

In other words, what happens in Hegel’s philosophy is the almost complete eradication of the other. The other becomes simply the alienated moment of subjectivity, which, however unrecognized, belongs to the Self, to Absolute Subjectivity, which is both ‘in and for itself,’ the difference between [being] in-itself and for-itself, being nothing more than a difference of consciousness. For whereas the subject is conscious for-itself, in-itself it is not.

One should not be surprised that even the simplest and most frequently used concepts in the Hegelian system speak fundamentally against the Kantian concept of ‘the thing-in-itself,’ which is not perceived by Hegel to be anything ‘higher,’ but something much ‘lower,’ by Fichte even considered a sign of Kant’s inability to think,\(^{62}\) as it lacks the mark of what to Hegel is always superior, consciousness, that is, the spirit that has recognized itself or itself in another. Hegel says,

\[\text{‘But this being-in-and-for-itself is at first only for us, or in itself, it is spiritual Substance. It must also be this for itself, it must be the knowledge of the spiritual, and the knowledge of itself as Spirit, i.e. it must be an object to itself, but just as immediately a sublated object, reflected in itself.’}\(^{63}\)

Concretely, the understanding of the other as substantially mine, is nowhere more memorably expressed by Hegel than in the opening of the infamous chapter on Lordship and Bondage, where Hegel, speaking of the original battle of the two

opponents facing each other in the perhaps *inceptional*, the *ursprungliche, duel*, says, ‘Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of itself. This has a twofold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self.’⁶⁴ To make sure that the Being of the other essentially belongs only to me, that I must *produce* his self without which he is nothing, Hegel remarks,

‘It must supersede this otherness of itself. This is the supersession of the first ambiguity, and is therefore itself a second ambiguity. First, it must proceed to supersede the other independent being in order thereby to become certain of itself as the essential being; secondly, in so doing it proceeds to supersede its own self, for this other is itself.’⁶⁵

In short, the other is obliterated in battle, but not without the victorious giving or granting the vanquished his *substantial* Being, and the conquered granting the conqueror his *essential* life through his *work*. But there are less violent means to obliterate the other, to eradicate the apperception of *otherness*, the most obvious being not to hide but to recognize its *production*.

Kant already makes explicit, that the only way to experience the Being of another is to substitute one’s *self* for that of another. Without such substitution of *souls*, we would never be capable of apperceiving the soul of the other, but merely *experience* the masque, the persona, or as Kant would say, the phenomenon.⁶⁶

Immediately it would seem to be true that not many would voluntarily make such a substitution, not many willing to make such an exchange, to give her or exchange her soul for that of another. However, it is not only possible to make [th]is

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⁶⁶ Kant says, ‘It is … impossible for this necessary unity of the subject, as the condition of the possibility of any thought, to be derived from experience.’ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A353, p. 391.
exchange, but, according to Kant, part of our very constitution, our faculties, to do so, and to do so reasonably, vernünftelnd and seemingly without thinking, so swiftly that one thinks that one has done nothing, not given a single thought to the Being of the other. But one has. For, as Kant says, without [th]is exchange of souls, without [th]is substitution, the other has no soul, no self, no Being.67

[28] Wittgenstein however suggests that [th]is inference to what is beyond the phenomenal, however much it is possible, is by no means necessary, as it is perfectly possible to experience the other as automata.68 Thus men, women and children suddenly and unexpectedly appear to Wittgenstein unensouled. As Wittgenstein says, in an undisguised critique of Hegel and Kant, in *Philosophical Investigations*,

‘But can’t I imagine people around are automata, lack consciousness, even though they behave in the same way as usual? – If I imagine it now – alone

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67 See Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A348-A380, esp. A353, p. 391, for the splendid exposition of the false inference to what is hidden, the noumenon that Reason provides by offering Vernunftsschlüsse, inferences of Reason, that wrongly compels the spectator to infer to what is hidden, the noumenon. For, as Kant could have remarked in the more available *Prolegomena*, ‘Reason is not a tool for looking.’ Cf. the exposition of Kant’s position in *Chapter 3, Philosophies of Concealment*, ‘§3.2 Kant’s ‘Paralogism of Pure Reason.’’

68 Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Fragment 420, p. 107. It should perhaps be added before we proceed to quote Wittgenstein, that this note in Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*, points negatively to what is missing or what Wittgenstein in these investigations is searching for but in vain, what he never finds and not even attempts to name, the Being of beings. We could here also point to the reason why he never finds what he is searching for and that Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* was bound to end up as an aporia, showing the true character of a man who maintained that he would proceed along the same way even though there was nowhere to go. For it would be, as is obvious, impossible to name positively that which is experienced negatively, and all Wittgenstein was searching for, in attempting, sometimes through the most pulp use of language, the singular, the irreplaceable, the most particular but almost solely positive use of language, he should have realized before he published his notes, which we maintain is not a way, no road but an aporia, that he would not be able to find that which is irreplaceable, the singular apperception of the Being of beings through any particular but positive use of language. For however particular, even anomal, [th]is use of language or [th]is language-game is, to express that which is singular it would have to point beyond itself, beyond the language game, which, as Wittgenstein says, primitively shows what is ‘meant’ by hammer and nail, that what he hammer this nail into is neither, but simply there. Da. [For the primitive or fundamental learning of language through use or referential function, see, Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Fragments 1-7. For one of Wittgenstein’s many pulp reflections, see Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Fragments 514-515, and finally, for Wittgenstein’s awareness of the shortcomings of his investigations, see the ‘Preface’ of January 1945 to *Philosophical Investigations*.]
in my room – I see people with fixed looks (as in a trance) going about their business – the idea is perhaps a little uncanny. But just try to keep hold of this idea in the midst of your ordinary intercourse with others, in the street, say! Say to yourself, for example: “The children over there are mere automatons; all their liveliness is mere automatism.” And you will either find these words becoming quite meaningless; or you will produce in yourself some kind of uncanny feeling, or something of the sort. Seeing a living human being as an automaton is analogous to seeing one figure as a limiting case or variant of another; the cross-pieces of a window as a swastika, for example.69

If one intended to conduct a comparative study of how to produce the perception of men as machines and the apperception of men as living beings, as we do in The Poetics of Being, one could compare Wittgenstein’s notes to Kant’s concluding remarks on machines in What is Enlightenment?, Descartes speculations on the difference between men and machines in Discourse on Method,70 and finally, Husserl’s perception of men as mannequins, if not Husserl’s inapperception of man, in Ferraris’ What is There?.71 Although we do not intend to investigate how it is possible to experience the other as automata, it is nevertheless clear from what has been said, that the Being of beings, or the soul of the other is not something we can take for granted, but something we have to produce the apperception of, and although this production may have become habitual to us, it is by no means necessary. There is obviously, as Wittgenstein gives testimony to, a possible but not inevitable exchange of souls.

§9.3 The Paradox of Substitution

[29] Substitution is either a case of misapperception or inapperception, the false apperception or non-apperception of /thjis ontological contradiction. Through

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substitution one will attach properties to a subject to which they do not belong, mistakenly attribute essences to another substance, these accidents to another existent or these properties to no being at all. Through these false attributions, the other will remain unrecognized, be merely a composite of predicates whose singular Being remains inapprehended. One would perhaps immediately think that one, through substitution, would apperceive the other as less real, since one through misapperception or inapperception fails to singularly acknowledge that which to Kant appear to condition every perception. It is however obvious, that if I have not apperceived this condition, or if I mistake or have a false apperception of this condition, it does not mean that this condition does not exist. Rather, that the impression of this existent will be reinforced by the witness to this false apperception. We therefore inquire into something Kant never did, the false apperception of the Being of this being. However ‘critical’ Kant’s investigations may appear to be, even if it may pass for, as Adorno remarks, ‘the philosophy of depth par excellence,’ it is nevertheless true that even though it remains ‘dialectical,’ that is, it inquires into the ‘inference’ to the Being of the other, it remains stubbornly one-sided as it never inquires into the false perception or the false apperception of any being, neither in itself nor of its effects. It is this half-hearted, even uncritical aspect of Kant’s theory that blocks every inquiry into what is false. Kant simply pretends to investigate the whole when he only investigates the half. And pretending the exclusiveness of truth, he excludes what is

72 As clearly as Kant never inquires into false perceptions, he similarly excludes every investigation into false apperceptions, whether of themselves, or more importantly, their effects.
73 Adorno, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, p. 72.
false, and through [th]is pretension Kant’s investigation, however admirable it otherwise may seem, suffers. We could even say that from not including the false, by excluding the misperceptions of Understanding [Verstand] and the misapperceptions of Reason [Vernunft], Kant’s investigation suffers deeply.

[30] Unlike Heidegger, Kant considers the ontological difference to be the end and not the beginning.75 That Kant considers the singular noumena to be the effect, the end of a false inference, is already announced by his use of ‘dialectics’ and ‘logic’ in Critique of Pure Reason. For the singular apperception of [th]is noumenon is not what is at the beginning, but at the end of [th]is inference. Any end, whether it is true or false, is undeniably what is effected. In Kant’s case, the apperception of the ontological contradiction is specifically the effect of the use of our own faculties, more particularly, the use of Reason.76 It may be true that [th]is - ontological contradiction - is the condition for all my perceptions and apperceptions, even my life, that which makes anything come true. However, approaching the Being of the other and not merely my own, the false cognition or


76 As Kant remarks in the introduction to the exposition of Transcendental Dialectic, ‘dialectic [is] as such a logic of illusion.’ [Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A293.] Concerning the difference between ‘perception’ and ‘apperception,’ we follow Kant to a certain degree, but simplify conceptually for the sake of clarity, saying that there are two kinds of ‘experience,’ that one may ‘perceive’ phenomena, as much as one may ‘apperceive’ noumena. Any apperception transcends what may be properly described, that is, the apperception is always of something indescribable, be it of subject, world or God. Furthermore, apperceiving the subject as having personality, substantiality, existence, there is, as Kant indicates, no perception adequate to what is signified by these empty words or ideas. [Cf. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A327/B384, p. 371.] Kant has, as we recall, an inessential concept of ‘idea,’ to be distinguished from the more common and essential understanding of idea that stems from Plato. [Cf. Plato, Symposium, 210d-211d.] Adopting a double concept of Being, we shall not only demonstrate that [th]is ontological contradiction is apperceived as either concealed or unconcealed, but also demonstrate that [th]is ontological contradiction, is not only that which conditions all my perceptions, but equally, that which we, more or less effectively, are persuaded to make an inference to. We shall demonstrate that [th]is inference is made, most effectively and effortlessly through inadequate perceptions or inadequate apperceptions that does not express what this truly is, but what this [truly] is not.
unrecognition of *this* [ontological difference] produces a more profound notion of *Being* - to the one witnessing *this* false apperception - than any immediate or true apperception ever will. Without thinking one would perhaps assume that what has *not* been apperceived would appear to be less real than what has. That is not the case. For through *this* misapperception, not only does that which *is* misapperceived appear to be, not only does the spectator unknowingly, suddenly and involuntarily, stand up to guarantee the existence of that which *is* unrecognized, but, moreover, the dynamics of inapperception, the dialectics of misapperception, also ensures the Being of that character who, falsely, has given his own self to that which is *not* apperceived.\(^77\) For when it becomes clear to the spectator that one character has *not* apperceived the other, it is self-evident that what *is* apperceived – by the character - does not belong to that which *is* apperceived - the character within the play - but only to the apperceiver - within the play - who has, perhaps involuntarily, given his self away [to the other], and thereby taken his place.\(^78\)

[31] We do not attempt to exhaust the topos of substitution in Shakespeare’s plays, only point out that it is a most constant topos, which reappears when one least expects it, for instance when Hamlet stabs through the curtains at Elsinore Castle and ends the life of one he did *not* apperceive, Polonius whom he falsely

\(^77\) If there is a ‘discrepancy of awareness’ that is truly crucial to the production of any *true* theatre, the most crucial difference is *not* between the characters within the play, but between the characters within the play and the spectators within the theatre. The *spectator* remains the most reliable witness to any incognition that may occur within the Shakespearean play, more reliable indeed than almost any *character*.

\(^78\) In any apperception there is, as Kant and Hegel indicate, a fundamental substitution of the self of the apperceiving subject with the subject apperceived. Nowhere is [th]is more true than when the subject in question is *misapperceived*. For if it is true that [th]is has been misapperceived, it will be equally true that the ground for [th]is misapperception cannot be other than the misapperceiver, who has mistaken himself for the other. As indicated, [th]is subject does not often recognize itself.
The Production of Being through Substitution

apperceived as Claudius behind the curtain.\(^{79}\) The death of Polonius shows clearly that one cannot take the place of another, and when attempting to or appearing to do so, one transgresses a limit no man may step beyond without uncovering his true place, that place which no man may escape except through death. More fundamentally, however, [th]is substitution creates the apperception of depth, the Being of that which is undiscovered. When the head of ‘Cladio’ is falsely displayed to Angelo towards the end of Measure for Measure,\(^{80}\) we are completely aware that the inapperception of one man saves, entbergt another man’s life. Nonetheless, we all know that however like the head of Ragozine is to Claudio’s, however much Angelo has been given the false satisfaction of having carried out the Law, that no one can die in another man’s place. No more can Ragozine die in the place of Claudio than Titus can step forward and exchange his life for the unfortunate and loving Gisippus in Elyot's lovely The Story of Titus and Gisippus.\(^{81}\) For even when one is about to think that [th]is man is willing to sacrifice himself, one realizes that no one can hang in another man’s place, that indeed, as Heidegger says, ‘Insofar as it “is,” death is always essentially my own.’\(^{82}\)

[32] It is when speaking of Heidegger’s famous definition of death in Being and Time, ‘the possibility of the pure and simple impossibility for Dasein.’\(^{83}\) that Derrida suggests the impossibility of writing the history of death as it would clearly be a history without a subject.\(^{84}\) Derrida looks with unhidden amazement

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\(^{80}\) Shakespeare, Measure for Measure, Act IV, Scene iii.74, 88, 93, 103, 117.

\(^{81}\) Notice a similar reality-effect when the living are pronounced dead, as when Proteus falsely tells to Silvia, ‘Valentine is dead.’ [Shakespeare, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act IV, Scene ii.110.]

\(^{82}\) Heidegger, Being and Time, Section 47, S. 238/ p. 221.

\(^{83}\) Heidegger, Being and Time, Section 50, in Derrida, Aporias, p. 23. For Heidegger’s exposition of death in Being and Time, see Sections 46-53.

\(^{84}\) Derrida, Aporias, p. 25.
at Aries, who admits in the preface to *The History of Death* that the project was for long postponed because he had metaphysical problems with death.\(^85\) Similarly and with unconcealed ridicule, Derrida speaks of those historians who would search for a criteriology of death before commencing on their investigation, when the ontological question of death is *not* even raised, that is, as Derrida says, ‘What death ‘is’ or whether death ‘is’ at all.’\(^86\) Despite this negative introduction, Derrida goes on to positively assert that it is death that guarantees my singularity through the impossibility of dying for another, ‘that it is impossible to die for the other in the sense of ‘to die in his place.’\(^87\) Following Heidegger’s ontological analysis of death,\(^88\) marking off ontological death from perishing ontically, Derrida says, ‘[It] is in dying proper and properly speaking that ‘mineness’ is irreplaceable, that no one can die for the other, [not even] in the experience of the hostage or of the sacrifice, in the sense of ‘in the place of the other,’ and that no testimony can testify to the contrary.’\(^89\) Heidegger basically says that I may indeed *re*present what another person is, on stage as in life, but the possibility for *re*presentation ends when it comes to *re*presenting *that* [th]is person *is*. For I can, as Heidegger says, obviously not die for another. Heidegger says, ‘The broad ways of being-in-the-world in which one person can be represented by another extends only to the used-up modes of public being. Here one Da-sein can and must, within certain

\(^{85}\) Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 50.

\(^{86}\) Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 25.

\(^{87}\) Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 25.


\(^{89}\) Derrida, *Aporias*, p. 38. In his ontological analysis of death, Heidegger, marking off the ontological implications of death from perishing ontically, says, ‘Insofar as it “is,” death is always essentially my own. And it indeed signifies a peculiar possibility of being in which it is absolutely a matter of the being of my own Da-sein. In dying, it becomes evident that death [Heidegger’s note: The relation of Da-sein to death; death itself, its arrival, entrance, dying.] is ontologically, constituted by mineness and existence. Dying is not an event, but a phenomenon to be understood existentially in an eminent sense still to be delineated more closely.’ [Heidegger, *Being and Time*, ‘Section 46, The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death,’ S. 240/ p. 223].
limits, “be” another Da-sein. Heidegger, defining the limits of replaceability, the absolute limit of [re]presentation, says, ‘However, this possibility of representation gets completely stranded when it is a matter of representing the possibility of being that constitutes the coming-to-an-end of Da-sein and gives its totality as such. No one can take the other’s dying away from him.” And finally, marking how death ends all possibilities of [re]presentation of that which it negates, namely life or Being, Heidegger concludes, ‘In ‘ending,’ and in the totality thus constituted of Da-sein, there is essentially no representation.’

We will immediately assert the superficiality of this view, pass it by much like Prince Hal walks away from Falstaff when he appears to be dead on the battlefield. For coming across the superficial view that immediately and without thinking states that it is impossible for anyone to die for another, we advance to the more profound view, that it is the false apperception of this man dying in another man’s place, like Sir Blunt appears to die for King Henry, that creates the true apperception of his death, the death of that Being which is not apperceived or apperceived untruly. For Falstaff is no more apperceived behind the masque of death than Sir Blunt is apperceived within King Henry’s armour. However, it is exactly this inapparception, which creates the apperception of depth, the Being of

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90 Heidegger, Being and Time, ‘Section 46, The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death,’ S. 239f./p. 223.
91 Heidegger, Being and Time, ‘Section 46, The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death,’ S. 240/p. 223. Heidegger elaborates, ‘Someone can go ‘to his death for an other.’ Such dying for can never, however, mean that the other has thus had his death in the least taken away. Every Da-sein must itself actually take dying upon itself.’ [Heidegger, Being and Time, ‘Chapter 46, The Possible Being-a-Whole of Da-sein and Being-toward-Death,’ S. 240/p. 223. Emphasis added.
that which remains entirely concealed and completely and essentially empty.

Speaking immediately of the impossibility of taking the place of another, as if [th]is was possible without obstacles, as Heidegger and Derrida do, one has indeed forgotten that the Being of the other has first to be apperceived. Kant states clearly, in the Critique of Pure Reason what Hegel reiterates in Phenomenology, that the other, has no Being without me. According to Kant, the other has no substance, no self without me unknowingly giving him mine. However unrecognized, the Being, soul, self or substance of the other is always my own. And there is, according to Kant, an inevitable exchange of selves through which the other comes alive. Although /th/is is hardly recognized, there is, as both Kant and Hegel asserts, an inevitable indistinguishability between the substance or soul or self of the other and my own. We will not go so far as to say that we necessarily apperceive the hidden soul/self/substance of the other. What we do say, is that through substitution, [th]is inference, the inference to /th/is, the Being of the other is almost inevitable. For as is easily recognized, as most of us no longer give Being to trees and stones and stars, there may come a time when we would no longer give Being to another man, to [th]is man, to that man which appear before us.

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98 Having observed that there appear to be an impression of another thinking being, Kant explains that it is only oneself in disguise. Kant says, ‘We wrongly turn this subjective condition into a condition of the possibility of a cognition of objects, viz., into a concept of a thinking being as such. We do this because we cannot present such a being without putting ourselves, with the formula of our consciousness, in the place of any other intelligent being.’ [Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A354].
100 Heidegger and Derrida simply show how much they are preoccupied with what is true, when they maintain that it is impossible to take the place another, to die in another man’s place. However, [th]is actual impossibility of substitution does not guard against or prevent one man at one point or another to actually apperceive one man as another, and therefore to see him die in another man’s place. There is, apparently, an obvious difference between what can be thought and what can be done, what we can think of and what can actually occur. It is, as we have maintained all along, [th]is discrepancy, [th]is difference between the imaginable and the unimaginable, that produces the apperception of the Being of beings. Indeed, the apperception of [th]is ontological
Of all battles in the history of theatre, the most profound to have ever taken place on Shakespearean soil, is surely the battle that culminates *Henry IV, Part I*, where Sir Douglas is forced to fight, to unknowingly overcome, men who are not themselves, replicas. No battle is more persuasive, because it, like the *duel* that ends *Hamlet*, is simply false. However, whereas the duel that ends *Hamlet* produces the apperception of the ontological contradiction through a presentation of what is essentially false: Laertes, the dagger, King Claudius, the false battle of *Henry IV, Part I* is an illustrious example of *The Poetics of Being* through another kind of inadequation, substitution. For in this battle, the ontological contradiction is produced not through the misperception of what is essentially is, but through the misapperception, even inapperception of thjis. What we realize with a tinge of astonishment at the height of [th]is battle, is not only that we are witnessing a fight between different fractions and hopefuls, but rather that there is, throughout *Henry IV, Part I*, a battle between different concepts of truth. As the battle ensues, it does not so without giving a sense of khora, the apperception of that incomparable place where only one man may or may not survive. For in the middle of [th]is false battle, when hardly anyone or anything is truly apperceived, and the stage mirrors the true confusion of any real battlefield, Shakespeare suddenly

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101 Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*, Act V, Scene iii, Scene iv. The ambiguity is that Douglas does not know whether or not he is fighting a replica as he truly is in Scene iii, an uncertainty he is unable to shake off when the true King arrives in Scene iv.
103 Again we use ‘truth’ in an ontological sense, expressing an indifference between what is, if not only its apperception, and what is true.
creates the apperception of what is *unconcealed* by letting Prince Hal and the ‘gallant Hotspur’ encounter each other like two planets within the same orbit. As Prince Hal says to Hotspur before they engage in the duel which will convey the successor to the throne of England, ‘I am Prince of Wales, and think not, Percy,/To share with me in glory any more/Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere.’

Apparently, Shakespeare has made *Henry IV, Part I* into the ordeal of Prince Henry, who finally *proves* himself when Hotspur succumbs to his mighty sword.

After the battle, nothing is more appropriate than to let Prince Hal climb to the highest point of the battlefield, as he has truly earned the right throughout this play to, without allegory, incarnate the ontological contradiction as *unconcealed*. However, Prince Henry is accompanied by one man who, on the scales of Being, personifies the opposite aspect of the ontological contradiction, his untrue friend, Falstaff, who throughout the play certainly have earned the right to incarnate the ontological contradiction as *concealed*, the right to be concealed. As one cannot live without the other, it appears they both personify designs for a living eternally open to man, i.e. a true or a false way to promote one’s life or Being. As Prince Henry says to Lord Falstaff before they climb the summit, let us ‘to the highest of the field,/To see what friends are living, who are dead.’

In order to stay alive, Falstaff deserts himself, when he, on the battlefield, saves his own life by pretending to be dead. It is, indeed, impossible to be dead,
but, as Prince Hal passes him by,\textsuperscript{108} he does no longer apperceive his soul, and, as
that which \textit{is} inappercieved, Falstaff truly comes alive before us, but only as that
which is \textit{concealed}. Even before [th]is battle commences, and again consistently
showing his inclination to be concealed, his reluctance to shine, Falstaff says to the
young Prince Hal, later Henry V, ‘I would ‘were bedtime, Hal, and all well.’\textsuperscript{109} To
which the young Prince replies, before he strides away on horseback, ‘Why, thou
owest God a death.’\textsuperscript{110} Then and there, when Falstaff is left alone on the heath, he
proves once and for all that he is entirely and thoroughly false, performing his
soliloquy against the medieval virtue of honour before the battle begins.\textsuperscript{111} Among
obscure speeches, among hymns to obscurity, this soliloquy should rank as highly
as Hamlet’s speech,\textsuperscript{112} but as Hamlet favours the prospects of death, Falstaff
honours the art of concealment in the battle for \textit{life}.\textsuperscript{113}

\[36\] We may speak of the culmination of \textit{Henry IV, Part I} as a battlefield of false
apperceptions, not only Hal’s inappercipation of Falstaff, but also Sir Douglas false
apperception of the King. For Sir Douglas falsely apperceives the man wearing the
King’s armour as the King himself, and Falstaff is, after a short exchange of blades
after which he soon falls to the ground, no longer apperceived as he appears to be

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{108} Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene iv.100. \\
\textsuperscript{109} Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene ii.125. \\
\textsuperscript{110} Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene ii.126. \\
\textsuperscript{111} Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene ii.127-141. \\
\textsuperscript{112} Shakespeare, \textit{Hamlet}, Act III, Scene i.56-88. \\
\textsuperscript{113} Both soliloquies should be recognized for what they are, for speaking out against medieval ideals
of unconcealment, they both trumpet ideals of concealment. As much as Hamlet yearns for death,
Falstaff joyously, vivaciously, wish to live. It is in this state of life-assertion, on the morn of the
battle where he later will pretend to be dead, that Falstaff speaks out against the chivalric ideal of
honour, of maintaining one’s true place in battle, of appearing indifferently as what you are. Quite
remarkably, Falstaff’s soliloquy against the chivalric ideal of ‘honour,’ takes the shape of a
commentary on the meaning of the word, concisely summed up in Falstaff’s conclusion, ‘Honour is
As Sylvan Barnet points out in the notes he has so kindly and conscientiously provided for the
reader, ‘scutcheon’ means merely a ‘painted shield with a coat of arms identifying a \textit{dead}

\begin{quote}

\textit{nobleman.” [Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene ii.140n].} 
\end{quote}
dead. And so we may say that in the first place another is apperceived in his, whereas where we find Falstaff lying on the ground amid the fallen corpses, his Being is no longer apperceived. In both cases, *[th]is* is not apperceived, and it is *[th]is* inapperception that paradoxically gives Being to these appearances, makes sure that when Sir Blunt falls and his blood is gushing forth, we think he is really dying, and that when Lord Falstaff rises to his feet, we think he *really* pretended to be dead, that he overcame in *[th]is* battle by *Being*, remaining, concealed.

Obviously, identities are confused, when Sir Blunt, wearing the armour of the King, sees Sir Douglas approach on the battlefield, and cries out, ‘What is thy name, that in battle thus thou crossest me?/What honour dost thou seek upon my head?’114 To which Douglas replies as he draws his sword, reminding us that all subjects, some truly, some falsely, are recognized by name, ‘Know then my name is Douglas,/And I do haunt thee in the battle thus/Because some tell me thou art a king.’ To which Sir Walter Blunt falsely replies, ‘They tell thee true.’ And calling Sir Blunt by his false name, ‘King Harry,’ Sir Douglas does not only name, but finally overcomes one who he in this battle never did truly apperceive or falsely apperceived as the King.

It does not take long before the cause of Sir Douglas’ inapperception is disclosed. For when Hotspur arrives at the scene, he marks the true name of the defeated, ‘his name was Blunt;/Semblambly furnished like the King himself.’115 However, as if Shakespeare unknowingly was writing under a spell of enthusiasm, Sir Douglas act of inapperception is soon doubled. For when the King finally appears, unmistakably clothed in the same armour, the same coat of arms, Sir

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Douglas apperceives him not. As effortlessly as Sir Douglas gave one man the Being that did not belong to him, he is now reluctant to give the other his rightful Being. And Being in a state of uncertainty, he says to the one who has pronounced himself as ‘The King himself,’116 ‘I fear thou art another counterfeit;/And yet, in faith, thou bearest thee like a king.’117 Concerning the false production of Being no impression of the ontological contradiction is more profound than the one offered by its inapperception, the one given by the unquestionable inapperception of [th]is. After his pretended death, after he fell and succumbed to the wound from the blade that never scratched him,118 Falstaff rises again to his feet on the battlefield, which is budding forth with the crops of dead men. Showing clearly an ontological understanding of truth,119 where there is an indistinguishability between what is and what is true, Falstaff says,

‘Sblood, ‘twas time to counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit. I lie: I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man, but to counterfeit dying when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed.’120

117 Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, Act V, Scene iv.75.
118 Shakespeare, Henry IV, Part I, Act V, Scene iv.76.
119 Concerning the ontological understanding of ‘truth,’ where an in-difference between truth and existence is upheld, we could say that nothing is more precarious, uncertain, unsettled, and perhaps, as Heidegger suggests, closer to Anaximander’s concept of the indeterminable apeiron. For what is fought for in any battle, is not primarily what is essentially true but what is [true]. That is, the being that overcomes in any battle is [true]. In an ontological sense, truth is, as Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger assert, simply the outcome of war, polemos. [For the ontological notion of truth as the outcome of war, see Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit, ‘Lordship and Bondage,’ p. 111-119, Nietzsche, Philosophy and Truth – Selections from Nietzsche’s Notebooks of the early 1870s, ‘The Philosopher: Reflection on the Struggle Between Art and Knowledge,’ Fragment 47, p. 17, and Heidegger, Parmenides, p. 18.
[1] Having first climbed to the top of [th]is battlefield, there is no reason to not rest and admire the view down below, from [th]is height of inapperception, look back on the land made fertile by these rivers, these figures of indefiniteness, falsity, substitution, making as they do the apperception of [th]is through the imperceptions, the misperceptions and the inapperceptions they afford. Concerning substitution, we see, quite paradoxically, that it is the inapperception of [th]is that produces [th]is apperception, much like it is the misperception of what [th]is is that more effectively than any true perception produces the apperception of the Being of beings. In the case of indefiniteness, there is, of course, only an imperception given, the empty perception of what [th]is is not rather than what [th]is is that produces, as it were, the naked apperception of, what Hegel would call ‘nothing’ and Kant a pure phenomenological Anschauung, an impression more persuasive, however empty it is, in providing a sense of [th]is being unconcealed than any true or adequate perception. These three figures of falsity, substitution and indefiniteness, are all aspects or figures of inadequation that produces, whether concealed or unconcealed, the same, the apperception of the Being of beings. But there is also the true production of Being, but only if we take truth in the ontological sense - to be defined as that which upholds all properties and that without which these properties could not be - and not truth in a merely epistemological sense where [th]is, the Being of beings is taken for granted, and all that concern us is the adequation or correspondence between my description or perception of what [th]is is and what [th]is essentially is. For even though we may learn much from such descriptions, this approach is merely phenomenological. For
having inquired into what this essentially is, and having done so even adequately, we would still be at a loss to present this, knowing nothing of that which these true descriptions, these adequations of mind and matter, these correspondences of intellect and thing, of words and appearances, of language and phenomena, take for granted, namely the Being of beings, the Being of this [being].

[2] Again we shall speak of what should have become clear in the preceding chapters, that the effect of inadequation is the apperception of this, that which is singular and unknown affected through inadequation. It is obvious that as there are different kinds of inadequation, they all achieve their end of producing the apperception of the Being of beings in different ways. Through falsity, the perception of what is essentially false, there is an obvious misperception that furthers the immediate inference to that which does not have these attributes and as such, as that which does not have these attributes, is apperceived. It is quite obvious that the immediate effect of indetermination is imperception and that the immediate effect of substitution is inapperception, affecting in turn the apperception of this as either concealed or unconcealed. As Aristotle said, and no one has said more clearly after him, an indetermination does not express what this is, does not express a perception of what this essentially is but only affords an impression of what this is not. Through this indetermination what this is, is not perceived, and this imperception opens up for the apperception of this as unconcealed.

[3] When it comes to substitution, it is obvious that this is wrongly or falsely apperceived. It may be true as, Nietzsche says, that this, be it called substance or

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1 Aristotle, *de Interpretatione*, Chapters 1, 2 and 10.
soul, is *always* falsely apperceived. Kant does however take [th]is false apperception to be a necessity, to be unavoidable. On the other hand, Kant limits his questions to what is *true*, the true perceptions of phenomena, and however ‘false’ he may call the inference to the apperception of the [singular] noumena that grounds every [single] *persona*, he only speaks of the false apperception of what is hidden. Never does he inquire into how much more effectively we infer to the existence of [th]is ontological contradiction when faced with *false* phenomena. If he did, he would have discovered that the truly *false* perception or apperception of [th]is, even the inapperception of [th]is, does more emphatically produce the apperception of [th]is than any true apperception could ever do.

[4] We found, at the crossroads of misperception and inapperception, that Shakespeare clearly produces that which they have in common, namely [th]is ontological contradiction. Knowing how close to Shakespeare’s heart these *means of inadequation* are, something we may already conjecture from the example of Sonnet 72 where he explains to his beloved that thou art everything and I am

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3 [For Kant’s exposition of the transcendental inference to the illusory, almost unavoidable apperception of the singular Being of another human being, see, Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ‘The Paralogisms of Pure Reason,’ A341/B399-A405/B432.] It may appear to some that I confuse the necessity of the noumenal as a grounding *condition* for all phenomenal perceptions, if not all cognition, with the illusory apperception of what is singular. However, we contend that the apperception of the Being of beings is singular, and that when we are faced with anything, in theatre as in life, it is *impossible* to doubt that there is something that noumenally effects our perceptions, but it is sometimes doubtful whether what effects us is *alive*. For in theatre as in life, the challenge is not to prove that there is anything at all, but to prove, to convince the spectator that [th]is being is *alive*. The argument that there must be something simply because there is something to cognize, is no more helpful in theatre than in life, for also the *lifeless* may similarly be cognized. However, we do not grant *Being* to dead men, although there are *bodies* there to perceive, *not life* to characters simply because they can be *seen*, nor do we grant *Being* to a play simply because we can perceive the stage.
nothing, we can see that these distinct instruments of inadequation are often applied with such ease within the same play, oftentimes even within the same scene, as is the case in *Twelfth Night*, that we are scarcely able to perceive them.

We can take the experience of Olivia to lie at the crossroads of misperception and inapprecception. For by perceiving Viola as a man, as ‘Cassius,’ she misperceives *what* *[th]is* is and hence gives Being to *[th]is* false appearance, but by perceiving Sebastian as Cassius, she is unknowingly guilty of inapprecception, which creates an equally profound and immediate apperception of *[th]is* ontological contradiction, as what is mistaken is not only *what* *[th]is* is, but *[th]is,* that which nothing can *be* without.

We distinguish between imperception and inapprecception, that is, between indefinition and substitution, as their effects are quite opposite, as the one provides a way to the apperception of *what* is *unconcealed* and the other to *what* is *concealed*. Whereas we apply non-perception where there is a lack of perception, that is, where we do not perceive *what* *[th]is* is, and what remains is an empty apperception of Being, or as Hegel would say, *nothing.* We speak of inapprecception where one does *not* apperceive the subject or substance of that which appear to have these properties. We could therefore say that misapprecceptions or inapprecceptions produce, through the almost inevitable substitution affected, the apperception *that* *[th]is* is, the Being of *that* being which

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4 Shakespeare declares to his beloved, ‘O, lest the world should task you to recite/What merit lived in me that you should love/After my death, dear love, forget me quite,/For you in me can nothing worthy prove/Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,/To do more for me than mine own desert/And hang more praise upon deceased I/Than niggard truth would willingly impart./O, lest your true love may seem false in this/That you for love speak well of me untrue/My name be buried where my body is/And live no more to shame nor me nor you;/For I am shamed by that which I bring forth/And so should you, to love things nothing worth.’ Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, Sonnet 72.

is not apperceived, that does not have these properties or to whom these properties
does not belong.

[6] Delivering the dialectics of inappereception for the first time, we should
follow Aristotle’s example by explaining what is more difficult by what is less, what
is complex through what is simple. We could speak of inappereception as we do of
what is inappropriate. For as the inappropriate transgresses the law of decency or
the limit of what is considered appropriate at any given time, so the inappereceived
is beyond apperception. And as it is inappropriate to not be considerate to one who
is there, it is even more so to not apperceive one who is. Nonetheless, what is
inappropriate does not remove, but strengthens our sense of what is [appropriate].
Equally, any inappereception will paradoxically reinforce the impression of what is
not apperceived. If we should find an appropriate concept for what is not
apperceived, a total lack of appereception, a possibility that is suggested by the
experiences of Descartes, Husserl and Wittgenstein, however much Kant would
consider any singular inappereception [to be] impossible, as the singular condition
for [th]is perception would, according to Kant necessarily have to be apperceived
as a subject with personality and soul, the testimonies of these three distinguished
philosophers do however destroy Kant’s claim that [th]is inference is necessary.6
We could speak of anappereception in much the same way as we speak of what is
amoral, that is, where the question of that which is apperceived like the question of
morality is not even raised.

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6 It does not destroy Kant’s claim that for every phenomenal description, there is an indefinite
noumenal ground to be apperceive as such, but it does destroy the claim that we almost necessarily
make the inference to the substantiality, the personality and the unity of the other being, i.e. the
singular Being of the subject appereceived. Cf. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, ‘The Paralogisms of
Pure Reason,’ A341/B399-A405/B432.
There is clearly a production of Being that occurs through misperception and inapperception. The failed apperception of [th]is will not fall short of creating the impression of something that is. Similarly, the failed perception of what [th]is is creates the apperception of that which is without properties, what remains hidden, but nevertheless is that to which these properties does not belong. Obviously, the misapperception of [th]is creates the apperception of what is concealed. However, misapperception is not immediately the inability to apperceive [th]is, as for example, Descartes, Husserl or Wittgenstein are at one time or another unable, if not unwilling, to apperceive the Being of the other, the Being of the being before them, calling that which remains inapperceived, that which offer nothing to apperception, in historical order, machine, mannequin, automata, but rather, the false apperception of another. As Descartes says when he is staring out the window, be it in Brussels or Amsterdam, ‘what do I see from the window beyond hats and cloaks that might cover artificial machines, whose motions might be determined by springs? But I judge that there are human beings from these appearances, and thus I comprehend, by the faculty of judgment alone which is in the mind, what I believed I saw with my eyes.’

We shall have a final look at some of these Shakespearean places of substitution, but not without first acknowledging Kant’s forgotten dictum, ‘The Being of the other is my own.’ The other has no Being without me. To find an

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7 For a reference to Husserl’s experience of men as mannequins, see Maurizio Ferraris, What is There?, in Derrida and Ferraris, A Taste for the Secret, p. 95, and for Wittgenstein’s almost profound, but necessarily pulp, experience, see Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, Fragment 420.

8 Descartes, Meditations on The First Philosophy, ‘Meditation II: Of the Nature of the Human Mind; and that it is more easily known than the Body,’ in A Discourse on Method, Meditations and Principles, p. 85.

intimation of how this could be true, that the other has no Being without me, we
would first have to consider the contrary case, where the other is given no Being at
all. The most famous case of inapperception in the history of philosophy, where a
man is left with motion but no Being, is surely Descartes’ automata, although we
should not neglect Kant’s machines. For according to Kant, phenomena, like
machines, seem very well to work without substance, self or soul. In literature,
there is, of course, merely a generation after Kant, Hoffmann’s famous story of the
man who unknowingly fell in love with a mechanical doll, whom he wanted to
marry as he found her to be so mysteriously like him self.

The premise of this argument is that the other does not give the impression
of having substance without substitution, nor does he give the impression of Being
unconcealed without indefinition, which creates the apperception of that place
through which he is unconcealed. In short, the Being of the other is neither
concealed nor unconcealed if not the ontological contradiction is granted him. As
Kant in effect says in the Critique of Pure Reason, ‘The other has no being without
me.’ It goes without saying that if, as Kant says in ‘The Paralogisms of Pure
Reason,’ the inference to the self of the other is both necessary and false, both
automatic and erratic, an error which we, like machines repeat apparently without
thinking, it is also the case that in theatre, the spectator is not immediately inclined
to be so generous with his self. In the theatre, the spectator has to be persuaded to

10 As is generally known Descartes was, like many of his age, fascinated with automata, the
mechanical dolls that populated the gardens of Louis XIII.
11 Kant, What is Enlightenment?
12 E.T.A. Hoffmann, Tales of Hoffmann, Penguin Classics, Selected and translated by R. J.
wrote also, even a generation before Edgar Allan Poe, what is considered the first detective novel,
‘Mademoiselle De Scudery,’ pp. 17–84.
13 Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, A353–A354.
give away his self. But if not the spectator gives Being to the player, life to the
stage, world to the theatre, the player is no more than an actor, the stage is no
more than a stage, the theatre no more than a theatre.

Substitution is one of the most efficient ways to produce the apperception of
self, to make the spectator, unknowingly give his self away to the other, and this
two times over, and so effortlessly and lightly that the spectator thinks that he has
done nothing, does not even suspect that he has given anything away. But how does
this substitution occur, how is it effected, and how is the spectator [mis]led into
giving his self away, to the other, and then to not recognize his own presence in the
other, as if he had so secretly given away himself, that he does not know of or
recognize his own Being in the other, does not realize that he has given himself, his
self, away. Of course, one would need subtle means to persuade a man to give
himself away, and of all means none is more subtle, none immediately more
effective than the act of substitution, where one is mistaken for another, or where
one takes the place of another and this substitution remains unknown to the
character within the play, but also, where this second act of substitution remains
unknown to the spectator within the theatre. And still, even if it is known, it is
difficult to not give oneself away.

It is obvious that Shakespeare creates his plays as contradictions, for the
perception of what is untrue or the apperception of what is untrue, that is
inadequate perceptions or apperceptions, produce the apperception of what is
true]. Paradoxically, but truly, the inapperception of [th]is produces its
apperception, as much as the misperception of what [th]is is produces the
apperception of [th]is. Again we notice, what so many have done before us, without
disclosing its true function nor end, that the experience of the spectator is exactly opposite to the experience of the character. The purpose of any inadequate presentation is obviously to create the apperception of the ontological contradiction, for whereas the character experiences what is not, the spectator experiences what is. There is even an inferential chain that draws or pulls the spectator from the perception or apperception of what is not, to the apperception of what is.

[12] Clearly, Shakespeare has created his plays as contradictions, paradoxes where the direction of the meaning of the play is exactly opposite to the way in which the Being of beings is produced. The very thought of identification between spectator and character does, from this perspective, seem almost absurd. For whereas the play presents this Being as inapperceived, as for example, Sly, Viola, Falstaff and Juliet are all, at one point or another, inapperceived, it is this inapperception that produces, and this is quite convincingly and effortlessly, the apperception of this, the Being of beings. This inapperception does paradoxically provide the opening for this ontological contradiction to be apperceived. For as clearly as Sly does not apperceive himself, Viola is not apperceived by the Duke, and Falstaff is no more apperceived by Prince Hal as he lies dead on the battlefield than Juliet is apperceived by Romeo as she lies displayed openly in the sarcophagus. When Romeo walks down into the crypt that gives birth to all human spirits, and discovers his beloved lying lifeless in that open grave, it is obvious that there is nothing wrong or false with Romeo’s perceptions.
For even though Juliet looks the same, there is something missing, that which Romeo no longer apperceives, the Being of [th]is being.¹⁴

Likewise, any misperception of what [th]is is, as for example Ophelia’s misperception of Hamlet’s madness, King Duncan’s misperception of Macbeth’s loyalty and Iago’s misperception of Desdemona’s infidelity, will most emphatically produce the apperception of [th]is, the Being of [th]is being. It is as Nietzsche says, in, I believe, The Will to Power, that arguing against a man’s opinions you may prove him wrong, but by offering all the arguments against him, you have proved what is more fundamental to any man, his Being. For any misperception produces doubly the impression of that from which the person is alienated through this false perception, that which no persona, not even a false persona can be without, namely substance. So again, the dissociation of appearance from substance, of essence from self, produces a more profound sense of self, of substance to the spectator who witness the display of that masque which does not belong to [th]is man or that woman.

For the first time, The Poetics of Being offers the dialectics of substitution and the dialectics of inapperception. The dialectics of substitution concerns the exchange of selves as much as the dialectics of inapperception concerns the inference from what is not apperceived or misapperceived to the apperception of its existence, even the creation of [th]is apperception by displaying, by Being confronted with what is not apperceived. Falstaff appear to be dead on the battlefield. And what is a dead man except one who through a masque of death lets

¹⁴ We are perhaps reminded that the difference between clones and identical twins is the same as the difference between the living and the dead, [th]is, the Being of beings.
nothing be apperceived, a phenomena that does not yield, like most human crops, the fruit of continuous and abundant apperception. Of course, we may become conscious of \textit{this} production, even the necessity of the production of the Being of beings in that instance, and perhaps only in that instance, when it is \textit{not} produced. What better way to illustrate the dialectics of inapperception, than with a man who is willing to be inapperceived in order to save his life. For Lord Falstaff is as easily saved through the inapperception of death as Sir Blunt dies being misapperceived as the King on the battlefield. For rather than having his life taken away, Falstaff appears, at the height of \textit{this} battle, to be inapperceived, or as Prince Hal says to Prince John, speaking of Falstaff, \‘I saw him dead,\Breathlesss and bleeding on the ground.’ When Prince Hal astonished sees Falstaff approach fat and well, he says, \‘Art thou alive,\ Or is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?\ I prithee speak. We will not trust our eyes/Without our ears. Thou art not what thou seem\’st.’ Of course, if Shakespeare distinguished conceptually between perceptions and apperceptions, which he in effect does, and if Reason is that by which we apperceive what \textit{is} beyond perception, he should perhaps have let Prince Hal say to Falstaff as he approached fat and well, \‘We will no longer trust our \textit{Reason.’}

\footnotesize{15 Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene iv.132-133.}
\footnotesize{16 Shakespeare, \textit{Henry IV, Part I}, Act V, Scene iv.133-136.}
Glossary

Definition is an attempt to grasp the meaning of a concept universally or within a particular discourse, here *The Poetics of Being*. As we in part continue an ontological discourse and in part reinvent it, some concepts will be familiar some will sound familiar, and still others will be entirely unfamiliar. It is obvious that we should offer a cautionary remark for the reader who seeks immediate illumination. These definitions are attempts to keep out what is foreign to a concept, and so, even if we draw nearer to that which is named by these definitions, the reader may still demand greater specificity.

*adequation*, the commonplace understanding of *truth* as the correspondence between intellect and thing, proposition and fact, perception and phenomenon, in short, the correspondence between what we *think* the world is and what the world, or a community of men believe the world, *actually* is.

*affirmation*, either the assertion of the properties given to a subject, the assertion of the subject itself, or the assertion of the compound.

*anapperception*, the failure to apperceive the singular Being of a phenomenon/persona. To encounter another being where only the phenomenal masque is perceived without and apart from that which upholds the integrity of any being while it is still alive, the Being of beings.

*animitation*, to negate the impression that a [re]presentation is a likeness to such a degree that it is apperceived as a living being; to facilitate the substitution of the symbol with what is symbolized.

*aphairesis*, the process of abstraction or gradual denial which leaves the reader or the spectator with the apperception of that which is without properties.

*aporia*, the incapacity to name or predicate that which is encountered. An arrest of the intellect, a cognitive arrest, that paradoxically invites the mind to proceed by dwelling on that which is still unknown.

*apperception*, the transcendental notion of that which cannot essentially or phenomenally be described, but whose impression is as difficult to erase in life as it is difficult to create by art, namely the Being of beings. The apperceived is that which no perception is adequate to. For an immediate understanding of the difference between perception and apperception, one should perhaps try to imagine clones or identical twins, for even where there is no perceptual difference, there is still a difference to be apperceived. [Th]is ontological difference is, moreover concealed or unconcealed, a contradiction.

*beings*, the things in the world that may one day be perfectly described and categorized without yet offering a glimpse of that which grants each phenomenon the depth or the shine of life, the Being of beings.
Being of beings, what is highest or what is first.

catharsis, the elevating or purifying effect of taking part in or witnessing a performance that offers the apperception of the Being of beings, an experience indistinguishable from what is, or quite simply, inseparable from life.

clear/clearing, that which is unconcealed or the apperception of that which is unconcealed.

concealment [of the ontological difference], the preapperception that grants no being to phenomena that do not offer a sense of what is hidden.

contradiction, either to give irreconcilable properties to a subject, or to affirm and deny the identity, existence or apperception of this subject at the same time.

dialectics 1, the indefinite or negative progression that leads to definition and hence knowledge; the infinite progression from what is unknown to what is known [Plato].

dialectics 2, argument based on opinions that are self-evident to the many or the few [Aristotle].

dialectics 3, the ontological inference that leads from the perception of this phenomenon to the apperception of its noumenal ground [Kant].

dialectics 4, the necessary and often neglected implication of the subject in the object perceived or apperceived [Hegel].

dialectics of imperception, to infer the unconcealed Being of that which is not perceived by the other from witnessing an act of singular non-cognition.

dialectics of Inapperception, the spontaneous substitution or I-identification of the spectator with the subject which is in-apperceived; the spontaneous substitution of the spectator’s subject with the subject of the person that is not recognized.

dialectics of misperception, the ontological inference to the Being of that being whose properties are perceived inadequately.

dissimilarity, unlikeness, that which is [re]presented as essentially different from itself. Through the dissimilar display of oneself or another one will convey the impression of that which the [re]presentation is inadequate to, namely the Being of that which is concealed.

elision, the progressive removal or violent ab-straction of properties from an individual being. The more indispensable the properties that are taken away are to the essential identity of the individual being, the more will it appear to be [alive]. We shall use, elision as a concept to describe the gradual or sudden removal of some or all properties from one being, whereas we shall, as tradition, apply
aphairesis to the act of denying all properties to everything that is, so that nothing remains but the [apperception of] the Being of beings.

elusive, the end of elision; the singular apperception of that which remains after all properties or properties indispensable for the essential identity of a being has gradually or violently been taken away.

experience, taken in a less discrete sense than by Kant, to whom experience is limited to the assessment or judgement of phenomena, which experience cannot pass beyond. That is, to the Understanding experience is limited to perceptions, whereas Reason may step, and indeed, does involuntarily step beyond what is perceived to what is apperceived, be [th]is apperceived as subject, world or God. Here ‘experience’ denotes more generally, both perception and apperception: to grasp what [th]is essentially is, whether the assessment is true or false, and the apperception of the hidden condition for the Being of [th]is appearance. In one sense this is prior to the understanding of what [th]is essentially is, and, in another sense, it is the singular depth we make an inference to, the depth of the subject apperceived as: substantiality, personality or existence.

false 1, ontological sense, that which is not.

false 2, epistemological sense, the inadequate perception of the properties that belong to a subject or the inadequate apperception/identification of the subject; the expression or [re]presentation of these inadequations.

function, often denotes the ontological effect [re]presentations may have by producing the apperception of the ontological contradiction through different, and mostly, inadequate means of [re]presentation.

general/universal, the result of a generalization from particulars to a universalising contention that describes a compound, a category which may be universally applied to conceptually understand the essence of all particular beings of the same class. However, the category itself describes nothing that exists.

hermeneutics, the systematic endeavour to give meaning to that which has been rendered meaningless by diachronic or synchronic differences of place, sociology, culture, class, gender, religion, fashion, etc. in short, the attempt to understand that which has been rendered meaningless by time.

hypostatise, to reify or transform into a thing, what may only be indirectly apperceived by inference; pretending to perceive as a thing that which may only inferentially be apperceived: God, world, subject; and of the [singular] subject: its substance, personality or existence.

idea, in the Platonic/Neoplatonic sense the concept or form that is indistinguishable from the essential Being of any phenomena, and to Kant, the apperception of that which transcends all phenomena and grounds all beings, the noumenon, be it apperceived as subject, world or God, for which the senses provide no evidence.
inapperception, whereas we apply imperception where there is a total lack of perception of that which presents itself, we shall speak of inapperception where one does not apperceive the Being - the personality, substantiality or existence - of the subject that appears to have these properties. An untrue apperception or inapperception will not, however, fail to produce the apperception that [th]is. Inappereceived is that being which does not offer the true noumenal ground of its Being to another being.

Inadequation, a dialectical concept signalling the lack of correspondence between what or that a thing is and its [mis]perception or [mis]apperception.

Indefinition, a negation that denies a particular property to a being, whereby the apperception of the Being of this being is unconcealed, in short, a negative affirmation that affirms the impression of the Being of that which is apperceived without properties.

Imitation, see mimesis.

Imperception, the non-perception of a thing or person by one man or woman, who is present to, perceived or apprehended by another.

it, the [ontological] mark of that which is at the end of aphasiresis/denial, which itself may finally be denied if the contemplative ambitions of the mystic, as he desires, are finally destroyed, and union achieved.

khora, denotes that place which is inevitably different from itself, and singularly unconceals all beings to Being.

logic 1, The deductive demonstration from principles that are self-evident to all or subscribed to by most. [Aristotle]

logic 2, The fundamental apperception of the Being of beings [as unconcealed] that is implied in the experience that any appearance in time is a negation that denies its own concealment whereby it presents itself or itself to another without erasing completely the apperception of that which has been negated, the negative impression of that which is concealed [by [th]is appearance] [Heidegger].

logic 3, The dialectic of consciousness implied in considering the subject both the essential and inessential content of everything that is perceived or apperceived, known or unknown [Hegel].

logic of Being, a syllogism or demonstration whereby properties are proved to belong to a being if this being simply exists, is unconcealed; to be distinguished from a predicative logic.

meaning, to predicate or give essential properties to a subject, or to grasp this essence conceptually [Hegel], the successful attempt to grasp the essence of what is [re]presented.
**meaningless**, the failure to attribute meaning, leaving one with the impression of that which is not identified, the object unconcealed and the subject concealed.

**metaphysics**, the systematic and for long hypostatised inquiry into the Being of beings, whereby what is apperceived is reified as substantial beings. The doctrine or belief that what is hidden is essential, and that the search for what is essential or substantial is more valuable than what is not.

**mimesis**, the [re]presentation of a subject, whose being is taken for granted; a [re]presentation often implies a reference - the impression of which can be erased - to an already existing but imaginary being, as the ‘reference.’ More often than not, it is no more than a fictional compound of what separately exists as parts of other beings.

**mirror**, signals either the reflection of phenomena or the understanding that each phenomenon itself is a reflection of an idea. The latter is the Neoplatonic position, which holds that phenomena are as insubstantial to Being as mirror-reflections are to us.

**mystic/mystical**, that which is singularly hidden and more often than not offers the apperception of the Being of beings, the ontological difference.

**negation**, either the denial of the properties given to a subject, the denial of the subject, or the denial of the compound.

**nothing**, the mark of unconcealment or the denial of that which is unconcealed, which in turn offers the apperception of that which is at the end of aphairesis, what is concealed.

**noumenal**, the condition of the phenomenal world.

**noumenon**, that which sustains the [living] integrity of all phenomena, the unity of all the essential properties that may be carried by a [living] subject.

**onto-logy**, the self-disclosure or self-hiddenness of what is, or the philosophy concerned with [th]is revelation or mystery; to be distinguished from another meaning of ontology, namely the essential and categorical science of beings whose existence are taken for granted.

**ontological contradiction**, the contradiction between beings and the Being of beings; the apperception of the Being of beings as either concealed or unconcealed, as well as the negative apperceptual movement from the neglect of the one moment to the emphasis on the other. Most fundamentally, that which gives rise to all contradictions; and, Being available only to apperception, it contradicts everything we may possibly perceive. Furthermore, the realization that non-beings produce the most emphatic sense of Being.

**ontological difference**, the difference between beings and Being, the Being of beings.
**ontological difference, negative**, where mere presence is *not* sufficient to grant a sense of Being and the apperception of Being is provided by that which, either concealed or unconcealed, transcends any appearance to grant to it the impression of life. Furthermore, the apperception of Being is more forcefully granted by what *is not* rather than what *is*, false rather than true appearances. The exposition of Being is expanded by showing that non-beings produce a more emphatic sense of Being. [Th]is paradox is also called *the ontological contradiction*.

**ontological difference, positive**, the position that mere presence or appearance is sufficient to offer a sense of Being to any being, and/or the substratum of this being is considered to be substantial and/or essential. More generally where the exposition of Being is limited by/to the sole consideration of what beings *truly* are.

**ontological inference**, the inference to the apperception of the Being of beings: to infer from a phenomenal impression, to the apperception of the noumenal ground, the apprehension of *[th]is* singular being.

**paradox**, we shall indicate what paradox is by enumerating its particular instances, before we finally attempt a general definition that applies to all cases: Paradox/paradoxical is that the *inapperception* of the subject provides the *apperception* of the Being of the subject; that the *non-description* of a subject through indefinition offers the apperception of the *unconcealment* of this subject; that the *false* perception of what this being essentially is, creates the apperception of the *true* life of this being; that a *dissimilar* [re]presentation of oneself or another offer the apperception of that which is *similar* to itself, the singular apperception of *[th]is* being; that by *removing* everything from *[th]is*, I have *added* the apperception of the depth of *[th]is* being, which stands out more emphatically as alive without anything than if it possessed everything [in the world]; that by showing something *untrue* to my expectations, I receive a more ineradicable apperception of what is *true*; and finally, by renouncing everything I have said as ‘nothing,’ by swearing I have said nothing, I add the apperception of Being to what *is* said. In short, I paradoxically grant Being to that which is *contradicted*. Hence, an *ontological paradox* is a contradiction that produces the apperception of the *Being* of that which *is* contradicted. The fundamental reason that a contradiction – the presentation of irreconcilables – would be impossible [to] present did it not have something in common, namely the apperception of *[th]is*.

**paralogism**, to infer the apperception of the noumenal ground from that which is phenomenologically perceived: the noumenon.

**particular**, an instance of a generic category or genus.

**phenomenon**, that which is sensually perceived, whether or not this perception corresponds to an ‘actual’ being [in the world]. Hence, that which is perceived in dreams, theatre and in nature, are all and equally, considered as phenomena.

**poiesis**, to produce the perception or the apperception of what previously was not. In nature *poiesis* is without intentions, in art it is the realization of an end, a *telos*.
Glossary

**place**, that immaterial location which unconceals alike all beings and all thoughts to beings, as much as one being to another.

**praxis**, the excellence or virtue, i.e. the power that belongs to excellent communication with other men, and to the excellent conduct of life in society.

**predicative logic**, the demonstration of essential attributes by means of a deduction from principles which are either universally accepted or taken for granted; or the induction - if there is an inductive logic - from the perception of the **essence** of individual beings to the understanding that these properties belong to the genera or category as a whole.

**problem**, two contradictory or irreconcilable propositions where the validity has to be decided dialectically by an appeal to the many or the few. Only with reference to the opinions or the many of the few can a philosophical problem be [re]solved, and then, only temporarily.

**perception**, refers to the impressions that are gathered by the five senses and conceptualised as concrete sensual and essential **experiences**.

**produce**, to pro-ject or make something that preciously was not; in *The Poetics of Being*, the ontological contradiction is **produced**.

**reception history**, indicates the influence tradition exerts on the attribution of meaning or Being in any phenomenological encounter. Neither the meaning that a text conveys nor the apperception of Being that a play may offer can be considered in isolation, without those who have been affected before us and in turn have conditioned the way in which we are affected.

**reification**, to hypostatise or falsely make what is ungraspable into a thing among other things.

**singular**, that to which a general or particular idea or category must be applied in order to distinguish between that which is essentially **identical**; the apperception of [th]is [singular] difference.

**techne**, the excellence or virtue, i.e. the power that belongs to poiesis, the power to create excellently, with excellence.

**theoria**, the contemplation of that which is in so far as it is, or the systematic endeavour to essentially describe and categorize the essence of all beings, so that one day man may not only comprehend the essence of all beings, but truly explain how they **work**. In this sense, **theoria** is the foundation of **technologia**.

**this**, Thomas’ singular principle of incarnation without which no general idea could be **determined**, nor any individual being **exist**.

**[th]is**, ontological marker that indicates the apperception of the ontological contradiction which is either **concealed** or **unconcealed**.
theo-logy, the self-disclosure or self-hiddenness [i.e. logos] of God or the science [i.e. logos] of this revelation or this mystery.

topology [of the ontological contradiction], the identification of the places in literature where the Being of beings may most spontaneously be apperceived as concealed or unconcealed.

topos, place.

truth, [epistemological sense] the adequate [re]presentation of what or that this is, the adequate apperception/identification of the subject or the adequate perception of its essential properties.

truth, [ontological sense] whatever is [unconcealed]. The ontological definition of truth comprehends truth as indistinguishable from what is. This means that a proposition will express an ontological understanding of truth if ‘true’ can be replaced by ‘real’ without altering the meaning of the proposition.

Unconcealment, where the appearance of a phenomenon is understood negatively as the removal of its own state of concealment, the act or happening whereby a being is brought to life – through self-disclosure - much like a sculptor discovers the true man within the block of stone, by removing everything that is obscure.
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