

The Natural World in Greek Literature and Philosophy



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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter examines the role of the natural world in ancient Greek literature and philosophy by way of Schiller's claim, in "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry," that there was a transformation of the Greek relationship to Nature in the Hellenistic period. While arguing that Schiller's observations remain seminal, this chapter suggests that a reconsideration of early Greek poetry is necessary in order to properly appreciate the importance of Nature in Hellenistic poetry. The chapter opens up a new approach to this issue by turning to Plato and the Platonic tradition, where access to contemplation is available through a prephilosophical relationship to the natural world. Finally, it is suggested that recent debates between partisans of the autonomy and givenness of the world in continental philosophy reiterate arguments about the cosmos as a home for human beings as expressed in Greek thought itself.

Keywords: Greek poetry, Greek philosophy, Hellenistic period, Schiller, Nature, autonomy, givenness, home

Poetry

As poets and readers of modernity looked to antiquity for instances of supreme poetic achievement, they were disconcerted by the infrequency of descriptions of the natural world in Greek poetry and the absence of Nature as a source of consolation. The more important Nature became for modernity, the more its marginality across all the genres of Greek poetry stood in need of an explanation, and the one proposed by Friedrich Schiller, in "On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry" (1795–1796)¹ proved influential: Since the Greeks had not lost what was natural in their humanity, they had no urgent need for objects outside humanity in which to rediscover it. By contrast, the modern person's feeling for Nature is a "sick person's feeling for health," and the modern poet must serve as his physician in this respect:

By virtue of the very notion of a poet, poets are everywhere the *guardians* of nature. Where they can no longer completely be this, and where they have already experienced within themselves the destructive influence of arbitrary and artificial

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forms or have had to contend with them, they will appear as nature's *witnesses* and *avengers*. They will either *be* nature or *seek* the lost nature.²

One could hardly exaggerate the influence of Schiller's claim that early Greek depictions of the natural world contain "no more special involvement of the heart than the depiction of a dress, a shield, a weapon, a household tool, or some sort of mechanical object."³ One can hear it in Matthew Arnold's formulation of classical poetics as the power to see life steadily and to see it whole ("To a Friend"), in Auerbach's claim that Homer gives us "uniformly illuminated phenomena ... in a perpetual foreground,"⁴ in Bruno Snell's contrast of naïve archaic poetry with its sentimental Hellenistic successors,⁵ and in numerous more specialized treatments of the natural world in Greek poetry.⁶

Schiller observes that it is not until Euripides, whom he views as a precursor of Hellenistic developments, that the representation of the natural world for its own sake makes an appearance in Greek poetry. This observation has, broadly speaking, been confirmed by classical scholarship.⁷ That poetry is, or should be, a representation of human beings in action is, after all, a point on which Plato and Aristotle agree (*Republic* 3, 395cd; *Poetics* 2, 1448a19). What does bear investigation, however, is the meaning of the absence that Schiller detects. Is it really the case that depictions of the natural world appear infrequently in early Greek poetry because it makes no special claims on the affections, or that natural objects are, in this respect, no different from artifacts? A brief survey of the appearance of the natural world in early Greek poetry will leave us better equipped to understand Schiller's claim that there is a fundamental change in the way the natural world is depicted in later poetry, especially insofar as this difference rests upon a new perception of externality with respect to a "Nature" from which the early Greeks did not experience their difference, such that they can be said to have been part of Nature in the way in which we understand rivers, rocks, trees, or animals ("the natural world") to be parts of a totality that, because it does not include ourselves, we can long to be part of too.

While it is surely true that "it is not for his landscapes that Homer is read,"⁸ his landscapes are not merely a setting for a human story that might just as well be happening elsewhere. Homer's juxtapositions of battlefield action with similes involving description of the natural world often produce an uncanny Nature that blurs the distinction between the human and the nonhuman. When Homer compares the sounds of the battlefield—the clash of metal weapons, the cries of victors and vanquished—to winter streams meeting in a valley that a shepherd hears from afar (4.452–456), the comparison suggests that human beings impute agency to sensory impressions of an extreme or unusual kind in the act of sensing itself, whether or not they would otherwise think of what produced these impressions as an agent: Mountain streams and battles suspend customary distinctions between subject and object in the act of perception. Similarly, as Snell notes, in the comparison of the front rank of an army to a rock that endures wind and waves (15.615), it is incorrect to say that the rock is viewed anthropomorphically, "unless we add that our understanding of the rock is anthropomorphic for the same reason that we are able to look at ourselves petromorphically."⁹ Such similes are not merely a glimpse into kinds of human life that the martial content of the primary narrative excludes. They reveal, as a deep

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psychic stratum, the fundamental work of objectification that makes a human narrative possible; in Snell's words: "Man must listen to an echo of himself before he may hear or know of himself."¹⁰

From this perspective, the appearance of the river Scamander as a battlefield combatant (21.233–283), which exercised the interpretive ingenuity of ancient critics,¹¹ is a hypertrophic development of an occasional tendency to make Nature uncanny that is present throughout the poem.¹² Its cheerful cousin is the fallout of Zeus and Hera's lovemaking (14.342–351), where golden rain drops to the earth, and grass, lotus flowers, crocuses, and hyacinths spring up beneath it, as Apollonius recognized when he made a magical, crocus-like flower sprout from the drops of ichor the eagle lets fall from Prometheus's liver (*Argonautica* 3.851–853). Ancient critics attributed such departures from the norms of mimetic realism to poetic license,¹³ and this is no doubt correct so long as we bear in mind that such excesses are a counterpart to the archaeology of the human imagination in the similes: As the similes allow us a glimpse of the work of objectification that makes a stable human story world possible, fantastic mythological interludes briefly instantiate an alternative story world in which the natural world is no longer a background against which human action seems the natural or normative subject of narration but instead becomes the primary object of attention.

The natural world, in these Homeric scenes, is an alternative to—rather than a carrier of—human meanings. It is uncanny, sublime, terrifying, fantastic—anything but a quiet frame for human action or something with respect to which human beings have not yet experienced a sense of their own difference. In this regard, Sappho is Homer's antitype. Her lyrical fragments are a treasury of minor vegetation whose like will not be seen again until Theocritus. The basic scenario is the memory of pleasure, and the flower is its essentially evanescent marker. Departing lovers remind one another of the garlands they wore when they lay down together on soft beds (violets, roses, crocuses: frag. 94); the comparison of an absent lover to the moon among stars turns the mind to moonlight on the sea and on fields of flowers, then to dew on garden plants (roses, chervil, clover: frag. 96). One might compare the consolation of Nature in these Sappho poems to Psalm 103: "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. | For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." In both, reflective lingering over the claim that human presence leaves no trace on the natural world is the source of consolation. Cultivating the feeling that one is not at home in the world in the way that flowers and grass are at home in it is a way of coping with the loss of those features of one's lived experience that make the world feel like home.

Morton

Local details, carefully observed, block the longing for transcendence¹⁴: what appears in Sappho's poetry is the real earth on which we find ourselves in pain and which we can never feel the same as, but which we cannot stop wanting to be one with when we grieve. It is the gods who have no special involvement of the heart in the natural world because they have not lost what is natural in their own lives, and their being at home in the world is perfectly staged by Pindar. Pelops stands by the sea at night and calls upon his former lover Poseidon: "And he at once appeared right next to him" (*O.* 1.73–73). The immanence

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of the gods to a world that is theirs could hardly be given a more compelling narrative expression. Likewise, when Apollo sees Cyrene wrestling a lion in *Pythian* 9, it is the naturalness of her behavior that attracts him, as this manifests freedom from mortal constraints. He characterizes her inner life by negation: a fearless head, and a mind that is not weathered by fear. It is then that the natural world appears: “As a cutting of what stock does she cling to the hollows of these shadowy mountains?” (*P.* 9.33–34). Again, the brevity could hardly be surpassed: What belongs to the scene has no need of introduction, and the wonder is that what is apparently alien to it—a young and beautiful human woman—could be so at home in the very landscape in which centaurs have their homes and gods take their recreation (“Come out of your cave and take a look” is how Apollo calls Cheiron to witness).

We have, then, challenged Schiller’s assertion that the marginality of the natural world in early Greek poetry is expressive of the lived indifference of the human and the natural, but we have not yet observed the poet as guardian, witness, or avenger of Nature, whose appearance is symptomatic for Schiller of the loss of what is natural in human life. As we move now to the Hellenistic period, consider this simile from Book 4 of Apollonius’ *Argonautica* (167–170):

ὥς δὲ σεληναίης διχομήνιδα παρθένος αἴγλην
ὑπόθεν ἐξανέχουσαν ὑπωροφίου θαλάμοιο
λεπταλέω ἔανῶ ὑποίσχεται: ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ
χαίρει δερκομένης καλὸν σέλας.

“As a maiden catches in her delicate raiment the full moon’s light spilling down over her lofty chamber: her heart within her rejoices as she beholds the lovely gleam.”¹⁵

The maiden’s feelings are perfectly in sync with the moonlight, and they perfectly match her lovely clothes. Apollonius even embeds a small aesthetic signature in the metaphor: the weave of the maiden’s dress is “delicate” (λεπταλέω), and this epithet associates her with the field of Hellenistic aesthetics that aspires to what is delicate and fine. But, as an object in a metaphor, the craft object that stands for such aesthetic aspirations has not been produced in the primary story world of the poem in which it appears. While the difference may be purely formal—the world of the metaphor exists only for a moment, and we have no way of gauging its resemblance to the world of the primary narrative—the placement of the epithet directs our attention to this formal point: The aesthetic aspirations it signals depend upon a concinnity between natural world, art object, and poem, but these aspirations are realized in a form of life that is not that of the primary story world. The displacement points to the lack of such concinnity in the world in which programmatic claims to fineness and delicacy aspire to be normative and realizable under present conditions. Nature is now a way to imagine what an unavailable form of life would feel like, and this fantasy is cast in an imitation of Homeric parataxis akin to the medievalism of the later Romantics:

The gemmy bridle glitter’d free,
Like to some branch of stars we see

Hung in the golden galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down from Camelot.¹⁶

The before-time of the *Argonautica* differs from the before-time of Homer in its emphasis upon the pristine. The uninhabited island next to Cyclopsland is a missed opportunity for human use (*Odyssey* 9.116–133), whereas, for Apollonius, the world in which one could land on a desert island, and be the first to make an altar for Apollo among its shady groves, is infused with a love of what has not yet been touched by human hands (4.1711–1713). There was a pristine world that existed “until yesterday [εἰσέτι που χθιζόν]” (4.1397), when it was overtaken by human destructiveness.¹⁷ Apollonius imagines a setting for the kind of human action that is really worth doing—killing dragons and marrying princesses—but, as in all classics of the primitivist imagination, this world disappears upon contact with civilization. The tribes of men are, as yet, still few and far between—and entirely distinctive in their curious customs—but, when Peleus waves goodbye to baby Achilles from the deck of the *Argo*, the world in which Zeus will have to alleviate the heavy footprint of human presence on the earth with global war is already on the horizon.¹⁸

Bruno Snell characterized the sentimentalism of the Hellenistic poets as an exaggerated wonder shot through with intellectualism. Its best representative is Callimachus, whose poetry does not exhibit “the genuinely child-like amazement of the earlier writers who took the wonders of life to heart,” but is rather an expression of “the genial spirit of one who surveys a lost treasure from the heights of skepticism.”¹⁹ In Callimachus’s *Hymns*, this double consciousness is realized through a set of narrators whose narration should not be understood as the poet’s ironic distancing of himself from the content of his poem but rather as the appearance of proxy figures that give the poet access to the roles of guardian, witness, and avenger of Nature.²⁰

The “Hymn to Zeus” begins with a cascade of questions as its narrator tries to imagine what the world looked like before Zeus was in it. He seems to settle on a story—“It was in Parrhasia that Theia bore you” (1.10)—but is fascinated by the absence of water in Arcadia at the time. The rivers Ladon, Erymanthus, Iaon, Melas, Carnion, Crathis, and Metope did not yet exist, and Zeus’s mother has to split the mountain beneath her feet for a stream with which to cleanse herself of afterbirth. The catalogue of rivers is not a learned distraction, but, as Snell suggests, a mediation of child mind: the exaggerated enthusiasm for particulars of knowledge brings the speaker closer to the object of his adoration,²¹ and a nativity scene ensues (1.42–53):

εὔτε Θεὸς ἀπέλειπεν ἐπὶ Κνωσοῖο φέρουσα,
Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἢ Νύμφη σε—Θεναὶ δ’ ἔσαν ἐγγύθι Κνωσοῦ—
τουτάκι τοι πέσε, δαῖμον, ἅπ’ ὀμφαλός: ἔνθεν ἐκεῖνο
ὀμφάλιον μετέπειτα πέδον καλέουσι Κύδωνες.
Ζεῦ, σὲ δὲ Κυρβάντων ἑτάραι προσηπὴχύναντο
Δικταῖα Μελίαι, σὲ δ’ ἐκοίμισεν Ἀδρήστεια
λίκνω ἐνὶ χρυσέω, σὺ δ’ ἐθήσασο πίονα μαζόν

αἰγὸς Ἀμαλθείης, ἐπὶ δὲ γλυκὺ κηρίον ἔβρωσ.
γέντο γὰρ ἔξαπιναῖα Πανακρίδος ἔργα μελίσσης
Ἰδαίοις ἐν ὄρεσσι, τὰ τε κλείουσι Πάνακρα.
οὔλα δὲ Κούρητές σε περὶ πρύλιν ὠρχήσαντο
τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες, ἵνα Κρόνος οὔασιν ἠχὴν
ἀσπίδος εἰσαῖοι καὶ μή σεο κουρίζοντος.

When the nymph who was carrying you, father Zeus, to Cnosos, was leaving Thenae—for Thenae is near Cnosus—then it was, god, that your umbilical cord fell off, for which reason the Cydonians subsequently call that plain Umbilical. The companions of the Cyrbantēs took you up in their arms, Zeus, the Dictaeān ash tree nymphs, and Adrasteia put you to bed in a golden crib, and you sucked the rich breast of Amaltheia the goat, and you ate sweet honeycomb. For all of a sudden the works of the Panacran bee came into being on the Idaean hills, which they call Panacra. And the Couretes danced a vigorous war dance around you, striking their armor, so that Cronus might hear the noise of shields with his ears and not you babbling.

Imaginative concentration on the first face of the world allows the divine infant to be visualized and addressed, and seeing the body of the holy child enacts the transition to this poem’s version of unalienated social life—Zeus’s ordering of human trades under their patron divinities, which concludes: “Kings are from Zeus, since nothing is more godly [θειότερον] than the kings of Zeus” (1.78–79). All of Callimachus’s *Hymns* stage some such productive relationship between the visualization of divinity and visualization of the primordial Greek landscape. The “Hymn to Apollo” begins—“Do you not see?” (2.4)—but Apollo’s imminent arrival in the ritual enacted in the frame narration is deferred for a tour of places with ancient associations with the god: the “moist stone” in Phrygia that once was Niobe (2.23), and the sites he founded throughout the Greek homeland: Cyrene, Athens, Colophon, Sparta, Thera. The catalogue is once again a prelude to imagining the god as a child, as he was when he built his supreme site, Delos, at the age of four (2.58).

In the “Hymn to Artemis,” the travels of the goddess as a girl conclude with a set of child-minded questions about the places she has visited (3.183–185): “What’s your favorite island? What’s your favorite mountain? What’s your favorite harbor? What’s your favorite city? Who’s your favorite nymph? Who’s your favorite heroine?” The interrogation of divine mind as if it were the mind of a child enacts a transition to Greece’s mountain landscapes that the reader can then experience imaginatively as playgrounds of the gods. For Callimachus, the idea that the earth is shared with the gods, which made it possible for ancient Greek communities to imagine that natural, human, and imagined landscapes “co-existed and merged with one another,”²² is best accessed through child mind, itself imagined as a self-expressive freedom from the constraints of normativity. Gods, like poets, travel untrodden paths, as Callimachus puts it in the *Aetia* prologue (frag. 1.26–29), and in this respect they both resemble children.

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In “The Hymn to Delos,” childish questions—“Were oak trees born at the same time as the Nymphs?”—get childish answers: “The Nymphs are happy when rain makes the oak trees grow, but the Nymphs are sad when there aren’t any leaves on the trees” (4.83–85). To pass this catechism is to return to a primordial landscape in which mountains, rivers, and islands take to their feet at Leto’s approach, and from there to visualization (or rather, audition) of the poem’s miraculous infant: the foetal Apollo who announces from his mother’s womb that Ptolemy II will relieve the earth of the barbarian surplus with which it is currently “jam-packed [ἀμφιπεριστεύωνται]” (4.179).

The “Hymn on the Bath of Pallas” nuances the generative relationship between interrogation and visualization in the first four of the *Hymns* with a story of prohibition, blindness, and the limits of seeing. Tiresias is gifted with prophecy after seeing Athena naked on Helicon, and his mother, in her grief, implicates the mountain itself in his loss of sight (5.90–92): “O mountain, O Helicon no longer to be traversed by me, you have gotten a lot in return for little. You lost a few deer of various kinds and now have my son’s eyes in return.” The apostrophe brings the mountain almost as close as a god, but the hints of its agency are, in the end, no more than hints, and it is the “Hymn to Demeter” that offers the most powerful proxy of the poet as Nature’s witness and avenger.

Like the “Hymn on the Bath of Pallas,” the “Hymn to Demeter” tells of a mysterious change of fortune. The *daimon* of the Tropidae grows vexed with the family, and a bad idea takes hold of Erysichthon, the son of Triopas: He takes his huge retainers (“man-giants to a man, who could lift a whole city”) to cut down a poplar tree sacred to Demeter (6.31–36). In this early world, fruit trees and wild trees grow together in a primeval forest so dense you can hardly shoot an arrow between their trunks. The tree Erysichthon chooses to fell is so tall “it reached to the sky,” and, when struck with the axe, it cries aloud to the other trees. Demeter hears and hurries to the scene in disguise, but Erysichthon will have none of her warnings. He threatens to cut her down too, as he is intent on making a mead hall for his fellows, and at this point Demeter finally manifests her divinity: Her feet remain rooted to the ground, but her head, like the top of her tree, reaches all the way to Olympus. She lets Erysichthon finish his work but punishes him with insatiable hunger.

At this point something strange happens to the poem. We leave behind the world of magical trees, primeval forests, and half-human giant men for the ordinary human reality in which Erysichthon lives out his punishment. His parents are all too humanly embarrassed by his hunger and the all too human excuses with which they try to conceal it (and him) from visitors—he can’t come to a party because “he fell out of his chariot” (6.86)—track the diminished stakes of human action in the poem.²³ The poem’s speaker contrasts Erysichthon’s fate with the lives of those who enjoy the bounty of Demeter (6.116–117), but her self-satisfaction is of a piece with the small-mindedness of Erysichthon’s parents, and her piety is entirely civic in character. The civic Demeter of the ritual enacted in the frame narration is not the Demeter of the primal grove.

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A similar constellation of Demeter worship, hubristic violence, and access to the primordial appears in Theocritus's *Idyll* 7. Simichidas, the poet's proxy, ends his journey through the landscape of Cos, in the course of which he encounters the ur-goatherd Lycidas and his little song from the mountains (7.51) at a festival of agricultural Demeter. In this poem, her festival does allow some kind of access to the ancient spirit of the wild: In drinking her wine, the poet hears the voices of poplar and elm, insects, frogs, and birds mingled with the sound of holy water; he wonders whether he might be drinking such liquor as Cheiron once served to Heracles in the cave of Pholus or that made Polyphemus dance among his mountain stock pens—preludes to famous scenes of mythic violence (7.135–153).²⁴ Here, due reverence for Demeter, as the source of nourishment on which the human organism depends, allows cognitive access to Nature as a whole and imaginative understanding of the rude life of early humanity within it. It is not quite Siegfried drinking the dragon's blood, but some limitations are overcome through the poetic imagination and some kind of reintegration into Nature is achieved.

In the appearance of Erysichthon, Heracles, and Polyphemus as natural man, Nature becomes the condition for an understanding of human historicity. It is not simply that, in Schiller's terms, the prioritization of Nature as a theoretical and discursive object marks the loss of what is natural in human life and points out a way to recover it. The discovery of Nature outside humanity, in the nonhuman, is the only way to access what early human life felt like and so the only way to experience history as a constitutive condition of human being in the world. In the "Hymn to Demeter," Erysichthon's refusal to acknowledge what the goddess claims as her own enacts a transition to a world in which the primordial is no longer available. In *Idyll* 7, Heracles, centaurs, and Cyclops are an evanescent glimpse of early life, the visionary conclusion of a poem that ends by asking Demeter to repeat the conditions that brought it into being. The tragedy of natural man is that his natural violence projects him from the primordial he does not know he inhabits and to which those who come after can return only in their dreams.

In true postphilosophical style, Callimachus offers no explanation of his fable, explicit or otherwise. Erysichthon makes his fatal misstep when the family *daimon* becomes vexed, and, while Demeter in disguise pleads with him to desist, she does not stay his hand.²⁵ Something supervenes upon Erysichthon to block his understanding of his place in Nature, and Demeter, in her kindly instantiation as Nature's witness, cannot reorient him but must act as Nature's avenger instead, afflicting him with insatiability as the punishment that fits his crime.

Philosophy

Adam Parry credits Plato with the invention of pastoral.²⁶ It is fitting, then, to begin our discussion of the natural world in Greek philosophy with the *Phaedrus*—for I mean to cleave closely to the preposition "in" of my title. I intend to look at the role of the natural world as an agent in philosophical texts and not simply as an object of empirical or theoretical consideration²⁷—to look, in other words, at how the natural world impinges on the

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theory of Being for which it is the evidence and on the practice of philosophy for which it is the setting.

Socrates meets Phaedrus, who claims to be under strict instructions from a physician to make a circuit outside the city walls [ἔξω τείχους]. Socrates sees through this excuse for leaving the city and realizes that Phaedrus is heading outside the walls [ἐκτὸς τείχους] to practice a speech. Phaedrus asks Socrates if he has time to hear it, and Socrates replies that he is so keen to listen he will not leave his side, “even if your walk takes you to the wall and back [προσβάς τῷ τείχει πάλιν ἀπίης].” Phaedrus recognizes that this is an unusual excursion for Socrates, who seems like a fish out of water in the countryside [ἀτοπώτατός τις]. Under normal circumstances, he will not set foot outside the city walls [ἔξω τείχους] because he has no business there: “I am a lover of learning, and the outdoors and trees have never taught me anything, whereas in the city there are people and they do teach me” (227a–230d).

The contrast between the beauty of the landscape as the reader imagines it from the conversation between Socrates and Phaedrus and Socrates’s apparent disdain for it within the conversation could hardly be more palpable: The best thing about grass, Socrates says, is that you can use it as a pillow. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates attributes such disdain for the beauty of the natural world to herdsmen and makes the inattention incumbent upon a use-based approach to the natural world the basis of a comparison between herdsmen and tyrants: The tyrant is so intent on milking (and fleecing) his herd that he becomes uncultivated because of his lack of leisure, “just as herdsmen do, having surrounded himself with a wall, like a stock pen on a mountain [σηκὸν ἐν ὄρει τὸ τεῖχος περιβεβλημένον]” (174de).²⁸

The comparison appears in the midst of a discussion of Thales, who falls down a well because he is so intent on looking at the stars that he does not watch where he is going. A cute Thracian slave girl is on hand to make fun of his mishap, and Thales becomes a figure for the philosopher as a man so remote from civic life that he not only does not know who his neighbor is and what his neighbor is up to but does not even know if his neighbor is a human being or some other domestic creature, since he concerns himself only with higher-order versions of these questions: “What is a human being?” and “What should a being of this kind do that is different from what other creatures do?” Only the body of this philosopher is at home in the city, whereas his mind, in a reminiscence of Pindar, travels “below the earth” and “above the sky,” attending to the cosmos as a whole. He is a laughing stock in the law courts and every kind of public arena, but when he takes flight and rises to the investigation of justice and injustice as they are in themselves, the tables are turned. Dizzy with the view from above, it is now the ordinary man who stammers and makes a fool of himself, not in the eyes of slave girls and the mob, since they have no conception of higher things, but in the eyes of all those who have not been slavishly raised (172d–175e).

The Thales of the *Theaetetus* is the figure of the naïve philosopher, in Schiller’s sense, insofar as the immediacy of his relationship with Nature as an external compulsion to philo-

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sophical reflection contrasts with the single-minded focus on the interiority of the city and the self on the part of the Socrates of the *Phaedrus*.²⁹ The Socrates of the *Theaetetus*, however, points to the one-sidedness of this portrait insofar as his image of herdsmen and tyrants who wall themselves in to attend to private projects of self-enrichment suggests the limits of the self-enclosure espoused by the Socrates of the *Phaedrus*. Furthermore, the natural philosopher of the *Theaetetus* is the only one in the city who is able to ground political life in contemplation of what justice is. The complementarity of cosmic attention and genuine political understanding seems designed to resist the idea that sacrifice is involved in establishing the right relationship between the two. The distraction of the civic man of the *Theaetetus*, who is exclusively focused on the petty rivalries of polis life and unable to enact the conditions of political life as such, is linked to his disinclination to investigate his place in the natural world as a whole.

The model of the self as a walled city was naturally extended to the cosmos as a figure of containment,³⁰ and establishing the proper understanding of interiority and exteriority remains a persistent endeavor in the Platonic tradition. Plotinus, in “On Beauty,” offers a striking reversal of this relationship, imagining the longing of a soul that no longer feels itself inside something but outside it. For Plotinus argues that the good “holds beauty before it [προβεβλημένον τὸ καλὸν πρὸ αὐτῆς]” (1.6.9) like a veil, a shield, or some other protective device, such that our apprehension of the beauty of the natural world is also a feeling of being excluded from some other kind of belonging. The experience of being at home in the world that beauty gives us includes an intimation of exteriority such that Plotinus can, on the one hand, take “let us flee to our dear homeland [φεύγωμεν δὴ φίλην ἐς πατρίδα]” from *Iliad* 2.140 as the rallying cry of his philosophy (1.6.8), and, at the same time, mock his adversaries, in “Against the Gnostics,” for their belief that human beings are strangers in a strange land (2.9.11: ἡ γῆ αὐτοῖς ἡ ξένη λεγομένη).³¹

Plotinus dismisses the Gnostic vision of a cosmos ruled by mysterious Archons as “a fearful tragic fable [τῆς τραγωδίας τῶν φοβερῶν]” and recommends accommodating oneself calmly to the natural world with a reminiscence of Pindar’s first *Olympian*: The cosmic order the Gnostics revile is, in fact, “what makes all things sweet for them [πάντα μείλιχα τεύχουσιν αὐτοῖς]” (2.9.13; cf. *O.* 1.30: Χάρις δ’, ἅπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς). This is not the only occasion on which Plotinus turns to lyric in order to imagine restoring the proper orientation to the source of life that all living beings have simply by virtue of being alive but that human beings are particularly liable to lose. In “The Presence of Being Everywhere II,” Plotinus jokes about the lucky soul that turns around to see “god and himself and the All,” because he has had his hair pulled by Athena, like Achilles in the *Iliad* (6.5.7). The humorous reference to Homer is in keeping with the skeptical attitude to mythologizing expressed not just in his objections to the Gnostics’ tragic fabrications but in concerns about Platonic myth in “On love” (3.5.9): “Myths, if they are really going to be myths, must separate in time the things of which they tell, and set apart from each other many realities which are together, but distinct in rank or powers, at points where rational discussions, also, make generations of things ungenerated, and themselves, too, separate

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things which are together.” The philosopher can put back together what the myth maker has separated, but, here too, narrativity risks beguiling the novice.³²

Lyric cognition is a better analogue for contemplation than the sequential apprehension of dialectic and myth, because what is to be apprehended in contemplation is that which is prior to multiplicity. In “On Beauty,” Plotinus recalls Pindar again in order to criticize those who think that beauty depends upon our perceiving a harmonious relationship of parts (1.6.1): “For these people, too, beautiful colors, and the light of the sun as well, since they are simple and do not derive their beautifulness from good proportion, will be excluded from beauty. And how do they think gold manages to be beautiful? And what makes lightning in the night and stars beautiful to see?”³³ In the great images of the *Enneads*—the plant that is the same throughout, no matter how far it extends itself (3.8.10; 4.3.8); the sun rising over the horizon, which gives itself to the eyes to see (5.5.8); the spring that empties itself into rivers but is not exhausted by them (3.8.10)—lyric accommodations of the natural world (which may be images sourced from Homer and treated in isolation, as if they were lyric) are the best analogy for contemplation not just because they avoid the sequential ordering of dialectic and myth but because the instantaneous, holistic apprehension they allow originates in a subcognitive yearning human beings share with other living beings.³⁴

For Plotinus, the likeness between beautiful things “here” and beautiful things “there” is apprehended experientially not propositionally: It is a fact of our embodiment that instantaneous, prerational apprehension of beauty in this world is the best token we have of the source of life that is other than life (1.6.2). The wonder that takes hold of us when we look at the stars is of the same kind as the wonder that would seize us if we could grasp its source (3.8.11), and it is for this reason that we ought to devote some part of our daily lives to looking at them: A star’s form of life [προαίρεσις], like that of a soul that is truly itself, is to fix its attention on what is better than itself, and, when we look at the stars, we grasp their being as more steadfast in this project than we are (2.3.9).

In characterizing the natural world as one among many “launching points to the realm of mind,”³⁵ Plotinus concentrates on charismatic megaphenomena that appeal to all people in all places: the sun, the stars, the rivers and springs that sustain life. The greatness of what appeals universally invites us to transcend particularity even as we respond in first-person fashion to its appeal. The great entities of the natural world do not give a particular character to contemplation; rather, our experience of their ontic prestige readies us for an encounter with ontic realms of which they are more constitutively aware than we are. Access to philosophy is thus always at hand through a kind of naturalistic prephilosophy whose possibility, even in the most adverse circumstances, is nicely acknowledged at the end of the Platonic tradition in the Emperor Julian’s *Oration to King Helios*. Julian describes how, as a boy, he would walk out at night under the cloudless sky, giving himself up to the beauty of the stars, heedless of what people might say about him as a result. No book had yet come into his hands, and it was the heavenly light shining all around him that roused him to contemplation. His childish ignorance of true philosophy is an embarrassment to him now, but the philosophic light available to all in the great phenomena of

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the natural world ought nonetheless to be acknowledged before proceeding to philosophy as such (4.130c–131b).

In this respect the Neoplatonic relationship to the natural world has its antitype in the medical tradition. The Hippocratic “Airs, Waters, Places,” for example, discovers the influence of the natural world in every aspect of human development but not through the appeal of macrophenomena—the bright stars that seize a person with wonder—but in microclimates, local topographies, and niche environments that impart distinctive characteristics to their inhabitants. In this fractal version of the Greek landscape, the citizens of an east-facing city, with its clear, sweet-smelling waters, are no more aware that the site of their city is the source of their fine complexions, clear voices, and superior intelligence (5) than dwellers on the Phasis know that their marshy domain is responsible for their sallow skins, deep voices, and ungainly physique (15). The natural world does not become an object of consciousness for those who are affected by it, and the physician, in diagnosing its local somatic effects, remains at the level of manifestation and does not contemplate Nature as such.³⁶

New Directions

Between 1966 and 1969, Martin Heidegger gave three seminars in the village of Le Thor, Provence, at the invitation of the poet René Char. In the last of these seminars, Heidegger asks his audience two questions about the origin of philosophy: “How does philosophy arise from the Greek residence in the midst of phenomena?” and “From where does philosophy receive its first impetus, which sets it upon its way?” His answer to these questions is resoundingly naturalistic. Because there is an “*overabundance* ... of what presences” in Greece, philosophy was, for the Greeks, a natural outcome of their encounter with this “*excess*”:

Here one should recall the anecdote of Thales: he is that person so struck by the over-abundance of the world of stars that he was compelled to direct his gaze towards the heavens *alone*. In the Greek climate, the human is so overwhelmed by the presencing of what presences, that he is compelled to the question concerning what presences *as* what presences. The Greeks name the relation to this thrust of presence *θαυμάζειν*.³⁷

Heidegger drops the social setting of Plato’s Thales anecdote but retains a certain emphasis on victimization in order to establish a homology between philosopher and poet. As the editors of the Le Thor seminars note,³⁸ Heidegger has Hölderlin in mind in making the Greek climate the midwife in the birth of philosophy. Hölderlin’s second letter to Casimir Böhlendorff describes the poet’s experience of the climate of southern France. “The violent element,” Hölderlin writes, “the fire of the sky, and the quiet of the people ... stirred me continually, and as one says of heroes I can probably say of myself: that Apollo has struck me.” To be struck by Apollo is to become properly acquainted with the essence of the Greeks, to know how their wisdom originates in “the way they grew up in their climate and the rules by which they protected their exuberance from the power of the ele-

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mental.” And to grasp the natural conditions of Greekness is to be at home in Germany at last:

Nature in these parts also stirs me more powerfully the more I study it. Storms, not just in their greatest manifestation, but seen as power and figure, among the other forms of the sky, the effect of the light, shaping nationally and as a principle and destiny, so that something is holy to us, the intensity of its coming and going, the characteristics of the woods and the coincidence in one region of different qualities of nature, so that all the holy places of the earth are together in one place, and the philosophic light at my window, they are now my joy. May I keep in mind how I have come to where I am now!³⁹

The phylogenetic forgetfulness of Being that is, for Heidegger, the destiny of western thought is recapitulated ontogenetically as a personal danger: that one forget the source of one’s own philosophic light. In the Le Thor seminar, the Thales anecdote caps a call to face this danger through the work of demediation: a return from Kant’s “things appear to me” to the Greeks’ “things appear.” Heidegger suggests that the “*retour amont*,” to use an expression of René Char’s, in which we would get upstream of “the subjective as mediation,” which the Greeks had not yet thought, is still open, so long as the Greek experience of immediacy is not thought privatively as “a poverty of those who begin,” for whom “the experience of dialectical mediation is still lacking” (36–37).

Heidegger cites Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* to remind his audience of the priority of the cosmos to thought—“Even if no one were to see them, the stars for that reason would shine nonetheless” (40)⁴⁰—and the organization of activities at Le Thor sought to encounter this priority outside the walls of the classroom. Walking parties in the mountains with René Char have equal billing with Heidegger’s seminars as poet and philosopher work toward articulation of the “common presence” of human and nonhuman in the landscape of Provence (89–90)⁴¹:

Daily we made splendid excursions with Heidegger in this country. Char led us to the most out-of-the-way and secret places. At times we came upon the blue Lubéron, which lay before us from out of Cézanne’s Provence, with the Montagne Sainte-Victoire in the distance.... The participants ... were greatly filled by a recognition of the pricelessness of what they took part in—and they attempted to give something of that back in return, by opening up a country, a face of the earth, to Heidegger’s eyes and heart.⁴²

As Char’s poems open up their world, they are gateways to the actual landscape, and Heidegger’s seminars demand openness to their setting as a condition of participation. For it is by instantiating the possibility of not “losing the site” that Char perpetuates poetry’s fidelity to the “inceptual upsurge” of a particular place and links himself to Hölderlin and Sophocles, just as Heidegger, in a poem dedicated to Char, wonders whether Provence may be “the mysterious [*geheimnisvoll*] | invisible bridge from the early thinking | of Parmenides to the poetry of Hölderlin.”⁴³ The natural world is the passage between self and text, the third term that makes tradition conceivable, and anecdote ap-

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pears alongside philosophy and poetry as an acknowledgment of the conditions of their origination in a response to the natural world: One can give thanks only in the first person.

The idea that locality produces distinctive forms of imagination and reflection is a foundational principle of Romanticism, and Constanze Güthenke has shown just how generative the relationship between “the ideal and the materially real” was for Romantic Hellenism.⁴⁴ As the occasion for just such a generative relationship, the Greek landscape is very much still with us. Stathis Gourgouris, in “DeLillo in Greece,” an essay on Don DeLillo’s *The Names*, has analyzed the cultural self-enclosure produced by contemporary globalization, and the ensuing search for exteriority in an encounter with the elemental, as a quest that finds its natural solution in Greece. As “the source of sensuous precision,” Greece is the name for “a curious materiality of the intangible” ineradicable from the western imaginary whose workings the novel theorizes:

To understand how this novel *thinks* is to recognize a certain primacy in geography, to remind oneself that the foundational questions that still animate the imaginary of today’s world are associated with a specific terrain on the globe, and not merely the actual presence of this terrain but its many histories, its many names.”⁴⁵

François Jullien, likewise, makes the contrast between Greek and Chinese landscapes the starting point for his “essay in de-ontology” in *The Great Image Has No Form*. It is because the nebulous vistas of China are not a Greek landscape where, “in a luminous transparency, the forms of things stand out in sharp relief and make us believe in an identity of essence,” that Chinese painting has been able to call on its viewers to go beyond temporary individuation and return “to the undifferentiated fount of things.”⁴⁶ Jullien prizes the Chinese refusal to characterize Being as self-disclosure, as it has mostly been characterized in the West.⁴⁷ But we may wonder whether discovering the origin of philosophy in a particular form of the natural world’s presence is not to imply, as Heidegger does for the Greeks: How could things have been otherwise for them?

In recent theoretical accounts of the Greek miracle, damping down this first-person experience of presence appears as a “deflationary solution” to the emphasis on givenness in the phenomenological tradition.⁴⁸ For Alain Badiou, the Greek achievement is to have made being expressible as a subtraction from any instance of presence, such that the Greeks can be said to have “*untied* the thought of being from its poetic enchainment to natural appearing.” Rather than inventing the poem, whose close relationship to the natural world is a cultural universal, the Greeks “*interrupted* the poem with the matheme,” and a distinctive western ontology emerged that retroactively constituted poetic utterance as an “auroral temptation,” a nostalgia for presence and for a past in which such presence was available as a historical form of life.⁴⁹

In responding to these debates, it is worth bearing in mind that what is familiar as “emanation” in passages adumbrating the agency of the One is, in Plotinus, simply “giving” [δίδωμι].⁵⁰ Giving, unlike “emanation,” is transitive, and, while transitivity does

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not imply intentionality, my being at home in the world, and not a stranger in a strange land, is an essentially first-person experience of its givenness.⁵¹ A fault line appears in Greek thought itself between the historical production of the autonomy of the natural world, with the simultaneous appearance of nostalgia as one of its consequences, and nostalgia as a universal, natural affect of all living things as it is conceptualized in a Platonic tradition that turns increasingly to poetry as the best analogy for the intermittent but naturally given experience of unity with the extramundane source of life that the natural world gives us.⁵²

As Philippe Descola has put it, “one does not have to be a great seer” to predict that the relationship between human beings and the natural world will likely be the most important question of the present century. Descola cites climate change and the multiplication of transgenic organisms as two among many signs of the imminent disappearance of the separation between Nature, conceived as a “field of autonomous regularities,” and culture, as the home of the “values, conventions, and ideologies” that have no place in it.⁵³ Now, then, is the appropriate moment to reflect upon this pristine exteriority that the Greeks have enabled us to create. Was it what made our interiority tolerable? And what will we do without it, when what the poets have founded no longer endures?

Nun aber sind zu Indiern
Die Männer gegangen,
Dort an der luftigen Spitz'
An Traubenbergen, wo herab
Die Dordogne kommt
Und zusammen mit der prächt'gen
Garonne meerbreit
Ausgeheth der Strom. Es nehmet aber
Und gibt Gedächtnis die See,
Und die Lieb' auch heftet fleißig die Augen,
Was bleibet aber, stiften die Dichter.

But now those men are gone to Indians, there at the airy headland of the vine hills, where the Dordogne descends and together with the glorious Garonne the stream flows out ocean-wide. The sea takes away remembrance and also gives it back, and love too lifts up the eyes assiduously, but what endures, poets found.⁵⁴

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Notes:

⁽¹⁾ The first complete text of the essay appeared in 1800, combining what had been three installments of a journal publication. For details, see Schiller (1998) 179.

⁽²⁾ Schiller (1998) 193–196. Emphasis original.

⁽³⁾ Schiller (1998) 194.

⁽⁴⁾ Auerbach (1953) 11; cf. 5, where he cites Schiller's claim that Homer gives us "the quiet existence and operation of things in accordance with their natures."

⁽⁵⁾ Snell (1953) 272–276.

⁽⁶⁾ Soutar (1939) 191 acknowledges the presence of natural objects as moral examples; Parry (1989 [1957]) 12 is entirely in the spirit of Schiller: "The poets of early Greece did not look to nature for something different from themselves." Alpers (1996) 28–37, and Ambühl (2007) are good accounts of the long afterlife of Schiller's essay.

⁽⁷⁾ Schiller (1998) 196; cf. Williams (1991) 11: "It is extraordinary, when one considers the beauty of the Greek countryside, how remarkably few references to landscape there are in literature ... during the archaic and classical periods." Her attention to landscape as "a particularly Alexandrian trait" is a useful complement to the broad survey in Elliger (1975), as are Mauduit and Luccioni (1998), and Cusset (1999) on the natural world in the various genres of ancient literature.

⁽⁸⁾ Rackham (1996) 24: an excellent introduction to the real landscapes of ancient Greece.

⁽⁹⁾ Snell (1953) 201.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Snell (1953) 201. Compare Schiller's claim, in *Letters on Aesthetic Education* 24.2, that every man must recapitulate humankind's emergence from a natural state of "imme-

diate contact” with the world, in which “objects press in upon him to destroy him, and he thrusts them away in horror,” with the possibility broached in 25.3, that this work of objectification, by which he learns to distinguish himself from things, might some day fail, and “sheer mass, ponderous and inchoate,” impose itself upon him instead.

(¹¹) Nünlist (2011) 41, 177–178.

(¹²) See, for example, the clouds that, in spite of the insubstantiality we might think of as being constitutive of what it is to be a cloud, appear at *Iliad* 5.522–527 as a way to imagine the unyielding resistance of the Danaan battle ranks to the Trojan force applied to them. The passage is ably discussed by Purves (2010) 327–328 in her reconsideration of Hermann Fränkel’s claim that “in the *Iliad* there is hardly any weather.” Her discussion of the Homeric poems’ multiple planes of description begins with an illuminating comparison with the movement of wind in the background of the Lumière brothers film *Repas de bébé* (*Feeding the Baby*) and culminates with the frame-breaking wishes of Helen and Penelope that the kind of wind usually found only in the Iliadic similes might have broken into the primary narrative and swept them away, so that they would never have been part of the poems in which they appear. These unfulfillable wishes are an intratextual variant of the desire to “ruin the story,” λύειν τὴν ὑπόθεσιν, that ancient critics saw Homer and the tragedians as flirting with on occasions; see the discussion in Nünlist (2009) 66–68.

(¹³) Meijering (1987) 68–69; cf. Payne (2007) 7–8.

(¹⁴) Cf. Morton (2007) 197–201 on John Clare.

(¹⁵) The text of Vian (1981), which corrects unmetrical ἀνέχουσαν in 168 (the reading of most manuscripts). Bremer (1987) 425 prefers Livrea’s ἀντέλλουσαν, which, Vian (1981) 153 observes, “serait séduisant ... si on pouvait expliquer l’origine de la faute.” Fränkel’s *OCT* marks the crux and observes: *structura verborum obscura*.

(¹⁶) Tennyson, “The Lady of Shalott,” Part III.

(¹⁷) The pun on χθόνιος and χθιζόν (1397–1398) is difficult to reproduce in English. Cf. Cusset (2004) on the *Argonautica*’s “itinerary of the wild” and Jason as its un compelling figure of civilization.

(¹⁸) On the *Cypria* in the *Argonautica*, see Sistakou (2007) 80–83.

(¹⁹) Snell (1953) 272–276.

(²⁰) Cf. Parry (1989 [1957]) 35: “Nineteenth-century English nature presents an idealized *nature* (and calls it that) with which the poet would like to identify himself, but cannot. Greek pastoral presents an idyllic nature in which the poet can move by proxy, and with which he is content.” Emphasis original.

(²¹) Ambühl (2007) considers Snell’s debt to Schiller in his discussion of Callimachus’ poetics of childhood. It should be remembered, however, that Snell’s interest is in the Hellenistic poet’s “postphilosophical” renunciation of theoretical mastery, expressed as a

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preference for discrete particulars of knowledge over epistemic wholes, and not in the poet's relationship to literary history, whether this relationship is construed as epigonal, as it so often has been, or revolutionary, as Radke (2007) argues.

(²²) Cole (2004) 8; cf. Buxton (1994) 80–96, whose emphasis is upon the complementary relationship between landscape, ritual, and poetry in early Greek literature as aspects of a shared community life.

(²³) Cf. Bulloch (1977) 112–115.

(²⁴) Fantuzzi (1995) 28.

(²⁵) “My child,” she calls him, three times in succession (6.46–47): “a common word of kindly address to a younger person,” as Hopkinson (1984) 122 puts it.

(²⁶) Parry (1989 [1957]) 35.

(²⁷) Furley (1989) is an excellent introduction to ancient philosophy of Nature.

(²⁸) Cf. *LSJ* περιβάλλω 1, “having his wall around him,” which compares Aristotle, *Politics* 1331a8, on defensive fortifications. Deioces, in his seven circles of walls at Ecbatana, is surely the most spectacular image of the tyrant's self-enclosure; see Herodotus 1.98.

(²⁹) Thales' naïvety is, of course, a sentimental perspective: as Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983) 81 note, Plato ignores the stories of the commercial successes enabled by Thales' astronomical observations.

(³⁰) Furley (1989) 2–4, 228–229.

(³¹) Cf. Brague (2003) 61–66 on “Against the Gnostics” as a reply to Gnostic antic cosmism.

(³²) Cf. 5.3.17; 6.7.35.

(³³) Cf. *O.1.1–6*: ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ, ὁ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ | ἅτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ
μεγάνορος ἔξοχα πλούτου: | εἰ δ' ἄεθλα γαρύεν | ἔλδαι, φίλον ἦτορ, | μηκέθ' ἀλίου
σκόπει | ἄλλο θαλπνότερον ἐν ἀμέρα φαεννὸν ἄστρον ἐρήμας δι' αἰθέρος.

(³⁴) While one should no doubt be cautious about following the methods of literary criticism, and approaching Plotinus through his images, as Hadot (1993) 18 urges, to claim that these images are not “spontaneous” but “traditional,” and so “do not emanate from the depths of his personality,” tells us little about their function in the *Enneads*, and subscribes to the very false Romanticism we are counseled to avoid.

(³⁵) Kenneth Guthrie's translation of ἀφορμαὶ πρὸς τὰ νοητά, one version of the title of Porphyry's summary of Plotinus, reprinted in the edition of Hornum (1988).

(³⁶) Cf. Holmes (2010) 128 on σημαίνω in the Hippocratic corpus: “The verb lays stress on the phenomenon's power to indicate something hidden. At the same time, it quietly marks the symptom as a threshold that cannot, in the end, be crossed: because the body cannot

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be opened and because the cause cannot be seen, we can access the unseen only indirectly, through a conceptual leap from signs to hidden truths.”

(³⁷) Heidegger (2003) 38. Emphasis original.

(³⁸) Heidegger (2003) 107 n. 68.

(³⁹) Hölderlin (2009) 213–214, translation slightly modified.

(⁴⁰) *Metaphysics* 7.1041a1-3: καίτοι κἄν εἰ μὴ ἐωράκειμεν τὰ ἄστρα, οὐδὲν ἂν ἦττον, οἶμαι, ἦσαν οὐσίαι αἰδίωι παρ’ ἅς ἡμεῖς ἤδειμεν.

(⁴¹) The citation of Char’s poetry that introduces the first seminar is from the collection *Commune présence*; see Heidegger (2003) 1, 7.

(⁴²) The Indiana University Press edition of the *Four Seminars* preserves the event character of the meetings in Le Thor, including anecdotes, poems, and letters along with the texts of the seminars themselves. The perceptions of another youthful participant in these events, in this case a student of Char, not Heidegger, are memorably recorded in section V of Gustaf Sobin’s “A Portrait of the Self as Instrument of Its Syllables,” in the collection *Voyaging Portraits*, which gives an account of Heidegger’s *plein air* remarks on Hölderlin’s “Wie Meeresküsten ... “

(⁴³) Heidegger (2003) 9, 90–91.

(⁴⁴) Güthenke (2008) vii.

(⁴⁵) Gourgouris (2003) 293–294. Emphasis original.

(⁴⁶) Jullien (2009) 2.

(⁴⁷) Jullien (2000) 285 acknowledges a resemblance between lyric cognition in the Chinese tradition and Neoplatonic indication: in both, there is a “beginning to say” in the use of natural images that points to the source of life, but does not equate the relationship to Nature with an experience of this source.

(⁴⁸) Meillassoux (2008) 73.

(⁴⁹) Badiou (2005) 125–126. Emphasis original. Bregue (2003) 18 locates the event by which “the Greeks set out on a path where other civilizations did not follow” in the discovery of an order of the world not maintained by human action; cf. Meillassoux (2008) 136 n. 1.

(⁵⁰) *TLG* indicates 407 occurrences of the simple verb in the *Enneads* as a whole.

(⁵¹) Cf. Marion (2002) 94–97, on “the bracketing of the giver,” and Marion (2011) 19–34, a robust defense of “the strictly phenomenological status of givenness” against attempts to characterize it as a covert restoration of ontotheological causality and grounding.

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⁽⁵²⁾ See Lamberton (1986) 108–133 on the influence of Plotinus’s student Porphyry in this regard.

⁽⁵³⁾ Descola (2013) 81–82.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Andenken.”

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