

APPENDIX:

HEIDEGGER'S "MAN'S DWELLING"

TRANSLATED BY CESAR A. CRUZ

For ease of cross reference between essay and appendix, paragraph numbering has been added to the appendix, as well as page references to the German original in volume 13 of the Heidegger Gesamtausgabe.¹

[1] [213] Hölderlin's saying – "Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth" – is hardly registered by us, has not been fully fathomed; nor has it entered our collective memory.² And how could it? In light of contemporary reality – a reality regarding itself, and the very reserves it draws on, as that of a self-made and self-sustained society – the poet's saying is easily watered down by just about anybody as fanciful. Poetry is seen in contemporary society as the production of literature.

[2] That Hölderlin's saying is not taken seriously is also testified to by the present stage of Hölderlin research. That research groups the saying among the poet's "questionable works" because its text has not come down to us in manuscript form, or so Wilhelm Waiblinger emphatically states at the close of his 1823 novel *Phaedon*. By contrast, Norbert von Hellingrath's "Prologue to a First Edition of Hölderlin's Translations of Pindar" (1911, page 58, note 3), talks of "passages that in essence well could be genuine." Hellingrath's [214] efforts at researching Hölderlin's oeuvre rested on a distinct poetic approach to the poet himself – a poet (Hölderlin) who one day may stand revealed as the poet herald of a future art of poetry.

[3] Strangely enough, the adjective "poetic" does

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not occur in Hölderlin's poems in the final text of his published works. Nevertheless the Stuttgart edition (II, 635) includes the adjective as variant in line 28 of the poem "The Archipelago", the relevant passage (lines 25-29) reading as follows:

*Likewise, heaven's own, they, the powerful up on high, the silent ones,
Who a serene day and sweet slumber and foreboding
From far away cast over the head of men sensitive and receptive to it
Out of the fullness of their might, even they, the ancient companions in play,
Dwell, as before, with You...³*

[4] In the first draft, instead of "the ancient companions in play, / Dwell," Hölderlin writes "poetic companions in play, dwell." Thus the poetic thought of a poetic dwelling is in no way foreign to the poet. But the adjective "poetic" in the quoted passage qualifies the manner of dwelling of the heavenly bodies, not man's.⁴ What then does "poetic companions in play" say if instead it turned out to say "the ancient companions in play" in the final version?

[5] In what respect are the "ancient" the "poetic", and the "poetic" the "ancient"?

[6] The heavenly bodies in the poem refer to things that always have been – 'ones of yore' – as well as to things that shall return in what is yet to come. They are ones of yore in a twofold sense. Their being of yore explains their present state, their everlasting aspect in Hölderlin's phrase of the "ever blooming stars" (Draft, II, 365) goes beyond mere persistence. The ancient companions in play bring, to "men sensitive and receptive to it," the serenity of day and the night's slumber and foreboding. These companions donate constancy to mortals across their lifetime, and are thereby poets (or 'poetizing' ones). The ancient companions in play "dwell poetically" with the god of the Aegean Sea, with its islands and the inhabitants.

[7] [215] Even though the final version of the poem calls the heavenly bodies the "ancients," this did not eliminate their designation as "the poetic ones." For the verses that follow (lines 29-42) begin by expressly naming the most supreme of the celestial bodies, "the day's sun," the "all transfiguring" sun – and line 38 calls it "the poetizing one." The sun bestows a clarity that allows all things to shine forth in their uniqueness and gives to mortals their measure.

[8] And yet, the poem "The Archipelago" expresses itself in more meaningful and complete a manner than a set of inevitably fragmented notes ever could.

[9] Meanwhile, a question imposes itself. Don't the passages, certified by the poet's own hand and preceding the final version of this poem,

diminish or entirely do away with any doubts surrounding the authenticity of the words “In lovely blueness blooms” (employed by Hölderlin in a prose text) from which the line “full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this earth” was taken? Even if this were true, the distinction mentioned above between “the ancient” versus “the poetic” would still remain.

[10] According to “The Archipelago”, the heavenly bodies “dwell poetically,” with the sun being, as the most supreme of heavenly bodies, “the poetizing one.” The designation “poetic” thus goes with “heaven’s own.” According to the later prose text, “poetic dwelling” goes with the mortals “on this earth.”

[11] According to “The Archipelago,” the heavenly ones were inclined to impart to those on earth their measure. According to the prose text, mortals concede the imparting of their measure to the heavenly. “Imparting their measure in equal ways?” we may ask, ere we pause and hear the text’s own question: “Is there a measure on earth?”, and have to immediately ponder the text’s own answer: “There is none.”

[12] The poetized ones on earth are only the measure-takers of a heavenly gift of measure. Poetized mortals always only bestow meaning by building on something they themselves already received. For Hölderlin, the making of poetry is not a creative power that resides in the individual poet. Rather, it is a measured building (*Bauen*) the heavenly ones employ, to the full extent of their power, with works of Saying being the result of such building. In this way a region is kept open for mortals to sojourn within it.⁵

[13] [216] That region’s overall inclination ought to be termed a clearing: a clearing in which the heavenly ones incline towards Earth’s mortals in a manner both foreign and generous, and where those on earth incline to the heavenly by way of gratitude and cultivation. To a region of such

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inclination belongs, by way of giving and receiving of measure – thus, poetically – that the heavenly and mortals each dwell in their own way and alongside one another.

[14] Still, isn't all of this a mere dream, the creation of an arbitrary imagination that is lacking all reality, any prospects of possible realization, every claim to validity and obligation?

[15] A single casual glance upon the state of the world today may suffice to compel us towards these questions. Yet here we overlook too easily that Hölderlin himself became cognizant of what poetry demanded and of its hazards along his path – more cognizant than we ever could become today, reflecting on his thought.

[16] The closing stanza of the hymn “The Journey” expresses this as follows (Hellingrath IV, 171; Stuttgart Edition II, 141):

*Heaven's servants
Are ever so wonderful,
Just as all of God's children.
Through a dream it comes to him who wants just once
To steal from heaven, yet there is retribution for those that
Through forceful means want to be equal to it;
Often it is a surprise to the one
To whom it has hardly ever come to mind before⁶*

[17] And thus it remains premature, even on Hölderlin's own behalf, to point to, let alone announce as having been uttered with any commitment, the saying “poetically man dwells on this earth”. If we were to mention “poetic dwelling,” the most we could reach by way of assertion at this point is: Man today dwells on this Earth, but not poetically.

[18] [217] And what does that mean? Does Hölderlin even speak of it? Norbert von Hellingrath, under the section entitled “Fragments and Drafts,” presents us with a short text with the heading of “The Nearest Best.” It goes as follows:

*[O]pen are heaven's windows
And set free is the nocturnal spirit,
Who in storming the heavens has our land
Enticed, and, by having much to say, by being unpoetic,
Has mallowed in the debris
Up to this very hour.
And yet what I yearn for, it will come, ... ?*

[19] Does “unpoetic,” as used here, mean the same thing as not poetic? In no way. Yet, if these terms are to connote different things, in what respects do they demand that we differentiate them?

[20] There is an answer readily at hand. The difference lies in the

manner of negation. A triangle for example is not poetic, but it can never be unpoetic. For, to be that, it must have been able to be poetic – such that it could, in this regard, be lacking something, and fail to comply with the poetic. In the history of thinking, there has long been a distinction between mere negation and deprivation. It remains open to further consideration whether, this distinction in place (one that required Plato’s utmost intellectual efforts to disentangle in his *Sophist*), the question concerning the “not” has now been sufficiently settled.

[21] We can only learn how to understand the “un” in “unpoetic” in the present case if we succeed in more precisely determining the “poetic”. Fortunately, Hölderlin himself provides the type of assistance we need.

[22] The word “unpoetic” only occurs once in the preserved manuscripts of Hölderlin. Hellingrath’s “Appendix” (IV, 392) records the term’s variants, and comments: “just above the occurrence of *unpoetic*, the following variants are [218] listed on top of one another: *infinite*, *unpeaceful*, *unbounded*, *unrestrained*.”

[23] How are we to understand the varying nature of these variants? Does one variant just go in place of another, with a preceding one extinguished by a subsequent one – such that only the final one remains valid for the text’s final form?

[24] The Stuttgart edition (II, 868) sets down these variants as listed “one above the other,” but adopts “unrestrained,” (occurring in the list’s topmost position) instead of “unpoetic” as the text’s authoritative reading (II, 234 and 237). This might be true if we were adhering to a philological rule (see the Stuttgart Edition I, 319). But it is not ‘poetologically’ true; it does not reveal what the poet wants to say and record.

[25] The variants show Hölderlin’s effort at determining the meaning of “poetic” in “unpoetic.” The “unpoetic” names the unessential of the

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“poetic,” that which in it is uncanny or not “at home.” “Unpoetic” is the adjective used to qualify “having much to say,” to qualify how “the nocturnal spirit” speaks, “who has our land / Enticed,” – a spirit who is, “in storming the heavens,” hostile, even rebellious against the heavens.

[26] In being “unpoetic” the “poetic” does not disappear, but rather the “finite” is dismissed, the “peaceful” troubled, the “bound” undone, the “restrained” wrongfully transforms into the “unleashed.” All this tells us: that which bestows measure is not admitted, the very reception of measure is suppressed. The region that would be so inclined is instead buried under debris.

[27] What leaps to mind is how the quoted fragments mentioning the “unpoetic” – fragments certified in manuscript form – belong together with the apocryphal text of the saying, “poetically man dwells.”

[28] Meanwhile, one difference between the two texts still remains. “The Nearest Best,” that fragment published by Hellingrath, does not speak of man’s dwelling. Or at least, so it seems. For exactly that impression is put to rest by that fragment’s text [219] variant entitled “draft hymn” offered by Friedrich Beissner in the Stuttgart edition. The three draft forms (II, 233-239) were brought together in a convincing manner “based on handwritten idiosyncrasies,” and are to be interpreted as poetry of the “Dawn of a newly realized age following the patriotic reversal” (II, 867 and following). This age, and the care by which we are to enter it, underscores Hölderlin’s poetry in the elegy “Homecoming.” (See my “Annotations to Hölderlin’s Poetry,” supplemented by the two lectures, “Hölderlin’s Earth and Heaven” and “The Poem” in: *Collected Works*, Volume 4, 5th edition.)

[29] Hölderlin’s poetry persists in the care shown in the “Homecoming.” It is the care shown in establishing those places whereby man dwells poetically, and is shown in the patient waiting for salvation that is a part of this earthly sojourn. The draft “The Nearest Best” expresses this implicitly by referring to “having much to say” as “being unpoetic.”

[30] Nonetheless, ever since Hölderlin poetized his hymns, it may have been all too clear: this poem says and waits in vain. The saying regarding man’s poetic dwelling remains unfulfilled, it remains just one great illusion.

[31] Yet the question remains whether in light of this statement we will ever think through the poet’s message with sufficient patience. Man of the present age too dwells poetically in his own way, which is to say, assuming his way of being in name only, unpoetically.⁸ For the sake of his will to produce himself and [produce] reserves that can be cultivated, man seizes measure from an earth that his machinations leave disfigured. He lacks the ability to hear Hölderlin’s answer to the question: “Is there a measure upon earth? There is none.”

[32] “Having much to say,” what “entices our land,” are in reality only the monotony of language from which everything which is said lies flat: the computer’s language of informatics. The only measure for computing man is the quota.

[33] Certainly Hölderlin had not foreseen or foretold the state of the world today.

[220] Nevertheless there *remains* what his saying has established and left for us to keep in our thoughts.

Much is left to consider, that is, to experience thoughtfully. Next for us to consider is:

First of all, to think about the unpoetic aspects of our world sojourn as such, experiencing the mechanization of man as his fate instead of dismissing it as merely arbitrary and an infatuation. Further, it calls for us to realize that there is no measure on this earth, but rather that the earth can give no measure when it is quantified on a planetary scale, that the earth is carried away in the lack of measure.

[34] In the midst of the unpoetic it is insufficient for the poetic to think of the way out in the apparently equalizing dialectics.

[35] We still rush past the mystery of the “not” and of what is not.

We do not yet experience clearly enough what is suggested to us in the withdrawal because we do not yet know the withdrawal itself. We do not yet know the poetic in the unpoetic.

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ENDNOTES

1. The copyright for the original German version of this text is held by Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 2002. This translation was very much a cumulative effort between the editorial staff and contributing colleagues of *Architecture Philosophy*, and myself. I would like especially to thank Tom Spector and Stefan Koller for their great help in proofreading, verifying, and editing this translation.

2. “Hölderlin’s saying”: *Wort* is translated in this

essay, of course, as “word,” but primarily as “saying” and “message,” as it refers both to the entire line “Full of merit . . .” and, as Heidegger sees it, the message inherent in Hölderlin’s poetry.

3. The translations of Hölderlin’s three poems quoted in this essay benefitted from consulting previously published translations of each. Nevertheless, the translations here are my own, as in each case there were enough differences, sometimes subtle but significant enough differences, that I could not use the previously published poems. For comparison of “*Der Archipelagus*” see Friedrich Hölderlin, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), 212-215.

4. ‘Heavenly bodies’ (*Himmelskörper*): literally, celestial bodies (as in section 7). The translation preserves Heidegger’s referene to ‘the heavenly’ in Hölderlin’s poem (section 4) and his own Fourfold.

5. Heidegger writes “the region” (*die Gegend*) instead of “a region.” The latter is used here because he is referring to a kind of region or regioning, not a specific locality or place. Also, like sections 7 and 10, the present paragraph uses ‘poetize(d)’ to designate ‘*dichten(d)*’, the verb (and adjectival form of) ‘to make poetry’. Cf. Aurenque’s essay above, n. 8.

6. For comparison of “*Die Wanderung*” see Friedrich Hölderlin, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Hymns and Fragments*, trans. Richard Sieburth (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 66-67; Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hölderlin: His Poems*, trans. Michael Hamburger (London: The Harvill Press, 1952), 188-189; and Hölderlin, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems and Fragments*, 398-399.

7. For comparison of “*Das Nächste Beste*” see Hölderlin, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Hymns and Fragments*, 174-175 and 274-275; and Hölderlin, *Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems and Fragments*, 544-545.

8. “way of being”: the only use of *Dasein* in this essay. Literal translation: “Man of the present age too dwells poetically – namely, that is, as per (*unter*) the name of his *Dasein*, unpoetically.”