

**Truth, Being, and The Work of Art: Reflections on Heidegger's  
and Gadamer's Interpretations of the Tradition**

**Barbara Ann McCord**

**Ph.D. Thesis**

**Mary Immaculate College**

**University of Limerick**

**Supervisor: Dr Niall Keane**

**Submitted to Mary Immaculate College:**

---

## *Declaration of Originality*

Declaration: I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and does not contain the work of any other individual. All sources that have been consulted have been identified and acknowledged in the appropriate way.

Signature of Candidate:

---

Barbara Ann McCord

Signature of Supervisor:

---

Dr Niall Keane

Date:

---

## *Acknowledgements*

I would like to extend a very special thank you to Dr Niall Keane for his patience, kindness, and invaluable support in the supervision of this work. And for helping me to make my dream become a reality.

A sincere thank you is also due to Dr Chris Lawn, for all the enjoyable, informative, and helpful conversations throughout the years in college.

Many thanks go to Dr Gerard Downes for his practical help and kindness, which is much appreciated. To the staff in the various departments of Mary Immaculate College, too numerous to mention, whose support and friendly approach enhanced my experience of college life enormously, I extend my gratitude.

I would also like to mention a word of thanks to members of the philosophy department in NUIG, including Prof. Paul Crowther, Dr Tsarina Doyle, and Dr Felix O'Murchadha, for their interest in the early stages of this project.

Throughout the years of what has been at times a daunting undertaking I have been sustained by the conversations, encouragement, and love, of my close family, Jim, Jean, Sarah, and Jackie and for this I am truly grateful. Particular mention has to go to Jim who, with patience, good humour, and attention to detail, tirelessly attended to the technological aspect of making the compilation of this work possible.

A huge thank you goes to my three sisters, Mary, Helen, and Marian for their continuing interest and encouragement. Especially to Marian, who also travelled the academic journey and supplied me with invaluable insights and information en route, I extend my love and gratitude.

I would like to acknowledge my good friends, who helped me to take 'time out' during the years of study, with a special thank you to Thérèse, who so generously shared her professional expertise in helping me with the oral presentation of my work.

Sharing a room with the other aspiring Ph.D. candidates Anne and Sandra made the daily task of writing easier, as did the company of all the post-grad community in Summerville.

Finally, last but never forgotten, my deep gratitude goes to my parents who always encouraged us to search for truth.

## *Dedication*

For Frank

Who enriched my life with love and introduced me to the academic world of philosophy

Also for our three beautiful granddaughters, Jenny, Kyra, and Becky, as a reminder that the  
pursuit of learning continues

## *Abstract*

This thesis addresses the fundamental and interrelated questions of truth and being, which have occupied Western philosophical thought since the time of the Ancient Greeks, giving particular attention to how they relate to works of art. More specifically, it examines the unique way in which works of arts enable an unfolding of truth to occur, which exceeds the notion of truth as correspondence or correctness. Martin Heidegger's phenomenological enquiry into the meaning of being, which leads him to an analysis of the question of truth, shows that there is an inseparable connection between being and truth. Furthermore, with his 1930s essay on the work of art, which represents a challenge to the aesthetic tradition and establishes the role of art in facilitating the enactment of truth, Heidegger re-introduces the operations of art to the centre of philosophical thought. Following Heidegger, and hugely influenced by his thinking, Hans-Georg Gadamer, by means of his own philosophical hermeneutics, develops a theory of art's unique role in opening up an experience of truth which cannot be attained in any other way. And, in their separate ways, both Heidegger and Gadamer find an intrinsic link between the questions of truth, being, and the work of art. This dissertation will explore the tensions in the continuity and discontinuity of their respective reflections on the above concerns.

## *Disclaimer*

Of Note: As English is the preferred language for the purpose of writing this thesis, it should be made clear at the outset that I have checked the original German when I have deemed it necessary. However, I have worked entirely from the available English translations, which will be detailed in an attached bibliography and I have not made reference to the German pagination.

## ***Table of Contents***

<i>Declaration of Originality</i> .....	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	<i>iii</i>
<i>Dedication</i> .....	<i>iv</i>
<i>Abstract</i> .....	<i>v</i>
<i>Disclaimer</i> .....	<i>vi</i>
<i>Epigraph</i> .....	<i>x</i>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Heidegger’s Phenomenological Investigation of ‘Truth [<i>Wahrheit</i>]’ and ‘Being [<i>Sein</i>]’ .....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	13
1.2 Dasein’s Manner of Existing in the World .....	15
1.3 Dasein, as a Social Being .....	17
1.4 Dasein; in the Mode of Care .....	19
1.5 The Self of Everyday Existence .....	23
1.6 Being-in [ <i>In-Sein</i> ] .....	29
1.7 ‘State of Mind’: Attunement [ <i>Befindlichkeit</i> ] .....	30
1.8 Fear: As a Mode of Attunement [ <i>Befindlichkeit</i> ].....	31
1.9 Understanding; Projecting Possibilities .....	33
1.10 Discourse [ <i>Rede</i> ] and Language [ <i>Sprache</i> ].....	39
1.11 Understanding, Being, and Truth .....	42
1.12 Traditional Understanding of Truth .....	45
1.12 (a) Ernst Tugendhat’s Critique of Heidegger.....	51

1.13 Conclusion .....	55
<b>Chapter Two: Enquiry into the Essence of Truth .....</b>	<b>57</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	57
2.2 Enquiry into the Essence of Truth.....	60
2.3 Distinguishing Un-truth from Truth.....	65
2.4 The Meaning of Accordance.....	66
2.5 Freedom .....	70
2.6 Letting-be: Concealing.....	71
2.7 Errancy: Forgetfulness of the Mystery.....	73
2.7 (a) Friedländer’s Critique of Heidegger’s Concept of Truth .....	76
2.8 Conclusion .....	78
<b>Chapter Three: Heidegger’s Enquiry into the Question of Truth and Being; as     Manifested in the Work of Art .....</b>	<b>80</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	80
3.2 Earlier and Later Versions of ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ .....	83
3.3 The Work-being [ <i>Werksein</i> ] of the Work of Art.....	86
3.4 Truth; Manifested in Art .....	90
3.5 The ‘Thingly’ Element of the Artwork .....	92
3.6 Equipmentality; Serviceability; Reliability.....	96
3.7 The Greek Temple: The God Within .....	102
3.8 The Question of Aesthetics .....	104
3.9 Hegel: Aesthetics .....	108
3.10 Heidegger’s Later Thinking on the Question of Art.....	112
3.11 Conclusion .....	114
<b>Chapter Four: Gadamer: A Hermeneutical Interrogation of Our Encounter with Truth     in Word and Image .....</b>	<b>118</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	118

4.2 Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics .....	120
4.3 The Relevance of Language.....	128
4.4 The Unthought and Unspoken .....	131
4.5 Aesthetics and Aesthetic Consciousness.....	134
4.6 The Significance of Play in Art.....	137
4.7 The Importance of the Beautiful within our Understanding of Art .....	145
4.8 Modernity and Autonomy: The Creative Artist.....	150
4.9 Conclusion .....	154
<b>Chapter Five: The Question of Truth in Art.....</b>	<b>158</b>
5.1 Introduction.....	158
5.2 The Challenges of Metaphysics .....	162
5.3 The Question of Humanism .....	168
5.3 (a) Heidegger on Humanism.....	170
5.3 (b) Gadamer on Humanism.....	175
5.4 Science and Technology: Its Relevance to the Work of Art.....	182
5.4 (a) Heidegger; Understanding Technology.....	184
5.4 (b) Gadamer’s View of Science and Technology .....	187
5.5 Conclusion .....	189
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Reference List.....</b>	<b>203</b>

## *Epigraph*

For all of the things that confront us in nature and history, it is the work of art that speaks to us most directly. (Gadamer)

## Introduction

The impetus of this thesis stems from the three following sources. The first of these is Heidegger's claim that '*Alētheia* is the enigma itself—the matter of thinking'. (Heidegger, 1998a, p.332) The essence of all Heidegger's thought is traceable back to *alētheia*. The second impelling source is the challenge posed by Heidegger's statement that '[T]he greater the work of a thinker—which in no way coincides with the breadth and number of writings—the richer is what is unthought in this work'. (Heidegger, 1991b, p.71) I intend to argue that Hans-Georg Gadamer, in accepting this challenge, thinks out what is unthought in Heidegger most extensively, especially when it comes to the nature of 'image', 'truth', and the 'word'. And, the third motivating factor stems from Gadamer's sanction that '[W]hen people claim to be "against" Heidegger—or even "for" him—then they make fools of themselves. One cannot circumvent thinking so easily'. (Gadamer, 1994c, p.112) Given Gadamer's acknowledgment of the significance of Heidegger's thought, it will be seen how, in offering an immanent critique, he both transforms and remains faithful to Heidegger's thinking.

Bearing Gadamer's dictum in mind, I do not intend to become entrenched in a position of either/or within my discussion. But, rather, by inhabiting the areas of tension between the thinking of Heidegger and Gadamer, I intend to show how the dynamic surrounding both the areas of agreement and divergence of their views serves to heighten our understanding of the questions which give impetus and weight to their thought. Furthermore, given Gadamer's claim that asking the question already suggests an understanding of the answer, it will be seen how these questions serve to enhance our understanding of their own philosophical thought. Moreover, I will argue that, by unpacking the claim that the work of art has a distinctive role in enabling truth to emerge, both of these thinkers succeed in establishing an understanding of the philosophical importance of art in general, albeit with a difference. As Gadamer tells us, 'to understand at all is always to understand differently'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.44) What we can take from this, in the case of art, is that in every new encounter with the dynamic ontological aspect of art we are challenged to continue to question and to think and to thereby enhance or intensify our understanding, which is not reducible to mere

epistemic acquisition or a knowing better. This phenomenon is not just peculiar to our encounters with art but is essentially a feature of all our existential encounters and thereby permeates all aspects of our existence.

The question of art is central to this project, which is concerned with the philosophical questions of truth and being, how they intersect and, in particular how, through the work of art an unfolding of truth occurs which exceeds the notion of truth as correspondence [*Übereinstimmung*] or correctness [*Richtigkeit*]. The fundamental issues of Truth and Being, which provided both an underpinning and stimulus for Western philosophical thought since the time of the Ancient Greeks and which, Heidegger claims, have been neglected and downplayed since antiquity, were once again brought to the fore with the advent of phenomenology in the twentieth-century. Notably, by Heidegger's innovative phenomenological hermeneutic approach which by representing a challenge to traditional metaphysical thinking opens the way for a new radicalising discussion of these core philosophical concerns. Furthermore, through his investigation of the integral role that the work of art plays as a means of enabling the disclosure of truth, Heidegger effectively places art at the centre of this single-minded discussion. Framed by his response to Heidegger, whilst at the same time in a significant departure from many aspects of Heidegger's thought, Gadamer, by means of his own philosophical hermeneutics develops an understanding of truth and being which is intimately connected to the work of art, as an encounter with truth and being. As he admits, 'art... was really the starting point of my whole hermeneutical theory'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.44) Central to the philosophical position of both Heidegger and Gadamer is the concept of human finitude, which gives rise to their individual critiques of traditional metaphysics, including the aesthetic appreciation of art. Moreover, in each case, through an exploration of the role of art in enabling the disclosure of truth, they both find an inextricable link between the questions of truth and being. Therefore, this dissertation will be concerned with the development of these fundamental philosophical questions through the phenomenological-hermeneutical and philosophical-hermeneutical investigations of these two thinkers.

My work, as stated, is concerned with the question of being and its intrinsic connection to truth, whilst placing particular emphasis on the manifestation of truth in the work of art. The urgency and enigmatic nature of the questions of being and truth have, in Heidegger's view, started to wane, become 'trivialized' or deemed superfluous, and dogged by presuppositions and prejudices which Heidegger states 'are constantly reimplanting and fostering the belief that an inquiry into Being is unnecessary'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.22) However, in contesting this notion he argues that, although we already live in and with an understanding of being, what he terms a constitutively provisional 'pre-ontological understanding', we are still far from understanding the meaning of being. Hence he considers that 'in principle' this question demands renewed inquiry, which leads him, by returning to the ancient Greeks, to repeatedly retrieve and radicalise the question of being from antiquity. And, thereafter, for Heidegger the one abiding question that stays with him throughout his entire career is the question of the meaning and truth of being. From the Greeks, Heidegger also takes the notion of *alētheia*, which he claims the Greeks understood as disclosedness and he argues that in *alētheia* we find the fundamental source of the traditional understanding of truth.

Due to the complexity of his language and his thinking, and the extent of his textual corpus concerning the particular themes of his enquiry, any comprehensive study of Heidegger can prove to be difficult. Therefore, bearing this in mind, for the purpose of my discussion, I will isolate and focus on three particular works in which Heidegger expounds on the topics of truth and being, these include, *Being and Time*, 'The Essence of Truth' (1943), and 'The Origin of The Work of Art' (1950). And, as mentioned, of particular interest in this thesis is the philosophical investigation of truth in relation to art, a truth which does not conform to scientific methods of verification. As Gadamer puts it:

That truth is experienced through a work of art that we cannot attain in any other way constitutes the philosophic importance of art, which asserts itself against all reasoning. Hence together with the experience of philosophy, the experience of art issues the most pressing challenge to the scientific consciousness to acknowledge its own limits.' (Gadamer, 1979, p.xiii)

We are thus left in no doubt about the continuing significance of art in advancing our understanding of the world, and ultimately in leading towards our understanding of ourselves in a transformative manner. Art's contribution to truth and its role in enabling the event and emergence of truth is bound up with the concept of *alētheia* for both Heidegger and Gadamer, which represents a departure from the traditional aesthetic appreciation of art which had prevailed since Kant brought it to the centre of the philosophical debate in the eighteenth-century. Taking an aesthetic view of art is not only at odds with the notion of art's role in allowing the manifestation of truth to occur but, in Heidegger's view, it serves to obscure this role altogether. Therefore, I will explore and analyse Heidegger's critique of aesthetics, whilst bearing in mind his stated intention to 'overcome' or 'recover from' metaphysics which, he claims, originated in the thinking of Plato and Aristotle. Furthermore, Gadamer's perception of the threat that aesthetics poses to the position of art, which is made clear by his belief that '[T]he experience of art must not be side-tracked into the uncommittedness of the aesthetic awareness', (Gadamer, 1979, p.87) will be further explored. However, it will be shown how, by engagement with Plato, Gadamer develops his thought from within a less critical and less monochromatic understanding of the metaphysical tradition than one finds in Heidegger. And although Gadamer does not espouse what could be termed a 'metaphysical theory' of understanding and interpretation, he is mindful of the debt we owe to our metaphysical heritage. Furthermore, within his hermeneutics of the human sciences, he acknowledges the importance of understanding our metaphysical tradition as a means of enhancing our understanding of 'the genuine tradition in which we stand'. (Gadamer, 1994h, p.29) As such, one could easily claim that Gadamer's hermeneutics is a dialogue with tradition, which both remains with the tradition and probes questioningly back through the tradition.

For the purpose of this dissertation, my project will be divided into five chapters, with chapters one to three focusing on the aspects of Heidegger's thinking that are of central importance to my discussion which, as stated, concerns the questions of truth and being and their connection to the work of art. Therefore, in order to understand what we mean when we refer to the questions of being and truth, the first two chapters will examine Heidegger's treatment of these core issues. In the third chapter, I will

explore his unique treatment of the question of art which, as he clarifies, cannot be separated from the question of being. In Chapter Four, I will show how Gadamer, hugely influenced by Heidegger's thought, develops his own distinctive philosophy, both in *Truth and Method* and in his later essays, by means of his hermeneutical investigation of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), placing particular emphasis on his treatment of the experience of truth which happens in and through our encounter with works of art. In the final chapter, I intend to look at the works of both Heidegger and Gadamer, in the light of their separate contributions to the debate surrounding the persistent questions of truth and being, together with their treatment of the question of art. Their individual views on the role of art, including works of modern art and its philosophical relevance, will be assessed in the light of Hegel's claim that art has exhausted its significance and that it 'no longer counts as the highest way in which truth finds existence for itself'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.51)

Although Heidegger's thought continues to move along a wide range of issues on different levels, the question of being is the abiding theme that permeates his entire oeuvre, therefore, it would be difficult to find a more authoritative understanding of this fundamental question than Heidegger offers. For that reason, in Chapter One, as a point of departure for my thesis discussion, I intend to provide a detailed explication of Heidegger's analysis of the meaning of being, within his magnum opus *Being and Time*. It will be shown that in his interrogation of being, Heidegger appeals to a fundamental ontology by means of an analysis of a situated, neutral, and historical existential-ontological entity, namely Dasein. Heidegger assures us that Dasein's neutrality does not indicate 'the voidness of an abstraction, but precisely the potency of the *origin*, which bears in itself the intrinsic possibility of every concrete factual humanity'. (Heidegger, 1984b, p.137) In other words, by being gender neutral, its facticity is not totally prescribed, Dasein can be either male or female. Dasein is a being-in-the-world involved with things in the world, whose being is at issue and an issue for it, and whose possibilities have been handed down to it by means of tradition and heritage and yet still freely chosen. In his existential analysis of Dasein, Heidegger isolates its two modes of being, which he distinguishes as an 'authentic' mode of being, encompassing an understanding of the ontological structure of the self, whereby Dasein has an awareness

of its own being and its own potentiality for being, including his own finitude. And, an ‘inauthentic’ mode of being, in which Dasein becomes distracted by trivia and absorbed by things in the world and thus experiences a forgetfulness of being. For the most part Dasein exists in an ‘inauthentic’ mode of being. Therefore, Heidegger pursues his investigation of human existence by means of an analysis of Dasein in its everyday existence, which he sees as the key to understanding the nature or essence of being. Understanding Dasein as the only being, in the active and verbal sense, which has an awareness of its own finitude and therefore an awareness of its own possibilities for non-being shows that the question of the meaning of being can only be understood within the horizon of time.

This chapter will also include an examination of Heidegger’s search for an original understanding of the problem of truth, which appears in §44 of *Being and Time*. Here it will be seen how, in considering the correspondence theory of truth, which he maintains is based upon a misinterpretation of Aristotle, to be flawed and inadequate he appeals to the ancient Greeks and to the Greek notion of *alētheia* in his attempts to find the fundamental ontological meaning of truth. At the end of this chapter there will be an analysis of Ernst Tugendhat’s critique of Heidegger’s espousal of *alētheia* (disclosedness) in support of his concept of truth.

Chapter Two concerns Heidegger’s continuing interrogation of the question of truth in his essay entitled ‘On The Essence of Truth’ (1943), which he pursues by means of an enquiry into its ontological foundations and which, he claims, have been overlooked or misrepresented due to reliance on ‘ “Sound” common sense’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.116) This enquiry indicates a shift of emphasis by Heidegger, from his analysis of the being of Dasein in *Being and Time* to an analysis of the truth and untruth of being in the aforementioned essay. Central to this essay is Heidegger’s claim that the essence of truth is freedom, by which is meant the ability to be open and opened up by truth, insofar as it is brought out into the open and insofar as doing so opens us up. However, by examining truth in its various ontological modes, Heidegger identifies an inseparable link between the ‘essence of truth’ and the ‘truth of essence’, which leads him to conclude that the question of the essence of truth cannot be fully answered

without the more fundamental question of the truth of essence being discussed. Furthermore, it is interesting to note, in the light of Tugendhat's critique, that within this essay Heidegger defends his radicalised analysis of the notion of *alētheia*, in connection with truth as a freeing disclosure, whilst making it clear that the unconcealing or disclosing of truth always at the same time involves a concealing or closing. In other words, truth and untruth cannot be uncoupled from one another or held apart as mere dialectical opposites. However, whereas this explanation might to a certain extent counter-balance Tugendhat's criticism, a further challenge to Heidegger's conception of truth is posed by the classical Greek scholar and philologist, Paul Friedländer, on the grounds that Heidegger's interpretation of *alētheia* is based upon a false premise. In Friedländer's view, Heidegger makes the mistake of attributing the alpha-privative to the Greek term *alētheia*, [*a-lētheia*] to denote un-hiddenness as a wresting or robbing unhiddenness from hiddenness and this, he claims, does not come within the Greek experience. Furthermore, in contending that the only case where *alētheia* is understood to mean unhiddenness in this sense is in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Friedländer dismisses Heidegger's claim that it was to be found in Heraclitus. Friedländer's challenge will be discussed in further detail, in this chapter.

In Chapter Three I provide a critical appraisal of Heidegger's unique treatment of the work of art, which can be seen as a repudiation of traditional aesthetics. Heidegger makes it clear that his enquiry into the origin or essence of art is 'completely and decisively directed solely toward the question of *being*'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.55) And, for the purpose of his ontological investigation of the origin of the work of art, it will be shown that the ancient Greek notion of *alētheia* is central to his theory of art's role in enabling the disclosedness of truth. Heidegger's questioning of tradition, which guides his enquiry into the questions of truth and being, and his search for the foundations upon which tradition stands, by returning to the ancient Greeks, marks the thrust of his investigation of the work of art. However, Hegel's pronouncement concerning the demise of art, leads Heidegger to question the relevance of modern art, and in the 1960s his encounter with the art of sculpture causes him to review his thinking about the relation of art and space, and to consider the notion of space and its limits. For Heidegger, as I will point out, the limit does not denote the end, but

indicates the beginning and rather than being an obstacle, space is an accomplice in allowing things to extend beyond themselves, thereby enabling the realization of human potential. Furthermore, in a world where technology threatens to dominate and subsume the human being, Heidegger advocates informed thinking as a means of averting possible dangers and he suggests that through art we can possibly find the unconcealment which is necessary in confronting the enormity of technological advances.

The unifying thread, which permeates the first three chapters concerning Heidegger's phenomenological investigation of the fundamental issues of truth and being and their intrinsic place in the work of art, can be found in the questioning or searching approach that he takes to tradition. Within each separate chapter it can be seen that Heidegger does not attempt to negate traditional thinking, but rather he enjoins us to look further and seek the foundations upon which the tradition is based. To this end, he returns to antiquity, where he finds in Greek thought the notion of *alētheia* which, as stated, he views as the 'enigma' which invites 'thought'. As observed earlier, the essence of the entirety of Heidegger's thought is brought back to *alētheia*. Through the disclosiveness of *alētheia* we are granted access to the truth which the traditional approach to truth obscures and neglects. And, in his essay on art, through an analysis of specific examples of works of art, Heidegger illustrates the way that truth is disclosed and how we are enabled to participate in this event of truth. As we have seen Heidegger's analysis of the notion of *alētheia* in connection with truth has received considerable criticism, however, in what appears to be an absence of a distinctive theory of truth of his own and in a move which allows Gadamer to work outside the confines of tradition, he appropriates the notion of *alētheia* from Heidegger.

The fourth chapter will provide an account of Gadamer's hermeneutical enquiry into the question of truth, which is intimately connected to the question of art. It will be shown that, by reading Heidegger on Heidegger's own terms, Gadamer manages to develop his own individual thought and he thereby implicitly accepts Heidegger's challenge, by thinking through what is unthought in Heidegger, without being slavishly consumed by Heidegger's thinking. Furthermore, in telling us that 'reaching an understanding is a problem that must succeed or fail in the medium of language',

(Gadamer, 2007e, p.92) Gadamer makes it clear that language is pivotal for his hermeneutics. Conversation and dialogue, which is an important aspect of understanding, take place in the medium of language. However, Gadamer differentiates between everyday language, which ‘points to something beyond itself and disappears behind it’ and the language of poetry, which ‘shows itself even as it points, so that it comes to stand in its own right’. (Gadamer, 1986b, p.67) Language, as Heidegger tells us, is what defines us as human beings, or as Gadamer puts it, ‘man is an essentially linguistic being...and we become acquainted with men and in the last analysis with ourselves when we learn to speak’. (Gadamer, 1977b, pp.61-62-63) It will be shown that the question of the beautiful is of central importance in Gadamer’s treatment of the work of art, as he sees it, the function of the beautiful is to bridge the chasm between the ideal and the real, which ties the concept of the beautiful to the ontological register of understanding and self-understanding. And, in Plato Gadamer finds a connection between the beautiful and *alētheia*. Furthermore, by clarifying that Plato’s thinking stands ‘in between the early thinkers and the scholastic form of metaphysics’, (Gadamer, 1994d, p.82) it is clear that what Gadamer is offering is a reading of Plato prior to Platonism and to the systematic or doctrinal readings of Plato, which supports a Platonistic thinking. Therefore, this allows Gadamer to work from a metaphysical background that does not bind him to one picture of the tradition nor isolate him from metaphysics, in the same way as Heidegger, who is intent on the ‘overcoming’ [*Überwinden*] of metaphysics, which he later tempers as a ‘getting over’ [*Verwinden*] of metaphysics. Apart from Heidegger and Plato, it will be seen that Gadamer’s thinking is significantly influenced by Hegel. However, Gadamer makes it clear that his hermeneutical practice of understanding, by means of conversation or dialogue, does not in any way resemble Hegel’s dialectic process of enquiry which, he believes, could possibly be seen as a prefiguration of a determining modern scientific method of enquiry. An area where Gadamer’s originality is particularly evident is in his theory of play, and by developing the notion of play and making its connection to the playful event of art and our encounter with it he succeeds in further demonstrating the relevance of art within our everyday lives. The to and fro of play, whether we are competing with a game or with another, forms the instructive aspect of playing which enhances our capacity for understanding the structures of society, and our self-understanding. The

notion of play, festival, and symbol, in relation to art, found in Gadamer's later essay 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', will be explored in detail in this chapter.

In the final chapter, I intend to discuss the project's overriding and unifying objective, which concerns the philosophical importance of art in enabling an experience of truth to occur, which cannot happen in any other way and which exceeds the notion of truth as correspondence and correctness, or assertoric truth. Having chosen to explore this subject through the phenomenological-hermeneutical investigations of Heidegger and Gadamer, I will reflect on their individual treatment of the subject, by first noting Heidegger's orientation towards the future, in understanding Dasein as a being towards death. Whereas, although in agreement with Heidegger concerning our finitude, Gadamer emphasises the historical tradition and acknowledges the importance of the past, in defining what we are and what we have become in dialogue with each other. It will be made clear that the common thread that brings their thoughts closest together, which is central to this thesis, is the question of the work of art, its 'work-being', in its role of allowing the reciprocal event of truth to occur. For both Heidegger and Gadamer *alētheia* is what makes this event possible, however, they each view the experience of truth in different ways. I will discuss the claim that for Heidegger, going back to Heraclitus, truth comes like a flash of lightning and contains untruth, whereas for Gadamer, recognition of truth is a slow mediated event that requires us to take time and 'tarry' with the experience.

I also intend to discuss varying views that both of these thinkers take towards the metaphysical tradition by taking into account Heidegger's intention to 'overcome' metaphysics and Gadamer's more measured approach, whereby he acknowledges the debt that we owe to the two-thousand years of a metaphysical tradition on which we stand. The question of humanism will be explored in the light of Heidegger's rejection of the traditional metaphysical notion of humanism, on the grounds that it does not go far enough in establishing the 'proper dignity of the human being'. (Heidegger, 1998b) Taking a very different view to Heidegger, Gadamer claims that the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] can best be understood by starting from the tradition of humanism. Whilst they each take a different approach to the question of humanism, I

will argue that, by his rejection of the traditional notion of humanism, Heidegger cannot be understood to condone inhumane acts, but is rather, seeking the fundamental thinking behind this notion, which is a characteristic of his entire philosophical enquiry. However, this thesis will show that Gadamer's treatment of the question of humanism enables him, particularly through his development of the notion of the play of art, to take his enquiry beyond Heidegger. And to thereby see how the play of art opens up a space for us to address the participative event of the social encounter with the other that both makes me the person I am and allows me to contribute to the person they are. It will be seen that through our participation in play, we gain an understanding of the structures of society and of the communal and social aspects of living, which also lead to self-understanding as a responsive and responsible participant in the play of truth and truthfulness.

I will conclude the final chapter with an analysis of Heidegger's and Gadamer's thinking about the question of science and technology which indicates an awareness, on the part of both of these thinkers, of the important contribution which science makes to knowledge, coupled with a sense of the impending dangers of living in an increasingly scientific world. It will be seen that, in order to avoid becoming a part of the scientific-technological machine, they both stress the urgency of an informed understanding of the potentially pernicious effects of technology. However, in Heidegger's view, this understanding can only be found in a realm which is close to technology and he concludes that this realm could be found in art. For Gadamer, such understanding is achieved by means of dialogue and conversation, thereby identifying language as the way towards understanding differently.

As I have shown, the aim of this thesis is, by first gaining an understanding of what we mean when we refer to the questions of truth and being, to explore how the work of art is intrinsically connected to these questions in its unique role of enabling the event of the disclosure of truth to occur. To this end, I intend to engage with the philosophical enquiries of Heidegger and Gadamer, paying particular attention to their separate treatments of the question of art, which offers a new way of thinking about art that is not confined by the subjectivism of aesthetics traditionally understood.

Furthermore, it will be seen that the event of the disclosure of truth is a reciprocal act which requires the participation and cooperation of the human being, thus affirming the intrinsic connection between truth, being, and the human being.

This thesis is not intended as a simple comparison between the work of Heidegger and Gadamer. But rather, by showing some of the most important aspects of their respective philosophies, particularly in the area of truth, being, and the work of art, the thesis aims to highlight the role of the work of art in enabling a participatory event of truth. By examining Heidegger's enquiry into the meaning of being in Chapter One, which includes a detailed account of the question of truth and of truth's intrinsic connection to being, and continuing with a further discussion on truth in Chapter Two, I intend to provide a background for the ensuing philosophical discussion of both Heidegger and Gadamer. It will be seen that Gadamer takes from aspects of Heidegger's thinking, notably in his espousal of the ancient Greek notion of *alētheia*, denoting disclosedness, to support his claim for the role of art in facilitating an enactment of truth. Chapters Three and Four are concerned with the question of the work of art, through the lenses of both Heidegger and Gadamer respectively, and the final chapter will highlight their areas of agreement and divergence in more detail. The areas where the thinking of both Heidegger and Gadamer diverge will be discussed, notably in the areas of metaphysics and the question of humanism. Gadamer's treatment of Heidegger cannot be viewed as a polemic, but rather as an immanent critique insofar as his own philosophical hermeneutics takes the discussion beyond Heidegger in certain areas, by mining down into what remains unexplored and rejected in Heidegger's work. And it will be shown that it is through his espousal of the humanistic tradition that Gadamer is enabled to explore the relevance of art in shaping the social and cultural ambience of everyday living, in a way that Heidegger, who attempts to overcome or recover from metaphysics, fails to do. This notwithstanding, the overall philosophical value of this thesis lies in its ability to illuminate the depth of thought on the part of both Heidegger and Gadamer, and to show how they each in their own distinctive philosophical ways succeed in affirming the intrinsic link between truth, being, and the work of art.

# Chapter One: Heidegger's Phenomenological Investigation of 'Truth [*Wahrheit*]' and 'Being [*Sein*]'

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with Heidegger's phenomenological investigation concerning the question of the meaning and truth of being which was, as Joseph J. Kockelmans points out, the one abiding question that he stayed with through his entire career.<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that Heidegger's thoughts stagnated with the same question throughout his work but rather, as will be shown, in his search for an answer to the question of the 'meaning of being', his enquiry encompassed ontology in the broadest possible way. I will show that, in his analysis of the question of truth in §44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger clearly indicates that there is an inextricable link between truth and being. Moreover, it will be made clear that the integral connection between these fundamental questions of philosophy is central to Heidegger's unique philosophical treatment of the subject of 'Art',<sup>2</sup> whereby, in exposing the prejudices inherent in the traditional aesthetic perception of the work of art, he highlights art's participation in the event of truth.

However, to first gain an understanding of Heidegger's approach to the questions of being and truth, I will begin, in this chapter, by studying his analysis of being which is the focus of his enquiry in his magnum opus *Being and Time*. By means of an analytic of an existential being, one that questions its own being, Heidegger questions the being of human existence in itself. In the interest of maintaining a neutral perspective, he calls this existential being, *Dasein*. Furthermore, in the 1920s, prior to the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger delivered a series of lectures concerning the question of truth. These lectures, which were first published in English in 2010 in a

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Kockelmans, 'Heidegger kept insisting that his thought was oriented toward one basic issue only. Every thinker thinks only one single thought. That essentially distinguishes him from the scientist. For Heidegger, this basic and focal point was the question concerning the meaning of Being'. (Kockelmans, 1984, p.45)

<sup>2</sup> I will give a detailed analysis of Heidegger's treatment of art, in Chapter Three of this thesis.

volume entitled *Logic: The Question of Truth* and were considered to have provided the basis for *Being and Time*, will also be consulted for the purpose of my investigation.

In a detailed analysis of truth in §44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger returns to the ancient Greeks where he identifies what he claims to be the primordial locus of truth. And, in what represents a departure from traditional metaphysics, it will be seen that by adopting a phenomenological approach he traces recognition of the inherent link between truth and being back to the ancient Greeks. Heidegger's investigation begins with the observation that the question of being, which had occupied the thought of Plato and Aristotle, remains unresolved. And, to further illustrate the evasiveness of this question, he invokes the following comment from Plato's *Sophist*, as a prelude to his own research in *Being and Time* "For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression 'being' [*seiend*']. We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed". (Heidegger, 2010a, p.xxix). Heidegger further adds that the question of being, which provided a stimulus for the thinking of Plato and Aristotle, has since that time not just been neglected but has been deemed to be superfluous, disturbing, obscure and hidden and not to be clear or self-evident. Our familiarity with the concept of being is in no small way responsible for this neglect, as in Heidegger's view we foster the notion that we already have knowledge of being in our comprehension of everything that we already encounter as an entity. However, contrary to this notion, he is of the view that 'the concept of "being" is indefinable', finding convincing support in Blaise Pascal's conclusion that '...one cannot define a word without beginning in this way: 'It is...' This beginning may be expressed or implied. Thus, in order to define being one must say 'It is...' and hence employ the word to be defined in its definition'. (Heidegger, 2010a, p.4) Heidegger responds to the seeming absurdity of any attempt to define the concept of 'being' by appealing to a fundamental ontology by means of an analysis of the existential Dasein which, as already noted, in eschewing the term 'human' is Heidegger's preferred 'neutral' term for the entity which is the subject of his investigation and investigator.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> In a detailed analysis of Dasein, within the context of Heidegger's research, Thomas Sheehan begins by reminding us that for Heidegger the question at the centre of his investigation concerns 'the *meaning* of being'. And Sheehan's stated aim is 'to show that Dasein is the answer to the question about the meaning of being.' (Sheehan, 2005, p.193) We are reminded that when Heidegger speaks of 'being' he means

Dasein's neutrality is considered to be essential to an enquiry into the meaning of being because, as Heidegger points out, 'the interpretation of this being must be carried out prior to every factual concretion. This neutrality also indicates that Dasein is neither of the two sexes'. (Heidegger, 1984b, p.136) In other words, being must be understood from an impartial viewpoint. Dasein, Heidegger explains, is a being whose being is an issue and at issue for it, in that it is the only being which possesses awareness of its own finitude, and of its own possibilities for non-being. For this reason, as he states, it is 'that entity which already comports itself, in its being, towards what we are asking about...' (Heidegger, 1962, p.35) The question which Heidegger is addressing, as already clarified, concerns the meaning of being which, he concludes, can only possibly be understood within the context of the horizon of *time*. Therefore, Dasein in its existential, finite mode of being provides Heidegger with an effective means of enquiry into the meaning of being.

## 1.2 Dasein's Manner of Existing in the World

The very fact that being is considered the 'most universal' and empty concept, the understanding of which, as Heidegger states, 'is already included in conceiving anything which one apprehends as an entity', (Heidegger, 1962, p.22) rather than serving to enhance our knowledge of being, leaves it, as Heidegger states, 'veiled in darkness', thus making an enquiry into the question of the meaning of being ever more necessary. Having identified 'Dasein' as an entity for whom the 'Understanding of Being' is a definite characteristic of its being and for whom 'Being in a world is something that belongs essentially', (Heidegger, 1962, p.33) Heidegger confirms that in the case of the question of the meaning of being 'Dasein is not only the primary entity to be interrogated; it is also that entity which already comports itself, in its being, towards what we are asking about...'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.35) This leads him, by means of an existential analysis of Dasein, to proceed with an investigation of being

---

meaningfulness and, in order to illustrate this point, Sheehan cites Heidegger's post World War One lecture in which he brings students to the realization that their 'first encounter in their lived experience' is 'the meaningful [*das Bedeutsame*]'. (Sheehan, 2005, p.197) Furthermore, as Sheehan states, 'Heidegger's own hermeneutical phenomenology consists in identifying the world as the source of all meaning. *Die Welt weltet...*' (Sheehan, 2005, p.197) It becomes clear from this that a detailed analysis of the existential Dasein, as a being-in-the-world, involved with things in the world is, as Sheehan suggests, the way to approach the question of the meaning of being.

which is aimed at gaining an understanding of the existence and co-existence of human beings and their relation to the meaning and sense of being as a whole.

Existential-ontological Dasein occupies two modes of being and the main thrust of Heidegger's enquiry leads him to an analysis of Dasein in its everydayness, and to the 'inauthentic' mode of being, in which it is preoccupied by things in the world. This 'double mode' of being is understood by Rudolf Bernet in the light of Heidegger's response to Edmund Husserl's phenomenological reduction, which isolates the 'double life of the transcendental subject'. Bernet states that

In *Heidegger*, this split within the transcendental subject assumes the form of Dasein's double mode of existence. In "inauthentic" or "improper" [*improper*] existence Dasein attends to the practical matters of its familiar world, while in "authentic" or "proper" [*proper*] existence it is led to care for its own proper being. (Bernet, 1994, p.247)

Both of these modes of being form an integral aspect of the existential Dasein-analytic. However, for the most part Dasein occupies an inauthentic or 'fallen' state of existence whereby it becomes absorbed by the world, causing a fascination with or captivation by the things within it. The use of terms such as 'inauthentic' and 'fallen' might seem to suggest that Heidegger is, in this context, referring to an inferior mode of being, however, he refutes this notion by claiming that 'inauthentic' or 'fallen' are descriptive, i.e. value-neutral, constitutive terms for the mode of Dasein's existential-ontological being-in-the-world. He further states that the prefix 'in-' of 'inauthentic' should not be taken to imply a passive mode of being in the world, such as merely existing 'in' this world, like a stone could exist within a container to the exclusion of the Self, and he confirms that 'The world belongs to Being-one's-Self as Being-in-the-world'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.186) Therefore, for Heidegger the study of Dasein in a state of 'fallenness', by means of a systematic analysis, forms a crucial aspect of an enquiry which allows him to explicate the various ways of being of Dasein and its structures.

### 1.3 Dasein, as a Social Being

Heidegger starts by enquiring into the ‘who’ of Dasein in its everydayness, and by clarifying that ‘All the structures of Being which belong to Dasein, together with the phenomenon which provides the answer to this question of the ‘who’, are ways of its Being’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.149) In attempting to gain an understanding of the ‘who’ of Dasein, Heidegger examines its structures or structural tendencies which, in his view, are equiprimordial with being-in-the-world. These include being-with [*Mitsein*], as in being with other people in a mutually shared world, which is radically different to the being proximally present-at-hand of an entity. And ‘Dasein-with’ or being-one’s-Self [*Selbstein*], which allows for self-knowledge and self-awareness and which Heidegger sees as the link to furthering our understanding of the ‘they’ or the ‘other’, in relation to Dasein. He confirms that these structures are central to Dasein’s being-in-the-world by stating that ‘The world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]’, it is the means by which Dasein in recognising his own being-with already understands the being of others. Heidegger does not offer any explanation of how Dasein acquires the characteristic of being-with, but sees it rather as an *a priori* property of every Dasein.

Understanding Dasein’s mode of being in its everydayness is, in Heidegger’s view, the route to encountering the Dasein of Others and it is to this end that he pursues the existential question of the ‘who’ of Dasein. Having established that ‘Dasein is an entity which is in each case I myself; its Being is in each case mine’, (Heidegger, 1962, p.150) it is gleaned that an ‘I’ and not ‘others’ is this entity and therefore that the question of the ‘who’ is to be answered in terms of the ‘I’. This cannot however be taken to mean the isolated Cartesian ‘I’. Heidegger clearly rejects the solipsistic notion of the thinking ‘I’ as a separate substance, the espousal of which, he maintains, would amount to equating Dasein with the present-at-hand, which is the kind of being that ‘belongs to entities whose character is not that of Dasein’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.150) In other words, to an entity that is not concerned with its own being, to an entity whose being is not an issue or at issue for it. Furthermore, he explains that Being-in-the-world, which, as previously stated, includes the equiprimordial structure of being-with [*Mitsein*], precludes the possibility of ‘a bare subject’ without a world existing in isolation from ‘others’. This view is further endorsed by Theodore Schatzki’s

translation of *Mitsein*, to mean coexistence, which he equates with ‘sociality’. Furthermore, Schatzki points out that in Heidegger’s view ‘human existence is essentially social; an essential feature of an individual life is that other lives bear on it’. (Schatzki, 2007, p.234) It is through reflective interaction with others that we attain self-awareness, which will become evident by examining Heidegger’s account of Dasein’s ways of encountering others and of sharing the world with others.

According to Heidegger, ‘The “who” is what maintains itself as something identical throughout changes in its Experiences and ways of behaviour...’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.150). However, in stating this Heidegger is not suggesting a fixed human nature, being mindful of the historical projective aspect of Dasein’s existence, in that rather than being an actuality it projects towards its ownmost possibility or self-transcendence. In further querying the question of the ‘who’, Heidegger states that the ‘who’ is *not* the ‘I myself’, thereby concluding that the ‘who’ is just ‘not oneself [*man selbst*], not some people [*einige*], and not the sum of them all but is rather the neuter, *the “they”* [*das Man*]’, (Heidegger, 1962, p.164) thereby establishing that Dasein’s identity lies in being-with-others as a part of society. Heidegger further endorses this finding by stating that, ‘[S]o far as Dasein *is* at all, it has Being-with-one-another as its kind of Being’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.163) And as Schatzki has confirmed, Dasein is essentially a social being.

‘Being-in-the-world’ is not concerned with mere spatial occupancy and should not be understood as a reference to Dasein’s physical position within the world. It is rather to do with existing-towards the world and with the various modes of being within the world. It is in this context that Dasein forms relationships and has encounters with others, whom, because of its awareness of its structure of being-with, it recognises as other Daseins. For Heidegger what he terms ‘Being-with [*Mitsein*]’ concerns the way in which we interact with others. It is an existential characteristic of Dasein, without which it would lack the capacity to encounter other Daseins and our survival depends upon our encounters with other Daseins. Furthermore, as Heidegger points out, self-knowledge ‘is grounded in Being-with’. The reflective aspect of being-with is what gives us an awareness of our own situation in a shared world. Because, as Heidegger

claims, Dasein as Being-with 'is' essentially for the sake of others even when the other is not present or when Dasein retreats from the other in an effort to be alone, this state of aloneness still presupposes a form of being-with. 'The Other can *be missing* only *in* and *for* a Being-with. Being-alone is a deficient mode of Being-with'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.157) In short, it is only through our experience of being with others that their absence becomes perceptible. Conversely, just as the absence of the other is bound up with the phenomenon of being-with, a mere physical presence of others does not preclude the phenomenon of being-alone. One can be alone in the midst of a crowd if there is a perceived lack of approval or empathy with the other, which clearly indicates that our mode of encountering the other is the determinant of the perception of aloneness or, conversely of the level of engagement between one Dasein and the other. However, even if there is a sense of distance and alienation between Dasein and the Dasein of others, there is always an awareness of the other, which constitutes a form of 'being-with', albeit, as Heidegger points out, in a deficient mode.

#### **1.4 Dasein; in the Mode of Care**

The other is encountered in the environment which is closest to us, which, as Heidegger explains, can best be understood by reference to the work-world of the craftsman, stating that along with the equipment which is found...

Others for whom the 'work'...is destined are 'encountered too'...The boat anchored at the shore is assigned in its Being-in-itself to an acquaintance who undertakes voyages with it; but even if it is a 'boat which is strange to us', it still is indicative of Others. (Heidegger, 1962, pp.153-54)

Dasein's constant acknowledgment of others is made possible by his recognition of the 'being-with' of his own being and by the being-in-the-world of the Dasein of others. By 'Others', 'we do not mean everyone else but me—those over against whom the "I" stands out. They are rather those for whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself—those among whom one is too'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.154) In other words, we can identify with the other by recognising their innate mode of being-with. Dasein relates to the world through what it 'does, uses, expects, avoids, and in all the things

which are ready-to-hand' with which it is concerned. However, although the Dasein-with of others can often be encountered through what is 'ready-to-hand' in the world, the others are not encountered as 'person-Things present-at-hand' but are rather encountered in their being-with in the world. Unlike things which are ready-to-hand and towards which Dasein's concern is manifested as 'care', in the case of its encounters with other Daseins 'care' more appropriately becomes a form of 'solicitude'. As King suggests, Heidegger's use of the term '*Fürsorge*', which translates variously as 'welfare', 'care', 'aid', can be best understood as 'solicitude' in the context of being-with the other. (King, 2001, p.77) Factual social activities, such as 'welfare work', which is concerned with the interest of others, are according to Heidegger, 'grounded in Dasein's state of Being as Being-with' and provide examples of 'solicitude' or 'care-for', which appears to amount to recognition, by Heidegger, of the ethical dimension of an existential being in the world. However, there are various means by which solicitude can be manifested which include either for, against, or without one another, and for much of the time Dasein's care-for each other in its everydayness can be deficient and indifferent. However this indifferent mode of being in which entities are with one another is ontologically distinct from the 'indifferent' way in which 'Things at random occur together', which suggests an active awareness of the other.

Moreover, Solicitude, in its various modes, is seen to have 'two extreme possibilities'. Within the first positive mode 'care' is taken away from the other to be taken 'care of' by another Dasein, effectively depriving the other of the opportunity to exercise their self-responsibility and thereby compromising their independence. This kind of solicitude, in taking over from the other what is essentially his or her concern, puts them in the position of either choosing to accept the outcome or avoid the concern completely. The consequences of this type of solicitude, which can be prompted by a desire for control or an urge to protect, can have a stifling effect on the other causing them, often unobtrusively, to become dominated and dependent, and it is clearly to be guarded against. It is, according to Heidegger, a widespread phenomenon in everyday being with one another. The second extreme kind of solicitude, as described by Heidegger, 'does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him [*vorausspringt*] in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his

'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time'. (Heidegger, 1962, pp.158-59) In other words, rather than allowing the other to approach his concern alone it anticipates the obstacles ahead and attempts to ease the concern, not by disburdening him of his care but by returning it to him 'authentically' as his own. This kind of solicitude is concerned with the existence of the other rather than the particular care in question, and with allowing the other a freedom and self-awareness by means of enabling it to confront its own care structure. For the most part in our everyday being with one another, as Heidegger observes, we fluctuate between various mixed forms of solicitude, which are situated between the two aforementioned extreme modes. However, at this juncture he avoids any discussion concerning these various forms, deeming it to be superfluous within the context of his present investigation.

Before he sums up his findings in this regard, Heidegger briefly discusses the two guiding features of solicitude. These translate from the original German words *Rücksicht* and *Nachsicht* to mean, at least in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation, 'considerateness' and 'forbearance' respectively. King elaborates by explaining both of these features within the context of the two extreme modes of solicitude, stating that '*Rücksicht*...means an understanding that lies in looking back...On thrownness and dependence upon a world that has to be taken care of'. (King, 2001, p.78) But, as is further explained, thrownness is always connected with the other for whom and with whom 'the world has to be taken care of', (King, 2001, p.78) therefore *Rücksicht* can be understood to refer to the 'leaping-in' mode of caring-for. '*Nachsicht*, on the other hand is an understanding that lies in seeing or looking towards something such as to 'the possibility of being a self...[which] is only possible with another self. Dasein thus bears care for the other self;' (King, 2001, p.78) Therefore, *Nachsicht* can be understood as the guide of the leaping-in and leaping-ahead manner of caring-for. Within both of these guiding features of solicitude there can be a wide range of modes, which are referred to by Heidegger as '*Nachsehen*', and are understood in this context to have derogatory connotations, denoting a careless, uncaring tolerance and indifference towards the other.

In summation, Heidegger reaffirms that being with others is an intrinsic and constitutive part of the existential being of Dasein. He states that even when Dasein turns away from others in an indifferent mode, and seemingly manages to get along without them, that this is a form of being-with in which the other is an essential part of Dasein's being. Because, a part of Dasein's innate structure is being-with, it follows that there is an implicit understanding of others in its understanding of being, including knowing oneself which comes about from 'being-with-others-in-the-world', and Heidegger takes this notion as 'the only basis from which an ontological analysis of Dasein can even start'. (King, 2001, p.79) In the everyday world, where for the most part Dasein exists, the other is constantly encountered environmentally in various guises, such as a customer for the weaver, the supplier of raw materials, or the buyer in the individual's book shop. Others can also be encountered non-interactively, by contact with an entity which is intended for another or as the absent owner of the visibly cared for field, which one observes whilst walking along its edge. The kind of being which we encounter in this way, belongs to the Dasein of others whom 'in accordance with their kind of Being as Dasein themselves—are 'in' the world and living towards the world, in which they are at the same encountered within-the-world, and are 'in' it by way of Being-in-the-world'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.154) However, due to an acknowledged prevalence of the deficient or indifferent modes of the solicitude of Dasein towards the other in its everyday being, which can be manifested by a lack of openness, self-knowledge can become obscured by a closing-off of oneself, which effectively renders true self-knowledge, or knowledge of the other to remain concealed. This can be problematic, as in its everyday encounters Dasein, for the most part, does not get beyond an average understanding of the other, nor of itself.

Heidegger argues that 'Being towards Others is ontologically different from Being towards Things which are present-at-hand' (Heidegger, 1962, p.162) and he confirms that the other has the same kind of Being as Dasein, which suggests a link between Dasein and Dasein. However, a problem arises if being-towards others is another form of being-towards-oneself, in that the other could be seen as a duplicate or self-analogising confirmer of the Self, thereby depriving Dasein of its existential-ontological particularity. Heidegger rejects this notion, by stating that '[N]ot only is

being towards Others an autonomous, irreducible relationship of Being: this relationship, as Being-with, is one which, with Dasein's Being, already is', (Heidegger, 1962, p.162) and with this statement Heidegger reaffirms the *a priori* status of being-with. He concludes this section of his enquiry by confirming that for the most part Dasein encounters itself, in the same way as the Dasein-with of others in terms of the with-world. However, he follows this with the observation that in its being-with towards Others, Dasein 'is not itself', which leads him to query, 'who' is the self of everyday existence?

### **1.5 The Self of Everyday Existence**

In searching for the self of everyday existence, Heidegger seeks an existential definition of the 'subject character' of one's own Dasein and that of others, by which certain ways of one's being are described. In our everyday environmental encounters, he states, others meet us 'as what they are; they are what they do...'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.163) However, by this it is not to be understood that each Dasein is defined in a superficial way by its occupation or profession which, as has already been seen, is how the other can be encountered environmentally. It is rather, about how they understand themselves and comport themselves towards the other Dasein. In its everydayness Dasein measures itself in terms of others, by looking to what they have achieved or failed to achieve in the world, thereby understanding itself in terms of the difference between itself and others. 'The care about this distance between them is disturbing to being-with-one-another, though this disturbance is one that is hidden from it'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.164) And in working out this distance, everyday Dasein creates a 'distantiality' or 'stand-offishness' [*Abständigkeit*] of itself from the others, which can be manifested in various ways, such as by the perception that one's own Dasein has lagged behind the others and wants 'to catch up in relationship to them', which suggests a sense of one's own inadequacy in relation to the others. Or conversely Dasein can, from a position of superiority, attempt to keep the other suppressed. Through this way of comporting himself in his everydayness, King observes that

Da-sein understands his existence by "standing off" from the others and not by the genuine possibilities that lie in the uniqueness of his

finite self. Da-sein looks away from the true distance, the limit of his finite being, from which alone he can become transparent as the self he is, and measures his self in advance by his distance from what the others are and do. (King, 2001, p.81)

What this shows is that, either through a feeling of inadequacy in relation to the other or through a delusional sense of superiority, Dasein relinquishes its own sense of self and becomes subjugated to the other, thereby highlighting the need to live with, rather than to measure ourselves against the other.

In response to his own rhetorical question, Heidegger concludes that it is the other 'who has taken over Being as everyday Being-with-one-another'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.163) Others, as Heidegger again stresses, are not definite others but are interchangeable and can be anyone, including oneself. Every other is like the next in its concern for and utilization of entities which are ready-to-hand in the world, such as public transport or information in the newspaper, thereby making them indiscernible from each other and rendering one's own Dasein indistinguishable and indistinct. The effect of this, King points out, is that 'the ontological character of Dasein's being, which is always singly and uniquely *my* being, comes into a mode of not-being in the sense that it is not itself according to its own-most possibility.' (King, 2001, pp.81-82) If Dasein is not itself then the question of who it is comes to the fore. The 'who', as Heidegger has already established, is not any particular one, neither is it the sum of one or the other. The 'who' is the neuter, *the "they"* (Heidegger, 1962, p.164) Thus Dasein, in its everyday being-with-one-another is not itself, but is taken over and has its being prescribed by the indefinite 'they'. In this being taken-over by the 'they' one's own Dasein becomes merged with or lost to the others and, as with the others, becomes inconspicuous and unascertainable. This is, according to Heidegger, where 'the real dictatorship of the "they" is unfolded'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.164) We acquiesce to the tyranny of the 'they' in our being-with-others-in-the-world, by subscribing to the average understanding of being and taking pleasure as 'they' take pleasure, by judging art and literature in the way the 'they' prescribe, and by shunning the things as 'they' shun them. The averageness of the 'they-self' reveals the essential tendency for all differences (in the life of Dasein) to be 'levelled down' [*Einebnung*]. There is a

disquieting aspect to this 'levelling down' of all possibilities of being, which Heidegger refers to as 'publicness' [*Öffentlichkeit*].

Publicness controls the way in which the world is perceived, not because of its privileged access to things but rather because of its insensitivity to the differences between genuineness and averageness, which precludes any depth of understanding or seeing and effectively renders everything commonplace. Nonetheless, the point can be made that conformity to a certain extent is not necessarily a bad thing, as it frees us from having to constantly engage in making mundane decisions. Whilst Heidegger is not arguing with this notion, he never loses sight of the implicit dangers involved in conformity, which can result in a lack of clarity regarding who actually makes the decisions and choices. 'It remains indefinite who has 'really' done the choosing. So Dasein makes no choices, gets carried along by the nobody, and thus ensnares itself in inauthenticity'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.312) A process, he states, that 'can be reversed only if Dasein specifically brings itself back to itself from its lostness in the "they"... In choosing to make this choice, Dasein *makes possible*, first and foremost, its authentic potentiality-for-Being'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.312) Thus Heidegger effectively cautions us about the dangers of conformism in that, by allowing others to think and speak for us and talk us out of ourselves, we may eventually lose sight of our own possibilities and thereby relinquish our freedom.

In our 'inauthentic' mode we disburden ourselves of responsibility by hiding behind the indistinguishable 'they' and attributing blame to the 'they', which means that no one is responsible, because it is always the other who understands and decides how things will be. 'Everyone is the other, and no one is himself. The "they", which supplies the answer to the question of the "who" of everyday Dasein, is the "nobody" to whom every Dasein has already surrendered itself in Being-among-one-another'. (Heidegger, 1962, pp.165-66) However, Dasein can never completely be absorbed by the 'they', as not to be oneself and to be 'a nobody' is only possible to an already existing self. Therefore, the 'they' cannot be understood as a separate species, but rather as a true mode of existence for Dasein. However, in the inauthentic mode of existence Dasein hides behind the 'they' and fails to acknowledge its own essential

being, thereby evading the truth of being and, although this mode of existence represents ‘inauthenticity and failure to stand by one’s Self’, Heidegger does not apparently view this as a diminution of Dasein’s facticity, neither does he understand the ‘they’, as the ‘nobody’, in a negative sense. On the contrary, the ‘they’ constitutes a fundamental mode of Dasein’s existence and not some ontic quality which is imposed upon Dasein from outside. Although, as it has been seen, Dasein remains for the most part in its inauthentic mode in the ‘they’ world when it does become aware of the world in its own way and discloses its own authentic being to itself this happens, according to Heidegger, as a result of a ‘clearing-away of concealments and obscurities’, which thereby allows for a clarity and disclosedness. This notion of disclosedness, which the Ancient Greeks termed *alētheia*, provides the foundation for Heidegger’s phenomenological investigation and permeates his entire philosophical search for truth.

Heidegger’s return to the Greek notion of *alētheia* first becomes apparent within his lecture series, delivered in the years 1925-26, and published in English in 2010, as *Logic: The Question of Truth*. These lectures, together with two further lecture courses, delivered in the 1920s and published in English as *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (1985), and *The Concept of Time* (1992), are considered to have provided the basis for *Being and Time*. They are, Heidegger states, aimed at investigating ‘an original understanding of the problem of truth and a radical way of solving it...’ (Heidegger, 2010b, p.107) In what could be viewed as a preparatory move for an analysis of truth, which he develops at length in §44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger identifies what he sees as a misrepresentation of Aristotle’s thought, in attributing the claim that the proposition is the locus of truth to Aristotle. Heidegger contests this notion, which informs the traditional theory of truth and which, in his view, stems from a mistranslation of Aristotle and he argues that ‘Aristotle never determined “truth” as such by going back to the proposition’. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.108) For Aristotle the propositional statement is speech that can be either true or false and ‘either/or is what distinguishes speech qua statement and delimits it from other kinds of speech’. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.109) Furthermore, Heidegger clarifies that for the Greeks the word for being-true is *alētheia* and he asks, ‘[W]ith Parmenides, does not... [*alētheia*],

truth, stand over the beginning of the path of philosophy?’ (Heidegger, 1998a, p.332)  
Gadamer reminds us that

Heidegger was not the first to make it known that *alētheia* means unconcealedness... [but he] taught us what it meant for the thinking of Being that truth must be won as if it were a robbery [*Raub*] from the concealment and hiddenness of things. (Gadamer, 1994i, pp.35-36)

From this it is evident that truth does not simply offer itself up or disclose itself from concealment, but rather that it has to be actively pursued, grappled with, and won. Furthermore, by stating that ‘There *is* truth only in so far as Dasein *is* and so long as Dasein *is*’, (Heidegger, 1962, p.269) Heidegger makes it clear that there is a reciprocal and constitutive relationship in the recognition of truth, of which Dasein is an essential part.<sup>4</sup> Truth disclosure is Dasein disclosure.

However, for this disclosure of truth to happen it requires openness by Dasein which, in its inauthentic mode of being in the world Dasein shies away from becoming absorbed by things in the world and measuring itself against the ‘they’. By understanding the two modes of Being-in-the-world in relation to the ‘they’ as Being-with, and Being-one’s-Self, Heidegger sees the answer to the question of the “who” of Dasein’s everyday Being-with-one-another, and thereby an understanding of the basic constitution of Dasein. As the kind of Being which belongs to the ‘they’, Dasein is ontologically interpreted and understood in terms of the world, and is thereby perceived as an entity within-the-world. This interpretation, as Heidegger points out, can effectively cause the phenomenon of the world to be passed over and become obscured by what is present-at-hand, which he specifies as ‘Things’. In concluding this section of his enquiry, Heidegger re-establishes the fact that everyday Being-with-one-another is different in principle from pure presence-at-hand, despite appearing to be close to it ontologically. Furthermore, he states, in taking this into account it is even less plausible

---

<sup>4</sup> Gadamer, who appropriated the concept of *alētheia*, in the context of truth, within his own philosophical hermeneutics, notes that ‘Heidegger renders *alētheia*, the Greek word for truth, as unhiddenness’ and he adds, in what appears to be an endorsement of Heidegger, that according to Greek thought ‘If knowledge depends on our leaving error behind us, truth is the pure unhiddenness of beings’. (Gadamer, 1977a, pp.224-25)

for the authentic Being-of-the-self to be conceived as presence-at-hand. Authentic Being-one's-Self is, he states, '*an existential modification of the "they"—of the "they" as an essential existiale*'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.168) By which, rather than completely dismissing the 'they' as an inferior figure of contempt, Heidegger endorses it, albeit in a modified form, as an integral part of Dasein's being and its awareness of its own finitude. In a word, any notion of the overcoming of the 'they-self' constitutes a fiction.

With this acknowledgment of the intrinsic role of the 'they' in constituting an integral part of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, Heidegger accepts the 'inauthentic' mode of Dasein's being in its everydayness as an essential component of its being, and he declares that in its 'inauthentic' mode Dasein is in fact an '*ens realissimum*'. The inauthenticity, which can be characterised by coercion, albeit often in subtle forms, is a real component of the structure of Dasein. Therefore, it should be understood that Dasein in this mode does in fact represent a true being and it is just as real an entity as when it is in its 'authentic' mode of being, which is conversely characterised by a lack of coercion, thereby allowing freedom in its recognition of its own being. The terms 'Inauthenticity' or 'fallenness' are not intended to denote negativity but are rather to be seen as an integral aspect of Dasein's facticity and existence, which is made possible because Dasein is a being-in-the-world whose being is an issue or at issue for it. In order to dispel any ambiguity that the use of the term 'inauthentic' may have caused, Heidegger clarifies the position, by firmly stating,

On no account...do the terms "inauthentic" and "non-authentic" signify 'really not', as if in this mode of Being, Dasein were altogether to lose its Being. "inauthenticity" does not mean anything like Being-no-longer-in-the-world, but amounts to rather a quite distinctive kind of Being-in-the-world... (Heidegger, 1962, p.220)

Conversely, as Heidegger explains, 'authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is seized upon'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.224) The implication here is that Dasein, whether in an 'inauthentic' or 'authentic' mode of being, is always to some

extent aware of its facticity. Added to this is the consideration of Dasein's concrete authenticity, whereby its possibilities are always subject to the conditions of its facticity. These are however possibilities which Dasein, for the most part, does not concern itself with in its inauthentic mode of Being. The fact that both of the aforementioned modes of being are essential characteristics of Dasein is further supported by Mulhall's observation that attaining 'authenticity does not require severing all ties with Others, as if genuine individuality presupposed isolation or even solipsism' (Mulhall, 1996, p.70) which, as we have already seen, Heidegger clearly rejects as a possible way of being for Dasein. Bearing this in mind it soon becomes clear that Dasein's attainment of self-awareness and self-knowledge cannot be achieved in isolation from others, because, as already stated, any attempt by Dasein to detach or uncouple itself from the other is still a mode of being-with, albeit a deficient one. Therefore Dasein's 'authentic' mode of self-awareness constitutes a deeper form of being-with the other, based on non-substitutable relationality, relationality of the non-relational.

### **1.6 Being-in [*In- Sein*]**

Following his enquiry into the 'who' of Dasein in its everyday being-in-the-world, in which he explicated two modes of being, being-with, and being-one's-Self, Heidegger returns to the question of 'Being-in', which makes up the totality of being-in-the-world. Each of these modes of being is semi-autonomous, interdependent and 'ultimately inseparable from...the ontological whole they make up.' (Mulhall, 1996, p.75) Heidegger's method of enquiry at this stage is to approach the phenomenon of 'Being-in as such' from the perspective of Dasein as a being that exists understandingly. And, as Mulhall points out, this entails

...recognizing that the way in which Dasein inhabits its world reflects and determines the nature of the world thus inhabited, and in particular that it is a world in which Dasein dwells together with others just like itself – a social world. (Mulhall, 1996, p.75)

Part of this recognition, for Heidegger, involves clarifying Dasein's position as a being-in-the-world, and by identifying that '*Dasein is the Being*' of the 'between' [*das*

*Zwischen*] of a subject present-at-hand and an object present-at-hand. In other words, Dasein effectively assumes a medial or mediating role which facilitates understanding between entities within the world and their intelligibility and utility. In further highlighting Dasein's thrown openness and accessibility, Heidegger states that its existential-ontological structure is, that

...it *is* in such a way as to be its "there"...*as* Being-in-the-world it is cleared...in itself, not through any other entity, but in such a way that it *is* itself the clearing...*Dasein is its disclosedness*. (Heidegger, 1962, p.171)

The clearing, or what has been termed a thrown openness, is the temporal space where intelligibility and understanding take place.<sup>5</sup> Having thereby established its position, Heidegger identifies the existential structures of Dasein that enable it to perform the task of disclosure, namely, 'Understanding' [*Verstehen*] and 'Attunement' [*Befindlichkeit*]. These structures are deemed to be equiprimordial and are identified as the two specific and fundamental characteristics of Dasein's being-in. What makes the interpretation of these existential characteristics possible, according to Heidegger, is discourse [*Rede*]. However, it is clarified that by discourse in this context 'Heidegger does not mean the ontic phenomenon of language, but an existential structure that makes language possible'. (King, 2001, p.55) Before entering into a discussion regarding discourse at this juncture, Heidegger turns his attention to conducting an analysis of 'state-of-mind' and 'understanding'.

### **1.7 'State of Mind': Attunement [*Befindlichkeit*]**

The term 'State of mind', which has been chosen by Macquarrie and Robinson, the original translators of *Being and Time* into English, to describe the German term '*Befindlichkeit*', has aroused a certain level of controversy amongst Heidegger scholars, who are of the opinion that it does not adequately convey the correct sense of the

---

<sup>5</sup>Sheehan makes the observation that "“Thrown-open-ness” and “being appropriated,” and even “anticipation” are different names for the same ontological fact: Dasein's being is always already thrust into, or claimed by, its ultimate possibility in such a way that a world of significance is opened up. Furthermore, he states that, in the 1930s Heidegger adopts the term *Ereignis* to describe 'the process of our being “pulled” or “appropriated” into what is one's own.' (Sheehan, 1999, p.294)

German word.<sup>6</sup> According to Heidegger, ‘[W]hat we indicate *ontologically* by the term “state-of-mind” is *ontically* the most familiar and everyday sort of thing; our mood, our Being-attuned’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.172) Moods can fluctuate and can change from one to another, but they are an integral part of our existence. When Heidegger suggests that we ‘should and must, through knowledge and will’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.175) be in a position to control our moods, he makes it clear that this can only be achieved by way of acquiring a ‘counter-mood’, as we are never free from moods of one kind or the other. It is through our moods we are confronted by and with ourselves and gain an insight into ourselves as existential beings, not as isolated entities but as beings-in-the-world surrounded by other beings. According to Heidegger, moods are not pre-determined, ‘[A] mood assails us. It comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside; but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being.’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.176) This way of being, which Heidegger refers to as, he claims, be best understood by exploring a concrete example of a mode of being, and to this end he provides a detailed analysis of fear, as a mode of ‘state-of-mind’.

### **1.8 Fear: As a Mode of Attunement [*Befindlichkeit*]**

Heidegger isolates what he considers to be the three points of view from which the phenomenon of fear may be considered. These include, ‘that in the face of which we fear...fearing, and...that about which we fear’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.179) which he states are not isolated phenomena, but rather combine to highlight ‘the general structure of states-of-mind’. The point is made that what we fear is the ‘fearsome’, which is something that we encounter within the world. In fearing what we perceive as a potential danger to our safety or well-being, either directly or indirectly, we are fearful

---

<sup>6</sup> According to Mulhall, this term is ‘seriously misleading, since... [state-of-mind] has a technical significance in the philosophy of mind which fails to match the range of reference of the German term, ‘*Befindlichkeit*’’. (Mulhall, 1996, p.76) However, Macquarrie and Robinson, being aware of these difficulties include the caveat that, whereas it does not fully describe it, the term ‘state-of-mind’ comes closest to what Heidegger meant. This, it is explained, is ‘that dimension of being-in-the-world that structures the affects: moods, feelings, emotions’, (Galt Crowell, 2007, p.58) and which, rather than being chosen, are imposed upon Dasein and constitute its existential being. Joan Stambaugh, in her translation into English of Heidegger’s work, first published in 1995, whilst stating a preference for the term ‘attunement’ qualifies this choice by stating that ‘disposition’ could also provide a legitimate translation for the term ‘*Befindlichkeit*’. Bearing this in mind, it should be noted that in any direct reference to the Macquarrie and Robinson translation of *Being and Time*, I will apply the term ‘state-of-mind’. In all other instances, within this work, ‘*Befindlichkeit*’ will be referred to as ‘attunement’.

for ourselves and for the threat that is posed to our own being and thereby to our ability to be. This subjective approach to fear, where we anticipate a potential threat to our being from something within the world is only possible because of our awareness of our vulnerability, which is imposed by knowledge of the finitude of our own being. Furthermore, the fact that Dasein's being is perceived to be in jeopardy from forces within the world reveals, as Mulhall states, 'not only that the world Dasein inhabits can affect it in the most fundamental ways...but also that things in the world are really capable of affecting Dasein'. (Mulhall, 1996, p.78) In other words, it illustrates Dasein's susceptibility to and its dependence upon other entities within the world. There is also the phenomenon of fearing for others which does not, as Heidegger explains, relieve the other of its fear, but does represent a way of relating to the other. The fear of a threat to the other can also be perceived as a type of fear for oneself, in that it can be viewed as an awareness of a possible threat to Dasein's capacity for 'being-with' the other.

Fearing or being fearful about something exposes the threatening and the threatened within the world. In drawing attention to three significant ways in which Dasein can encounter fear, Heidegger cites the example of how a sudden threat when perceived, albeit from a familiar source, can induce a feeling of imminence and uncertainty, which he states, causes fear to be changed into *alarm*. However, when the commonplace becomes unfamiliar 'fear becomes *dread*', and where a dreaded threat is encountered with an alarming suddenness 'fear becomes terror', thereby inducing a feeling of anxiety [*angst*]. 'On the other hand, as Dasein falls, anxiety brings it back from its absorption in the 'world'. Everyday familiarity collapses. Dasein has been individualized, but individualized *as* Being-in-the-world'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.233) This prompts the consideration that in becoming disentangled from absorption in the world and entering into its authentic mode, which is characterised by recognition of its own possibilities including the possibility of its own finitude, Dasein can ameliorate this feeling of anxiety. Whereas the feeling of fear is always induced by fear of something, the feeling of dread or anxiety cannot be attributed to any specific thing or 'entity within-the-world'. In anxiety, Heidegger states,

We cannot say what it is before which one feels ill at ease...All things and we ourselves sink into indifference...not in the sense of mere disappearance...in this very receding things turn toward us. The receding of beings as a whole that closes in on us in anxiety oppresses us. We can get no hold on things...Anxiety reveals the nothing. (Heidegger, 1993f, p.101)

We can see by this, that with the perceived withdrawal of familiar things we feel a sense of emptiness, referred to by Heidegger as ‘nothingness’. There is a nullity of truth and being revealed in anxiety, although this cannot be seen in terms of a void, as ‘nothing’ cannot be thought in isolation from being, ‘[N]othing has gone side by side with the question of what is, since its inception...Nothing can serve as a gauge and a criterion for the manner of asking about beings’. (Heidegger, 2000, p.26) And, stressing the importance of the feeling of anxiety in opening up an understanding of the truth of being, Heidegger makes the further observation that, ‘[I]n the clear night of the nothing of anxiety the original openness of beings as such arises: that they are beings—and not nothing’, (Heidegger, 1993f, p.103) thereby indicating the contrast, which is an ever present aspect of all our encounters with truth in allowing the truth to stand out. Furthermore, by stating that the ‘‘nothing’ with which anxiety brings us face to face’ reveals ‘the nullity by which Dasein, in its very basis, is defined’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.356) Heidegger shows the way it reveals the inevitable finitude of Dasein’s being-towards-death. Heidegger refers to lesser modifications of fear, which he does not explore at this juncture, but which, are to be understood as an integral part of Dasein’s existential way of being, which is to be fearful. Therefore, by isolating fear as one particular mode of ‘state-of-mind’, Heidegger succeeds in demonstrating the fundamental role that ‘state-of-mind’ has to play in the way that we exist and co-exist with others within the world.

### **1.9 Understanding; Projecting Possibilities**

‘If states-of-mind reveal Dasein as thrown being-in-the-world, understanding reveals it as carrying forward that momentum...’ (Mulhall, 1996, p.81) Understanding and states of mind which, as has already been established, are equiprimordial, are inextricably linked, as can be seen by Heidegger’s claim that ‘A state-of-mind always

has its understanding...Understanding always has its mood'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.182) 'Understanding' used in this context does not refer to a cognitive comprehension or grasping of things, but is rather concerned with both recognising and projecting possibilities onto things. Projection constitutes an essential component of understanding, as without the capacity to project any true form of understanding would be restricted, thereby opening the way to possible misunderstanding. The assumption of a thematic understanding of a thing before projecting possibilities would in Heidegger's view, 'reduce it to the given contents which we have in mind' (Heidegger, 1962, p.185), and would thereby be in danger of masking its potential. Understanding a thing has to be discovered and it is because Dasein is an entity whose being is an issue for it that its understanding is always connected to its unique possibilities, including the inescapable possibility of its own death.

In highlighting Dasein's awareness that some possibilities which it envisions carry with them the possibility of 'not', King points out that, 'The understanding of this not reveals to each Dasein his being as singly and solely his, and so brings him to himself in the uniqueness of his finite self.' (King, 2001, p.60) In other words, understanding the possibility of a 'not' and thereby having an awareness of the limits of its horizon is the defining feature of an existential Dasein. It is within its authentic mode that Dasein is enabled to free itself from its fascination with things within-the-world and project itself onto the possibilities that are available to it. Heidegger points out that in terms of being a possibility and not an actuality, the thing is ontologically on a lower level than actuality and necessity, (Heidegger, 1962, p.183) nevertheless, he states that possibility, as an existential characteristic of Dasein, is the 'most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically.' (Heidegger, 1962, p.183) An understanding of its potential for 'not being', which has just been discussed, and recognition of its 'Being-possible' is what impels Dasein towards its possibilities. There is also the consideration, which is highlighted by Mulhall, that 'if Dasein's Being is an issue for it, then each moment of its existence it must actualize one of the possibilities which its situation makes available to it...' (Mulhall, 1996, pp.81,82) The inference to be gleaned by this thought is that in constantly realising or projecting itself onto its available possibilities Dasein effectively enacts its understanding. What

can also be ascertained from Mulhall's observation is that as an existential being-in-the-world, which is subject to available possibilities, Dasein is not fully autonomous and, therefore, Heidegger's assertion that '*The essence of Dasein lies in its existence*' (Heidegger, 1962, p.67) cannot be taken to imply that Dasein is free to choose its essence in the Sartrean sense. As a being which is, in Heideggerian terms, 'thrown' into the world, Dasein is both guided and shaped by the shadow of its facticity, which is inextricably linked to its ability-to-be [*Seinkönnen*] and its existence.

Understanding, as already mentioned, always entails looking forward or projecting towards or onto possibilities and projection shows that understanding understands itself in terms of possibilities. Because projection is an ontological characteristic of Dasein, Heidegger posits the notion that 'Dasein is constantly 'more' than it factually is'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.185) However, he qualifies this assertion by clarifying that because Dasein's 'ability-to-be' is an essential part of its facticity, it is existentially that which, in its 'ability-to-be', 'it is *not yet*...it *is* what it becomes'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.186) Projection, as the task of Dasein, is always directed towards the unknown and, as we have seen, the essence of Dasein lies in its 'to be'. This line of reasoning prompts Heidegger, going back to Pindar, to invoke his dictate 'Become what you are' and to thereby endorse its relevance within the context of understanding. Thus it is becoming what you already are, what is ontologically always already the case, on the basis of being what you become. Heidegger reaffirms that in its existential state Dasein always has and always will understand itself in terms of its possibilities and not actualities, and as such it is possibility which stands higher than actuality. Dasein's existential understanding of its possibilities is rooted in its understanding of 'Self' as possibility and as self-possibilizing, within the context of its essential structure as a being-in-the-world. As he explains,

Understanding of Being has already been taken for granted in projecting upon possibilities. In projection, Being is understood, though not ontologically conceived. An entity whose kind of Being is the essential projection of Being-in-the-world has understanding of Being... (Heidegger, 1962, pp.187-88)

Heidegger thereby confirms that projection is only possible for an entity that already has an awareness and understanding of being. Having thus clarified that understanding is a prerequisite for projection, or that understanding is projective, he turns his attention to the development or unfolding of understanding, which is, he states, ‘interpretation’ [*Auslegung*]. Heidegger then clarifies that ‘In interpretation. Understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself. (Heidegger, 1962, p.188)

Having reaffirmed that for Dasein understanding is concerned with its projection towards possibilities which are understood as an ability to be, Heidegger explains that in projection understanding has the possibility of attaining self-awareness and of ‘developing itself’. This development of the understanding is, in his view, what we call ‘interpretation’. However, he clarifies that rather than being changed by interpretation and becoming something different, understanding becomes more firmly established as ‘itself’. Interpretation involves working out the possibilities which are ‘projected in understanding’ and which confront us when we are forced to reflect on the ‘ready-to-hand’ entity of which we already have an understanding. Heidegger elaborates by giving an example of repairing or adjusting a familiar thing, which is ready-to-hand, and in the process being required to contemplate it in a different way. This does not mean that we bestow meaning on something which we encounter existentially because that which is ‘ready to hand’, as stated, is already understood by its Being-in-the-world. It is rather a matter of rendering visible in a more explicit way that of which we already have an understanding. This understanding of the environmentally ready-to-hand allows us to see the ‘structure of *something as something*’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.189) and it is the ‘as’ in this context which is important for Heidegger, because it provides an explicit status of the thing in the world. He further illustrates this by citing examples of how we interpret things, ‘*as a table, a door, a carriage, or a bridge...*’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.189) In cases where the ‘as’, which allows us to see the totality of the thing, is absent there results a restricted form of understanding where the potential of the thing and its totality is obscured. Mulhall sums it up with the observation that ‘Seeing-as is simply the fundamental structure of the totality of reference—or assignment-relations that make up the world’. (Mulhall, 1996, pp.85,86) Furthermore, by highlighting the essential purpose and meaning of things in the world, ‘seeing as’ renders the world more

interconnected to Dasein. And as previously observed, interpreting ‘as’ is not just a case of bestowing a meaning or value on the thing which we encounter existentially, but is rather a case of revealing the already established involvement of the thing within the world, by means of our own understanding of the totality of the world. In other words, it is effectively showing a thing as it is in itself and thereby making the thing, which is the subject matter of the statement, accessible and, as Heidegger states, ‘preserved [*verwahrt*]’. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.112) Gadamer also connects ‘preservation’ to the question of truth where, in the case of the classical, ‘the binding power of its validity that is preserved and handed down, precedes all historical reflection and continues through it’. (Gadamer, 1979, p.255) It would appear from Heidegger that understanding the purpose of things within the world, together with the recognition of our own potentiality as Beings-in-the-world, brings us closer to an understanding of being as a whole. However this does not mean that the elusive quality of being can be grounded in any particular entity, but rather that there can only be an understanding of being in so far as it ‘enters into the intelligibility of Dasein’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.193) In other words, in that something shows up as meaningful. Understanding, which is dependent upon disclosure by Dasein, is concerned with every aspect of existential existence, including the sciences for which understanding is a pre-cursor of knowledge.

Furthermore, what emerges from Heidegger’s assessment of understanding and interpretation is the notion of prior knowledge, which, although not always fully exploited, is always in the background. This advanced knowledge, which has been acquired by our involvement with entities within the world and guides our interpretative faculties, can be manifested in three ways, which Heidegger identifies as ‘*fore-having*’, ‘*fore-sight*’, and ‘*fore-conception*’. In every instance of interpretation there lies an assumption which is rooted in this trilogy of modes of understanding. And what appears to be suggested by Heidegger’s assertion that ‘An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us’ (Heidegger, 1962, pp.191-92) is that interpretation always contains an element of anticipation. However, this notion seems to be at variance with Heidegger’s attempts to avoid any pre-conceived bias in our engagement with things within the world, in choosing to focus his analysis of ‘being’ on Dasein, denoting the experience of being that is peculiar to

human beings, without introducing any 'factual concretion' into the discussion. Furthermore, given that Dasein is itself historical, it is difficult to envisage how Heidegger can altogether avoid the notion of prejudice. Heidegger addresses this issue by stressing that, whilst pre-conceptions are an essential precondition of our interpreting and understanding of the world, these pre-conceptions must be subjected to critical evaluation. However, as critical evaluations cannot themselves be without pre-conceptions they must in turn be open to further evaluation, which leads to what Heidegger refers to as a 'circle of understanding'. This is not, he stresses, to be understood as a vicious circle from which escape is sought, but is rather a necessary requirement in advancing our understanding of the world. Therefore, as he explains,

What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way. This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself. (Heidegger, 1962, p.195)

The 'circle of understanding' cannot be perceived as a geometrical figure which has to be penetrated at a particular point, but should rather be seen as a circular movement of both being and Dasein which enables an existential Dasein to connect with and understand the qualities of being. As Heidegger explains, '[T]he 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.195) This prompts Heidegger, by means of an analysis of the existential being of Dasein, to 'get into the circle' in order to seek what he describes as 'the most primordial kind of knowing' which is, he states, hidden within. By highlighting the importance of subjecting pre-conditions to scrutiny and in the process identifying their intrinsic value, in order to ensure that they are not guided by fantasy or folklore, Heidegger defines what it is that distinguishes prejudices from pre-conceptions. He thereby effectively demonstrates that the interpretative process, rather than being guided by prejudice, is the result of intensive research.

## 1.10 Discourse [*Rede*] and Language [*Sprache*]

Having established that ‘All interpretation is grounded on understanding’, (Heidegger, 1962, p.195) Heidegger discusses the role that language plays in articulating what has been understood and thereby in revealing its meaning. Revelation, as Heidegger sees it, takes place by means of assertion, which he defines as a ‘*pointing-out which gives something a definite character and which communicates*’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.199) and further to this he clarifies that what assertion points out has already been disclosed in understanding. Assertion is a derivative mode of interpretation, which is connected to our existential being and has, according to Heidegger, ‘been accepted from ancient times as the primary and authentic ‘locus’ of *truth*’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.196) Referring to the three different aspects of assertion which combine to form a unified whole, Heidegger identifies them as follows, ‘pointing out’ or designating, which is dependent upon fore-sight, ‘predication’, which assigns a particular quality to a thing, and ‘communication’, which specifies the thing which has been pointed out together with its possibilities and thereby requires fore-conception. And, as previously stated, the pointing out of assertion does not represent a new disclosure but is always based upon previously acquired knowledge. However, assertion narrows our focus by restricting our attention to the thing present-at-hand, thereby causing the ready-to-hand to become less obvious and, as Heidegger states, this change of focus, by giving a definite character to something present-at-hand, modifies the ‘as’ structure of interpretation and can be the cause of misunderstanding or error. He further clarifies that ‘[T]he primordial ‘as’ of an interpretation...which understands circumspectively we call the “*existential-hermeneutical ‘as’*” in distinction from the “*apophantical ‘as’*” of the assertion’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.201) Assertion has a reductive effect on language, which, Heidegger maintains, can be offset by means of discourse [*Rede*], in expanding and elaborating on a given topic.

Discourse, which Heidegger identifies as an ontological characteristic of Dasein, is existentially co-original with state-of-mind and understanding and is the means by which we make sense of being-in-the-world. Heidegger describes discourse as ‘the Articulation of intelligibility...it underlies both interpretation and assertion’, (Heidegger, 1962, pp.203-04) furthermore, he adds that discourse is expressed by means

of language. By language, Heidegger clarifies, we mean speech and in affirming that the capacity to speak is particular to human beings, he further emphasises that it is a distinguishing feature of being human, adding that ‘the essence of man consists in language’. (Heidegger, 1993e, p.398) He also clarifies that the ‘basic movement is not from language to speaking but from speaking to language’.<sup>7</sup> (Heidegger, 2010b, p.113) However, he observes, that this distinction was not always clear and that initial questioning, which started at both sides at once, oscillated between the two ‘with no fixed point of reference’. That point of reference, Heidegger asserts, ‘is “truth” understood as uncovering, as indicative showing-as’. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.113) This finding enables Heidegger to establish his claim that the proposition is not what makes truth possible, but that it is, conversely, dependent upon truth in order to be.

In addition to speaking, Heidegger makes it clear that listening and hearing are also an essential part of the activity of discourse. Listening, which requires silence, is only possible within genuine discourse in which a person has something to say and it effectively reduces the possibility of, what Heidegger refers to as, ‘idle talk’ [*Gerede*]. Heidegger refutes the notion that mention of ‘idle talk’ suggests an inferior type of discourse, stating that this is not the intention and that as a constitutive part of everyday Dasein’s understanding and interpreting ‘idle talk’ denotes a positive phenomenon. However, in view of the fact that ‘idle talk’ is preoccupied with prevailing and tranquil opinions, as is inauthenticity and fallenness, concerning a particular thing or state of affairs rather than with the acquisition of knowledge of the thing in question, it is difficult to view it as a positive phenomenon, as Heidegger appears to suggest. Therefore, I would argue that what ‘idle talk’ could be seen to signify amounts to another form of the tyranny of the ‘they’ in that it serves to distract Dasein from its authentic mode of being and thereby from an awareness of its own ability to be. By which is implied an awareness of the possibility of freeing itself from its tendency towards falling and recognising its powerlessness to halt it. Anxiety disrupts fallenness only to show its inevitability. Furthermore, in poetical discourse, which is not constrained by the rules which apply to the normal spoken language, ‘the

---

<sup>7</sup> Sheehan highlights the importance of this ‘because all of Greek logic, and consequently our own logic right up to today, takes its orientation from this, the spoken sentence’ (Heidegger, 2010b, p.113)

communication of the existential possibilities of one's state-of-mind can become an aim in itself' and this, Heidegger states, 'amounts to a disclosing of existence'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.205) Inspired by a work of poetry, namely, Trakl's poem 'Winter Evening', in a lecture on language, delivered in 1950, Heidegger observes the different way in which language can be, by remarking on the 'significant distinction between speaking and saying-something. It is possible for one to speak much and say nothing; it is also possible to say much by keeping silent'. (Kockelmans, 1984, p.152) Moreover, in his essay 'On the Origin of The Work of Art' (1950), Heidegger takes the view that language is poetry and he reaffirms the role of language in the revelation of being, stating that 'it brings beings as beings, for the first time into the open. Where language is not present...there is also no openness of beings, and consequently no openness either of that which is not a being [*des Nichtseienden*] or of emptiness'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.46) Furthermore, he draws attention to the link between being and nothingness.

As a medium for communication language is essentially oriented towards others and therefore it presupposes the existence of an external world, a phenomenon which for Heidegger is unproblematic. In taking an opposing view to that of Immanuel Kant,<sup>8</sup> Heidegger is of the opinion, any problem that may arise here is not that of proving the existence of an external world but it is rather, he states, the 'scandal of philosophy' 'that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again*'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.249) In other words, Heidegger considers that any attempt to refute Cartesian scepticism is both futile and unnecessary and furthermore it demonstrates a lack of understanding of the existential characteristics of Dasein. In Heidegger's words, 'If Dasein is understood correctly...it defies such proofs, because, in its Being, it already *is* what subsequent proofs deem necessary to demonstrate for it'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.249) What can be understood by this is that Dasein is already an entity within the world and therefore it renders any further clarification completely superfluous. And as we have already seen, Heidegger confirmed that 'being-in-the-world', which is a characteristic of an existential Dasein, includes the equiprimordial structure of 'being-with', therefore any suggestion that places the existence of an external world in doubt is in conflict with the

---

<sup>8</sup> Immanuel Kant, as Heidegger records, considers it 'a scandal of philosophy and of human reason in general' that there is still no cogent proof for the 'Dasein of Things outside of us' which will do away with any scepticism.' (Heidegger, 1962, p.247)

fact that Dasein is a being-in-the-world. Furthermore, following an explanation of the function of speech within our lives, how it facilitates interaction with others and how it distinguishes us as human beings, Heidegger further clarifies that

what is essential about speaking is that it is experienced as speaking to others about something...Not only is speaking to others and to oneself the behavior that makes human beings stand out as human; speaking is also the way that humans direct and guide all their other kinds of behavior. (Heidegger, 2010b, pp.2-3)

It can be understood by this that Heidegger unequivocally discounts any notion of a solipsistic existence.

### **1.11 Understanding, Being, and Truth**

For Heidegger reality concerns the interaction of beings-in-the-world. 'Reality is ontologically grounded in the Being of Dasein' (Heidegger, 1962, p.255) and it thereby follows that it is synonymous with the phenomenon of care. However, in the absence of Dasein reality can neither be understood nor can it be discounted, as to do so would be to subscribe to the same type of thinking as the sceptic, which Heidegger is careful not to do. He focuses his enquiry upon the ontological understanding of being, which as he correctly observes is only possible as long as Dasein exists, and about which he can explicitly state that 'as long as there is an understanding of Being and therefore an understanding of presence-at-hand, it can indeed be said that *in this case* entities will still continue to be'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.255) Heidegger's enquiry into the reality or truth of being leads him back to the ancients whom, he states, described philosophy as 'the science of the 'truth'...a science which contemplates entities as entities...with regard to their Being'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.256) In a detailed analysis of being, within §44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger appeals to the ancient Greeks as he extensively develops this most fundamental problem of philosophy by first making the observation that '[F]rom time immemorial, philosophy has associated truth and Being'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.256) Parmenides, he states, was the first thinker to discover the being of entities, and to establish that thought and being belong together. As Heidegger interprets it, Aristotle, and perhaps the Greeks as such, sees 'philosophising' about or

after 'truth' as a form of exhibiting something or disclosing something with regard to truth, to the thing disclosing or giving itself to the viewer. It is this disclosive and uncovering understanding of truth that Heidegger is concerned with in *Being and Time*, and which continues to permeate his philosophy throughout his career. Notably, it will be seen how this understanding of truth is later applied in his critique of the artwork in relation to the "primal strife" between concealment and unconcealment.

The notion of truth, which, for Heidegger, denotes the same as thing, prompts him to query what the expression 'truth' signifies if it can be used as a term for an 'entity' and 'Being'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.256) He further states, in §44 of *Being and Time*, that if there is an intimate primordial connection between truth and being this would bring the phenomenon of truth 'within the range of the problematic of fundamental ontology' and, through his existential analysis of Dasein considered in its modified modes of being, he attempts to uncover the ontico-ontological connection of truth to Dasein and, as he states, the 'ontical characteristic of Dasein which we call, "the understanding of Being"'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.256) As Heidegger has already established, truth can only be grasped through Dasein's way of understanding as the 'being as care', therefore, understanding in the most primordial sense belongs to the basic constitution of Dasein.

In his lectures, delivered in the 1920s and published in English in 2010 as *Logic: The Question of Truth*, as we have seen, Heidegger begins by declaring his intention to investigate the problem of truth. To this end he appeals to Aristotle's treatment of the question of truth and to the misreading of Aristotle, by traditional thought. Aristotle's decisive influence upon the development of Heidegger's own thinking becomes evident throughout his work. In Heidegger's view, the traditional understanding of Aristotle's position, which maintains that he regards the proposition as the place of truth, is not only inaccurate but amounts to a misrepresentation of Aristotle's thinking. According to the traditional view, Aristotle was the first to designate the copula in the proposition as the place of truth and, furthermore, it is contended that it was he who first 'determined the concept of truth—as the correspondence of thought with things'. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.108) Heidegger sets out to redress what he sees as a

misinterpretation of Aristotle's position which, he claims, continues up to the twentieth-century, by clarifying that Aristotle did not ever place truth within the proposition and, furthermore, that the only way he connects the proposition with truth is in the reduction of logos to the categorical rather than the movement of truth. 'The propositional statement is determined by Aristotle as speech that can be true or false', (Heidegger, 2010b, p.108) and in support of this observation, Heidegger invokes Aristotle's view that

All speech is about something {i.e., in general terms, it means something}...but not all speech is indicative {i.e., lets something be seen}, but only speech in which being-true or being-false is present {as the ways of speaking}...But being-true-and-false is not present in every kind of speech. A request, for example, is a form of speech, but it is neither true nor false. (Heidegger, 2010b, pp.108-09)

In addition, for Aristotle in certain kinds of speech, such as assertoric statements, the 'proposition is determined by its reference to truth—not vice versa, as if truth were derived from the proposition... The proposition is possible only within truth'. (Heidegger, 2010b, pp.109-13) And bearing in mind Aristotle's claim that the proposition has an inherent ability to be either true or false, it follows that truth cannot be dependent upon the proposition in order to be. Heidegger thereby convincingly demonstrates that the traditional notion, based upon a reading of Aristotle which claims that the proposition is the *locus classicus* of truth, is completely misinformed.

In Heidegger's view, the difficulty in finding clarity in this area is due to inadequate translations of Aristotle's work, which fails to capture the Greek understanding of 'being-true' and 'being-false'. He argues that an accurate interpretation for 'the Greek word for "being-true"...means to *uncover* in the sense of unveiling something, removing the hiddenness from something'. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.110) In the light of this translation, Heidegger's choice of the Greek term *alētheia*, within the context of his concept of truth in *Being and Time* and throughout his further writing, can best be understood. To uncover [*Zu entdecken*], as Heidegger points out, involves revealing something that has previously been covered and may become covered again. However, he states, the Greek word for being covered cannot be

translated so as to mean ‘being-false’, but is best understood to mean ‘to cover over’, which rather than constituting an act of deception or misrepresentation, fails to allow genuine self-givenness within a given situation. As Heidegger has previously stated, the problem with understanding Aristotle’s position occurs in translation which, as outlined, distorts the meaning of Aristotle’s statement and thereby misses the depth of his philosophical concept. In seeking to overcome this difficulty Heidegger offers what he deems to be an accurate translation, which reads as follows:

Only that speaking in which uncovering or covering-over sustains and determines the authentic intention of the speaking is an indicative {statement} that shows something. (Heidegger, 2010b, p.111)

Having established what he considers to be the more faithful reading of Aristotle’s account of an indicative statement, Heidegger recalls the distinction that Aristotle makes between an indicative statement, in which uncovering or covering-over is present, and speech such as a request, in which neither un-covering nor covering over occurs. Thereby confirming that it is uncovering and covering-over that transforms a sentence into a statement. And it is this showing of a thing in terms of itself that constitutes the essence of a proposition. Having destabilized the traditional concept of truth by demonstrating tradition’s failure to grasp an accurate understanding Aristotle’s view, Heidegger turns to the ancient Greek notion of *alētheia*, understood as disclosiveness or uncovering, as the foundation for his own argument regarding the fundamental question of truth.

### **1.12 Traditional Understanding of Truth**

Heidegger’s enquiry into the question of truth takes as its point of departure the traditional understanding of truth, and he specifies the following three ways in which truth is traditionally perceived and which are understood to have formed its original definition:

- (1)...the ‘locus’ of truth is assertion (judgment);

(2)...the essence of truth lies in the ‘agreement’ of the judgment with its object;  
(3)...Aristotle...has set going the definition of ‘truth’ as ‘agreement’.  
(Heidegger, 1962, p.257)

It is made clear, by Heidegger, that Aristotle never defends the thesis that the primordial ‘locus’ of truth is in the judgment. Furthermore, he states, for Aristotle, the soul’s ‘experiences’, its ‘representations’ are likenings of things, and he continues by explaining that although this is not intended as an explicit definition of the essence of truth, it has led to the formulation of truth in the Middle Ages as *adaequatio intellectus et rei* (‘adequation of the intellect and the thing’). ‘adaequatio’ has been variously interpreted to mean, ‘likening, ‘correspondence’ and ‘coming together’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.257) The judgement or agreement of something with something has, according to Heidegger, ‘the formal character of a relation of something to something’, which raises the question of the feasibility of the relation of something ideal to the thing. It is suggested that equality is one way of finding agreement, however in the instance of the intellect and the thing equality cannot apply, as they are not of the same species. Heidegger overcomes this obstacle by invoking the correspondence theory, in which truth is correspondence to a fact. This is rendered possible on the basis of the ontological status of the knower and what is known, as in the being-in-the-world of the object and of the intellect, (being-in-the-world is the basic state of Dasein). Whilst not rejecting the traditional notion that the essence of propositional truth lies in the correspondence of the proposition, or judgment, with the state of affairs that is judged to obtain, rather than viewing the proposition or assertion as the primary locus of truth Heidegger considers that it is derivative and that it originates from disclosedness by way of definite modification.

As a means of demonstrating the relation of subject/object, Heidegger provides the following example,

Let us suppose that someone with his back turned to the wall makes the true assertion that ‘the picture on the wall is hanging askew.’ This assertion demonstrates itself when the man who makes it, turns

round and perceives the picture hanging askew on the wall.  
(Heidegger, 1962, p.260)

He then explains that asserting is a way of being towards the thing itself that is. However, what is of primary importance here is not the speculative assertion by the individual, but rather the Real picture on the wall, by means of which confirmation of the assertion is made manifest. The being-true of a judgment or an assertion is not to be understood primarily as the being-valid of the assertion, as seen by its subsequent confirmation in this instance, but rather as its being-uncovered, which is only possible on the basis of the being-uncovering of Dasein, in its basic mode of being-in-the-world. For Dasein its own being-uncovering is founded upon its disclosure of being. When stating that being-true as being-uncovering is a way of being of Dasein, Heidegger is referring to Dasein in its ontological mode of being, which is dependent upon being-uncovering for its being. Disclosedness or openness, he states, 'is that basic character of Dasein according to which it *is* its "there"'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.263) Heidegger further clarifies that Dasein's ability-to-be is only possible by being already thrown into the world and in making the connection between 'thrownness' and disclosedness, he states that 'thrownness' is a constitutive element of Dasein's disclosedness. This involuntary thrownness is necessary for the disclosure of Dasein's being-in-the-world, for establishing its facticity because, as Heidegger states, disclosedness is essentially factual.

As Heidegger has already established, Dasein is for the most part absorbed in the "they" world which, as he states, is dominated by the way things are publicly interpreted and resulting in that which has been uncovered and disclosed being 'disguised and closed off by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.264). This clouding over of the truth causes Dasein to become detached and to fall away from truth, thereby constituting a state of untruth for Dasein. Within this state, Heidegger views Dasein as *Weg-sein* [Being-away], which represents the falling tendency of being-in-the-world and causes Dasein to be both in truth and untruth. He reaffirms that being in untruth is an essential characteristic of existential Dasein. The four salient existential characteristics of Dasein's state of being are identified by Heidegger as follows; 'disclosedness in general', which he states 'embraces the whole of that

structure-of-Being which has become explicit through the phenomenon of care.’ ‘Thrownness’ which reveals Dasein as already being in the world and which Heidegger states is ‘essentially factual’. ‘Projection’, by which Dasein understands itself ‘in terms of the ‘world’ and Others or in terms of its ownmost potentiality-for-Being.’ In other words by projection Dasein attains its authentic mode of being. And ‘falling’, by which Dasein loses itself and becomes absorbed by the ‘they’ world and, Heidegger states, because ‘*Dasein is essentially falling, its state of Being is such that it is in ‘untruth’.*’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.264) However, Heidegger cautions against applying negative connotations to the state of ‘falling’, which he reaffirms belongs to Dasein’s facticity. In summation, Heidegger states ‘(1) that truth, in the most primordial sense, is Dasein’s disclosedness, to which the uncoveredness of entities within-the-world belongs; and (2) that Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and in untruth’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.265) In the light of future challenges to Heidegger’s conception of truth, it is worth noting that throughout his entire philosophical enquiry he continues to make reference to Dasein’s being in both truth and untruth.<sup>9</sup>

For the most part, Heidegger's description of truth as 'uncoveredness' [*Entdecktheit*] in his earlier lectures gives way in *Being and Time* to truth as "disclosedness" [*Erschlossenheit*], more precisely, the clearing of thrown Dasein. As Heidegger sees it, the clearing [*Lichtung*] is what grants to Dasein the illumination and the vision which allows it to understand itself and its position as a being in the world. As a derivative of Dasein’s own character, the illumination is effectively a light from within. ‘To say that it is ‘illuminated’ [*erleuchtet*] means that *as* Being-in-the-world it is cleared [*gelichtet*] in itself, not through any other entity, but in such a way that it *is* itself the clearing’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.171) This manifestation of being in the light of being is in direct contrast to Plato, where entities derive their truth from ‘ideas’. ‘Uncoveredness’ is mainly reserved for the ontic discovery or uncovering of this or that entity, while 'disclosedness' is reserved for the ontological disclosure itself, namely, the

---

<sup>9</sup> In challenging Heidegger’s treatment of truth within §44 of *Being and Time*, Ernst Tugendhat argues against, what he views as, the ambiguity of Heidegger’s use of ‘disclosedness’ or ‘uncoveredness’ in connection with truth, on the grounds that it does not allow for the possibility of bivalence and therefore, he states, ‘there remains absolutely no possibility of determining the specific sense of falsehood, and therefore also of truth’. (Tugendhat, 1994, p.89) Tugendhat’s challenge will be critically evaluated in this chapter.

way in which Dasein's manner of being open is disclosed in the truth of existence. So, the uncoveredness of entities within the world is grounded in the disclosedness of the world. Yet disclosedness is the basic manner of Dasein, in accordance with which it is open and opened. Thus the most original phenomenon of truth is first attained with the disclosedness of Dasein's thrown and opened way of being and not this or that uncovering. This would appear to indicate the emergence of the historical character of Dasein's being. For Heidegger 'the ek-sistence of historical man begins at that moment when the first thinker takes a questioning stand with regard to the unconcealment of beings...' (Heidegger, 1993a, p.126) However, if as just stated, the uncoveredness of entities within the world is grounded in the disclosedness of the world, and disclosedness is the basic manner of Dasein, in accordance with which it is open and opened, it follows that Heidegger's statement, that "The uncoveredness of such entities is equiprimordial with the Being of Dasein and its disclosedness" (Heidegger, 1962, p.264) is at variance with his previous claim that Dasein's disclosedness is "the most primordial phenomenon of truth". (Heidegger, 1962, p.263) The question is thereby raised as to how Dasein's disclosedness can be both primordial and equiprimordial, with uncoveredness, at the same time—Dasein pulled out into open as well as being open. Heidegger has clearly stated that the uncoveredness of entities is dependent upon the disclosedness of Dasein. Therefore, because Dasein's disclosedness is the means of facilitating the uncovering of entities and because it is uncoveredness that affords us an understanding of being, it would appear that the uncoveredness of entities within-the-world and Dasein's disclosedness are in fact 'simultaneous', which is to effectively agree with Heidegger's claim that they are equiprimordial. Furthermore, given that disclosedness is a characteristic of Dasein's facticity and that Dasein is 'in the truth', this adds further support to the notion that disclosedness and the uncovering of entities are equiprimordial.

Having acknowledged that truths are not themselves beings or entities but are essentially related to beings and are dependent upon being for their recognition, Heidegger clarifies that

*There is truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is.* Entities are uncovered only when Dasein *is*; and only as long as Dasein *is*, are they disclosed. Newton's laws, the principle of contradiction, any truth whatever—these are true only as long as Dasein *is*. Before there was any Dasein, there was no truth; nor will there be any after Dasein is no more. For in such a case truth as disclosedness, uncovering, and uncoveredness, *cannot* be. Before Newton's laws were discovered, they were not 'true'; it does not follow that they were false, or even that they would become false if ontically no discoveredness were any longer possible. Just as little does this 'restriction' imply that the Being-true of 'truths' has in any way been diminished... (Heidegger, 1962, p.269)

It is clear from this that Heidegger does not subscribe to Bishop George Berkeley's notion of immaterialism, which maintains that objects exist solely by virtue of our perception of them. However, in the absence of proof for an eternal Dasein, Heidegger does not pursue the notion of eternal truths but rather suggests that they are 'a fanciful contention' which cannot be legitimised on the basis of the 'belief' of philosophers. And, by stating that '*all truth is relative to Dasein's Being*', (Heidegger, 1962, p.270) he makes it clear that he is concerned with the ontological grounding of truth. He does however hasten to add that this does not imply that all truth is 'subjective', by pointing out that uncovering does not rely upon subjective discretion but rather, with uncovering Dasein is directly confronted by 'the entities themselves', (Heidegger, 1962, p.270) thereby freeing them to disclose themselves as they always were and will continue to be. This brings Heidegger to the question of the presupposition of truth and to the acknowledgement that as long as there is an existential disclosing Dasein which, he claims, is

...the kind of Being that belongs to truth... 'We' presuppose truth because 'we', being in the kind of Being which Dasein possesses, are 'in the truth'. We do not presuppose it as something 'outside' us and 'above' us, towards which, along with other 'values' we comport ourselves... Truth is what first makes possible anything like presupposing. (Heidegger, 1962, p.270)

What is made clear by this is that assumption and prejudice constitutes an integral part of the being of Dasein, with an awareness of its own being. And, whilst the 'Being of truth' is, according to Heidegger, unverifiable he reiterates the view that the sceptic's

argument is negated by the very fact that he/she 'is' and therefore does not need any further refutation. The being of truth is, in Heidegger's view, primordially connected with Dasein. And furthermore, in stating that 'Being (not entities) is something which 'there is' only in so far as truth is. And truth *is* only in so far as and as long as Dasein is. Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially' (Heidegger, 1962, p.272) Heidegger effectively reinforces the claim that truth and being are inseparable.

Heidegger's interrogation of truth continues, albeit with a difference, in an essay entitled 'On the Essence of Truth', which he first delivered in 1930. This essay, which reflects a change of emphasis, by Heidegger, in that his investigation of the essence of truth is no longer only approached from the perspective of Dasein's being but from an analysis of the truth of being, can be seen as a transition from his earlier to his middle philosophical thinking. John Sallis highlights the difficulties that we encounter when we attempt to question the essence of truth, by suggesting that

[T]here is perhaps no questioning less capable of detachment from what it would interrogate. For to ask the philosophical question... "What is it?", is to ask about the essence; and thus in the question "What is the essence of truth?" one merely repeats what is asked about, merely doubles the question. (Sallis, 1993, p.29)

Sallis thus identifies the difficulty of finding a detached point of entry into any discussion of truth and being, because we already inhabit what we are attempting to enquire about. Furthermore, given that '*Dasein is 'in the truth''*' (Heidegger, 1962, p.263) we cannot gain access to a view from nowhere for the purpose of our enquiry. However, as pointed out, Heidegger's theory of the question of truth does not go unchallenged.

### **1.12 (a) Ernst Tugendhat's Critique of Heidegger**

Writing in the 1960s, Ernst Tugendhat takes issue with Heidegger's concept of truth, as outlined in §44, *Being and Time*, in which, he states, 'Heidegger develops his concept of truth for the first time'. (Tugendhat, 1994, p.84) Tugendhat appeals to Husserl to support his argument that Heidegger's concept of truth as disclosedness is

not only flawed but that it fails to capture the real question of truth. Furthermore, whilst he does not deny the phenomena of disclosedness Tugendhat does not equate it with the notion of 'truth'. However, he favours the Husserlian approach to truth which is, he states, seen 'in terms of a difference "between mere 'intention' and the matter 'itself'" or between a "preliminary and ostensible" [*vordergründig*] givenness and a givenness of-and-by what is given itself [*Selbstgegebenheit*]' (Dahlstrom, 2001, p.394) The traditional concept of truth, as Tugendhat observes, deems a proposition to be true if it corresponds to entities 'as they are in themselves', which, it can be argued, amounts to a type of disclosiveness of the entities in question.

Part of Tugendhat's critique of Heidegger is based upon the argument that Heidegger combines this 'specific sense of truth with the phenomenon of uncovering things' and consequently, Tugendhat maintains, he heralds the 'uprooting' of the concept of truth. The result of this thinking is, as Tugendhat contends, that 'truth no longer consists essentially in how something reveals itself (namely, as it is in itself) but merely in the fact that it reveals itself'. (Dahlstrom, 2001, p.395) This evaluation of Heidegger's theory is problematic as, in Tugendhat's view it compromises the accuracy of making a distinction between 'truth' and 'untruth', thereby giving rise to 'the possibility of an untrue disclosedness', which in turn gives rise to the absurd notion of an 'untrue truth'. However, Tugendhat's argument is in turn challenged by both Daniel Dahlstrom and Rufus Duits. In Duits' paper entitled *On Tugendhat's Analysis of Heidegger's Concept of Truth*, his stated intention is to construct a defence of Heidegger's position against Tugendhat's two main challenges to Heidegger's concept of truth. First by clarifying Heidegger's position in relation to his formulation of the concept of truth, and continuing by demonstrating that Heidegger has included the possibility of truth and untruth within his thoughts. By highlighting Heidegger's insistence that the being of Dasein has both authentic and inauthentic modes of existence by means of which it 'is always capable of standing within truth and error', (Duits, 2007) Duits takes the view that, by claiming that Heidegger's concept of truth is incompatible with an adequate concept of falsehood, Tugendhat has failed to understand Heidegger's thinking in this regard. However, in his search for the essence of truth, Heidegger makes it clear that 'untruth', 'conceived as non-accord', does not come

within the parameters of his enquiry and he considers that ‘when it is a question of comprehending the pure essence of truth, untruth, as such an opposite of truth, can be put aside’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.119)

In a lengthy discourse, which can only briefly be touched on within this thesis, a further challenge comes from Dahlstrom. In summary, Dahlstrom identifies what he sees to be Tugendhat’s main charge against Heidegger, namely that he ‘carelessly and dangerously forfeits the specific sense of truth by characterizing truth in terms of the uncoveredness of entities and disclosedness of their manners of being’. (Dahlstrom, 2001, p.397) In his response to this and to Tugendhat’s secondary charge that Heidegger fails to accommodate the phenomenon of ‘untruth’ within his concept of truth, Dahlstrom states that

Heidegger’s way of proceeding does not by itself cancel or forfeit the principle of bivalence and...there are ample reasons to conclude that the specific sense of propositional truth remains in effect in his articulation of the more original truth. In Heidegger’s analysis of truth he does in fact hold himself to the bivalence presupposed by propositional truth. (Dahlstrom, 2001, p.398)

Although not directly refuting them, Dahlstrom clearly disagrees with Tugendhat’s claims. Moreover, he draws attention to Heidegger’s later reflections upon the notion of *alētheia* with his suggestion that it could have been misleading to equate it with the question of truth. But this should not, Dahlstrom emphasises, be taken as an endorsement of criticisms, such as those of Tugendhat. In conclusion Dahlstrom suggests that we need to be sceptical about Tugendhat’s claim that Heidegger ignores ‘the specific sense of truth’, with the further clarification that

The critical difference between truth and falsity, underlying bivalent assertions, remains in force in Heidegger’s presentation of both the way in which propositional truth “uncovers” entities (*Entdeckend-sein*) and the way in which the original or primordial truth “discloses” the sense of being (*Erschlossenheit*). (Dahlstrom, 2001, pp.406-07)

Therefore, in his response to Tugendhat's charges against Heidegger's concept of truth, by clarifying that Heidegger has neither neglected the phenomenon of bivalence nor the way that 'propositional' truth is instrumental in uncovering entities, Dahlstrom does not altogether discredit Tugendhat's argument but he successfully weakens it.

Notwithstanding Tugendhat's objections, I argue that from the outset Heidegger has made it clear that his decision to take the ancient Greek term *alētheia*, understood as disclosedness and uncoveredness, and to thereby apply this notion to his philosophy of truth, does not in fact constitute a negation of the traditional notion of truth where the locus of truth is assertion (judgement), but on the contrary it is, as Heidegger clarifies, an enquiry into the originary source of the traditional understanding of truth. By probing deeper into the foundations of tradition, which he states have been forgotten, whilst not discrediting tradition, Heidegger provides a more comprehensive account of the actual event of truth. Furthermore, bearing in mind Gadamer's contention that we are active participants in the event of truth's unconcealment, I further argue that rather than being the arbitrators of truth, which is an inherent danger where the locus of truth is in the assertion, we are witnesses of its manifestation and as such avoid the risk of endowing it with a subjective bias. Moreover, it is by means of participation that we discover and understand the entity 'as it is in itself', and not as Tugendhat maintains merely in the fact that it reveals itself. With regard to Tugendhat's further charge, concerning what he considers to be Heidegger's neglect to consider 'untruth' within his philosophy of truth, it appears that this originates from a fear that in going unrecognised untruth will become ignored, leaving truth without a counterbalance which would effectively destabilise its ability to stand out as truth, thereby negating the notion of truth altogether. However, as we have seen in this chapter, in his discussion of truth in §44 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger insists that any unconcealing or disclosing of truth at the same time involves a concealing, which causes being to be placed in both truth and untruth. And, although Tugendhat does concede that Heidegger characterises falsehood as concealment he is not satisfied that this goes far enough. It is interesting to note, however, that in his later reflections Heidegger appears to accept the ambiguity of *alētheia* by stating that '*Alētheia*, unconcealment thought as the clearing of presence, is not yet truth...to raise the question of *alētheia*, of unconcealment as such, is not the

same as raising the question of truth'. (Heidegger, 1993b, p.446) Although this assessment, by Heidegger, does not constitute a retraction of his concept of truth, as outlined in §44, it could be viewed as an oblique acknowledgment of Tugendhat's argument.

### 1.13 Conclusion

In the preceding chapter the fundamental issues of truth [*Wahrheit*] and being [*Sein*], and the investigation of these questions through the work and thoughts of Heidegger have been discussed in detail. The question of being, as Heidegger admits, is central to his entire phenomenological enquiry. Therefore, as a means of understanding his treatment of the range of philosophical questions that he encounters, it is first of all necessary to gain an insight into his understanding of the meaning of being. Bearing that in mind, I start by giving an explication of Heidegger's phenomenological enquiry into the question of being, together with his in-depth analysis of truth and the way that it is intrinsically linked to the question of being and the being of Dasein, as outlined in his magnum opus *Being and Time*. I have shown how Heidegger constructs his enquiry by appealing to a fundamental ontology, through an analysis of a factual, neutral, and historical existential-ontological entity, whose being is an issue for it, which he names Dasein. Moreover, it has been shown how, by means of analysing Dasein in its various modes of being, Heidegger provides an analysis of human existence, within the framework of working through the meaning of being. Furthermore, I have outlined how, in a move away from the traditional propositional definition of truth, which he deems to be inadequate, Heidegger returns to antiquity and to the Greek notion of *alētheia* in search of the ontological foundations of the traditional conception of truth. However, it has been shown that Heidegger's espousal of *alētheia* as a central tenet of his concept of truth does not go unchallenged. Notable amongst his critics is Tugendhat, whose argument has been critically assessed in a final sub-section of this chapter. Heidegger's search for the ontological grounding of truth and for the locus of its manifestation is of particular relevance within my thesis, which concerns how truth is manifested by means of the work of art. In the next chapter I will examine Heidegger's continuing enquiry into the question of truth, which he pursues by seeking to identify the fundamental quality or 'essence' of truth which, he states, must be linked

to 'the kind of Being which truth possesses' (Heidegger, 1962, p.257) and which, following phenomenological analysis he deems to be freedom.

## Chapter Two: Enquiry into the Essence of Truth

### 2.1 Introduction

The essay entitled 'On the Essence of Truth', which Heidegger first delivered as a lecture in 1930 and did not publish until 1943, sees a return to the question of truth which, as discussed in chapter one, he had developed at length in §44 of *Being and Time*. On further examination, it will become clear that Heidegger's theory concerning the question of truth is relevant to virtually all his later works, therefore the importance of any investigation, by Heidegger, in this area cannot be minimised. Bearing this in mind, I intend to critically examine his treatment of the question of the essence of truth in the above mentioned essay, whilst noting a change of emphasis or change of intensity from *Being and Time*, where in a search for the meaning of being Heidegger focuses directly on the question of the being of Dasein, to this later essay which concerns an analysis of the truth of being. However, it should be noted that the co-relation and co-dependence of the being of Dasein, its way of being, and the truth of being, continues to remain central to Heidegger's account. I will show how, having examined the phenomenon of truth in its various ontological modes and acknowledged the inseparable link between the essence of truth and the truth of essence, which Heidegger calls 'the intertwining', that he is led to the conclusion that the question of the essence of truth cannot be addressed without the more fundamental question of the truth of essence being raised. Furthermore, Heidegger's claim that 'concealedness' or 'untruth' is older than truth will be challenged, in the light of his various assertions implying that acts of disclosiveness and concealedness are co-original, thereby raising the query as to whether truth and untruth are equiprimordial?

In chapter one of this thesis, which is concerned with Heidegger's investigation into the question of the meaning of being, as his stated objective in *Being and Time*, it has been clarified that the meaning of being is its truth and therefore the question of being is inextricably linked with the question of truth so that any enquiry into being is necessarily connected to the question of truth. According to Heidegger, the question of being, which inspired the thinking of Plato and Aristotle, has since that time been

neglected by philosophy this, he states, is due in no small way to our seeming familiarity with the concept which mistakenly leads us to the assumption that we already have a clear and transparent understanding of being. However, whereas Heidegger acknowledges that being itself cannot be defined once and for all, he stresses the importance of continuing to investigate what is meant by being, stating that the 'indefinability of Being does not eliminate the question of its meaning; it demands that we look that question in the face'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.23) For this purpose, as we have seen in the previous Chapter, in order to avoid the risk of subjectivity, or anthropology, Heidegger constructs an enquiry into human existence by means of an analysis of a neuter existential mode of being which he terms 'Dasein'. In choosing a neuter state of being for the purpose of his analysis the possibility of factually existing as either male or female is opened up. Heidegger further qualifies that Dasein is the only being who is concerned with its own manner of being, in that it is aware of its own finitude, which brings him to acknowledge temporality as the meaning of the existential being of Dasein and to therefore identify 'time' as the horizon within which, or against which, being can be understood.

Heidegger's detailed investigation of Dasein in its various modes of 'being-in-the-world', which includes its being-with others and the attendant dangers of the tyranny of 'the other' or the 'they', has been explored in detail in this work. And, as pointed out, although Dasein remains for the most part in an 'inauthentic' or irresolute mode of existence, when there is a 'clearing-away' of concealments, which allows freedom from the tranquilizing they-self and freedom for an awareness of its own potentiality, it enters into an authentic mode of existence. Following upon his existential analysis of Dasein, Heidegger enters into a detailed discussion of truth which again leads him back to the ancient Greeks, for whom the question of truth is an ontological one, and to what he sees as the fundamental source of the traditional conception of propositional truth. By espousing the Greek notion of *alētheia* and interpreting it to mean unconcealment or disclosure, Heidegger develops a concept of truth that represents a departure from the traditional metaphysical conception of propositional truth, whereby it is maintained that the truth of a proposition lies in the agreement of that proposition with some object within the world. In Heidegger's view,

this understanding of truth is neither incorrect nor unimportant, furthermore, he makes it clear that he is not attempting to reject the traditional notion but is rather, as he states, endeavouring to demonstrate ‘that the idea of agreement is one to which theory had to come to on the basis of the primordial phenomenon of truth, and...how this came about’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.262) Moreover, having established that without Dasein ‘truth as disclosedness, uncovering, and uncoveredness, *cannot* be’ (Heidegger, 1962, p.269) he affirms that the question of truth is inseparable from the question of being, whilst also clarifying that any unconcealing or disclosing of the truth at the same time involves a concealing, which causes beings to be equally placed in truth and untruth. Heidegger’s choice of *alētheia*, understood as disclosedness within the framework of his concept truth, and in particular his treatment of truth in §44 of *Being and Time* faced strong challenges, most notably by Ernst Tugendhat and Paul Friedländer. Tugendhat’s argument that *alētheia* denoting disclosedness within this context is not only untenable but in fact serves to obscure the question of truth has been critically appraised in the previous chapter. Friedländer’s challenge, which concerns Heidegger’s etymological reading of the term *alētheia*, will be discussed in greater detail within this chapter.

However, in ‘On the Essence of Truth’ Heidegger defends his choice of the term *alētheia* in connection with the question of truth.<sup>10</sup> And, he explains that by translating *alētheia* to mean ‘unconcealment’ rather than ‘truth’, which he claims is a more faithful translation, we are led to reconsider the traditional notion of propositional truth and, as he states, ‘to think it back to that still uncomprehended disclosedness and disclosure of beings’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.125) However, Heidegger’s sense of frustration at what he perceives to be a misinterpretation of his position concerning his treatment of the question of truth, can be seen in a letter written in 1962 to Father William J. Richardson, in which he claims that ‘Only someone who is thinking superficially or, indeed, not thinking at all can content himself with the observation that Heidegger conceives truth as non-concealment’. (Richardson, 1974, p.Preface xii) The views expressed in this letter can be seen as an attempt, by Heidegger, to distance himself from his critics, moreover, he continues to subscribe to the notion of *alētheia* to

---

<sup>10</sup> Further justification of the use of *alētheia*, which appears in Heidegger’s later work, will be the subject of discussion within another section of this thesis.

denote the disclosure of truth throughout his writings and lectures. And, as I will show in Chapter Three, which concerns my analysis of his essay ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’, the concept of *alētheia*, as disclosure, is central to Heidegger’s argument concerning the disclosure of truth by means of the work of art. However, his immediate concern in his essay on truth is his search for the essence of truth.

## 2.2 Enquiry into the Essence of Truth

The essence of a thing is its defining characteristic, the ground of its inner possibility. Heidegger refers to the notion of essence throughout his writings. In *Being and Time*, he asserts that the ‘essence’ [*Wesen*] of Dasein is in its ‘to be’ [*Zu-sein*], stating that ‘*The essence of Dasein lies in its existence*’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.67) Given the historical aspect of Dasein, Heidegger’s claim in this instance suggests that ‘essence’, rather than being linked to substance ontology in the Aristotelian sense, can be understood to be historically emergent and hence not to be understood as an eternal invariable essence. Furthermore, in ‘On the Essence of Truth’, where the discussion is concerned with the truth of being, Heidegger attempts to isolate the true meaning of essence which is the one thing that all truths have in common and which, in his view, the metaphysical tradition, in understanding it simply as what something is, its essential identity, or as a generalizable ‘whatness’ (*quidditas*) fails to grasp. He takes as his point of departure the traditional conception of truth as correctness or correspondence, meaning the agreement or correspondence of an assertion with a thing as it is, and he argues that this experience of things or beings happens in their unhiddenness or disclosedness. As Heidegger sees it, truth is not unhiddenness itself, but rather *alētheia* in the sense of unconcealment is what permits the emergence of truth in the first place. Therefore, the essence of truth is a happening which facilitates the freedom for unconcealment and for truth to manifest itself. Heidegger suggests that essence could be understood in terms of the clearing or ‘open region’ which is an inherent feature of Dasein as an historical being.<sup>11</sup> For Heidegger, the notion of essence can be thought historically as an ‘essential unfolding’.

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. § 2.4

Heidegger's analysis of essence, then, is not motivated by theoretical objectives, but rather by what he terms an existential and historical necessity. The essence being sought after here is not that of an *essentia*, that is, a general abstract, and timeless *genus* or *quidditas*, but rather a historically unfolding and finite essence. This is a *Wesen* that impacts and engages, giving essential sense to our historical existence. Consequently, interrogating the question of essence does not imply interrogating *what* something is, *tode ti*, but rather *how* the disclosure of being occurs. In this sense, it is the overturning that Heidegger proposes in the form of a chiasm: the essence of truth comes down to the reflecting on the truth of essence, i.e. how it unfolds in time without becoming 'something' permanent that underlies change.

'On the Essence of Truth', as Joseph J. Kockelmans states, 'marks the transition from Heidegger's earlier to his later philosophy' (Kockelmans, 1984, p.5) wherein, whilst not abandoning the fundamental questions of *Being and Time*, he no longer places Dasein at the centre of the enquiry. And, as already observed, in his essay on truth there is a notable change of emphasis in Heidegger's investigation from an analysis of the being of Dasein to an analysis of the truth of being which, in Daniel Dahlstrom's view, would persist 'for the better part of the next three decades'. (Dahlstrom, 2007, p.63) Heidegger's stated aim within this essay is to identify what the 'essence' of truth actually is, whilst acknowledging that it is 'the one thing that in general distinguishes every "truth" as truth'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.115) In taking a phenomenological approach to his enquiry, he sets out to dismantle the traditional conception of truth, in the guise of what he names 'sound common sense'. And, by querying the notion of, this abstract question of essence in the midst of "'Sound" common sense', (Heidegger, 1993a, p.116) he highlights the tension that exists between philosophy and common sense. Common sense, according to Heidegger, in seeming to be obvious, has influenced our thought within the traditional conception of truth to the extent that it camouflages the original source of thinking in this regard. In *Being and Time* Heidegger identifies the problem, with his observation that

[T]radition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial 'sources' from

which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. (Heidegger, 1962, p.43)

And although this is not intended as a complete dismissal of tradition, it can be seen that he takes the view that in this instance traditional thinking lacks both a freeing radicality, in its original sense, and reference to its ontological foundations or underpinnings and is therefore open to misunderstanding. The correspondence theory, where the agreement of the proposition with the thing is deemed to be a manifestation of truth, does not, in Heidegger's view, go far enough. Therefore, rather than attempting to discredit this theory of truth, he is intent on locating its founding source. Moreover, it could be argued, if the proposition as expressed by the subject in relation to the object is deemed to be the arbiter of truth then it carries the risk of subscribing to a Cartesian notion of a subjective determination of what constitutes truth. This is a notion that Heidegger, who consciously avoids the danger of subjectivity, strongly refutes.

However, as Heidegger points out, the traditional definition of truth as '*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectūs*' [truth is the adequation of the thing to the intellect] can be understood in two ways. It 'can be taken to mean: truth is the correspondence [*Angleichung*] of the matter to knowledge...it can also be taken as saying: truth is the correspondence of knowledge to the matter'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.118) He admits that the usual interpretation of this definition is the latter, where knowledge corresponds to the matter and therefore propositional truth is only possible on the basis of material truth where in each case one must conform to the other, thereby establishing the notion of truth as 'correctness'. Heidegger makes it clear that by conformity in this instance he is not referring to the Kantian theory that 'objects conform to our knowledge', but, rather to the more Platonic traditional ontological concept of truth, which he states,

...implies the Christian theological belief that, with respect to what it is and whether it is, a matter, as created (*ens creatum*), is only insofar as it corresponds to the idea preconceived in the *intellectus divinus*, i.e. in the mind of God, and thus measures up to the idea (is correct) and in this sense is "true." The *intellectus humanus* too is an *ens creatum*. As a capacity bestowed upon man by God, it must satisfy its *idea*. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.118)

Heidegger thereby confirms that within traditional understanding for truth to prevail conformity is essential. Having acknowledged the theological belief that informs tradition, he clarifies that there can also be a secular approach which does not conceive of divine intervention and in which the same order can apply where truth, in this case, is in accord with what he refers to as 'a world-order', which could also be interpreted in popular parlance as 'the laws of nature'. This approach is not at variance with the theological notion of conformity but in this instance, rather than subscribing to the notion of divine creation, it attributes the capacity of things to conform to worldly laws and a worldly order, thereby allowing the claim for the conformity of propositional truth to remain the same. Traditional understanding also, according to Heidegger, makes the assumption that

...truth has an opposite, and that there is untruth. The untruth of the proposition (incorrectness) is the nonaccordance of the statement with the matter. The untruth of the matter (nongenuineness) signifies nonagreement of a being with its essence. In each case untruth is conceived as nonaccord. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.119)

Therefore, Heidegger concludes that, within the traditional approach to truth, untruth as an opposite of truth is irrelevant in any discussion concerning the essence of truth.

A major oversight within the traditional concept of truth dating from medieval times is, as Heidegger claims, due to what he sees as a misappropriation of Aristotle's thinking. Furthermore, he attributes the misrepresentation of *alētheia* to the work of Plato and Aristotle, for whom the concept of hiddenness became submerged and the term *alētheia*, understood as unhiddenness, took prominence as the visual and visible appearance of the thing. According to Dahlstrom, Heidegger maintains that in the Cave Allegory of Book VI of the *Republic*, '...Plato's yoking (*sugon*) of *aletheia* to the manifest way things *look* in the light marks a key moment in the devolution of truth as unhiddenness into truth as correctness and correspondence'. (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.364) This shows that the problem for Heidegger is that with Plato and Aristotle a preoccupation with the concept of the unhiddenness of things resulted in an overlooking of their hiddenness, of a hiddenness which belongs to unhiddenness, thereby causing

‘the root significance of *alētheia*’ to be forgotten. By this is meant the struggle between hiddenness and unhiddenness, which sustains them and their relationship and, as is amply illustrated by the struggle between earth and world in his essay ‘On the Origin of the Work of Art’, which for Heidegger, is pivotal to the event of the disclosure of truth.

The ensuing problem with this forgetfulness of the hidden is the resultant shift of focus ‘from things insofar as they are unhidden to objects insofar as they can be represented, produced, and managed’. (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.364) If this assessment of the situation is correct and if truth is portrayed in this superficial way, it serves to confirm the absence of a fundamental understanding within the traditional conception of truth, an absence which is bemoaned by Heidegger, for whom it constitutes a major flaw in traditional thinking. In a further observation, which echoes Heidegger, Dahlstrom attributes much of the changed understanding of the term *alētheia* to its translation from Greek to Latin and to the understanding of the Latin term *veritas*, which, he states, radically changes the emphasis of our understanding of truth.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to this and rather than espousing the negative connotations of the traditional concept of truth, Heidegger places the emphasis upon concealment, which he states ‘deprives *alētheia* of disclosure yet does not render it mere *steresis* (privation) ...concealment is then un-disclosedness and accordingly the un-truth that is most proper to the essence of truth’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.130) Heidegger thereby makes the essential connection between truth and untruth. The phenomena of concealment and unconcealment, absence and presence, continue to form an integral aspect of Heidegger’s philosophy of truth and despite the fact that Heidegger’s thought ‘changes and develops in important and controversial ways, his ‘characterization of truth as *Unverborgenheit*, as an event of revealing and concealing, is maintained throughout his life’s work’.<sup>13</sup> (Dostal, 1994, p.50) Furthermore, Robert Dostal draws our attention to the fact that the theory of concealedness and unconcealedness as an event of truth can

---

<sup>12</sup> ‘Crucial to the eventual loss of the primordial senses of hiddenness and un-hiddenness entailed by *alētheia* is its Latin translation as *veritas*. Instead of being itself a privative term, supposing an underlying hiddenness as something positive, *veritas* in the sense of imperial Roman and Ecclesial rightness or correctness becomes basic and its privation is no longer hiddenness, but something negative, namely, *falsitas*’. (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.366)

<sup>13</sup> Of note; It is this characterization of truth, albeit with a difference, that is espoused by Gadamer, for the purpose of his philosophical enquiry, and which I intend to explore in detail within this thesis.

be seen as ‘a development of Husserl’s treatment of perceptual truth as ineluctably perspectival...As we move around a thing, different profiles are presented...Every view of an object has its own perspective’. (Dostal, 1994, p.50) The fact that we do not have a complete view of a thing at any one time does not mean that our perception is subjective or that we do not have a view of the thing itself, on the contrary, according to Husserl’s philosophy, viewing a thing from its different perspectives is in fact to see it in its entirety. And as Dahlstrom notes, it was Husserl who brought ‘to a close a tradition of construing truth exclusively in terms of propositions or judgments’, (Dahlstrom, 2001, p.388) thereby opening the way for Heidegger to explore a more fundamental, pre-predicative approach to the concept of truth.

### 2.3 Distinguishing Un-truth from Truth

Having established that un-truth is a necessary constituent of truth, Heidegger proceeds to interrogate the notion of truth, by posing a seemingly simple question and asking ‘What is a true thing?’ (Heidegger, 1993a, p.117) In seeking to dismantle this question, he exposes the complexities of any attempts to provide a simple answer to such a query and by reducing the response to the traditional understanding of true versus false, he proceeds to uncover the shortfalls inherent within this line of thinking, first by asking how the true can be distinguished from the false. Through a process of deduction, in which he cautions against equating what is deemed not to be true with being false, Heidegger proceeds to demonstrate how a response stating that the true is ‘actual’ is an insufficient definition of truth and he makes the suggestion that what ‘actual’ signifies, within this context, is ‘accordance’. This leads him to the conclusion that the traditional criterion for truth is ‘to be in accordance.’ [*in der Übereinstimmung steht*] It thereby follows that if for a thing to be true it has to be in accord with another thing and what is meant by ‘not actual’, within this context, is in fact ‘not in accord [*stimmt nicht*]’<sup>14</sup>. However, as has already been established, in the case of the traditional conception of truth the conformity of the state of affairs to the proposition is

---

<sup>14</sup> ‘*Stimmung* refers not only to the kind of attunement that a musical instrument receives by being tuned but also to the kind of attunement that constitutes a mood or a disposition of Dasein. The important etymological connection between *Stimmung* and the various formations based on *stimmen* (to accord)...’ [or to voice] ‘is not retained in the translation.—TR.’ (Heidegger, 1993a, p.128)

what is in question, or to couch it in Platonic terms ‘the accordance of things to their idea or concept.’ (Gasché, 1999, p.32). And with the further observation that not only is the notion of true and false applied to beings, but it is also applied to ‘our statements about beings’, Heidegger highlights the dual character of accordance, within the traditional perception of truth, by pointing out that ‘[A] statement is true if what it means and says is in accordance with the matter about which the statement is made. Here, too, we say, “It is in accord.” Now, though, it is not the matter that is in accord but rather the *proposition*’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.117) Either way, traditionally the pertinent concept for being true and truth is to be in accord.

## 2.4 The Meaning of Accordance

Having established that conformity or accordance is an essential element for the recognition of truth, Heidegger concerns himself with the question of what accordance actually means and he isolates various types of being in accord. By taking the example of two five-mark coins and remarking upon the ‘oneness of their outward appearance’, he illustrates how the ‘thing’ is in accord with the ‘thing’. However, when we make an observation by remarking on the fact that a five-mark coin is round then accordance is established between the ‘statement’ and the ‘thing’. Given this finding where the statement is immaterial and the coin, is made of metal, both having entirely different functions, Heidegger is led to enquire how the statement, which must remain a statement in order to retain its own essence, is ‘able to correspond to something else, the thing, precisely by persisting in its own essence’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.121) He emphasises the fact that the statement must preserve its own essence, as to relinquish it and become something different would completely negate the validity of any enquiry. In order to overcome this problem, Heidegger introduces the notion of relation and he observes that ‘[T]he essence of the correspondence is determined...by the kind of relation that obtains between the statement and the thing’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.121) Furthermore, he claims that this occurs in an ‘open region’ where there is freedom for interaction. Truth can only be understood as a relation of presentation in the open, in which the presenting statement expounds upon the matter presented. In other words, the truth of the statement is dependent upon the matter presented, and this takes place in the open region, which comes from within Dasein. Heidegger thereby determines that in

the case of the statement and the coin, the statement relates ‘itself’ to the ‘thing’ in that, with its observation about the thing, the statement presents the thing in the same manner as the thing as it is presented ‘is’ and, as Gasché points out, it is important within this context to note that ‘[P]resentation (*Vor-stellung*) is not representation (*Vorstellung*)’ (Gasché, 1999, p.36)<sup>15</sup>. Heidegger further explains that by ‘present’ is meant ‘to let the thing stand opposed as object’, that is to allow the thing an openness within which accordance can freely happen. An opening up occurs, which is prescribed by neither a propositional nor metaphysical truth but is entered into freely and, according to Heidegger, this is experienced in Western thinking as “what is present” which, he concludes, has ‘for a long time been named “being”’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.122)

The notion of an ‘open region’, which provides beings with the space and the freedom for the event of disclosure, is a familiar theme in Heidegger’s work, having already established, within *Being and Time*, that a clearing [*Lichtung*] or open space is essential for the disclosedness of beings. The notion of ‘open’ becomes more central later. It is Heidegger’s way of recasting Dasein in order to weaken a subjectivistic understanding of Dasein. The ‘clearing’ constitutes the space in which Dasein can set itself apart from its inauthentic mode of being and recognise its potential for its own being authentic, which includes an awareness of its finitude. *Lichtung*, also translated as lightening, characterises Heidegger’s approach to the manifestation of truth which he views as a sudden event. Lightening, as a metaphor for the event of truth can be traced back to Heraclitus. Dostal records an anecdote by Gadamer, who ‘tells us...that above the door of Heidegger’s cabin in the Black Forest stood the fragment from Heraclitus: “Lightening steers all things”, (Dostal, 1994, p.57) which indicates the significance of the notion of ‘lightening’, for Heidegger. And although, as we have seen, in line with Heidegger, Gadamer subscribes to the Greek concept of *alētheia* as the undisclosedness of truth, his understanding of the manner in which truth manifests itself differs radically from that of Heidegger. In Chapter Four, I will show how Gadamer takes a dialectical approach which requires us to ‘tarry’ and take our time in conversation, in contrast to what Dostal refers to as ‘the immediacy of the experience of truth for Heidegger’.

---

<sup>15</sup> Gasché employs the use of a hyphen to differentiate between *Vor-stellung*, meaning presentation and *Vorstellung*, meaning representation.

(Dostal, 1994, p.49) However, what Dostal appears to overlook in this regard and what is worthy of consideration is Heidegger's view of Dasein's intrinsic role as a mediator, within his conception of truth, which, as I see it, suggests that taking time, to a certain extent, is a necessary aspect of an event of truth for Heidegger. According to Heidegger, there is no truth without Dasein, and as Dasein is for the most part in an inauthentic mode of being, this means it is in untruth. Therefore, in order to be receptive to truth, Dasein is required to think and as thinking takes time, this belies the notion that the experience of truth is instantaneous.

As we have just acknowledged, truth as disclosure is only possible with the complicity of a receptive being, which means that the recognition and acknowledgment of truth is in effect a reciprocal event. Heidegger clarifies that 'Being-true as Being-uncovering, is in turn ontologically possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-world', (Heidegger, 1962, p.261) thereby indicating the historically situated aspect of truth. Furthermore he makes it clear that the event of the disclosure of truth is contingent upon a complex set of circumstances, and in 'On the Essence of Truth' the task that Heidegger has set himself is that of unravelling and explaining the complexity of the process which is involved in this event. He identifies what he refers to as open comportment [*Verhalten*] as a necessary component of this event, claiming that 'Comportment stands open to beings' (Heidegger, 1993a, p.122) and he further qualifies this claim by stating that the distinguishing feature of all comportment is that 'standing in the open region, it adheres to something opened up *as such*'. (Heidegger, 1993a, pp.121-22) In other words, by comportment Heidegger means an attuned bearing or open disposition which is receptive to the way something is disclosed, and he further clarifies that the openness of comportment [*Verhalten*] is what first makes the correctness of statements possible. Heidegger thereby introduces a dynamic aspect to the question of the essence of truth. Furthermore, having established that this is the case, he deduces that if the correctness of statements is only possible through 'the openness of comportment', or that is by virtue of its relation to the presented thing, 'what first makes correctness possible must with more original right be taken as the essence of truth'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.122) If Heidegger's finding is well-founded,

then it effectively destabilises, or at least reframes, the traditional notion that the judgement is the ‘sole essential locus of truth’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.122)

Heidegger’s enquiry into the fundamental influences which cause the presentative statement to adhere to a faithful and accurate account of the thing returns him to the open-region and to an acknowledgment of the freedom therein. Freedom, in the sense of being free for what is opened up within this region suggests a lack of prejudice or coercion in allowing for the openness of truth. It is this unfettered area where truth can be authentically revealed that provides Heidegger with his answer and leads him to consider the notion that the essence of truth is freedom. However, in every disclosure of truth there is also concealment, which Heidegger refers to as a proper non-essence [*das Eigentliche Un-wesen*] of truth. It will be seen that in examining the enigma surrounding this phenomenon of concealing, he makes the claim that non-essence is prior to unconcealing and is therefore, what he terms, a ‘pre-essential essence’.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in acknowledging that ‘errancy’ (*Irre*) is a constituent of Dasein, he sees it as a counter-essence to the primordial essence of truth, and asserts that ‘Freedom...is the essence of truth...only because freedom itself originates from the primordial essence of truth’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.134)<sup>17</sup> The openness which is afforded by freedom within this context supports the theory of a non-subjective nature of truth, which is further borne out by Heidegger’s comment that ‘ “Truth” is not a feature of correct propositions that are asserted of an “object” by a human” subject” and then “are valid”...’ (Heidegger, 1993a, p.127) However, attention is drawn to the resistance of traditional thinking to the suggestion that the essence of truth is freedom, a resistance which, in Heidegger’s view, is based upon the preconception that freedom is a property of man. This notion is clearly at odds with the view held by Heidegger for whom ‘man’ having first been involuntarily ‘thrown into the world’ is subsequently shaped by his facticity. Moreover, in stating that ‘man ek-sists and so becomes capable of history only as the property of...freedom’, (Heidegger, 1993a, p.128) Heidegger makes it clear that, rather than constituting a property of man, freedom possesses man.

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. § 2.7., p.70.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. § 2.7.,pp. 71, 72.

## 2.5 Freedom

Having established that the essence of truth is freedom, Heidegger explains that by letting beings be, freedom is engaged 'in the disclosure of being as a whole'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.128) This engagement, rather than requiring active participation, involves a withdrawal which allows beings the space in which they are free to be revealed. Given that this is the case, then Heidegger makes the point that freedom must also be engaged in the concealment or hiddenness of being, as neither concealedness nor unconcealedness can occur in isolation from each other. Furthermore, in Heidegger's view because truth and untruth cannot be uncoupled from one another, it raises the question of the non-essence of truth which, in view of the fact that man's historically situated existence is beholden to freedom, cannot be a derivative of a negative source, such as 'human incapacity and negligence', but requires a more fundamental basis. Because freedom has been deemed to be equally engaged in the disclosure and in the concealment of beings, Heidegger concludes that untruth 'must derive from the essence of truth', and in addition he states that 'If the essence of truth is not exhausted by the correctness of statements, then neither can untruth be equated with the incorrectness of judgements'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.128) And with this statement he further highlights the inadequacy of propositional truth.

Heidegger states that, freedom, as ek-sistent and exposed engagement in the disclosure of being as a whole, 'has already attuned all comportment to being as a whole'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.128) However, as he explains, to understand attunement as 'experience' and 'feeling' would be to deprive it of its essence, therefore, being attuned can be 'experienced' and 'felt' 'only because the "man who experiences," without being aware of the essence of the attunement, is already engaged in being attuned in a way that discloses beings as a whole'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.129) He further qualifies this by stating that attunement understood as 'exposedness to beings as a whole' is a phenomenon which is inadvertently experienced by human beings whether or not it is accompanied by pre-theoretical awareness. However, in drawing attention to his phrase 'as a whole' he highlights the difficulties that can be experienced due to the distractions of everyday situations, which serve to obscure our grasp of things and thereby render complete comprehension impossible. What Heidegger appears to be

saying is that our preoccupation with mundane trivia can cloud our ability to fully understand the manifestation of either historical or natural truth, and within these situations freedom, in ‘letting-be’, effectively lends itself to the concealment of ‘beings as a whole’. This brings him, whilst still adhering to the notion of *alētheia* in connection with the disclosedness of truth, to reaffirm that un-disclosedness or concealment always accompanies disclosedness. It is however made clear that concealment, which Heidegger terms ‘untruth’, is not intended to denote falsehood, as the empty being-away of the truth, and it cannot be understood in a nihilistic way to denote a futile and empty nothingness. Heidegger clarifies that ‘what brings into accord is not nothing, but rather a concealing of beings as a whole...[L]etting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing’. (Heidegger, 1993a, pp.129-30) Furthermore, rather than equating concealment with falsehood, it ‘corresponds...to the fact that beings are never fully present to us and...not primarily because of us, but because of the character of their presence itself...’ (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.365) which can again be understood in terms of the Husserlian theory of the perspectival and adumbrated aspect of truth. To emphasise the inseparable link between truth and being, with the observation that ‘Just as truth entails un-truth, so being as presence entails absence’, (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.365) is to effectively highlight the inherent contrast that pertains in all areas of being. And, whilst not denying this contrast, Heidegger’s view in this regard seems to be unclear, as his thinking appears to vacillate from the claim that ‘untruth proper is older than truth’, as the ‘openedness of this or that being’, to his earlier observation ‘that Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and in the untruth’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.265) Furthermore, bearing in mind that he has stressed the intrinsic connection between truth and untruth and has made it clear that truths themselves are not beings, but are rather essentially related to beings and thereby dependent upon beings in order to be, it is difficult, at this stage, to follow what appears to be an ambivalence in Heidegger’s thinking when it comes to the ontological question.

## **2.6 Letting-be: Concealing**

Prior to his analysis of untruth as concealing within section six of ‘On the Essence of Truth’, Heidegger draws attention to the dual function of ‘letting-be’, which is, he states, ‘an attuning, a bringing into accord’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.129) And,

whilst reiterating that in the case of concealment this bringing into accord ‘is not nothing’ and further clarifying that concealment is a valid mode of being by explaining that

Precisely because letting-be always lets beings be in a particular comportment that relates to them and thus discloses them, it conceals beings as a whole. Letting-be is intrinsically at the same time a concealing. (Heidegger, 1993a, pp.129, 130)

With this observation Heidegger establishes the authenticity of concealment or untruth whilst also suggesting that ‘letting-be’ affords truth the freedom to reveal itself. And, having reasserted his claim that concealment as undisclosedness is untruth, he confirms his view that whilst concealment deprives *alētheia* of disclosure, it does not negate what is undisclosed but rather retains it in concealedness. However, given, as we have just seen, that truth is not an autonomous entity, but is reliant upon a being in order to be, this again raises the question of how untruth, albeit as essentially retracting, can exist prior to and therefore independently of truth, in other words, how can un-truth be concealed or held back prior to the disclosure and recognition of truth? Whilst insisting, within his 1930 essay on truth, that the ‘concealment of beings as a whole...is older than every openedness of this or that being’, (Heidegger, 1993a, p.130) Heidegger also makes a seemingly paradoxical claim that letting beings be ‘discloses and at the same time conceals’, (Heidegger, 1993a, p.130) which again indicates vacillation on the part of Heidegger, who seeks a solution to this quandary by appealing to what he refers to as ‘the one mystery’. The mystery which surrounds the concealing of the concealed is, in Heidegger’s view, older than all letting-be and therefore, he states, it is the proper non-essence [*das Eigentliche Un-wesen*] of truth. However, it is made clear that non-essence within this context is not to be understood to have an inferior or inessential status, but it is rather what Heidegger terms ‘pre-essential essence’ [*vorwesendes Wesen*]. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.130) In Gasché’s words, ‘All disclosing letting-be...is itself ‘dependent’ on the concealing of what is concealed’. (Gasché, 1999, p.47) What can be taken from this is that truth requires a framework in order to separate it from untruth, which effectively serves as a means of highlighting it, by the presence of absence and the absence of presence, which can be further understood by using Dostal’s

observation that ‘To bring something into the light is to cast an aspect of it into shadow’. (Dostal, 1994, pp.49-50) This again brings to the fore the chiaroscuro effect, whereby the darks accentuate the lights and the lights serve to emphasise the areas of darkness, which accompanies all recognition of beings.

Given Heidegger’s claim that concealing is a fundamental event, it follows that traditional opinion does not subscribe to the notion of non-essence and untruth as concealment, with the result, he states, that ‘concealing as a fundamental occurrence has sunk into forgottenness’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.132) By this Heidegger does not intend to imply that it has sunk into a state of oblivion but rather that there is, what he terms, a ‘peculiar presence’ concerning that which is forgotten, which seems to indicate that there is a residual awareness or inkling of the fundamental aspect or trace of concealing—vanishing but not vanished. However, as Heidegger points out, with the forgetfulness of the mystery, man is left to find his own bearings and in this state he turns to ‘what is readily available’ and becomes preoccupied with commonplace matters, thereby narrowing his perspective and causing him to lose sight of ‘being as a whole’. Man errs and essentially loses himself in an inauthentic mode of being from which he takes his values, he chooses new standards indiscriminately and, in Heidegger’s view, he ‘is all the more mistaken the more exclusively he takes himself, as subject, to be the standard for all beings’. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.132) By thus describing man in an errant state, in which his understanding of the truth of being is restricted, Heidegger grounds the notion of untruth and effectively confronts the language of metaphysics.

## **2.7 Errancy: Forgetfulness of the Mystery**

Having connected untruth with man’s falling away from himself, by withdrawing from the mystery and turning towards inauthenticity, in what is readily available, ‘passing the mystery by—this is *erring*’, (Heidegger, 1993a, p.133) Heidegger states and he analyses its effect upon human existence. He explains that man persists in pursuit of what is readily available, a persistence which, he states, has its support in ‘that *bearing* [*Verhältnis*] by which Dasein not only ek-sists but also at the

same time *in-sists*, i.e., holds fast to what is offered by beings, as if they were open of and in themselves'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.132) Kockelmans further elucidates Heidegger's claim, with the following observation,

[I]f we call Dasein's power to transcend beings toward Being itself "ek-sistence," then Dasein's propensity to adhere ontically to beings, once the mystery is forgotten, may be called "in-sistence."  
(Kockelmans, 1984, p.13)

Man's insistence is dependent upon his existence which, as Heidegger has already pointed out, is for the most part preoccupied with what is available and useful, and thereby is in forgetfulness of the mystery of being. This inauthentic mode of existence, which Heidegger has previously identified in *Being and Time*, he now calls errancy, and furthermore he states that man is thoroughly dominated by errancy. Errancy is, he states, 'the essential counter-essence to the primordial essence of truth' (Heidegger, 1993a, p.133) and he considers it to be a constituent of Dasein. Having identified various modes of errancy, from time wasting and miscalculating to what, in his opinion, is considered by philosophy to be erroneous, such as flawed judgement and incorrect knowledge, Heidegger considers the possibility that man, having experienced errancy, can respond by means of a resolute openness to the mystery, and thereby glimpse into the mystery via questioning.

In Heidegger's view, errancy dominates the movement from untruth, as the concealing of truth, to the disclosure of beings and these movements, he reaffirms, are simultaneous. However, he further states that 'Errancy and the concealing of what is concealed belong to the primordial essence of truth' and continues with the claim that 'Freedom, conceived on the basis of the in-sistent ek-sistence of Dasein, is the essence of truth...only because freedom itself originates from the primordial essence of truth'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.134) This may become clearer if we consider Heidegger's previous claim, within *Being and Time*, that the disclosure of truth is dependent upon Dasein's being, stating that 'only with Dasein's *disclosedness* is the *most primordial* phenomenon of truth attained'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.263) What seems to emerge from Heidegger's reasoning is that truth and untruth, in belonging to the primordial essence

of truth, despite previous claims to the contrary, are equiprimordial, which again indicates that in this regard there is some oscillation in Heidegger's thinking. Furthermore, by pointing to the in-sistent eksistence with which Dasein proceeds in errancy, causing oppression of the mystery, whilst continuing to be swayed by a certain subjugation towards the mystery, Heidegger identifies, what he sees as, Dasein in need. The truth of being wavers with Dasein's oscillation from one to the other. 'He is in the *needful condition of being constrained* by the one and the other. The full essence of truth, including its most proper nonessence, keeps Dasein in need by this perpetual turning to and fro. Dasein is a turning into need...' (Heidegger, 1993a, p.134) With this acknowledgment of Dasein's constant alternation between errancy and the mystery, Heidegger's awareness of the tensions within the question of the truth of being come to the fore. This pervading tension is an inherent aspect of all facets of being.

In the final section of his essay 'On the Essence of Truth', having established that the 'thinking of Being', which is the source of the questioning of being as a whole, has since Plato 'been understood as "philosophy"', (Heidegger, 1993a, p.135) Heidegger examines the question of the relation between truth and philosophy. He makes the observation that, with the rise of philosophy, common sense (sophistry), which views philosophical questioning as a threat, also begins to dominate. However, Heidegger responds to the question of common sense by drawing attention to its failure to touch on the 'essence of philosophy' which, he states, can only be understood in relation to 'the original truth'. But, as he points out, because the full essence of truth contains the non-essence [*Un-wesen*] and because it prevails as concealing, this in turn creates a tension for philosophy, whose function it is to ask the question of the meaning of truth. Philosophy in this instance maintains a 'stern and resolute openness that does not disrupt the concealing but entreats its unbroken essence into the open region of understanding and thus into its own truth'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.136) Heidegger describes this approach, which allows being to be as a whole, as a 'gentle sternness' and 'stern gentleness' (Heidegger, 1993a, p.136) where philosophical questioning precludes external prejudices.

Heidegger takes his enquiry into the question of the essence of truth to a deeper level, by stating that any such enquiry must of necessity be concerned with the more fundamental question of the truth of essence, from which the essence of truth originates. And, in making the distinction between each of these questions, Heidegger explains that the essence of truth 'is understood initially in the sense of whatness (*quidditas*) or material content (*realitas*)', with the added qualification that 'truth is understood as a characteristic of knowledge'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.137) In the case of the question of the truth of essence, he clarifies that, in being understood verbally it is still within the realms of the metaphysical. For philosophy, he states, the concept of essence is invariably connected to the concept of being, adding that the truth of essence is what distinguishes the ontological difference between being and beings, and in order to emphasise this point Heidegger reverts to the archaic spelling 'beyng'. Having asserted that 'Truth signifies sheltering that clears [*lichtendes Bergen*] as the basic characteristic of Being', (Heidegger, 1993a, p.137) Heidegger concludes with an apparent riddle, claiming that 'the *essence* of truth is the truth of *essence*'. (Heidegger, 1993a, p.137) He sums up his enquiry by declaring that the question of truth is bound up with the clearing which follows, what he calls, 'concealing withdrawal' and he names this clearing [*Lichtung*], *alētheia*. This clearing, which takes its shining from within Dasein, is where the basic relatedness of Dasein to being occurs. The entity which Dasein encounters in the openness of being both gives itself meaning and is given meaning by Dasein. In other words, the disclosure of being is a reciprocal event, which is always dependent on Dasein.

## **2.7 (a) Friedländer's Critique of Heidegger's Concept of Truth**

From within the framework of his exposition of Plato,<sup>18</sup> Paul Friedländer outlines his critique of Heidegger's concept of truth. He bases his main argument on Heidegger's etymological analysis of ancient Greek terms, in particular his interpretation of the term *alētheia*. In a reconstruction of Heidegger's analysis, which

---

<sup>18</sup> Twenty years after the publication of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* Friedländer's exposition of Plato appeared, under the title *Platon: Seinswahrheit und Lebenswirklichkeit*. Within this work, which was first published in English in 1958 as *Plato; An Introduction*, Friedländer includes a critique of Heidegger's theory of truth. For the purpose of this discussion the English version of Friedländer's work will provide the point of reference.

marks a departure from the traditional way of thinking about truth, Friedländer notes Heidegger's view that

...the concept of truth has degenerated in the course of the thinking of many generations: the prevailing opinion makes truth a predicate of thought and speech, not of reality. The meaning of truth has changed from "unhiddenness [*Unverborgenheit*] of being to the correctness of apprehension". (Friedländer, 1964, p.221)

Whilst Friedländer does not argue with Heidegger's theory of the 'unhiddenness' of truth, what he takes issue with is Heidegger's reading of ancient Greek thought in support of this theory which, he states, stems from his interpretation of Plato's allegory of the cave. Moreover, Friedländer considers Heidegger's interpretation of *alētheia* as unhiddenness to be mistaken and he paradoxically accuses Heidegger of a misinterpretation of the Greeks which, as we have seen, is an accusation that Heidegger has already directed at traditional thinking. In Friedländer's view, the mistake that Heidegger makes is in attributing the alpha-privative to the Greek term *alētheia*, [*a-lētheia*] to denote un-hiddenness, giving the understanding that it is built from a root [*lēthe*] meaning hiddenness, and he argues that this interpretation is not part of the Greek experience, which leads him to question the use of negatives 'when there is no indication that Homer understood the word as a negative'. (Friedländer, 1964, p.223) Furthermore, Friedländer challenges Heidegger's claim that, 'in one of the fragments of Heraclitus...the phenomenon of truth in the sense of uncoveredness [unhiddenness]...shows through'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.262) However, in contrast to Friedländer, Daniel Dahlstrom appears to accept Heidegger's method of interpreting the Greek word *alētheia*, meaning unhiddenness, and he acknowledges the relevance of the notion of hiddenness for Heraclitus and the early Greek thinkers. Furthermore, he claims that '[T]he emphasis that Heidegger places on this interpretation for the history of philosophy and, indeed, the state of the contemporary world in the grip of technology can scarcely be underestimated'. (Dahlstrom, 2013, p.363) However, Dahlstrom does acknowledge the development of Heidegger's thought, in relation to the question of *alētheia*, in the 1960s.

In his 1960s essay, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', Heidegger reviews his earlier acceptance of *alētheia* and, whilst continuing to maintain that *alētheia* is still to be understood as unconcealment, he states 'Alētheia, unconcealment thought as the clearing of presence, is not yet truth'. (Heidegger, 1993b, p.446) Furthermore, in what could be seen as a response to his critics, Heidegger claims that '...to raise the question of *alētheia*...is not the same as raising the question of truth. For this reason, it was immaterial and therefore misleading to call *alētheia*, in the sense of clearing, "truth"'. (Heidegger, 1993b, pp.446-47) However, whilst Heidegger concedes that the term *alētheia* may have been misleading, he is not attempting to destabilise his notion of truth, furthermore, it should be noted that in *Being and Time*, he already acknowledged that to translate *alētheia* as truth is to lose the meaning of the term, as understood by the Greeks.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.8 Conclusion

In 'On the Essence of Truth', whilst not trivialising the notion of truth as correctness, Heidegger probes deeper in search of the origin of the correspondence theory of truth to the question of the essence of truth. The essence of truth, which is directly connected to being, is to be found in freedom, which is first made possible by Dasein's and Being's claim on Dasein. And, in what amounts to a transformation of Dasein's relatedness to being, Dasein constitutes the essence of the human being. Moreover, as Heidegger has already indicated, being itself is what makes correctness possible, without being there cannot be any understanding. Furthermore, Heidegger argues, that as truth and untruth cannot be uncoupled, that untruth must derive from the essence of truth.

As I have pointed out in this chapter, Heidegger's thinking on the question of the equiprimordiality of truth and untruth—disclosing and concealing, appears to oscillate. However, I have argued that, given the interdependency of these phenomena, untruth

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger states that '[T]o translate...[*alētheia*] as 'truth', and, above all, to define this expression conceptually in theoretical ways, is to cover up the meaning of what the Greeks made 'self-evidently' basic for the terminological use of [*alētheia*] as a pre-philosophical way of understanding it'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.262)

and truth should be understood to be equiprimordial. As Heidegger sums it up, what has been achieved in his essay is a recognition that ‘a nearness to the truth of Being is first prepared for historical man on the basis of the Da-sein into which man can enter’ (Heidegger, 1993a, p.138) and, as he further reminds us, having left the subjective aspect of man behind, prior to *Being and Time*, a new ground that represents a move away from metaphysics is opened up from which emerges a new way of thinking.

At the conclusion of this chapter, I discussed Friedländer’s critique of Heidegger’s treatment of the question of truth, which is mainly concerned with Heidegger’s etymological analysis of *alētheia*. And, in what could be seen as a response to his critics, Heidegger’s review of the notion of *alētheia*, in ‘The End of Philosophy and The Task of Thinking’, has been discussed. In Chapter Three, which concerns Heidegger’s treatment of the work of art, it will be seen that the notion of *alētheia* is central to his discussion in which he argues that art has a unique role in enabling the disclosure of truth.

## Chapter Three: Heidegger's Enquiry into the Question of Truth and Being; as Manifested in the Work of Art

### 3.1 Introduction

Reflection on what *art* may be is completely and decisively directed solely toward the question of *being*. Art is accorded neither an area of cultural achievement nor an appearance of spirit; it belongs, rather, to the Event out of which the 'meaning of being' is first determined. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.55)

This statement encapsulates Heidegger's approach not only to the question of 'art' but to his entire philosophical enquiry. Furthermore, he disclaims any attempts to solve what he refers to as 'the riddle of art', deeming it to be a futile exercise.<sup>20</sup> Heidegger never claimed to have a philosophy of art, however Joseph J Kockelmans is in agreement with Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann's view that 'although he never developed a *philosophical aesthetics*...[Heidegger] certainly presented us with a *philosophy of art*, thought from the perspective of the question concerning the meaning of Being'. (Kockelmans, 1984, p.172) Within this chapter, I intend to assess Heidegger's treatment of the question of art and, by means of an exploration and analyses of his ontological investigation into the working or 'setting-itself-to-work' of truth in the work of art, confirm his assertion that his enquiry into art is directly concerned with the question of being.

From the 1930s onwards Heidegger's interest in the question of art became manifest through, amongst other writings, his lectures and essays on the poems of Friedrich Hölderlin, whose work continued to be of interest to Heidegger throughout his career. Hölderlin, he states, is 'the pre-cursor of poets in a destitute time', (Heidegger, 1971, p.142) by which is meant a time from which the gods have flown, thereby signifying the passing of metaphysics. Heidegger's most comprehensive treatment of the question of art is to be found in an essay entitled 'The Origin of the Work of Art', which, together with other works, he eventually published in 1950, and which, in Iain

---

<sup>20</sup> See Heidegger's Addendum (1956) to 'The Origin of the Work of Art', published in *Holzwege*, (1950).

Thomson's view, 'is far and away the most important source for understanding Heidegger's attempt to articulate an alternative to the aesthetic understanding of art'. (Thomson, 2011a, p.65) Thomson thereby indicates Heidegger's intention to overcome the traditional contemplation and appreciation of art, with its Cartesian implications of 'object' and 'subject', which, as he views it, is defined by the term 'aesthetics'. And although his continued interest in the question of art in the latter part of his career will be noted,<sup>21</sup> the aforementioned essay, by Heidegger, in which he pursues an ontological investigation into the working or setting-itself-to-work of truth in the artwork, will be the main focus of my analysis within this chapter of my thesis, which concerns Heidegger's philosophical engagement with the operations or workings of the work of art, which he terms its 'work-being' [*Werksein*].

Having clarified that his exploration of art is not to be separated from the question of being, Heidegger returns to the ancient Greeks in search of a fundamental ontological grounding of the question of art and in particular he appeals to Aristotle whom he credits with being a decisive force in the development of his own philosophy. Jacques Taminiaux's observation, that Aristotle identifies art as 'an intellectual virtue in the sense that it is a way of disclosing, of discovering...of revealing...thus a way of knowing truth', (Taminiaux, 1993, p.393) with the further addition that 'it is strictly Aristotelian to state that the essence of art lies in a happening of truth', (Taminiaux, 1993, p.393) clearly indicates that there is a strong Aristotelian influence on Heidegger's writings concerning the question of art. However, whilst this may be the case, I intend to demonstrate, by means of a critical analysis of his work, how

---

<sup>21</sup> In *Between Word and Image*, Dennis Schmidt gives a detailed analysis of Heidegger's encounter with the work of Paul Klee, in the late 1950s. Schmidt notes that 'Heidegger's enthusiasm for Klee had a great philosophical significance for him: he even spoke with friends of the need to revise or to write a "counterpart to" "The Origin of the Work of Art" in the light of what he saw in Klee.' (Schmidt, 2013, p.1) And although Heidegger did not fulfil this need, what is notable about his interest in Klee's work, given his dismissive approach to modern art, is the abstract nature of Klee's paintings. However, as pointed out by Schmidt, 'it was not just Klee's painted works that gripped Heidegger...Klee was a prolific writer, and his written texts were as esteemed by Heidegger as his painterly works' and, as Schmidt adds, a 'capacity for theoretical reflection distinguishes most all of the artists to whom Heidegger turns in his discussion of the work of art'. (Schmidt, 2013, p.1) Furthermore, within this chapter I intend to discuss Heidegger's engagement with the sculptors Bernhard Heiliger and Eduardo Chillida in the 1960s, in the light of Andrew J. Mitchell's observation that this encounter leads Heidegger to 'a rethinking of body, space, and the relation between these'. (Mitchell, 2010, p.1) Heidegger's interest in the art of Paul Cezanne, who was a pivotal figure in influencing the emergence of Cubism, will also be examined within this work.

Heidegger in radicalizing the Greek notion of *alētheia* further develops his own distinctive theory of the disclosedness and un-disclosedness, of truth and untruth, which, as can be seen from my analysis within chapter one, he treats in detail in *Being and Time*. Furthermore, I will show how, by applying his understanding of *alētheia* to the work of art, he describes how the artwork is active or operative in enabling the emergence of truth to occur. And, although he was not the first to single out the importance of art in this regard, it will be seen that in divergence from the metaphysical tradition, Heidegger takes a unique approach to the question of art, wherein he emphatically rejects the notion of aesthetics, deeming it to be a contributory factor in the demise of what he terms ‘great art’. In addition, I intend to draw attention to Heidegger’s retrospective reflections on the relation of art to truth from the perspective of the 1960s by examining his comments within the lecture ‘The Provenance of Art and the Destination of Thought’, which he delivered in Athens in 1967, together with his treatment of the topic within his essay ‘Art and Space’ (1969), and to thereby note the changes which occurred in his thinking in the intervening thirty years, since he first delivered his lectures on the work of art.

The thinking behind his essay ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ first came to light when Heidegger presented a lecture of the same title in Freiburg, in November 1935. The following year (1936) he delivered three further lectures in the Goethe Museum in Frankfurt, in which he developed and expanded upon the same topic. In recalling the impact of these lectures in the 1930s, Gadamer states that Heidegger’s ‘addresses on the origin of the work of art caused a philosophical sensation.’ (Gadamer, 1994g, p.98) The three Frankfurt lectures were subsequently compiled as one essay entitled ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, which was included in a collection and published in 1950 under Heidegger’s chosen title ‘*Holzwege*’. A draft of Heidegger’s earlier lecture, which came to light in a posthumous publication in *Heidegger Studies* in 1989, contains the core ideas that he develops in the final version with some notable differences. However given that the draft of the Freiburg lecture is considerably shorter than what is known as the Frankfurt version, it follows that a more comprehensive account of the topic can be found within the latter, which is the version that I intend to concentrate on within this

chapter of my work, whilst noting certain changes of emphasis which occur in contrast to the earlier essay.

### 3.2 Earlier and Later Versions of ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’

Heidegger’s writing on the work of art in the 1930s, in which the question of truth and its intrinsic link to being continues to be the focus of his enquiry, is viewed, by some critics, as a turning point in his thinking. Günter Figal comments on the concise and lively way that Heidegger indicates a ‘turn from the accomplishment of Being [*Seinsvollzug*] to the occurrence of Being [*Seinsgeschehen*’ (Figal, 2009, p.19) within his Freiburg version of the essay, which he perceives as a change in Heidegger’s thinking that is evident from that time onwards. However, rather than negating the concept of the ‘accomplishment of Being’ this change of emphasis stresses its dependence upon the ‘occurrence of Being’. Together they ‘form a subject-matter determined by the occurrence of Being’. (Figal, 2009, p.20) What this means is that in his essay on art there is a change from Heidegger’s understanding of truth, in *Being and Time*, in terms of Dasein’s awareness of its own possibilities, to Dasein’s recognition of the openness and hiddenness whereby truth reveals itself and is covered over, as an historical and conflictual happening.<sup>22</sup> This openness and hiddenness that is demonstrated by means of highlighting the conflicting elements of world and earth in Heidegger’s artwork essay is synonymous with the invisible in the visible and which is an intrinsic feature of the manifestation of all truth. The importance of Heidegger’s essay ‘On the Origin of the Work of Art’ in establishing the nature of truth and in pointing to the direction of his ongoing enquiry, is further emphasised by Gadamer’s observation which is included in an introduction, written at Heidegger’s request, to the Reclam version of the essay, published in 1960. In Gadamer’s view

[T]he fundamental significance of the essay on the work of art...is that it provides us with an indication of the later Heidegger’s real concern. No one can ignore the fact that in the work of art, in which a world arises, not only is something meaningful given to experience

---

<sup>22</sup> Indications of Heidegger’s change of emphasis from an analysis of the being of Dasein to an analysis of the truth of being have already been noted in a previous chapter of this thesis, in which his essay ‘On The Essence of Truth’ is discussed. (1943).

that was not known before, but also something new comes into existence with the work of art itself. It is not simply the manifestation of a truth, it is itself an event. (Gadamer, 1977a, p.224)

The event to which Gadamer refers and which will be discussed further concerns the ongoing conflict between world and earth, and the ensuing strife thereof by means of which truth is manifested in the artwork as historical.

In the Freiburg version of 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger begins by focusing on the 'work' character of the work of art and he duly determines that the distinguishing feature that renders a work of art 'great' is to be found in the 'work-being' [*Werksein*] of the work, which is not to ignore the importance of the work in its mode as a thing but, as Calvin O. Schrag remarks, 'only after art is apprehended in its 'work-being' will its thingly character be disclosed in the proper perspective.' (Schrag, 1973, pp.114-15) Heidegger's discussion could be seen to oscillate from thing to work and from work to thing and, it will be seen how, in a move which sets the work-being of the work into relief, Heidegger leads into a discussion of the thingly character of the work in the later version of his essay, whilst continuing to emphasise that in the work 'the happening of truth is at work'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.33) Moreover, it is only by means of the work that unconcealment 'occurs'. However, for unconcealment to occur, according to Taminiaux, Heidegger specifies three necessary 'fundamental modalities' of great art, naming them as 'artistic, philosophical, and political' and he clarifies that for Heidegger this means the works of 'the poet, the thinker and the State-creator'. (Taminiaux, 1993, p.399) Taminiaux takes the view that Heidegger's singling out of what he refers to as 'great' art can be seen as 'the countermovement against the falling tendency of everyday and petty... [art]', (Taminiaux, 1993, p.398) which is best understood within the context of Heidegger's theory of the inauthentic realm of *das Man* (the 'they'). However, the use of the word 'great', within Heidegger's writings in the 1930s, has evoked a more controversial view by some of his critics but, as a discussion concerning this controversy does not fall within the remit of my thesis, I will consign my comments to a footnote.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, a point worth noting is that

---

<sup>23</sup>In his essay 'The Greatness of the Work of Art', Robert Bernasconi is critical of what he perceives in Heidegger's writings in the 1930s as a 'rhetoric of greatness', linking it to his espousal of National

Heidegger's classification of greatness could be equated to Gadamer's use of the term 'eminent' in his description of certain texts, particularly within the context of the poetic form of art. Further discussion of this aspect of Gadamer's work will be taken up in the next chapter, which concerns the development of his philosophical hermeneutics.

Having, as previously mentioned, discussed the work-being of the work in his earlier essay, in the later Frankfurt version of 'The Origin of the Work of Art' Heidegger turns his attention to the question of the 'equipmentality' of equipment. Noting this shift of emphasis, Françoise Dastur explains that in the Frankfurt version, 'Heidegger starts from the analysis of equipment (*Zeug*) in order to differentiate thing and work', (Dastur, 1999, p.120) and, with reference to certain artworks, it will be seen how he duly examines and subsequently returns to the 'thingliness' of the thing. In enquiring into the thing-character of the thing, Heidegger re-conceives the common place understanding of things as he considers that this inhibits an understanding of its being. And whilst acknowledging that the artwork is in itself a thing, by means of a phenomenological epochē and reduction, he probes further to discover what it is that constitutes the 'thing' of the artwork which, due to its familiarity, together with our preoccupation with the work, we tend to overlook. I will show how Heidegger, by means of an investigation into the question of the equipmentality of equipment, gains an understanding of the 'thingliness' of the thing and the work character of the work which is at work in the event of uncovering of truth within the work of art. Walter Brogan highlights this move away from the metaphysical tradition, by Heidegger, and from what is perceived as the traditional wrangle for a hierarchy between art and truth, by stating that

[T]he reconciliation of art and truth in Heidegger's originary, non-metaphysical thinking stands in contrast to the long, although often

---

Socialism. Bernasconi does however concede that in his essay 'The Origin of The Work of Art' Heidegger applies a more discreet use of this term, confining it to the mention of 'great art'. (Bernasconi, 1993b, p.99) I do not intend to enter a discussion concerning Heidegger's political affiliations within this thesis. However, it is worth noting James Risser's observation, that whereas his conduct within the 1930s 'provided the opportunity for a critical re-reading and re-assessment of much of Heidegger's work from this period', (Risser, 1999, p.6) his critics including Jürgen Habermas, 'one of Heidegger's harshest critics, would not deny...that Heidegger's political conduct "cannot and should not serve the purpose of a global depreciation of this thought".' (Risser, 1999, p.6).

hidden, struggle in the history of metaphysics between art and truth for priority in determining the way in which beings are interpreted. (Brogan, 1984, p.349)

With this reference to an ‘originary, non-metaphysical thinking’, we are reminded of Heidegger’s continuing dialogue with the ancient Greeks, whereby he continues to draw on the ancient Greek term *alētheia*, translated as ‘unconcealedness’ to describe the unfolding of truth. However, in his later work a change of emphasis can be detected and, whilst not rejecting this theory, with his comment in ‘The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking’, in which he states that ‘to raise the question of *alētheia*, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth’, (Heidegger, 1993b, p.446) Heidegger appears to distance himself from this notion.<sup>24</sup> There is, however, an interesting observation by Graeme Nicholson who maintains that in the ‘Task of Thinking’, despite the prevailing perception to the contrary, *alētheia* is ‘the source and condition’ for ‘several different variants of truth’ which are considered by Heidegger. (Nicholson, 2014, p.71) Nicholson thereby acknowledges Heidegger’s faithfulness to the notion of *alētheia*, albeit in a less obtrusive way. Furthermore, it is made clear in ‘On the Origin of the Work of Art’ that the notion of *alētheia*, understood as the conflictual unfolding of truth between earth and world is central to Heidegger’s enquiry. Within this essay on ‘art’ Heidegger establishes that art is the ‘setting-itself-to-work of truth’ [*Das Ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*], (Heidegger, 2002b, p.19) however, in an appendix, which he later adds to the *Holzwege* version of his essay and which I intend to discuss within this chapter, it will be seen how Heidegger seeks to justify and explain this choice of phrase within the context of his discussion of truth.

### 3.3 The Work-being [*Werksein*] of the Work of Art

As we have seen, the work-being of the artwork is involved in what Heidegger refers to as ‘its setting-up’, by means of which he explains the work is enabled to open-up and reveal the world of contrasts that surrounds us, which despite its seeming familiarity is not readily obvious and can remain undetected. Furthermore, as Calvin

---

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Chapters One and Two for critiques by Paul Friedländer and Ernst Tugendat, concerning Heidegger’s reliance on the Greek term *alētheia* to support his theory concerning the event of truth.

Schrag notes, '[T]he "work-being" of the work of art consists in the unity-in-opposition of world and earth', (Schrag, 1973, p.117) by means of which the emergence of truth is enabled to occur and if the work fails to accomplish this, then Heidegger questions its validity as an artwork. In other words, whilst world and earth work together, individually they fulfil the intimately opposing functions of disclosing and concealing, which, is an essential phenomena in every event of the emergence of truth. Heraclitus acknowledged that the harmonious structure of the world depends upon opposite tension, '*Palintropos Harmonie*', which he likens to that of the bow and the lyre.<sup>25</sup>

A 'second essential characteristic' of the work-being of the work which, Heidegger identifies, is, he states, the 'setting-forth' of the earth and in examining how the work manages this he looks at its manifestation in stone, metal, wood, colour, tone and 'the naming power of the word', and asks if this 'mere matter', which has been brought under control by the artwork, disappears through formation. He discounts this notion and hails all these things as 'the unison of this unsurpassable plenitude' (Heidegger, 2009b, p.137) which he calls *earth*. Earth, Heidegger explains, 'is that in which the arising of everything that arises is brought back...and sheltered', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.21) that is, impenetrable earth is involved in reclamation or concealing of all that has been unfolded, and it is, furthermore, resistant to attempts to being uncovered. Earth is, as Gadamer states, 'a counterconcept to world insofar as it exemplifies self-sheltering and closing-off as opposed to self-opening.' (Gadamer, 1994g, p.103) And although earth and world are not to be viewed merely as antagonistic opposites, there is an interdependent affinity or ever vibrant relationship between them which results in a productive conflict. The conflict between the openness of the world and the resistant impenetrability of the earth generates strife and can be seen as analogous to the tensions occurring between the unconcealing and concealing of truth and untruth which, as we have previously encountered, Heidegger develops at length in *Being and Time*. Art, Heidegger explains, sees the work accomplishing this strife in 'setting-up' the 'work being' of its 'work' which, he states, 'consists in fighting the fight between world and earth' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.27), and it is from this fight within the work that truth

---

<sup>25</sup> Heraclitus, fragment 51.

emerges. We are reminded of the universal aspect of the tensions, which are inherent in the artwork, by Gadamer's observation that

The conflict between revealment and concealment is not the truth of the work of art alone, but the truth of every being, for as unhiddenness, truth is always such *an opposition of revealment and concealment*. The two belong necessarily together. (Gadamer, 1977a, p.226)

With these comments Gadamer, effectively endorses Heidegger's theory of the enactment or performance of truth and untruth within the work of art, whilst indicating its far-reaching implications. In Chapter Four it will be seen how Gadamer, by means of his own philosophical hermeneutics, develops this notion of the opposing aspects of truth. Furthermore, the suggestion that Gadamer takes his enquiry into the truth claims of art, art's unique assertions, to a level beyond that of either Kant or Heidegger will be explored in greater detail, by paying particular attention to his treatment of the notion of art as play, festival, and ritual.

Having identified the work being of art as 'the setting-itself-to-work of truth' [*Das Ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*], and its engagement with the world as 'setting-up', and with the earth, in recoiling, as 'setting-forth', Heidegger defends and clarifies the intended meaning of the word 'setting' within the context of the occurrence of truth, which he feels may have appeared to be ambiguous. In an Appendix which he attached to 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (1956), he begins by drawing attention to the apparent incompatibility of his reference to the 'fixing in place' and the 'letting happen of the advent of truth' within the body of the essay, suggesting that the former still conveyed a sense of enforcement or imposition of fixing which could effectively prohibit the happening of truth, whereas conversely 'letting happen', rather than implying an indifference, suggests a cooperative and participatory engagement which is conducive to the happening of truth and can, as Heidegger states, be seen 'as that which clears a space for the advent of truth.' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.52) Therefore, in the interest of clarity Heidegger advises that 'fixing in place' should be viewed in the same sense as setting [*setzen*] and placing [*stellen*], which he links to *Ge-stell*

[placement/framing]. He includes the proviso that in this instance we should disregard what he refers to as the ‘modern meaning’ of ‘placing’ and ‘enframing’, (Heidegger, 2002b, p.54) as it is understood within the context of technology,<sup>26</sup> wherein ‘enframing’ is absolute and it thereby reduces the human being to a position ‘of “standing reserve” or stockpile in service to, and on call for, technological purposes’. (Krell, 1993b, p.309)

However, in a further note to the Appendix which he attached to the Reclam edition of ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’ in 1960, Heidegger returns to the question of ‘setting’ and in an attempt to dispel any further ambiguity he suggests that ‘setting-to-work’ [*Ins-Werk-Setzen*] reads ‘[B]etter “bringing into work”; [*Ins-Werk-Bringen*] bringing forth; bringing as allowing;’ (Heidegger, 2002b, p.52) thereby endorsing a more co-operative receiving and participating involvement than the word ‘setting’ conveys. It is clear from this that, in Heidegger’s retrospective view, the word ‘setting’ could be interpreted to mean ‘imposing’ or ‘positing’, with the implication that the instigator of the ‘setting-up’ retains an element of control over what has been set-up. Heidegger is at pains to redress this perception because, if what is ‘set’ in place is set with an eye towards its fixity and control, it could be seen to feed into the triumph of modern subjectivity and thereby to the loss of the experience of truth, which is clearly at odds with what he intends to convey.

In Heidegger’s later work in the 1960s, it is interesting to observe that there is a significant shift in his language concerning the relation of the work to truth, a shift which is further evidenced in his essay ‘Art and Space’ (1969), written over thirty years after ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. Within this essay Heidegger, having made the adjustment, no longer refers to art as ‘the setting-itself-to-work of truth’ [*Das Ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*], but rather calls it ‘the bringing-into-work of truth’ [*Ins-Werk-Bringen*], (Heidegger, 2009a, p.307) Therefore, it is not now so much a question of ‘setting’ truth into the work, or to work, with its controlling implications, but is more of a participatory accompanying of truth to the work. With reference to this change in

---

<sup>26</sup> The term *Ge-stell* [Enframing] was coined by Heidegger as the name for the essence of modern technology. ‘Enframing means the gathering together of the setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual...’ (Heidegger, 1993d, p.325) Furthermore, within the realms of technology, *Ge-stelle* [Enframing] encompasses our understanding of reality.

Heidegger's terminology, Andrew Mitchell points out, '[I]n "Art and Space,"...truth arrives in the work less insistently than in "The Origin of The Work of Art"', (Mitchell, 2010, p.81) which means that we preserve and safeguard that truth in a collaborative and non-possessive manner. Furthermore, given that the essence of truth is freedom, this change of emphasis, by Heidegger, ensures that we do not restrict that freedom, but rather we allow truth the freedom and openness to disclose itself in its own unique way. And, as Gadamer acknowledges, in his introduction to the Reclam edition of Heidegger's essay on art, what continues to be of concern to Heidegger is the question of a 'unique manifestation of truth... [which] occurs in the work of art...an event of truth'. (Gadamer, 1977a, p.224) Therefore, in enquiring into what an artwork is, that enables this event of truth to occur, Heidegger examines the work of art and he queries its nature and its origin.

### **3.4 Truth; Manifested in Art**

Beginning by questioning the meaning of the term 'origin' [*ursprung*], or historical ground, Heidegger ascertains that it is 'that from where and through which a thing is what it is and how it is', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.1) thereby classifying the origin of something as the explanatory cause of its nature or its essence. He highlights what he considers to be the salient point of his investigation, namely the re-interpretation of the relation of Dasein to art, which requires a move away from the 'subjectivism' of aesthetics and traditional aesthetic appreciation towards an understanding of our open and opened finite being-in-the-world, which, in his view, is manifested in the instability or strife inherent within great works of art. By taking a systematic approach to the investigation, Heidegger first considers the traditional view, which maintains that the artwork originates through the activity of the artist, and from here he is led to question the origin of the artist. A connection between the artist and the artwork and their interdependence is then made but, rather than serving to reveal the origin of either of these, Heidegger's investigation takes a circular route leading to an impasse, which he describes thus, '[T]he artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other.' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.1) The inconclusiveness of this line of reasoning is not of any assistance in the search for the unthought origin of the work of art, an origin that is originary, i.e. abyssal, not an original, but is

fundamentally inconclusive. Therefore Heidegger looks for something else, ‘a third thing’, which is prior to both of these. Moreover, as he points out, following the connection between the artist and the artwork and attributing the artwork to the artist’s presentation ‘never provides an illumination of the origin of the artwork...because “origin” is here simply equated with “cause” of the presence-at-hand artworks.’ (Heidegger, 2009b, p.131) And as Julian Young explains, ‘though the artist is undoubtedly the artwork’s *causal* origin, he is not the origin of its status as an artwork and thus not the *logical* origin of its ‘nature’ as an artwork.’ (Young, 2001, p.16) In order to overcome this impasse Heidegger introduces the notion of ‘art’ as a third, common entity from which both the artist and the artwork ‘take their names’ and he proceeds to interrogate the existence of art, which he states can only be discovered through the work. This method of questioning, he admits, remains encircled and apparently in defiance of logic, however he continues undaunted by the circular movement of his argument viewing it as an advantage rather than an obstacle, as a virtuous circle and not a vicious one. At this juncture Heidegger decides to investigate the ‘actual work and ask it what and how it is’. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.2) In other words he sets out to establish what it is that constitutes the essence of a work of art.

Although he has not at this stage succeeded in determining what an artwork in fact is Heidegger overlooks this shortcoming and makes the assumption that ‘Everyone is familiar with artworks’, which he duly qualifies by referring to works of architecture and sculpture that can be found ‘in public places, in churches, and in private homes.’ (Heidegger, 2002b, p.2) It will become obvious that this line of reasoning is a necessary prelude to the next stage of his investigation, which requires the isolation of individual artworks. He draws attention to the fact that the works in question are ‘things’ by giving an account of the practical aspects of caring for, preserving, and making them accessible to a wide range of spectators, who together with the artist are crucial in establishing their integrity as works of art. Heidegger continues by citing examples of the functional treatment of works from three different areas of art. Starting with painting, he takes the example of Vincent van Gogh’s painting of a pair of peasant’s shoes, which travel from one exhibition to another. He then likens the treatment of artworks to that of commodities like coal and logs, giving further examples

of the way in which these works are relegated to the status of merely useful ‘things’. Further chosen examples include attempts to preserve Hölderlin’s hymns from the hazards of war by transporting them unceremoniously in a soldier’s knapsack, and also the seemingly irreverent treatment of manuscripts of Beethoven’s quartets, which are left lying in a publisher’s storeroom. Within this context, the artwork is incorporated into what Heidegger refers to disparagingly as the ‘*art business*’ [*Kunstbetrieb*], which in turn re-situates the works by withdrawing them from their world. This withdrawal is, he states, irreversible, as is the effect of decay on ancient monuments, such as the ancient Greek temple in Paestum or the medieval cathedral in Bamberg, which although still visited in their site of origin do not retain their former ‘self-sufficiency’, which is found in their being at work. Their worlds have disintegrated leaving them standing as objects no longer housing the images of the gods which defined them. However, whilst recognising the demise of the world to which the Greek Temple stands in testimony, it is made clear that Heidegger does not envision a new beginning arising out of a revival of ancient Greek philosophy. Furthermore, cognisant of Hegel’s pronouncement that art no longer holds the dominant role as the purveyor of truth, Heidegger queries if, in modern times, art is still capable of evoking the truth of its world, as he sees happening with the Greek temple. However, Young takes the view that ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’ ‘is Heidegger’s contribution to creating the possibility of the rebirth of art.’ (Young, 2001, p.15) Bearing this evaluation of Heidegger’s essay in mind, I intend, by exploring his analysis of the temple in juxtaposition with his treatment of a modern work of art by van Gogh, to show how in each of these very different examples Heidegger succeeds in bringing out the decisive power of the artwork in the movement of history and furthermore, how he succeeds in prioritising the truth claim of art over an aesthetic sense of appreciation and mere functionalism.

### **3.5 The ‘Thingly’ Element of the Artwork**

Having established that the work of art can be classified as a ‘thing’, Heidegger is able to focus on a crucial aspect of his investigation, which involves an exploration of the ‘thingly element’ of the work. However, as pointed out by Karsten Harries, this reduction of the work of art to the status of a ‘thing’ is not unproblematic. The problem with defining the artwork as a thing and thereby as an empirical object is highlighted by

Harries, who queries the whereabouts of the ‘thing’, i.e. the work of art, in certain given circumstances. Taking as an example the destruction of a printed copy of a poem by Hölderlin, Harries asks ‘Where then is the poem? Can it even be located in space and time?’ (Harries, 2009, p.69) Or, in the event that the manuscripts of Beethoven’s quartets are destroyed, he suggests that the location of the work of art is also placed into question. Harries concludes that the artwork does not reside in either the printed copy of the poem, or the manuscript of the musical score and even in the case of paintings or prints, which can have multiple copies, he takes the view that, the work of art cannot be assigned a specific location, therefore he takes issue with Heidegger’s definition of the artwork as a ‘thing’.<sup>27</sup> It would appear from Harries’ argument, that the designation of the artwork as a ‘thing’ represents a failure to appreciate the elusive aspect of the work of art, and to thereby effectively discount its dynamic and transcendent nature, which would, further place Heidegger’s insistence on the ‘thingly character of works of art’ into question. If the notion of a ‘thing’ is understood in the traditional sense, as an empirical object, I agree with Harries that location of the work of art is brought into question. However, it becomes clear that to accept the traditional reading of the word ‘thing’ would be to ignore the ephemeral and mystical aspects of certain works of art, which is clearly not what Heidegger intends by describing the artwork as a thing.

The absurdity of situation, as highlighted by Harries, is not lost on Heidegger who, whilst not discounting the notion of the artwork as a thing, brings into question the traditional understanding of what constitutes a ‘thing’. And, by means of an analysis of the essence of the thingly, he attempts to think through and overcome the traditional concept which holds that all entities, including art, are things and, in his view, consequently fail ‘to grasp the essence of the thingly’, (Heidegger, 2002b, p.17) by which he means the essential element that identifies things as ‘things’. In his analysis of the traditional concept of what constitutes a ‘thing’, Heidegger makes what could be construed as a dismissive reference to freight-handlers and museum char ladies, stating

---

<sup>27</sup>Cf. In his chapter ‘Art Work and Thing’, in *Art Matters*, Harries questions the relevance of Heidegger’s contention, that the artwork is a ‘thing’, by invoking support from both artists and art critics. ‘Have Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol,—and in a very different way Walter Benjamin,—not taught us what should have been evident all along: that this thingly quality is inessential?’ Harries asks, adding the further observation that ‘Arthur Danto’s discussions of recent art underscore this lesson. So does much recent concept art...’ (Harries, 2009, p.70)

that they may simply understand the artwork as a thing. Furthermore, he adds that even those who experience and enjoy artworks, in what he disparagingly describes as a ‘much-vaunted “aesthetic experience” cannot evade the thingliness of the artwork’. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.3) However, the stated aim of Heidegger’s enquiry is to find the essence of the artwork which, he states, is something other than a ‘mere’ thing, by which is meant simply a thing and nothing more and he thereby indicates that he intends to explore the essence of a ‘thing’. He refers to traditional perceptions of what constitutes an artwork including the view held by philosophical aesthetics, which contends that, by making something other than itself publically known, the artwork is an allegory and by bringing some other thing into conjunction with the thing that is made, it is viewed as a symbol. Heidegger explains how the artwork can be perceived in this way by tracing the etymology of term symbol back to the Greek word *sumballein*, meaning ‘to bring together’.<sup>28</sup> (Heidegger, 1993c, p.146) However, he clarifies that it is the ‘thingly element’ within the artwork that enables this symbolic relation with something else to be manifested in the artwork, which leads him to an investigation of the ‘thingly’ aspect of the work of art. As it will be shown, Heidegger finds a link between ‘the thingliness of the thing and the workly character of the work’ (Heidegger, 2002b, p.13) in the concept of equipment. And, bearing in mind that Heidegger, by his own admission, is concerned with the overcoming of metaphysics this allows him to approach the artwork ontologically, rather than view it as a metaphysical symbolic phenomenon.

Heidegger observes that the thing is predominantly understood in terms of matter and form, furthermore, he maintains that this ‘definition of the thing is derived from interpretation of the equipmentality of equipment’, (Heidegger, 2002b, p.13) from which he deduces that what is thingly in the work is the matter of which it consists, thus leading him to ponder upon the origin of the matter-form schema. By taking as an example such items as a jug, an axe or shoes, he confirms that ‘form as contour is not the result of a distribution of matter...the form determines the arrangement of the matter...the form prescribes, in each case, the kind and selection of the matter’,

---

<sup>28</sup> In Chapter Four it will be seen that, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, Gadamer also evokes the Greek notion of symbol and, by referring to Plato’s *Symposium*, he explains its significance in ancient Greece culture.

(Heidegger, 2002b, p.9) dependent upon the purpose which these items will be called upon to serve. And rather than treating these items as works of art, Heidegger views them as serviceable pieces of equipment, which brings to mind the claim he makes in *Being and Time* concerning the totality of equipment whereby, he states, it 'is constituted by various ways of the 'in-order-to', such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability', (Heidegger, 1962, p.97) thereby affirming serviceability as a basic trait of all items of equipment. By virtue of this serviceability, or usability, equipment is deemed to be more than just a 'mere' thing. Heidegger takes as an example a painting of a pair of shoes by van Gogh, in which he draws upon the equipmental aspect of the subject-matter. He clarifies that the shoes in the painting do not just depict 'mere' things, which would mean that they are denuded of serviceability, but that they are pieces of equipment which reveal or let appear the world of the peasant woman. Not only does equipment reveal the peasant's world, but moreover, as can be seen from the following observation by Heidegger, it can perform a wider function

[B]ecause equipment occupies an intermediate position between mere thing and work, the suggestion arises of using equipment (the matter-form structure) as the key to understanding non-equipmental beings-things and works, and, ultimately, every kind of being. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.10)

Heidegger further elaborates by pointing out that the notion of 'the matter-form structure' as the constitution of every being is not in conflict with the 'religious-biblical-faith' which represents the totality of beings as something created or 'made' in advance. He further argues that despite assertions that God's creative work differs from that of a craftsman, according to Thomistic philosophy, '*ens creatum*' is thought out of the unity of '*materia* and *forma*'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.11) However, Heidegger proceeds to question the foundations of the traditional theological notion of creation in terms of matter and form which, he states, can be traced back to the Middle Ages. And he takes the view that the Thomistic theory of the structure of matter and form amounts to a misrepresentation of Aristotle's philosophy, which prevails into modernity and which, due to its familiarity, continues to be accepted without question thus leading to a distortion of our understanding of what he terms 'the thing-being of the thing', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.11) by which he means the elusive essence of the thing. This

distortion which, in Heidegger's view, continues to permeate our thinking is not solely applicable to 'thing, equipment, and work' but rather it effects our perception and understanding of all beings. The problem, as he sees it, is that the pre-conceptions arising out of our acceptance of traditional thinking, with which we approach all beings, shackle our capacity for 'reflection on the being of particular beings'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.12) And in order to redress this situation, Heidegger seeks to overcome established traditional thinking by uncovering what is fundamental to all beings. Therefore, to this end he turns his attention to an analysis of equipment where, as a product of our industry, he sees a link to human representation and thus a connection between the thing and work, from thingly to work-being.

### **3.6 Equipmentality; Serviceability; Reliability**

So far in this chapter, which concerns an analysis of Heidegger's investigation into the 'setting itself to work of truth' [*Das Ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit*], in the artwork, I have demonstrated how Heidegger establishes that the work of art can be understood as a 'thing'. Furthermore, having made the connection between the 'thingliness' of the thing, the 'workly' character of the work, and the concept of equipment, Heidegger further looks into the 'equipmentality' of equipment. And, in this section I will show how, by exploring the 'equipmentality' of equipment, Heidegger intends to advance his understanding of the 'thingliness' of the thing and the 'workly character of the work'. However, in each of these cases knowledge is only possible in an indirect way, which means through an investigation of the work, therefore, the most effective way to learn what equipment 'in truth is', according to Heidegger, is 'simply to describe a piece of equipment quite apart from any philosophical theory.' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.13) It will become evident, despite his uncomplicated introduction, that there is nothing simple in Heidegger's analysis of his chosen example, which he describes as 'an everyday piece of equipment, a pair of peasant shoes.' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.13) These shoes are not however a pair of peasant shoes chosen at random, but are those depicted in a van Gogh painting, which leads Heidegger directly back to an artwork for the purpose of his investigation.

Heidegger begins his enquiry by describing what is visible within the painting, namely a pair of shoes which appear in total isolation. There is nothing surrounding them to indicate their purpose, 'only an undefined space'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.14) And it is this undefined space in the background of the painting, with its suggestion of hidden images which resist being exposed, that inconspicuously supports the emergence of the pair of shoes in the foreground. The inevitable tensions which arise between the openness of the visible and the resistant enigmatic invisible within the painting find expression in Heidegger's description of the conflict between our world of meaning and 'self-secluding' earth. Within van Gogh's painting our encounter with the visible heightens our awareness of the nothingness, the invisible, and by building upon this awareness Heidegger suggests the possible functional purposes of these shoes in the world of a peasant woman, classifying them as pieces of equipment. In order to investigate the 'equipmentality' of equipment which he states consists in its utility, Heidegger suggests that it is necessary to 'look out for the useful piece of equipment in its use', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.13) in other words, by isolating its typical mode of being, he intends to discover the essence of equipment. At this stage Heidegger's imagination sets the scene, by removing the shoes from within van Gogh's painting and placing them on the feet of a peasant woman. He then renders the following poetic description of the peasant woman in the field going about her daily toil, equipped with her shoes and accepting their support without question.

From out of the dark opening of the well-worn insides of the shoes the toil of the worker's tread stares forth. In the crudely solid heaviness of the shoes accumulates the tenacity of the slow trudge through the far-stretching and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lies the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path and evening falls. The shoes vibrate with the silent call of the earth, its silent gift of the ripening grain, its unexplained self-refusal in the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, wordless joy at having once more withstood want, trembling before the impending birth, and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the earth and finds protection in the world of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.14)

In this evocative passage Heidegger encapsulates the world of the peasant and the way it is connected to the earth by means of the equipment, which, in his view, ‘belongs to the earth.’ Through his description of the ‘dark opening’ of the shoes, he opens up the world of the peasant woman, whose grinding daily toil in communion with the unfriendly, loneliness of the earth depends on the reliability [*Verlässlichkeit*] of the equipment of which she is barely aware. It should be noted that Heidegger’s emphasis on the reliability of the equipment at this juncture marks a change from the view he takes in *Being and Time*, where the usefulness or essence of equipment lies in its serviceability [*Brauchbarkeit*]. (Heidegger, 1962, p.97) Furthermore, in his essay on the work of art, Heidegger makes it clear that he views reliability as a prerequisite of serviceability deeming that it is only through its reliability that the equipment gains its usefulness. However, given its hidden depths, reliability is to be distinguished from usefulness and as its more essential source it can be equated with the notion of dependability, solidity, and trustworthiness which, for Heidegger, represent the qualities of earth. Therefore, by virtue of its essential quality, reliability can be seen to be more primordial than serviceability, which describes our relationship with the world, and whilst not denigrating the notion of serviceability, it is through her inadvertent acceptance of the reliability of the equipment that the peasant, gains an understanding of what the equipment in truth is. Moreover, for the peasant woman it is the reliability of the equipment, in this case a pair of shoes, which enables her to actively engage in the truth of her world. Drawing our attention to what he considers to be Heidegger’s crucial point here, Paul Crowther states:

...it is only in the picture that equipment is disclosed in this profound way. Normally our awareness of equipment only extends as far as the immediate use to which we put it. Here, however, the essence of equipment is bodied forth. (Crowther, 2006, p.91)

And, as we have seen, the essence of equipment lies in reliability by virtue of which, as Heidegger illustrates in the case of the peasant’s shoes, ‘the peasant woman is admitted into the silent call of the earth...she is certain of her world.’ (Heidegger, 2002b, p.14) However, in our case the equipmental being or essence of equipment is only discovered through our proximity to the artwork, which in this instance is a painting by van Gogh.

The artwork, Heidegger says, ‘spoke’ and revealed what ‘the shoes, in truth, are’, meaning that the functional aspect of the shoes and the way they fulfil their role in facilitating the way of life of the peasant woman has been made manifest through the work of art. By disclosing their ‘equipmental reliability’, the shoes of the peasant woman have concealed their fragility and thereby exposed the tensions and conflicting activity within the painting. Heidegger views this event as ‘a happening of truth at work...a being, a pair of peasant shoes, comes to stand in the light of its being’. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.16) That is, from out of the nothingness which surrounds them, within van Gogh’s painting, the shoes stand as a testimony to the life of toil of the peasant woman.

Heidegger’s treatment of van Gogh’s painting of the pair of shoes has, however, been met with a critical response, in particular from the art historian, Meyer Schapiro<sup>29</sup> who questions the accuracy of Heidegger’s assumption that the shoes in the painting depict those of a peasant woman, rather than van Gogh’s own shoes. However, Young, who considers that Heidegger’s ‘evocation of Van Gogh’s painting of shoes, is poetic rather than analytic’, deems Schapiro’s argument to be ‘largely irrelevant’. (Young, 2001, p.22) Notwithstanding this controversy, I argue that in his analysis of the van

---

<sup>29</sup> Schapiro’s argument concerns the assumption, by Heidegger, that the shoes in the particular artwork by van Gogh are those of a peasant woman, rather than the artists own shoes. Furthermore, Schapiro contends that ‘Heidegger’s interpretation of Van Gogh’s painting is really nothing more than a projection of Heidegger’s own subjective biases’. (Thomson, 2011b) However, in what could be interpreted as anticipation of possible criticism, Heidegger makes the following pre-emptive comment within his essay on the work of art, ‘[T]o suppose that our description, as a subjective action, had first depicted everything thus and then projected into the painting would be the worst kind of self-delusion’, (Heidegger, 2002b, p.15) which can be seen as an attempt, by Heidegger, to discount the notion of any such projection. Nevertheless, the argument put forward by Schapiro is not without substance, as close scrutiny of van Gogh’s paintings of Dutch peasants, amongst whom, for a time he lived and worked, would reveal them to be wearing clogs, rather than leather boots. This finding suggests that Heidegger did not research the historical aspect of van Gogh’s subject-matter, but did in fact proceed to build his argument on an assumption. Therefore, speaking as an art historian, Schapiro’s attempt to discredit Heidegger’s argument is based on the historical, cultural, accuracy of Heidegger’s interpretation of the actual painting. However, according to philosophical opinion, the question of the ownership of these shoes is, in this instance, irrelevant and to become preoccupied with the matter, as Thomson states, is to ‘miss Heidegger’s philosophical point’. In addition, Thomson suggests that the conflict between world and earth could just as easily been reached by attributing ownership of the shoes in the painting to van Gogh himself, stating that ‘Van Gogh and these farmers lived the same struggle in different ways.’ (Thomson, 2011b) Schapiro’s critique of Heidegger’s assessment of van Gogh’s painting has also been dismissed by Kockelmans who, whilst acknowledging that there are certain difficulties with Heidegger’s interpretation, takes the view that ‘Schapiro’s criticism is substantially irrelevant, in that it itself rests on the aesthetics which Heidegger precisely wishes to overcome’. (Kockelmans, 1984, p.177)

Gogh painting, Heidegger succeeds, by exploiting his theory of the opposing strife laden aspects of 'world' and 'earth', in portraying how the artwork reveals the ongoing internal conflict within the painting, which is characteristic of the conflicting element of all searches for truth. The concept of 'world', which is central to *Being and Time* and thereby to Heidegger's argument, had from the very beginning, as Gadamer confirms, 'been one of Heidegger's major hermeneutical concepts' (Gadamer, 1994g, p.99) and, as Figal adds, it 'remains a central concept all the way into the last writings'. (Figal, 2009, p.5) For Heidegger, 'world' represents our in-eliminable horizon or frame of sense, it is where we gain our understanding of the meaningfulness of things, whereas 'earth' is what sustains and exceeds all our sense-making activities. Our understanding of truth involves both world and earth. Thomson takes the view that Heidegger's analysis of the van Gogh painting can be understood as an attempt to 'build a phenomenological bridge from a particular ("ontic") work of art by Vincent van Gogh to the ontological truth of art in general.' (Thomson, 2011b) In other words, by choosing an individual piece of art as a means of constructing his argument, Heidegger is attempting to establish the status of all 'great' art in facilitating the enactment of truth. As I read it, what can be taken from Thomson's claim is that the criterion of what makes art 'great' is recognition of its ability to actively facilitate the manifestation of truth and thereby transform us. And, it is precisely this aspect of the work of art that aesthetics fails to recognise. Heidegger informs us that prior to the rise of aesthetics, the Greeks 'had such an originally mature and luminous knowledge...that in their luminous state of knowing they had no need of "aesthetics,"'. (Heidegger, 1991a, p.80) Furthermore, on the question of 'great' art, he clarifies that

Great art and its works are great in their historical emergence and Being because in man's historical existence they accomplish a decisive task: they make manifest, in the way appropriate to works, what beings as a whole are, preserving such manifestation in the work. (Heidegger, 1991a, pp.83-84)

And, as we have seen, by guiding us through a particular choice of artwork in the form of a painting by van Gogh, Heidegger illustrates how the manifestation of the truth of being happens in 'great' art.

Mindful of Thomson's understanding of Heidegger's intention to establish the ontological truth of art in general, I intend to show how Heidegger's analytic approach to van Gogh's painting can effectively be applied in the case of another particular work of 'modern' art, thereby revealing its role in enabling the emergence of truth and further endorsing the truth claims of art in general. The particular work of art that I intend to introduce to the discussion at this stage is a painting by the Spanish artist, Pablo Picasso.<sup>30</sup> During the years that Heidegger was delivering his lectures on the origin of the artwork, Picasso was working on what was to become one of the most celebrated paintings of the twentieth-century, namely; *Guernica* (1937)<sup>31</sup>. Given the previously outlined criterion for assigning the term 'great' to a work of art, it will be seen that this work, by Picasso, undoubtedly fulfils the requirements. *Guernica* is a large sized, predominantly monochromatic painting which exudes obvious tension, with the areas of dark exceeding the space occupied by the lighter areas thereby suggesting, in Heideggerian terms, the opposing elements between the 'self-sheltering' of earth and the 'self-opening' of world. The dark areas, within the painting, seclude the unutterable tragedy of the situation in juxtaposition to the lighter areas, which dramatically display the involuntary response of a stricken people. The interplay between the darks and the lights which is evident within this work can be equated to the 'nothingness' in van Gogh's painting, which allows shoes to stand out. It bears testimony to the opposing forces within the world, which Heidegger sees as a polemic between world and earth. This is a painting that impels one to think. The work, which was created by Picasso in a style that challenges the traditional perception of art, defies any attempts to be reduced to a traditional aesthetic mode of understanding. Moreover, the intensity of its message

---

<sup>30</sup> Following Paul Cézanne's break with the 'perspectival' aspect of painting which was a feature of Renaissance art, Picasso was one of the pioneers in the development of what could be termed 'modern art', in the form of cubism. In attempting to overcome the problem of portraying three-dimensional subjects on a two-dimensional surface, Picasso departed from the traditional methods of painting and adopted the practice of de-constructing and re-constructing the subject matter. With the Cubist method of pictorial imaging the artist presupposes that the spectator has a certain familiarity with the subject-matter, and he further relies on the spectator's reciprocity in order to establish form. As Gadamer describes it, the viewer is 'expected to synthesize the various different aspects and facets' (Gadamer, 1986a, p.96) of the work, which necessitates an ability on the part of the spectator, to mentally reassemble the content in its entirety.

<sup>31</sup> The catalyst for Picasso's painting *Guernica* was the unprovoked bombing of the small Basque town of Guernica, on market day, 26 April 1937, in which the innocent lives of villagers, including women and children, were indiscriminately wiped out. *Guernica* was first exhibited in The Spanish Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair, during a time when Spain was immersed in a tragic civil war.

resists capture by the written word. *Guernica* speaks for itself, therefore, in order to come close to understanding the truth of its message it needs to be seen, in itself, and to be afforded time for contemplation, to borrow a term from Gadamer, we need to ‘tarry’ with the painting and take the time to think. For this to happen, the painting is housed in a museum and can thereby be seen to subscribe to the ‘art business’, to use a Heideggerian term. However, in my view, this engagement with the ‘art business’ [*Kunstbetrieb*], does not negate the transformative force of the revelation of this painting, but rather it provides it with a forum, thereby allowing wider participation in the shared event of the unfolding of truth.

Heidegger continues his exploration of the reality or truth of ‘great’ art, which, he admits, is the only category of art that concerns him at this stage, by moving from an analysis of a van Gogh painting to a very different style of art, in the form of an ancient architectural building. The building in question is that of a radically different type of artwork, namely; the ruined remains of an ancient Greek temple.

### **3.7 The Greek Temple: The God Within**

By means of an analysis of this ancient architectural work which, he states, ‘portrays nothing...simply stands there in the middle of the rocky, fissured valley’ he intends, as he states, ‘to make the happening of truth in the work visible anew’. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.20) However, with the observation, in the case of the temple, that ‘the world of the work that stands there has disintegrated...World-withdrawal and world-decay can never be reversed’, (Heidegger, 2002b, p.20) Heidegger makes it clear that his enquiry into a work from antiquity at this stage cannot be viewed as a nostalgic attempt to revive an ancient Greek culture. But rather, his analysis of the ancient Greek temple in conjunction with his treatment of the van Gogh painting, can be seen, in Thomson’s words, as an attempt, by Heidegger, ‘to help motivate a new, post-aesthetic understanding of what art could still mean for us, now and in the future.’ (Thomson, 2011a, p.76) In the same way, Picasso’s, *Guernica* which, as previously observed, does not invite aesthetic appreciation, can also be seen to facilitate a new understanding of the significance of the work of art. What this means is that, through Heidegger’s

treatment of these artworks, our understanding of the truth claims of art is freed from a subjective aesthetic, functionalist approach. Furthermore, by drawing our attention to the ever-present activity and tensions within the work of art, we gain a greater understanding of the essence of truth as historical.

Through his analysis of the ruins of the temple from antiquity, which is shaped from earth, Heidegger returns to the concept of earth as opposed to world and he illustrates how, through the structure of the temple, earth is revealed, in how it is given in self-retracting. Even in this revelation or ‘unconcealment’ there is a resistance by means of which earth does not fully reveal itself but rather guards itself in concealment, and in acknowledgement of this struggle Heidegger insists that truth, as the disclosure of beings as a whole, has to be ‘won’ or ‘wrested from concealment’. It is in this struggle between the self-concealment of the earth and the unconcealment of world that Heidegger, as he retrospectively phrases it, sees the role of art as ‘the bringing-into-work, of truth [*Ins-Werk-Bringen*].<sup>32</sup> The significance of the temple, which is fashioned from the earth, in allowing Heidegger to illustrate the truth claims of art unshackled by traditional prejudices, is elucidated by Gadamer in the following way

The temple column manifests the stone-like character of its being more genuinely in rising upward and supporting the temple roof than it did as an unhewn block of stone. But what comes forth in this way in the work is precisely its concealment and self-concealing—what Heidegger calls the being of the earth. The earth, in truth, is not stuff, but that out of which everything comes forth and into which everything disappears. (Gadamer, 1977a, p.223)

The history of the temple is evoked by its defining feature which, as Heidegger states, is the presence of the figure of a god and, by means of its enclosing and concealing of this figure of a god the temple and its precinct are established as something holy. The ruins of the temple do not however fade into insignificance, but rather by structuring and embracing the contrasting events that combine to shape human destiny, which Heidegger names as ‘birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace,

---

<sup>32</sup> Heidegger’s change from the ‘setting-itself-to-work’ in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ to the ‘bringing-into-work’ of truth in the Appendix, which he added to his essay in 1960, has already been discussed within this chapter.

endurance and decline' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.21) they constitute an embodiment of an historical world of human beings and by standing in testimony to these things, the temple gives affirmation and tacit approval to the historical values of a past community. Heidegger brings out the continuing relevance of the temple with his description of how it 'holds its place against the storm raging above it, it makes the storm visible in its violence...The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of the air.' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.21) And we are again made aware of how the visible can serve to heighten our awareness of the invisible, which in the case of the temple concerns the way that it opens up a world, while at the same time setting it back into earth by drawing on the 'unstructured yet unforced' support of the rock. Standing as a work of art and fulfilling its role, prior to any suggestion of decay or diminution by the absence of the god within, as Heidegger sees it, 'the temple first gives to things their look, and to men their outlook on themselves.' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.21) That is, with the presence of the god housed within, the temple establishes the beliefs and values of a community and its understanding of itself and, Heidegger assures us, it will continue to work in this way as long as it remains as a work and as long as the god remains within it. By considering his analyses of the van Gogh painting, together with his treatment of the ancient Greek temple, it has been shown how Heidegger succeeds in bringing out what he deems to be the *raison d'être* of the artwork and, contrary to the traditional view which favours aesthetic appreciation and adjudication, he establishes that this can be found in its role of enabling the emergence of truth. Therefore, having rejected the traditional aesthetic approach to art on the grounds that it obscures an understanding of the event of truth in art, Heidegger explores question of aesthetics, with its basis in the subjectivity of the mind's powers, which came to the fore in the eighteenth-century and gained philosophical significance through Kant's *Critique of Judgement*.

### **3.8 The Question of Aesthetics**

Heidegger's interrogation of art is, as he has stated, solely concerned with the question of being, therefore, having established the integral link between truth and being, his analysis of truth claims of art is effectively an attempt to understand the artwork in its mode of being. It has been shown that Heidegger's unique approach to the question of art represents a radical departure from the traditional subjective way in

which art is defined by its aesthetic appeal and which, as he states, is concerned with beauty and pleasure rather than being and truth. However, Heidegger does not attempt to denigrate the notion of beauty on the contrary he is fully cognisant of its importance. Furthermore, following Plato, who ‘was the first to show that the essential element in the beautiful was *alētheia*’, (Gadamer, 1979, p.443) Heidegger links the importance of beauty with its role in the manifestation of truth, by maintaining that ‘*Beauty is one way in which truth as unconcealment comes to presence*’ (Gadamer, 2007f, p.32) And, in an oblique reference to the rise of aesthetics in the eighteenth century, Heidegger indicates that prior to his own time art was acclaimed by virtue of its beauty rather than by its striking truth. It is this traditional notion of the supremacy of beauty within the context of art that he argues against. In ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, Heidegger is concerned with overcoming or recovering from an aesthetic approach to art, by refuting the notion of the supremacy of the beautiful and establishing the integrity of the truth claims of the artwork. To this end, Heidegger again returns to the ancient Greeks and to the Greek notion of *alētheia*, for the purpose of supporting his argument.

I intend to isolate and explore Heidegger’s view concerning the question of aesthetics by first examining his exposition on the subject within his *Nietzsche* study. Between the years 1936 and 1940, during the time he was presenting his lectures on the work of art, Heidegger also delivered a series of lectures covering various aspects of Nietzsche’s philosophy, which were subsequently published in the 1960s together with other selected writings by Heidegger. The first volume of this work, entitled *Nietzsche; Volume 1; The Will to Power as Art*, includes a critique of Nietzsche’s approach to question of art, in which Heidegger develops his thinking on the question of aesthetics. His response to Nietzsche, for whom, Heidegger maintains, the question of art is invariably connected to the question of the will to power, will provide further insight into the reason Heidegger emphatically rejects the traditional understanding of aesthetics within the context of art. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche ‘keeps to the traditional path’ in his thinking on the subject of art which, he adds, ‘is defined in its peculiarity by the term “aesthetics”’. (Heidegger, 1991a, p.77) Nietzsche’s espousal of traditional thinking in relation to art emphasises the disparity between his ‘sensible’ approach to the question of art and the ‘supersensible’ approach, which is a feature of

Plato's thinking. Moreover, the traditional aesthetic appreciation of art, which rests upon Cartesian subjectivity, is clearly at odds with the phenomenological approach taken by Heidegger, whereby he attempts to avoid any danger of subjective bias. However, to suggest that Heidegger's attitude is 'anti-aesthetic' would constitute an anachronism that would in fact belie his way of thinking, which is that 'any merely oppositional movement remains trapped in the logic of what it opposes.' (Thomson, 2011a, p.41) On the contrary, Heidegger responds to the question of aesthetics by first investigating its meaning and considering its relevance within the context of art.

Heidegger begins by exploring the etymology of the word 'aesthetics' before tracing its historical progression. The term aesthetics, he states, is 'formed in the same manner as "logic" and "ethics"', which, he explains, are always completed by the word *epistēmē* [knowledge]. He then confirms that '[T]he word "aesthetics" is formed in the corresponding way: *aisthētikē epistēmē*: knowledge of human behaviour with regard to sense, sensation, and feeling, and knowledge of how these are determined'. (Heidegger, 1991a, p.78) With this definition of aesthetics, Heidegger can be seen to follow the view of Georg W. F. Hegel, who states that 'Aesthetic' in its strict sense means 'the science of sensation or feeling'. (Hegel, 1993, p.3) And although for Hegel the use of the term aesthetic, in relation to art is deemed to be not 'quite appropriate', he nonetheless accepts that it can be used within the context of his discussion, which is concerned with 'fine art'. Furthermore, he makes a connection between the aesthetic and the beautiful, with the additional claim that 'artistic beauty stands higher than nature'. (Hegel, 1993, p.4) Hegel's thinking is clearly adapted and transformed by Heidegger who, without further explanation, states, that 'the beautiful' is a determinant of human feeling and that 'aesthetics is consideration of man's state of feeling in its relation to the beautiful', (Heidegger, 1991a, p.78) with the added acknowledgment that the beautiful can apply to either nature or art. And, what concerns Heidegger, in this instance, is the question of the beautiful in relation to art.

Given Walter Biemel's observation that, for Heidegger, '...the Greek world has a distinctive position because it is the beginning of European history, of European philosophy', (Biemel, 1993, p.371) it is not surprising to note that Heidegger traces the

inception of aesthetics back to the ancient Greeks, with the claim that ‘Aesthetics begins with the Greeks only at that moment when their great art and also the great philosophy that flourished along with it comes to an end’. (Heidegger, 1991a, p.80) What Heidegger is referring to here is the age of Plato and Aristotle, which heralds the advent of metaphysics in conjunction with, what he perceives as, the commencement of the decline of ‘great art’ in ancient Greece. Throughout the ages the way in which art was received went through several changes and, as pointed out by Gadamer, during the ‘Christian Middle Ages’ art was not singled out for any special recognition, due to the unquestioning acceptance by which it found ‘its place in life’.<sup>33</sup>

The re-emergence of aesthetics occurred in the mid-eighteenth century, when it was brought to the fore by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his *Aesthetica*. However, it was Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, published in 1790, that brought aesthetics into the centre of philosophical debate. The subjectivism of the aesthetic approach to art, which is a feature of the traditional view, can be traced back to Kant, whose remark that judgement of taste is neither cognitive nor logical, ‘but is rather aesthetic, by which is understood one whose determining ground **cannot** be **other than subjective**’ (Kant, 2000, p.89) is unequivocal. Kant, however, sees freedom to be the central prerequisite of all art, as he makes clear by stating that ‘only production through freedom, i.e., through a capacity for choice that grounds its actions in reason, should be called art’. (Kant, 2000, p.182) Freedom is the central issue of Kant’s philosophy. Whilst Heidegger does not take issue with Kant’s thinking about the question of freedom, he emphatically rejects the subjective approach to art which, since Kant, has been espoused by the modern tradition. He makes the argument that it obscures the strife-ridden opening up of the truth of beings within the art work, maintaining that ‘Art and its works are necessary only as an itinerary and sojourn for man in which the truth of beings as a whole...opens itself up to him.’ (Heidegger, 1991a, p.84)

---

<sup>33</sup> ‘Neither in ancient times nor in the Christian Middle Ages was there any discussion of the elevated rank in being that is possessed by works of art. The reason for this is that their “place in life” was already self-evident...’ (Gadamer, 2007f, p.207) Art, in these ages, fitted into the order of the day in both its visual and linguistic form, whereby it became a means of propagating the Christian message. The question of art throughout the ages will be discussed in greater length in Chapter Four of this work.

In Hegel's claim, that art has 'lost for us its genuine truth and life, and rather is transferred into our *ideas* than asserts its former necessity, or assumes its former place, in reality', (Hegel, 1993, p.13) Heidegger finds further confirmation of the effect of metaphysics within the realm of art. And, despite the creativity of his age, which included monumental works of art in the form of the poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin, and the music of Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, and Beethoven, Hegel's pronouncement that 'art is, and remains for us, on the side of its highest destiny, a thing of the past', (Hegel, 1993, p.13) poses a challenge to our thinking about the question of art. In Heidegger's view, it was never Hegel's intention to infer that in the future new artworks and art movements would not arise, but rather, to claim that the absolute position of art in relation to truth has been relinquished to religion and philosophy. By taking Hegel's argument into account, the decline of religious dominance in the modern age, could lead to the possibility of art's reinstatement as a purveyor of truth. However, with religious decline the notion of the absolute is also destabilised. Furthermore, as we have seen, Heidegger does not subscribe to the Hegelian notion that the highest mode of art is the certainty of the 'absolute' truth, but rather, with the claim that 'Truth is the truth of beings', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.52) he makes it clear that the thrust of his enquiry into the work of art concerns the happening of the truth of beings in the artwork, which leads the question of the truth claims of art back to Heidegger's understanding of the ancient Greek notion of disclosedness.

### **3.9 Hegel: Aesthetics**

Heidegger's attempt to highlight the importance of the work of art in enabling the emergence of truth could be viewed as a response to Hegel. And whereas he is cognisant of the truth claims of both philosophy and religion, Heidegger does not subscribe to Hegel's metaphysical elevation of the absolute concept, the concrete which grasps something as it is in itself and leaves what is hidden un-grasped, with its consequent denigration of the role of the artwork in enabling the event of truth to occur. Gadamer queries if by his pronouncement that art is a thing of the past, Hegel means that 'art no longer has a purpose, no longer states anything' or, he asks, does he mean that 'art is a thing of the past in respect to the standpoint of the absolute concept, because it was always and will always be preliminary to conceptual thinking?'

(Gadamer, 1976a, p.101) These questions remain unanswered and, in Heidegger's view, judgement on Hegel's pronouncement will only be made retrospectively on consideration of the truth claims of 'Western thinking since the Greeks'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.51)

However, in his approach to the question of modern art, Heidegger appears to be in agreement with Hegel concerning its demise, but, as Young observes, unlike Hegel he is of the view 'that great art *could*, one day, return...[furthermore] it is only if great art returns that there can occur a 'decisive confrontation' with the 'destitution' of the age'. (Young, 2001, pp.1,14,15) This hope for the future of art can best be put in context in the light of Heidegger's view that modern art has been subsumed by technology and functionalism and that, while the question concerning the essence of technology remains unresolved, the position of modern art remains undetermined. Within his later essay 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1954) Heidegger asserts that 'the essence of modern technology lies in enframing', with the added qualification that '[E]nframing belongs with the destining of revealing', (Heidegger, 1993d, p.330) thereby leading him to take a more favourable approach to the influence which technology exerts. And whilst always mindful of the threat it poses, rather than isolating it as a dominant, controlling force in our lives, Heidegger considers its liberating potential, stating that

...when we consider the essence of technology we experience enframing as a destining of revealing. In this way we are already sojourning within the free space of destining, a destining that in no way confines us to a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or, what comes to the same, to rebel helplessly against it and curse it as the work of the devil. Quite to the contrary, when we once open ourselves expressly to the essence of technology we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim. (Heidegger, 1993d, pp.330,331)

Whilst Heidegger appears to be reassuring us that a critical approach to the question of technology can act as safeguard from domination, he is not advocating complacency in our approach to technology, but rather he emphasises the need for caution with particular attention to the metaphysical connotations of, what he terms, the 'destining of

revealing’, which he states ‘is in itself not just any danger, but *the* danger’. (Heidegger, 1993d, p.331) He further explains that this danger lies in the fact that what is revealed can become commonplace and escape the discernment of ‘man’, thereby creating the illusion that the human being is the instigator of everything that exists, which in turn leads to a misapprehension of his own situation and ultimately to a lack of self-awareness. This is the tyranny of technology against which Heidegger advises vigilance and about which he cites Hölderlin for words of hope and guidance:

But where danger is, grows  
The saving power also. (Heidegger, 1993d, p.333)

What Heidegger takes from these words, by Hölderlin, is that enframing, where the danger is, which is the essence of technology, must ‘harbor in itself the growth of the saving power’. (Heidegger, 1993d, p.332) Hölderlin’s verse serves as a reminder of the ever present contrasts, the lights and the darks, which are a feature of all aspects of life. Furthermore, with Heidegger’s recommendation for the need for discernment in mind, we are well advised to maintain an informed approach to technology.

In his earlier work, Heidegger takes a dismissive approach to modern art, which appears to effectively discount the notion of its potential to convey the truth of being in a technological age, in the way that he has demonstrated with a van Gogh painting or the ruins of the ancient Greek temple, by allowing the truth of the historical worlds into which they first appear ‘to arise’. However, in the years following publication of ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’, Heidegger’s approach to the question of modern art appears to go through a period of vacillation, commencing with his encounter with the work of Paul Klee.<sup>34</sup> In Dennis Schmidt’s view, this encounter with Klee’s paintings in 1956 had an ‘immense’ impact upon Heidegger, and he goes so far as to state that the effect of this ‘seemed not only to overturn his negative views regarding modern art but also to alter, if not genuinely shift, his understanding of what was at stake in the world

---

<sup>34</sup> During the same period that Klee was producing his work, Pablo Picasso was also creating artworks in a modern abstract style. However, unlike Klee, Picasso did not write about his artwork, and he is not mentioned in Heidegger’s work. A work, by Picasso, is discussed in §3.6 of this thesis.

of art in general. (Schmidt, 2013, p.78)<sup>35</sup> Heidegger's fascination with Klee's work is noted by Stephen H. Watson who attributes it in part to the possibility that in Klee 'he continually saw—without fully seeing—something of himself.' (Watson, 2006, p.357) This could be accounted for in no small way by the fact, already mentioned, that Klee was a prolific writer and that Heidegger had access to the theoretical musings which accompanied his artwork. I support Watson's further observation that, in his accounts of their work, Heidegger seems to omit the 'most technological aspects of modern art' such as 'van Gogh's use of color, Cézanne's geometrical elements that led toward cubism... [and] Klee's own constructivism...'. (Watson, 2006, p.331) Furthermore, going beyond Watson, I suggest the implication here is that Heidegger intentionally does not wish to make an association between his chosen works of art and modern technology, whereas such a link could possibly serve as a means of recognising a more positive role for technology in its relationship to art, where it could also be seen to be, in some instances, subservient to the role of art. This observation is particularly relevant in the case of photographic art and artistic installations, which are reliant upon and would not be feasible without recourse to technology. However, it will be seen that, through his engagement with sculptural works, Heidegger later confronts this issue and considers the place and space of artworks in relation to technology.

In the 1960s, Heidegger's encounter with the sculptors, which I will discuss in greater detail in the next section of this work, challenged his thinking concerning the place of technology in relation to the work of art. However, rather than focusing on the technological aspect of these works of sculpture, Heidegger's interest lies in the spatial concept which they present. And, staying with the question of technology, in the light of Schmidt's comment that what Heidegger saw in Klee's work was its possibility for 'thinking the achievement of art that outstripped the reach of that achievement as it was outlined in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', (Schmidt, 2013, p.79) the question arises as to how he would approach contemporary 'modern art', in the form of installations, with

---

<sup>35</sup> Schmidt observes that Heidegger was not the only thinker to recognise the significance of Klee's work in establishing a place for twentieth century art, and he provides an impressive list of names who, he states, 'singled out Klee's work as privileged for the task of thinking painting today', (Schmidt, 2013, p.80) including Foucault, Benjamin, Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze, Adorno, and, of particular interest within the context of this thesis, Gadamer.

the intersection of art and technology which at times can render them indistinguishable from each other. However, as Heidegger never realised his stated intention to write in greater detail about Klee's work, its potential to establish a place for modern art within a technological age was never fully exploited, by him, and it was not until his engagement with sculpture in the 1960s that Heidegger returned to the question of modern art.<sup>36</sup>

### 3.10 Heidegger's Later Thinking on the Question of Art

Over ten years after the publication of 'The Origin of The Work of Art' and in the latter part of his career, Heidegger turned his attention to the art of sculpture, in particular to the work of the sculptors, Bernhard Heiliger and Eduardo Chillida. This encounter with the sculptors, which was considered to be of particular significance to him, caused Heidegger to decisively review his earlier thinking on the relation between body and space and, in Andrew Mitchell's view, led him to 'proceed further along a path of thought passing through both *Being and Time* and 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. (Mitchell, 2010, p.2) Moreover, as Mitchell observes, 'Heidegger's sculptural reflections are born out of a rethinking of limit whereby, in keeping with a favoured expression of Heidegger's, the limit marks the beginning of a thing, not its end.' (Mitchell, 2010, p.1) By viewing the limit in this way, rather than being an obstacle, space becomes an accomplice in allowing bodies to extend beyond themselves and to allow them, in Heidegger's words, to appear in their 'fullness' and thereby 'come to presence'. (Heidegger, 2013, p.121) Therefore, by means of the work of sculpture, Heidegger develops an enquiry into the enigma of space.

In a lecture which he delivered in Athens in 1967, Heidegger claims that the Goddess Athena, in meditating on the limit, already sees beyond it and, as he states, 'has in view what human action has merely in foresight, in order subsequently to create the thus fore-seen in the visibility of a work'. (Heidegger, 2013, p.121) In other words, the Goddess Athena, with the benefit of an all encompassing vision, provides a source of inspiration for the artist. She is the artists' 'muse', by means of which they are

---

<sup>36</sup> Within the next chapter of my thesis it will be seen how Gadamer, by means of his hermeneutics, advances Heidegger's thought in relation to the question of the relevance of modern art

enabled to stretch beyond the limit towards the invisible world, to ‘bring something into light’. (Heidegger, 2013, p.120) And, Heidegger adds that Athena’s glance does not only rest on ‘the possible works of men’, but also on nature. Recognition of sculpture’s facility to push out the boundaries can be seen as the catalyst for Heidegger’s renewed perspective of the potential of modern art in the enablement of the enactment of truth, bearing in mind that the work of the sculptors, particularly Chillida’s work, to which Heidegger afforded particular attention, can best be described as abstract modern art.

However, the previously mentioned 1967 lecture, mindful of the dominance of technology, queries the place of modern art in the absence of the gods, which have flown, and he asks how ‘things stand with respect to art within an industrial society whose world begins to become cybernetic’. (Heidegger, 2013, p.126) In a lengthy discourse, he discusses the ‘delimiting’ effects of scientific-technology and, with a sobering reminder he states that the world of science ‘becomes a cybernetic world... [and] in cybernetic terms abolishes the difference between automatic machines and living beings’. (Heidegger, 2013, p.123) However, Heidegger does not consider this situation to be insurmountable and, in offering us a way to assume control of our own destiny, he urges us to think. Whilst reminding us that ‘thinking is not a sovereign act’ (Heidegger, 2013, p.126) he advises that, in this case, our thinking has to happen by engagement with the roots of our technological world and, without rejecting technology, he tells us to take the necessary distance and ‘step backwards’ to allow for clarity of vision. By this Heidegger is not advocating a step backwards to the ancient gods, but is effectively advocating a phenomenological reduction whereby, by removing our thoughts from the distractions of the world of technology and from the obstacles which obscure our perception of the effects of technology we are afforded a freedom. The Greeks, as Heidegger recalls, name this freedom *alētheia*, un-concealment, adding that ‘unconcealment is everywhere in need of concealment’. (Heidegger, 2013, p.127) Moreover, as I understand it, with freedom, comes choice and, within the inevitable limits of the choices which are available to us, we are free to choose our own level of engagement with technology, whilst continuing to ‘step-backwards’, take stock, and remain vigilant, which is a fundamental requirement in a world wherein technology invades our space and threatens our identity. Heidegger returns to the question of the

place of art within a technological society and he suggests that art could provide the unconcealment necessary for a future in which we are confronted by ‘the gigantic laboratory of scientific technology’. (Heidegger, 2013, p.128) With this offering of a word of hope Heidegger concludes his lecture.

In a further development of his thinking on the question of space, Heidegger, in collaboration with Chillida, produced a work on the topic of art and space. Within this work Heidegger’s essay entitled ‘Art and Space’ was written on stone and incorporated in a lithograph, together with collages by Chillida.<sup>37</sup> Heidegger’s essay differentiates between the ways that art and scientific technology view space, maintaining that they each ‘work upon it with different aims and in different ways’. (Heidegger, 2009a, p.306) He queries our understanding of the term ‘space’ and, in what could be construed as an advance in his thinking on the question of modern art, he endows it with an authentic role, suggesting that by confronting the challenge of dealing with space, the position of modern visual art is validated. Heidegger’s encounter with Chillida’s imposing ironworks and their place in space has clearly influenced his assertion in this regard. In rendering visible space that is invisible to the scientific-technological eye, sculpture is actively engaged in enabling the unconcealment of truth and can thereby be seen to fulfil its role as a work of art. However, having affirmed that ‘truth means unconcealment of Being’ (Heidegger, 2009a, p.307) and pronounced the nature of space to be indeterminate, stating that it ‘remains undecided in what way space is, and whether an existence can even be attributed to it’, (Heidegger, 2009a, p.306) the question of the substance of space and the role of sculpture remains inconclusive.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have concentrated on Heidegger’s treatment of art and on the way that he demonstrates how the work of art fulfils its role in enabling the disclosure of truth to occur. From the outset Heidegger makes it clear that this is an ontological investigation, furthermore, he affirms the integral link between being and truth, which

---

<sup>37</sup> As Mitchell explains, the collage component, which is itself an experiment with space, ‘builds up from the lithograph, converting a two-dimensional space into a three-dimensional one’. (Mitchell, 2010, p.82)

had already been established in *Being and Time*. His enquiry takes him back to the ancient Greeks and to ancient Greek culture, where he finds the roots of Western civilization, and from where he appropriates the Greek notion of *alētheia*, understood as disclosedness, in support of his argument for the disclosive event of truth in the work of art. By means of a detailed analysis of his essay on art, I have shown how Heidegger, in his earlier stage, treats the question of art and illustrates its relevance within our civilization by affirming its pivotal role in enabling the event of truth to occur. Moreover, the development in Heidegger's thinking about the question of art over an ensuing thirty year period is also examined, with reference to some of his later works, including the lecture 'The Provenance of Art and the Destination of Thought' (1967), and an essay 'Art and Space' (1969).

The impelling question for Heidegger, which he declares from the start of *Being and Time* and which he reaffirms in his essay on art is, as Gadamer describes it, 'concerned with something that the tradition assumes to be unquestionable: What is Being in the first place [*überhaupt*]?' (Gadamer, 1994b, p.26) Because metaphysics neglects this question, Heidegger attempts to pursue his enquiry from outside the metaphysical tradition and, as previously mentioned, his critique of metaphysics in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' is seen by Thomson as Heidegger's most important attempt to provide an alternative to the aesthetic appreciation of art. Furthermore, it has been seen that, in following Hegel's definition of aesthetics, Heidegger makes it clear that he subscribes neither to the Kantian notion of the beautiful nor to Hegel's concept of the absolute.

Heidegger's encounter with the work of Klee in the 1950s, which included not just Klee's paintings but also his writings, is credited with having an impact on and effectively changing Heidegger's view of modern art. Moreover, in his later work, his change from a dismissive approach to the question of modern art, which is suggested in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', to a more conciliatory view of its possibilities, in his lecture in Athens in 1967, becomes evident. In Athens, Heidegger explores the place of modern art in an increasing technological world and he queries its effectiveness in enabling us to encompass the positive attributes of technology, without allowing

ourselves to be subsumed by it. Moreover, Heidegger's engagement with the sculptors, in the 1960s 'leads him to a rethinking of body, space, and the relation between these', (Mitchell, 2010, p.1) and through his encounter with the art of sculpture, Heidegger rethinks the notion of limit. Rather than viewing it in a restrictive way, he sees the limit as a beginning of something rather than an end, thereby indicating the possibilities for open-ended questioning and thinking. Heidegger's engagement with the sculptors, specifically the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida, prompts him to rethink the notion of space, to question our understanding of what space *is*, and through the three dimensional aspect of the sculptural work of art to recognise the mutual belonging together of body and space. Therefore, it follows that the trio of space, world, and earth are inseparable. This is further borne out by Mitchell's observation that, following Heidegger's encounter with sculpture, 'gone is even the suspicion that our existence could take place or be adequately thought apart from spatiality...' (Mitchell, 2010, p.8) This heightened awareness of the mutual interdependency of body and space, this retrospective critique of the early Heidegger, by the later Heidegger, could be seen in terms of a reconsideration of the play of space or play-space (*Spielraum*) and the way it relates to the work of art. Furthermore, an analogy could be made between Heidegger's expansive approach to the dynamic open quality of the works of sculpture and Gadamer's notion of the play of art, wherein he highlights the dynamic aspect of art and its social dimensions, which had its inception in *Truth and Method* and is developed extensively in his later work. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Heidegger's enquiry into the question of space leads him, in collaboration with sculptor, Eduardo Chillida, to produce what could be described as a 'work of art' combining the sculptural work of Chillida and Heidegger's text for 'Art and Space', written on stone, by Heidegger. As we will see later, it could be argued that while Heidegger is more than aware of the open and playful character of existence as expressed in works of art, he underplays the social and plural notion that such play entails in favour of an ontology of the work of art.

In his treatment of the role of work of art in enabling the disclosure of truth, Heidegger reminds us that with disclosure there is always concealment. This is not a new concept, but can be found in Heraclitus, who, as cited by Heidegger, states that 'To

the self-appearing belongs the property of concealment'.<sup>38</sup> (Heidegger, 2013, p.127) And, with this he highlights the incompleteness of understanding, by making it clear that there is always something else to be revealed and therefore, thinking must continue. This chapter of my thesis concludes with Heidegger's return to the question of modern art and to the place of art in a technological world. He sees the possibility that the unconcealment which is necessary if we are to learn to live with technology, without being taken over by it could possibly be found in the realm of art.

Bearing in mind Gadamer's claim that the question of art was 'the starting point' for his 'whole hermeneutical theory', (Gadamer, 1997a, p.44) I intend, in the next chapter to analyse his philosophical-hermeneutical investigation into the question art, which is inextricably linked to the questions of truth and being. It will be shown how, whilst acknowledging his intellectual debt to Heidegger, Gadamer finds his own voice in establishing the philosophical importance of the work of art, in its role of enabling a unique experience of truth to occur.

---

<sup>38</sup> Heraclitus, fragment B 123

## **Chapter Four: Gadamer: A Hermeneutical Interrogation of Our Encounter with Truth in Word and Image**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Following on Heidegger's exploration of the question of truth and its manifestation in the work of art, which was the subject matter of the previous chapter. I intend, within this chapter, to trace the development of Gadamer's hermeneutical enquiry into the fundamental philosophical question of truth which, in line with Heidegger, he also pursues through an analysis of the artwork in its various forms. By means of a critical appraisal of his work, I will attempt to gain an insight into Gadamer's contribution to our understanding of the importance of the visual and linguistic arts in facilitating the happening, or event of truth, within the human experience, an understanding which also leads to a self-understanding. Throughout his entire career, Gadamer never failed to acknowledge the level of his indebtedness to Heidegger, which he succinctly sums up in a final interview with Jean Grondin in 1996, stating that '[O]ne cannot think of my becoming who I am without Heidegger'. (Gadamer, 2007a, p.425) Whilst mindful of this acknowledgment and of the influence which Heidegger undoubtedly exerted on Gadamer's thinking, I intend to show how Gadamer, by means of his philosophical hermeneutics, wherein he both transforms and remains faithful to Heidegger, opens up possibilities for a new and different approach to the philosophical question of truth than that taken by Heidegger, in particular in relation to the artwork, and that in some ways he even surpasses Heidegger.

To this end, Gadamer's hermeneutical enquiry into the question of truth, by means of his analysis of the way in which truth is enabled to reveal itself through the work of art, will be explored. It will be seen how, thanks to the thought and method which was handed down to him by Heidegger together with the legacy of Hegel's work, which he admits challenged his thinking, Gadamer finds his own voice within his investigation into the truth claims of art. His emphasis on the significance of the concept of play to demonstrate how the subject participates in, and is drawn into the experience of what is perceived as an event of truth will be explored. And whilst, by

defining truth as an event which requires our participation, Gadamer can be seen to echo the thoughts of Heidegger for whom ‘truth *is* only in so far as and as long as Dasein is’, (Heidegger, 1962, p.272) I will show that Gadamer, through his development of the notion of play whereby he relates the work of art to the everyday world, succeeds in his own unique way in demonstrating the relevance or actuality of the artwork within the context of the event of truth. Furthermore, it will be shown that, in line with Kant and linking the question of the beautiful to ‘a feeling of life’ ‘[*ein Lebensgefühl*]’, together with support from Plato which enables him to establish the intrinsic connection between truth and beauty, Gadamer develops his argument from within a less critical understanding of the metaphysical tradition than one finds in Heidegger.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, it will be made clear that beauty is a central consideration for Gadamer, by showing how Gadamer, is led to the truth in art, by means of developing the concept of the beautiful.

I intend to assess the development of Gadamer’s thought by first considering the views expressed within his magnum opus *Truth and Method* and will continue with an appraisal of his writings in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, together with other selected primary works, giving the final word to what has been hailed as ‘Gadamer’s last definite statement on the philosophy of art’, (Palmer, 2007b, p.411) namely his essay entitled ‘The Artwork in Word and Image: “So True, So Full of Being!”’ (1992). In addition to his own writings, relevant secondary sources will be consulted for the purpose of assessing Gadamer’s hermeneutic investigation, by means of which he attempts to ground his argument and facilitate, in Grondin’s words, ‘a new understanding of philosophy which results from the hermeneutics of the humanities’. (Grondin, 1995b, p.96) In the course of my analysis the areas in which Gadamer can be seen to distinguish himself from Heidegger, whilst remaining faithful to the rigour and insight of Heidegger’s thinking will be highlighted. And furthermore, the importance of Gadamer’s relationship to Hegel, who apart from the ancient Greeks, has been deemed to be, together with Heidegger, one of ‘the two great sources of

---

<sup>39</sup> This is not to suggest that Heidegger denies the connection between truth and beauty, in fact, he makes it clear in the ‘Epilogue’ to ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’ that beauty does not occur apart from the truth of being. Clarifying that, ‘[W]hen truth sets itself into the work, it appears. Appearance—as this being of truth in the work and as work—is beauty. Thus the beautiful belongs to truth’s propriative event. It does not exist merely relative to pleasure and purely as its object’. (Heidegger, 1993c, p.206)

Gadamer's thinking', (Palmer, 2007c, p.323) will be viewed in the light of his unequivocal acknowledgement of the influence that both Heidegger and Hegel exerted upon his 'philosophic turn'. Gadamer claims that the 'impulses' he received from the 'thought of Heidegger' are 'inseparable from the all encompassing synthesis of Hegel'. (Gadamer, 2007g, p.327) And although there are significant differences in the philosophical insights of these three thinkers, by drawing attention to the fact that they are all 'concerned with recovering the ontological dimension of the question of truth as prior to and distinct from every ontic and historical condition of truth's occurrence as history', (Ambrosio, 1987, p.24) Francis J. Ambrosio succeeds in highlighting the common ground which they all share. Given the undisputed fact that Heidegger is a major figure influencing the direction of Gadamer's work it will be seen throughout my analysis, how Gadamer, by reading Heidegger on Heidegger's own terms, manages to find some lee-way to develop his own thought from within Heidegger without being consumed by his thinking, and that he thereby succeeds in developing his own distinctive philosophical hermeneutics. Furthermore, by following the independent direction of Gadamer's enquiry, I intend to discredit the thinking that portrays Gadamer as a mere off-shoot of Heidegger, as another one of his devoted students, and argue that Gadamer can in fact be seen as Heidegger's most loving critic, the one whose thought model refashions Heidegger from within, by re-engaging with the Greeks, with the open-ended dialogical nature of philosophy, and the nature of the artwork as an illustration of this, in a way that Heidegger, in attempting to distance himself from metaphysics, was unable to do.

#### **4.2 Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics**

For Gadamer, 'Hermeneutics is above all a practice, the art of understanding and of making something understood to someone else. It is the heart of all education that wants to teach how to philosophize'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.17) And although Gadamer was not the first to rehabilitate the practice of hermeneutics which, he acknowledges, was heretofore considered to be the preserve of theological or judicial enquiries, wherein it was employed in support of authority and tradition, his continued study in the area, throughout his extensive career, is what distinguishes Gadamer as a decisive figure in the development of twentieth-century hermeneutics. He recalls that he was

introduced to the concept at an early stage through Heidegger's lecture on the 'Hermeneutics of Facticity' (1923). And, although he suggests that the notion of a hermeneutics of facticity could be construed as an oxymoron, Gadamer discounts this possibility by explaining that, for Heidegger, hermeneutics in this situation is not intended as 'an explication that claims to "understand" facticity', but rather to recognise that 'existence itself is to be thought of as the consummation of understanding and explication, and that by way of this consummation existence gains its ontological distinction'. (Gadamer, 1994a, p.186)

Following Friedrich Schleiermacher, for whom the process of understanding involves the circular movement between the whole and the parts, giving rise to the idea of the hermeneutic circle, Gadamer claims the hermeneutic circle is 'the starting point' of his 'attempts to lay the foundations of hermeneutics'. However, Heidegger tells us in *Being and Time* that the phenomenology of Dasein 'is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting', (Heidegger, 1962, p.62) which, as the interpretation of the being of an existential being, effectively constitutes an ontological hermeneutics.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, in *Being and Time* Heidegger develops Schleiermacher's circular process of understanding, interpretation, and judgement, which represents a departure from the Cartesian linear approach to truth.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, following Heraclitus, who first described the phenomenon of truth as uncoveredness, Heidegger makes the connection between 'Being-true' and '...taking entities out of their hiddenness and letting them be seen in their unhiddenness (their uncoveredness)'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.262) The disclosive aspect of truth is central to Heidegger's enquiry, as we have already seen in Chapter One. Furthermore, it is interesting to note Heidegger's advice in *Being and Time* that to translate *alētheia* as

---

<sup>40</sup> Nicholas Davey informs us that '[T]he consequences of Martin Heidegger's radical transformation of hermeneutics are not to be underestimated: understanding is no longer conceived as the activity of a subject but as a mode of being which characterizes specifically the existence of the human subject (*Dasein*)'. (Davey, 2016, p.242)

<sup>41</sup> Heidegger gives a detailed account of the circle of understanding in *Being and Time*, clarifying that it cannot be reduced to either a 'vicious circle', or a circle which is 'merely tolerated', but rather that it 'belongs to the structure of meaning' which is, he states, 'rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein—that is, in the understanding which interprets'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.195) Moreover, in 'The Origin of The Work of Art', Heidegger can be seen to use the notion of the hermeneutic circle in attempting to gain an understanding of the meaning of art. Cf. Chapter Three-this thesis.

‘truth’ is to miss the pre-philosophical meaning of the word, as understood by the Greeks, whereby unhiddenness is always associated with hiddenness. (Heidegger, 1962, p.262)

Gadamer explains that, for Heidegger ‘the understanding of the text remains permanently determined by the anticipatory movement of fore-understanding’. (Gadamer, 1979, p.261) And contrary to John Locke’s theory of a ‘*tabula rasa*’, Gadamer is in agreement with Heidegger in considering that anticipation forms an integral part of our understanding. However, whilst Heidegger believes in the primacy of the future for the anticipation of our understanding, Gadamer believes that such anticipation can only occur with the benefit of our experience of the past. Therefore, whilst each of the thinkers approaches it from a different perspective, it can be seen that for both Gadamer and Heidegger understanding involves historical presuppositions or prejudice. It should, however, be noted that the term prejudice within this context does not necessarily have the negative connotations, which it acquired at the time of the enlightenment. As Gadamer writes,

Historical analysis shows that it is not until the enlightenment that the concept of prejudice acquires the negative aspect that we are familiar with. Actually ‘prejudice’ means a judgment that is given before all the elements that determine a situation have been finally examined...‘prejudice’ certainly does not mean a false judgment. (Gadamer, 1979, p.240)

With this observation, Gadamer indicates that understanding is always mediated from within a background of experience and that the notion of an approach to understanding, which is cognisant of prejudice, implies that it is an informed and measured approach. However, this is not to discount the possibility, which Gadamer brings to our attention, that our understanding can be affected by a subjective bias. Therefore, having informed us that hermeneutics concerns the phenomenon of understanding and of making something understood and that the hermeneutical task of understanding always involves a questioning of things, Gadamer cautions against the danger of allowing one’s preconceived ideas to obstruct the actual meaning of the text in our attempts to understand it. Borrowing Heidegger’s fore-structure terminology, he explains that it is

important ‘to be aware of one’s own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one’s own fore-meanings’. (Gadamer, 1979, p.238) Furthermore, by clarifying that to interpret and understand is not exclusive to the sciences but rather it concerns all aspects of human relations to the world, Gadamer confirms the ontological and universal aspects of the hermeneutical investigation.<sup>42</sup>

Gadamer began his hermeneutical enquiry in the mid 1930s when, as he recalls, ‘Heidegger...no longer trusted the notion of hermeneutics to keep his thinking free from the consequences of a transcendental theory of consciousness...’ (Gadamer, 2007g, p.330) He claims that it fell to him to confront the task of ‘speaking up for the happening that resides in understanding...and also the task of overcoming modern subjectivism by an analysis of hermeneutic experience that becomes reflectively aware of itself’. (Gadamer, 2007g, p.330) To this end, the hermeneutics which Gadamer develops displays a Heideggerian influence, based ‘upon finitude and the historical character of Dasein’. (Gadamer, 2007g, p.339) Furthermore, staying with Heidegger, in his search for truth, Gadamer espouses the ancient Greek concept of *alētheia*, denoting the phenomenon of disclosure, which forms an intrinsic part of our experience of truth. And by thus highlighting the opposing facets of the question of truth, Gadamer further indicates the incompleteness of understanding. This phenomenon of unconcealment and hiddenness, within the context of a search for truth, is indicative of, as Grondin views it, ‘a truth which is not really “knowledge”, but power and a discovery which

---

<sup>42</sup>The history of hermeneutics can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy, where it finds mention in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. In modern times, following Augustine, a universal hermeneutics, which relates to linguistic meaning in general, was brought to the fore by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Although, Heidegger maintains that, through his ‘more formal hermeneutics’, Schleiermacher reduced ‘the far-reaching, and living elements’ of Augustine’s hermeneutics to an ‘art of understanding’. (Grondin, 1995b, p.101) It was Wilhelm Dilthey, for whom the concepts of *Erlebnis* (lived experience) and *Verstehen* [understanding] play a crucial role, who first grounded the hermeneutical understanding ‘in a general theory of human life and existence’. (Ramberg & Gjesdal, 2014) However Grondin’s observation that Augustine is ‘an essential discussion partner for the hermeneutics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’ (Grondin, 1995b, p.100) can be best understood within the context of the views expressed by both Heidegger and Gadamer concerning the Augustinian concept of hermeneutics. Heidegger describes Augustine’s work as ‘the first hermeneutics in the great style’ and Gadamer maintains that it was Augustine who first recognised the universality of hermeneutics. Within his own hermeneutical enquiry, however, Gadamer makes it clear that he favours the approach taken by Hegel, for whom understanding involves the integration of the historical and the present, to that of either Schleiermacher or Dilthey. (Gadamer, 1979, p.153)

does not forget that it cannot discover everything, and that something of the truth essentially remains hidden'. (Grondin, 2003, p.22) However, although turning to the concept of *alētheia* as a starting point from which to determine how art can claim to be true, Gadamer takes a completely different approach to Heidegger by focusing on the metaphysical concept of the beautiful and, by appealing to Plato, he sets out to establish the connection between the beautiful, as what shines and *alētheia*, what is uncovered. Having ascertained that 'Plato...was the first to show that the essential element in the beautiful was *alētheia*', (Gadamer, 1979, p.443) Gadamer finds affirmation of the connection between truth and beauty. However, Gadamer is aware that '[W]hen Plato speaks of *alētheia* [truth] and sees truth connected with beauty, he is not thinking of art and he is also not thinking of the poets...' (Gadamer, 2007f, p.204) A fuller discussion of the concept of the beautiful and its relevance within Gadamer's enquiry will be developed in a separate section within this chapter.

The aim of Gadamer's hermeneutical enquiry is, 'to uncover a place for what seemed important and true [in art and the humanities] in the face of the overwhelming power of the historical standpoint.' (Palmer, 2007a, p.411) From this observation by Richard E. Palmer, it can be seen that Gadamer intends to discard the traditional conception of art and, in freeing it from the constraints of subjectivism and methodological scientific enquiry, allow it to assume its rightful mythical place within human culture, which in his view is also characteristic of 'metaphysics and religion'. Gadamer's treatment of the historical aspect of our understanding is a distinctive feature of his hermeneutics and, in what could be interpreted as a response to Heidegger's claim that '[R]uthless toward the tradition is reverence toward the past', (Heidegger, 1997, p.286) Gadamer looks to the past and he seeks to re-establish the relevance of historical thought to contemporary times, thereby redressing what he sees as 'the historical self-estrangement with which historical positivism had deflated ideas into mere opinions and philosophy into doxography.' (Gadamer, 2007g, p.330) In contrast to the empiricism of historical positivism with its reliance upon logic, Gadamer appeals to an historical aspect of thinking, whereby the horizons of our understanding combine, which he refers to as a 'fusion of horizons'. An horizon, he specifies, 'is not a rigid frontier, but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further...to have an horizon

means not being limited to what is nearest, but to be able to see beyond it' (Gadamer, 1979, pp.217, 269) and, as the phrase suggests, this fusion can be understood as a blending of historical times and situations where 'in every present moment not only is a horizon of the future opened up, but also the horizon of the past is in play'. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.198) This is not, however, to detract from the autonomy of the 'present experience' which is enjoyed by both philosophy and art and to what Gadamer, displaying an affinity to Hegel, refers to as 'the absolute presentness of art to all times and places', (Gadamer, 2007f, p.199) but is rather an acknowledgment of the way in which art is enabled to reach out across the divides of time and enhance our understanding which, for Gadamer, always concerns our self-understanding.

Gadamer's attempts to appeal to the historical were, as he recounts, helped by his encounter with Søren Kierkegaard's theory of 'contemporaneity' [*Gleichzeitigkeit*], which he applied within a religious context of 'understanding at a distance'. And, in *Truth and Method* Gadamer takes the view that 'temporal distance is not something that must be overcome' rather, he states, it should be recognised 'as a positive and productive possibility of understanding'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.264) Furthermore, he suggests, in the case of contemporary artworks, that it is only with the distance of time that their 'true content and their true significance' (Gadamer, 1979, p.265) will be understood. However, on reflection, Gadamer questions his argument concerning temporal distance, within the context of understanding and, despite its seeming persuasiveness, he considers that it 'was a poor preparation for discussing the fundamental significance of the otherness of the other and the fundamental role played by language as conversation'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.45) From this retrospective viewpoint it can be seen that, in his acknowledgment of the advantages of a view from a distance, Gadamer overlooked the importance of the discursive aspect of language, its intimacy and nearness, which is central to his hermeneutical investigation, and in attempting to redress this situation he includes the rider that 'interpretative distance does not always have to be historical distance'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.45) However, what does emerge from Gadamer's original investigation in *Truth and Method*, with his pronouncement that 'the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in

fact an infinite process', (Gadamer, 1979, p.265) is further confirmation that our understanding is never complete but rather is continuously in a state of development.

Staying with Kierkegaard, Gadamer reveals that through an earlier engagement with Kierkegaard's writings he found he was, albeit unwittingly, led to Hegel. And, although he makes it clear that he does not count himself amongst Hegel's followers, he reaffirms the influence which Hegel's thought has exerted upon his own thinking, claiming that 'it was not a matter of becoming a disciple of Hegel but rather of interiorizing the challenge that he represents for thinking'. (Gadamer, 2007g, p.334) This impetus for thinking is made evident in Gadamer's treatment of language, as Ambrosio observes, in *Truth and Method* 'Gadamer "profiles" himself against Hegel...by highlighting different shades of meaning that emerge from the notion that "the true is the whole" when that notion is rethought "from the centre of language"', and furthermore, he claims, 'the nature of the relation between language and reality' (Ambrosio, 1987, pp.23, 25) represents the point at which Gadamer's thinking diverges from Hegel. Whilst acknowledging Hegel's reference to the logical aspect of grammar, Gadamer contends that within 'the "variety of human language structures" there lies a range of very different anticipations of what is logical...' (Gadamer, 1994i, pp.92, 93) However, what Gadamer takes from Hegel is the dialectical deductive aspect of logic with its historical implications, which he applies to the relationship between word and concept, and he concludes that with words 'there is no beginning ex nihilo. Nor is it the case that a concept could be determined as a concept without the usage of the word with all of its many meanings playing a role'. (Gadamer, 1976b, p.93) And, he thereby displays the interdependency of the word and the concept.<sup>43</sup> As Gadamer sees it, we are surrounded but not confined by language, its importance lies in its role in facilitating communication and understanding', and he clarifies that 'to make oneself understood, means to hold what is said together with an infinity of what is not said in the unity of one meaning...' (Gadamer, 1979, p.426) Moreover, Gadamer tells us, 'language gives shape to the space of our freedom', (Gadamer, 2007g, p.335) whilst clarifying that this does not mean Hegel's idealistic notion of freedom as the goal of world history which,

---

<sup>43</sup> Gadamer returns to the question of the relationship between word and concept in a later essay 'From Word to Concept: The Task of Hermeneutics as Philosophy' (1994), in which he further highlights their interdependency.

in his view, is 'utopian'. Gadamer ponders upon the legacy of Hegel, whose thought has led us to 'encounter ourselves in art...[and]in the challenge of religion' and he states, 'we encounter ourselves also in thinking'. Furthermore, in Gadamer's view, the challenge represented by Hegel's thought is not only applicable to his own thinking but also is central to Heidegger's philosophy.<sup>44</sup>

Although the question of language is pivotal to the work of both of these philosophers, in what can be seen as a move away from Heidegger, Gadamer places emphasis upon the importance of language in enabling a shared dialogical enactment for the hermeneutic experience of understanding in a way that Heidegger never does. It is, nevertheless, important to note that from an early stage Heidegger stresses the importance of discourse or speech [*Rede*], informing us that '[T]he way in which discourse gets expressed is language'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.204) Furthermore, in acknowledging that the 'capacity to speak distinguishes the human being as a human being' (Heidegger, 1993e, p.397) Heidegger firmly establishes the fundamental position and relevance of language within the context of any enquiry into the question of our existential being. In Gadamer's view, our understanding is furthered by means of conversation and dialogue involving question and answer, and with his clarification that 'one only really "understands" a statement when one understands it as an answer to a question', (Gadamer, 2007g, p.331) he acknowledges the primacy of the question in pursuit of knowledge. Furthermore, the posing of a question suggests that there is already a certain necessary prejudicial knowledge of the matter involved, which is borne out by Gadamer's assertion that, 'contrary to the general opinion, it is more difficult to ask questions than to answer them'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.326) Gadamer supports this claim by recalling Plato's account of the difficulties encountered by the interlocutors in the Socratic dialogues, when they defensively attempt to assume the role of questioner from Socrates. This type of questioning which is only used by someone 'to prove himself right and not to gain insight' is, in Gadamer view, 'false discourse', (Gadamer, 1979, p.326) by which he places it outside the realm of what can be termed 'conversation', driven and guided by goodwill. Furthermore, Gadamer firmly

---

<sup>44</sup> Cf. 'Hegel and Heidegger' for Gadamer's account of the influence which Hegel's thought exerts on Heidegger, in particular concerning Heidegger's task of 'overcoming' metaphysics. (Gadamer, 1976a)

distinguishes the practice of understanding through conversation and dialogue which he advocates, from the notion of Hegel's dialectical method of enquiry which, because of its deductive method of reasoning, he admits to seeing as 'a dubious compromise with the scientific thinking of modernity'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.45)

### 4.3 The Relevance of Language

The question of language, as we have ascertained, is central to Gadamer's hermeneutical investigation. Furthermore, the relevance of language in the pursuit of knowledge is reinforced by Gadamer's unequivocal claim that

...reaching an understanding is a problem that must succeed or fail in the medium of language... All the phenomena involved in reaching an understanding, the phenomena of understanding and misunderstanding which constitute the central focus of what we call "hermeneutics," clearly involve language. (Gadamer, 2007e, p.92)

The above statement, together with Gadamer's earlier observation in his 'Foreword to the second edition' of *Truth and Method* that '[B]eing that can be understood is language', (Gadamer, 1979, p.xxii) leaves us in no doubt about the fundamental position which language occupies within all realms of understanding and intelligibility and of its integral place within the hermeneutical enquiry. Understanding what a person says, in Gadamer's view, is 'to agree about the object, not to get inside another person and relive his experiences', (Gadamer, 1979, p.345) and furthermore, he confirms that the process of understanding is linguistic in nature. However, being mindful of the provocative nature of this assertion, Gadamer argues that despite the perception that meaning can be conveyed without resorting to language, as in the instance of 'silent consent' or, as he states 'guessing that something is the case without putting it into words', these phenomena in fact constitute 'modes of language [of *Sprachlichkeit*]', Linguisticity. (Gadamer, 2007e, p.92) Furthermore, his assertion that 'the example of "silent agreement" is not so much an objection to the linguistic character of understanding; instead, it is the linguistic character of understanding that assures its breadth and universality', (Gadamer, 2007e, p.94) indicates that our understanding, whether or not expressed linguistically, is intrinsically linked to language, as the site of

our expressive intelligibility. Gadamer claims that all our efforts to understand begin when confronted by ‘something that is strange, challenging, disorienting’, (Gadamer, 2007e, p.93) in other words, when we are challenged by a phenomenon which we have not previously encountered. He traces the origin of this way of thinking back to the ancient Greeks and to their notion of *atopon* which, he states, translates as ‘the placeless’ and denotes ‘that which cannot be fitted into the categories of expectation in our understanding and which therefore causes us to be suspicious of it’. (Gadamer, 2007e, p.93) And what Gadamer deduces from the Greeks is that our capacity to understand is related to our pre-given knowledge and awareness of a subject, which can be seen to concur with Heidegger’s theory of ‘fore-understanding’ and Gadamer’s notion of prejudice. This is not to suggest that we approach a given matter in a state of intransigence, but rather that we are more open to discovery, by which is meant, we are pre-disposed to the acquisition of knowledge. As Gadamer has already informed us, to approach a situation with ‘prejudice’, rather than having negative connotations, implies that we have a more receptive approach.

Having successfully advanced the theory of the linguistic character of understanding, Gadamer sees the need for it to be rescued from the dominance of the technological world and reinstated as the means of facilitating all understanding, including self-understanding. As he views it, the notion of the inseparability of language and understanding has been usurped by the rise of science in the seventeenth century, wherein the concept of method is deemed to be the ‘absolute starting point for our self-understanding’. (Gadamer, 2007e, p.94) And, it is in Immanuel Kant that Gadamer finds the means of reconciling the scientific reliance on experience with the all encompassing concepts of metaphysics. Kant champions the autonomy of reason and, as Gadamer states, he shows ‘that without assuming freedom of the practical reason of man, the moral and social existence of man could not be thought’. (Gadamer, 2007e, p.95) Kant’s thinking, which clearly indicates the restraints that scientific method can place upon our thought process, amounts to an injunction for us to ‘think outside the box’. In recognising the legitimacy of scientific language, Gadamer does not deny the value of the advancements that scientific progress has made in contributing to knowledge, however, whilst asserting that he is not a fatalist, he doubts the ability of

science to place limitations on itself but sees rather that it is incumbent on humankind, by utilizing the political capacity that is within its reach, to avoid the potentially destructive effects that may arise from technological scientific advancement. And, on a more hopeful note, in making the observation that despite being absorbed by modern science

[I]language... holds the invariable things in our nature fast, those things which come to be spoken of in language again and again. And the language of philosophy, as long as it remains language, will remain in a dialogue with that language of our world. (Gadamer, 1976a, p.116)

Gadamer can be seen to take a more optimistic view of the future prospects for language. Moreover, on the occasions when language deserts us, he claims that this is itself a form of language and not a meta-language. It could, however, be argued, that our failure in certain instances to access appropriate language does not always reflect our lack of facility with words but can, in some cases, be attributed to the inadequacy of spoken language. However, rather than seeing this as an end to speaking, for Gadamer, who recognises the dynamic properties of language, stating that '[N]ew linguistic structures and ways of expression arise from the changes in our lives and our experience', (Gadamer, 2007e, p.98) it is in fact a beginning. And in response to the rhetorical question 'why is understanding, when it comes into the open, linguistic in character? Why does the "silent agreement" among people that again and again is built up as the commonality of an orientation to the world point to what we may call "linguisticity"?' (Gadamer, 2007e, p.96) Gadamer asserts that language is the means by which we interact and participate in conversation with another person and identify common interests and concerns. Furthermore, he emphasises the importance of conversation, stating that it does not simply contain the views of one individual but rather 'involves *the shared interpretation of the world which makes moral and social solidarity possible*', (Gadamer, 2007e, p.96) thereby enlightening, and transforming the viewpoint of each participant.

In his discussion concerning the language of art, Gadamer accepts that art, in its various forms, is not always linguistic in nature. However, by arguing that every interpretation that furthers understanding has ‘the character of language’, he deduces that ‘the entire experience of the world is linguistically mediated’. (Gadamer, 2007b, p.127) And, even if it is not itself linguistic, the work of art ‘speaks’ and in identifying the special way in which it addresses us, he explains that ‘it speaks to the self-understanding of *every* person, and it does this as something ever present and by means of its own contemporaneousness’. (Gadamer, 2007b, p.129) The role of artwork in enhancing our understanding will be further explored in my analysis of Gadamer’s treatment of the concept of the beautiful, within this chapter.

#### **4.4 The Unthought and Unspoken**

Writing in 1956, Heidegger challenges us to consider the value of the unthought and unspoken aspects of a thinker’s work, by stating that

[T]he greater the work of a thinker—which in no way coincides with the breadth and number of writings—the richer is what is unthought in this work, which means, that which emerges in and through this work as having not yet been thought. (Heidegger, 1991b, p.71)

I contend that it is Gadamer, who thinks through what is unthought in Heidegger most extensively, although not polemically, especially when it comes to the nature of ‘image’, ‘truth’, and ‘word’ and the inextricable link between them. Furthermore, it will be seen that Gadamer finds much of what Heidegger was striving for already contained within the tradition of Platonic thought, namely, within one of the richest and most nuanced epochs of metaphysics. Where Heidegger sees the beginning of metaphysical thinking with the rise of calculative and clarificatory thought, which he attributes to Plato and Aristotle, as a necessary falling away from something more originary, as Gadamer sees it, Plato stands ‘in between the early thinkers and the scholastic form of metaphysics—a metaphysics which assumed its initial form in the teachings of Aristotle’. (Gadamer, 1994d, p.82) Therefore, what Gadamer offers is a reading of Plato prior to Platonism and to the systematic or doctrinal reading of Plato, which supports traditional thinking.

In a move away from traditional understanding, which is not necessarily in conflict with Plato, Gadamer, in line with Hegel, states that ‘The "ideality" of the work of art does not consist in its imitating and reproducing an idea but, as for Hegel, in the sensible "appearing" of the idea’, (Gadamer, 2004, p.138) thereby subscribing to the disclosive aspect of the image whilst clarifying his resistance to the notion of the image as a copy. In Gadamer’s view, ‘Plato employs the concept of mimesis in order to emphasize the ontological distance between the original and the image’ (Gadamer, 1986c, p.116) and whilst understanding the thinking that regards the visual arts as a form of imagery, in that they capture movement and render it immobile, he is not sympathetic to Plato’s so-called denigration of the status of art, which he particularly applies to the poetic arts, however, what he takes from Plato is the description of the beautiful as that which ‘shines forth’. And, in his defence of the authenticity of the image in ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, Gadamer, displaying the influence of Aristotle, takes an interesting approach by underlining the importance of ‘recognition’ in our encounter with the beautiful, i.e. in our encounter with the ontological dimension of the shining-forth of the beautiful. As he sees it, the function of the beautiful is to bridge the chasm between the ideal and the real and to assert its universality in the particular. In my exploration of his treatment of the beautiful, I will show how Gadamer ties the concept of the beautiful to the ontological register of understanding and thereby to self-understanding. Gadamer emphasises the unique position and importance of the truth that the artwork speaks to us, its relevance within philosophical debate, and its implications for the enhancement of our understanding in all spheres of our encounters with the world, by informing us, as follows

That truth is experienced through a work of art that we cannot attain in any other way constitutes the philosophical importance of art, which asserts itself against all reasoning. Hence together with the experience of art issues the most pressing challenge to the scientific consciousness to acknowledge its own limits. (Gadamer, 1979, pp.xii,xiii)

The same can be said to be true of religious truths, which are also resistant to attempts to be grounded by science. Mindful of the inadequacy of scientific methods in certain spheres, Gadamer indicates the thrust of his investigation, whereby he interrogates the

truth claims of art, and he draws attention to the fact that his ‘starting point’ in *Truth and Method*, contrary to expectations, is ‘art—art itself’. The reason for this, he explains, is because his real interest in the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] is not ‘in their character as sciences [*Wissenschaften*], but rather how they dealt with art—in all its realms: literature, the visual arts, architecture, and music’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.195) In Gadamer’s view, the arts in their entirety reflect ‘the metaphysical heritage of our Western tradition. And the *Geisteswissenschaften* stand in a particularly close and interactive relationship with receptivity and sensitivity to art’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.195) Therefore, he believes, they are endowed with ‘a philosophical authenticity of their own’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.195) However, he makes it clear that his enquiry is not solely concerned with justifying the truth of art, but is rather an attempt to develop ‘a concept of knowledge and of truth which corresponds to the whole of our hermeneutic experience’. (Gadamer, 1979, p.xiii) In other words, the hermeneutical enquiry, in which Gadamer attempts to evade the constraints of scientific methodology, is concerned with understanding the truth of all our relationships to the world.

However, Gadamer, does not reject science but rather he acknowledges that it is due to science that ‘we have been liberated from many prejudices and disabused of many illusions’, (Gadamer, 1994i, p.34) thereby effectively recognising its contribution to knowledge. What concerns Gadamer is science’s insistence on proof and justification which, in his view, narrows its scope and fails to recognise the experience of truth that comes from areas which are unverifiable by science, such as philosophy, art, and history. Moreover, in Gadamer’s view, what he terms ‘aesthetic consciousness’ feeds into the dominance of science and, following Heidegger, he maintains that the resultant subjectivity of the aesthetic approach to the artwork inhibits our understanding of art’s claim to truth, and with this thought he was prompted to start his enquiry in *Truth and Method* (1960) with a critique of aesthetic consciousness. However, as Gadamer informs us in his later writings, by 1934 his critique of ‘aesthetic consciousness’ had already begun<sup>45</sup> and, although Heidegger may have made his view of aesthetics known, this was prior to the publication of his seminal essay on the work

---

<sup>45</sup> See ‘The Heritage of Hegel’ (1978) Gadamer states, ‘already in 1934 I had begun with a critical analysis of aesthetic consciousness, concerning which I sought to prove that it did not do justice to the truth claim of art...’ (Gadamer, 2007g, p.330)

of art wherein, as already shown in chapter three, with his rejection of aesthetics he seeks to offer an alternative approach to understanding art in terms of work, truth, and Being.

#### **4.5 Aesthetics and Aesthetic Consciousness**

Gadamer argues that the modern concept of subjectivity, which is a legacy of the Kantian treatment of aesthetics, has robbed us of ‘effective historical consciousness’, by which he means we are deprived of awareness of the historical traditions of not only the Western world, but of other diverse historical cultures. Moreover, without the understanding which is an aspect of historical consciousness, we lack a necessary discernment and therefore we approach things with a naïve unquestioning acceptance. However, by further qualifying that ‘[B]eing historical means never being able to pull everything out of an event such that everything that has happened lies before me’, (Gadamer, 1994a, p.58) Gadamer confirms that historical consciousness is always incomplete. And, this incompleteness is what Hegel refers to as ‘bad infinity’. For Hegel, the infinite, as opposed to the finite, is absolute, which includes the concept. However, something which is ‘merely’ endless constitutes, in Hegel’s terms, ‘bad infinity’.

In identifying the dangers of the subjectivity of aesthetic consciousness, Grondin is of the view that by considering works of art solely as aesthetic objects, they are deprived of ‘their moral and cognitive overtones...[and] ignoring the moral and cognitive dimensions has led to the rise of the autonomy of art in modernism’. (Grondin, 2003, p.23) The problem that arises in this situation is that in being autonomous the artwork, by definition, is set-apart and isolated and this isolation could be seen to jeopardise its role in enabling the emergence of truth. However, given that the notion of autonomy is synonymous with freedom, which can be equated with the concept of the absolute, and taking Gadamer’s understanding of the term ‘absolute’ to mean ‘independence from all restrictive conditioning’, (Gadamer, 2007f, p.197) it follows that within the context of modern art, its autonomy can be understood as self-containment, which frees it from inhibitions and grants it liberty to be true and to allow

its truth to emerge. Art's claim to absoluteness was recognised by Hegel, who attributed to it the capacity to transcend historical differences between eras.

However, Gadamer acknowledges the difficulties that we encounter in attempting to understand the experimental aspects of modern art and, rather than indulging in a reactionary response to this new phenomenon in artwork, he suggests that an enquiry into 'fundamental human experiences' could provide an answer. To this end, he states his intention to enquire into 'the anthropological basis of our experience of art', by means of examining 'the concepts of play, symbol, and festival'. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.22) And in studying these basic phenomena of human existence, which he already introduced in *Truth and Method*, Gadamer seeks a deeper understanding of the modes of human expression than traditional thinking can provide, one whereby art is viewed as a dynamic, historical, event in which, rather than being mere spectators, we are in fact participants. By including art within the broader realm of human experience and expression through his analysis of play, symbol, and festival, and thereby illustrating the way that we engage with diverse artistic endeavours, Gadamer develops a more incisive understanding of its relevance within historically effected human experience than can be found in Heidegger. And, whilst remaining with the notion of *alētheia* in relation to the revelation of truth in art, which he inherited from Heidegger, Gadamer succeeds in highlighting the inclusiveness of the experience of art, thereby making it more accessible to our understanding.

Notwithstanding Gadamer's disparaging view of aesthetic consciousness and the subjectivism found therein, Grondin identifies what can be perceived as a further divergence from Heidegger in, as he describes it, Gadamer's 'duel approach' to the question of aesthetics, whereby although he perceives

...“aesthetic consciousness”...as a hollow and disastrous modern abstraction...his entire project follows the lead of something like the aesthetic experience of truth when it undertakes to liberate the meaning of understanding and truth, as it is lived for instance in the human sciences and in our everyday practical judgments, from the straitjacket of the scientific, methodical model of truth. (Grondin, 1998, p.267)

Grondin's reading of Gadamer, in this instance, indicates a seemingly paradoxical treatment of the question of truth.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, in contrast to Heidegger, whose stated intention is the overcoming of metaphysics, Grondin's findings show Gadamer's willingness to work from within metaphysics, whilst still intent on grounding the notion of truth. And, rather than viewing metaphysics as an obstacle to his enquiry, Dennis Schmidt suggests that Gadamer sees it as a way to 'open up the possibility of a different understanding, and hence idiom of truth, one which is not defined by the conceptual prejudices that define the sense of truth in the natural sciences and in metaphysics'. (Schmidt, 2011, p.43) And, in so doing, he believes that Gadamer goes 'further toward opening a different future for philosophy than Heidegger did'. (Schmidt, 2011, p.43) In a development of this argument, Schmidt draws attention to Kant's treatment of the beautiful as *ein Lebensgefühl* [a feeling of life], which he connects to the language of truth and its enactment. The influence of Kant's theory of *ein Lebensgefühl* in describing the experience of the beautiful becomes evident as Gadamer's investigation moves towards what he terms an 'event of life', by means of which he develops 'the notion of play' and, in line with Kant, he recognises the dynamic aspect of play and of art and its enactment. Play is not an object, but is rather an event in which we participate and are absorbed into, we move in and out of play, and, through our involvement in this movement of play we are brought into an understanding of aesthetic experience. In recalling the 'two basic projects that were brought together in the concept of play [*Spiel*, also game]...the game we play with art', and 'the grounding of language in conversation, the game of language', (Gadamer, 1997a, p.41) Gadamer makes the connection between aesthetic experience and the question of language which is central to Gadamer's enquiry. Schmidt draws our attention to the significance of Gadamer's transformation of play into work, which he describes as 'a "*Verwandlung ins Gebilde* [transformation into form]" (Schmidt, 2011, p.47) and he claims that by making the connection between play and work, Gadamer succeeds in making an important advance on Kant's theory. Moreover, his contention that 'Gadamer replies to the all-important question—one that Heidegger never resolved—of how aesthetic experience,

---

<sup>46</sup> Grondin admits that, what he refers to as Gadamer's 'two-pronged' approach to aesthetics may appear to be confusing. However, in his paper 'Gadamer's Aesthetics; The Overcoming of Aesthetic Consciousness and the Hermeneutical Truth of Art', by analysing Gadamer's critique of aesthetic consciousness in juxtaposition with his theory of aesthetic truth, Grondin shows, that rather than being contradictory, these 'two movements go hand in hand'. (Grondin, 1998, p.267)

or any experience which opens up the movement of life, can move into language so that its truth might be said', (Schmidt, 2011, p.47) points to Gadamer's unique contribution to the question of the truth claims of art. In the following section of my work I intend to evaluate Gadamer's analysis of the human engagement with the concepts of play, festival, and symbol, and thereby find support for the claim that within his own distinctive philosophical hermeneutics, Gadamer took his enquiry into the truth claims of art to a level beyond that of either Kant or Heidegger. Furthermore, in a move away from aesthetic consciousness, Gadamer indicates the direction of his investigation, stating that it is neither the role of the creator of the artwork nor of the participator that interests him, but rather, what he terms, 'the mode of being' of the artwork and its implications for us, by clarifying that

...it is not the aesthetic consciousness, but the experience of art and thus the question of the mode of being of the work of art that must form the object of our examination...the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience changing the person experiencing it. (Gadamer, 1979, p.92)

He further explains that the subject of the work of art is not 'the subjectivity of the person who experiences it, but the work itself, and this is the point at which the mode of being of play becomes significant'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.92) Therefore, by exploring our innate disposition towards the concept of play and the phenomenon of our historical participation in the event of play, it will be shown how Gadamer reveals its intrinsic role in shaping our understanding of the other and simultaneously our self-understanding.

#### **4.6 The Significance of Play in Art**

...the play of art is a mirror that through the centuries constantly arises anew, and in which we catch sight of ourselves in a way that is often unexpected or unfamiliar: what we are, what we might be, and what we are about. (Gadamer, 1986e, p.130)

This observation highlights the importance of play within the context of the work of art. Furthermore, it illustrates that 'the play of art', to use Gadamer's terminology, affords

us a view from outside whereby, in enabling us to reflect on aspects of our being that have heretofore eluded us, it enhances our capacity for self-understanding.<sup>47</sup> Gadamer introduced the concept of play to his discussion on art at an early stage in his writing,<sup>48</sup> from which time throughout his entire opus it continues to be of significant importance within his hermeneutical enquiry. He explains that the reason for introducing the concept of play was ‘precisely to show that everyone involved in play is a participant’ (Gadamer, 1986f, p.28) and he further describes play as ‘an elementary phenomenon that pervades the whole of the animal world...it determines man as a natural being’. (Gadamer, 1986e, p.123) However, he looks for the distinguishing feature, within the context of play, which isolates man from other animals and he finds, in the imposition of rules and regulations to the activity of play, a characteristic which is peculiar to man. Moreover, our consciousness of the inherent structure of play suggests that we possess an awareness which is not available to any other species, and the single-minded approach we take to abiding by rules is a phenomenon which, Gadamer states, is referred to by philosophers as ‘the intentionality of consciousness’ and is a distinctive characteristic of human behaviour. Gadamer alerts us to the importance of the event of play, by stating that ‘failure to recognize the universal scope and ontological dignity of play produces an abstraction that blinds us to the interdependence of both’, (Gadamer, 1986e, p.130) which means that our lack of perception distorts our understanding of play, thereby causing a denigration of the whole notion of play and a trivialisation of its importance within the context of human existence. Furthermore, the modern phenomenon of placing the act of play in the service of the interests of large commercial enterprises raises a further challenge to our understanding of play, wherein its integrity and freedom is compromised and its identity as play is brought into question.

---

<sup>47</sup>Prior to the publication of Gadamer’s *Truth and Method*, in a compilation of a series of lectures published as *The Principle of Reason* in 1957, Heidegger discusses the concept of play. By raising the question of where ‘being *qua* being finds its repose’, (Heidegger, 1991b, p.111) he is led to the notion of play and to the observation that ‘[H]umans are truly capable of playing and of remaining in play only insofar as they are engaged in this play...’ (Heidegger, 1991b, p.111) Heidegger states that play is commonly perceived ‘as the dialectic of freedom and necessity within the horizon of ground/reason, of ratio, of rules, of rules of play, of calculus’, (Heidegger, 1991b, p.112) in other words, play is viewed as a necessary relief from the pressing issues of life. For Heidegger, who argues that for everything there is a reason, the unquestioning aspect of play is where its uniqueness is to be found. He states, ‘The play is without “why.” It plays since it plays’. (Heidegger, 1991b, p.113)

<sup>48</sup> See *Truth and Method* for an in-depth analysis wherein Gadamer links the concept of play to the work of art. (Gadamer, 1979, p.91)

Gadamer draws an analogy between the structure of play and the rules that ‘determine and bind our lives together’ and permeate all facets of human activity, including ritual, the administration of justice, and social behaviour in general, with the added observation that a ‘certain self-imposed limitation of our freedom seems to belong to the very structure of culture’. (Gadamer, 1986e, p.124) The ‘limitation of freedom’, which Gadamer refers to here, and which can also be understood in terms of the responsibility of freedom, is evident in the ethical and social patterns that shape our lives and which are essential in ensuring any form of harmonious existence. Moreover, in Gadamer’s view, any attempt to examine the differences between animal behaviour, which can be seen as a response to instinct, as opposed to human behaviour, wherein, he suggests, ‘everything follows from a freely made decision’, (Gadamer, 1986e, p.125) can only be approached indirectly. Therefore, prompted by his observation that art has been traditionally viewed within the context of play, he suggests that an appropriate medium for such an enquiry can be found within the realm of art and he starts his enquiry by examining the connection between play and the work of art.

The traditional perception of art, which is prevalent in Western society, considers it to be a frivolous pursuit without a purpose, viewing the experience of art ‘as merely one of the pleasures belonging to a historically refined education’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.200) And, only on those occasions when it has been harnessed in support of the Christian message or as a means of garnering support for a military cause was art deemed to have a worthy *raison d’être*. Moreover, in the contemporary world the acquisition of art for the purpose of a monetary investment, in what Heidegger disparagingly refers to as the ‘art business’ [*Kunstbetrieb*], indicates a lack of appreciation for, or interest in, the true value of art. However, Gadamer clearly does not support what could be seen as a denigration of the position of art, but views it rather as an integral aspect of our existence, which he attempts to understand by linking it to the experience of play. And by making the connection between art and play, he shows the fundamental relevance of art within the context of our lives, maintaining that ‘[I]nsistence on the opposition between life and art is tied to the experience of an alienated world’, (Gadamer, 1986e, p.130) and with this alienation the true value of art, its enactment of truth, is missed by the tradition. Having made the observation that it is

the ‘task of philosophy to discover what is common even in what is different’, (Gadamer, 1986f, p.12) Gadamer looks towards the diverse areas of play and of art, wherein he sees that play combines the characteristics of both restraint and freedom at the same time, and in ‘the creative forms of art’ he also identifies the combination of these two attributes. This combination, which can be seen to be analogous with the revelation and concealment that occurs within the work of art, is what enables a universal infiltration of art in all facets of our existence.

Whilst acknowledging that the tendency to make the link between the experience of art and the concept of play can be traced back to Immanuel Kant, Gadamer makes it clear that he does not subscribe to the subjective view of the alliance of art and play, shared by Kant and Schiller, which has been perpetuated by tradition. The shortcomings which Gadamer perceives in the work of both Kant and Schiller are outlined by Theodore George, as follows

Gadamer argues that despite their emphasis on the relation of art and play, Kant and Schiller...offer only a partial picture; while both...recognize “the contribution of the subject” to the construction of aesthetic experience’, neither captures the phenomenon of play in full. (George, 2011, p.9)

And, following on Kant and Schiller, the traditional experience of art is missing ‘the playlike character of the creation...[wherein] the very fact of its being “played,” comes to the fore’. (Gadamer, 1986e, p.127) George picks up on Gadamer’s use of the term ‘creation’ in his later essay ‘The Play of Art’ (1977), and perceives it as an attempt to align art with creation precisely in order to distance art from the idea of work’. (George, 2011, p.6) However, it should be noted that in an earlier essay ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’ (1974), Gadamer already made a suggestion that, in the interest of avoiding any misapprehension concerning the status of art, ‘we should replace the word “work” by the word “creation”’. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.33) And, whilst there may be some degree of substance to George’s critique of Gadamer’s choice of phrase with reference to art, bearing in mind that, within ‘The Play of Art’, he does argue that because of the uniqueness of a work of art it could more accurately be called ‘a creation (*Gebilde*)’

than a work, also stating that the various art forms which rely upon reproduction ‘must constantly be reconstituted as a creation’, (Gadamer, 1986e, p.126) throughout his later writing, Gadamer continues to use the term ‘work’, being-at-work, with reference to art.

However, in his final word on the subject of art, ‘The Artwork in Word and Image’, by exposing the creative aspect of what we refer to as ‘work’ and equating it to the ancient Greek notion of ‘*techne*’, Gadamer makes it clear that the notion of work in relation to art is not necessarily in conflict with an understanding of art in terms of ‘creation’. In summary, Gadamer explains that *techne* does not refer to ‘the act of making or planning’ but rather, borrowing a thought from Aristotle, to ‘the knowledge that actually guides the making’, (Gadamer, 2007f, p.202) thereby presenting the notion of ‘work’ within a broader context than popularly understood. Moreover, he distinguishes the work produced by the craftsman, which is made to fulfil a useful function, from the artist’s production, which is only there to be contemplated, claiming that in being exhibited the artwork is a ‘*work*’ and, ‘it remains a work *by* the artist, which, as a work by the artist, can be signed’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.202) Bearing in mind Ingrid Scheibler’s observation that in the case of ‘a subjectivized aesthetics, both the work of art and aesthetic experience depend on a process of alienation’, (Scheibler, 2001, p.162) Gadamer’s narrow definition of art, which effectively isolates it from the community, appears to reintroduce some subjectivity into his discussion. Furthermore, he expounds on this to include the works ‘of a creative instant’ that impact on us and leave a ‘lasting’ impression, including not only the plastic arts, but also music and poetry and he clarifies that these forms of art also go through what is linguistically described as ‘passing from *poiesis* [producing] to *poesie* [a thing made]’. However, in his discussion concerning the notion of play, wherein it is established that we are not the subject of play, but rather are participants in the event of play, Gadamer makes it clear that the notion of subjectivity, which is aligned to the traditional aesthetic appreciation of art, is contrary to his way of thinking.

In his essay ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful’, written in 1974, subtitled ‘Art as Play, Symbol, and Festival’, Gadamer gives an account of art’s connection to each of these three phenomena and, mindful of Plato’s theory of the one and the many, he draws

attention to their common role wherein they are united in establishing our relationship to the work of art. Closely allied to the concept of play which has already been explored within this work is the concept of the symbol, which Gadamer introduces to the discussion within the context of understanding modern art. He points out that, unlike classical art, modern art does not guide us in the experience of perceiving beauty in nature, on the contrary, it is, he states, 'precisely indeterminacy of reference that addresses us in modern art and that compels us to be fully conscious of the significance of the exemplary meaning of what we see before us'. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.31) Gadamer is thus effectively advising us that rather than approaching modern art with any pre-conceptions we need to have an openness to, and recognition of its authentic value. As a way of illustrating his meaning, Gadamer invokes the notion of 'symbol', which he states originally denoted 'a token of remembrance' in ancient Greece, and he recounts the ancient Greek custom of breaking an object in two and presenting a departing guest with one section, whilst retaining the other. This '*tessera hospitalis*' became symbolic of a certain unity of purpose, if in the event of a future visit to the same house by a descendant of the guest, the two pieces of the object could be rejoined in an act of recognition which, following Aristotle's understanding of the term, is an acknowledgment of a residual familiarity. Furthermore, in Plato's *Symposium*, according to Gadamer, the symbol provides 'an even more profound indication of the sort of significance that art has for us', (Gadamer, 1986f, p.31) and he describes the mythical account of originally spherical shaped human beings being cut in two by the gods in retribution for their misbehaviour, thereby rendering them with a sense of incompleteness and a yearning to be 'made whole once again'. The fulfilment of this search for wholeness, which amounts to finding 'our other half' is, as Gadamer sees it, found in the experience of love and furthermore, this search is also a facet of our relationship to the beautiful in art, which does not provide immediate understanding, but is rather imbued with a promise of further discovery. Gadamer claims that 'the symbolic in general, and especially the symbolic in art, rests upon an intricate interplay of showing and concealing', (Gadamer, 1986f, p.33) which he considers to be particularly relevant in furthering our understanding of modern art, in allowing its meaning to emerge, and thereby in enhancing our self-understanding. As Gadamer explains,

...self-understanding takes place in relation to something else that is understood and includes the unity and sameness of this other. Inasmuch as we encounter the work of art in the world and a world in the individual work of art, this does not remain a strange universe into which we are magically transported for a time. Rather, we learn to understand ourselves in it, and that means that we preserve the discontinuity of the experience in the continuity of our existence'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.86)

With this Gadamer highlights the continuing relevance of the truth which we experience and come to know through the work of art and he cautions us against the tendency to immediacy, which is a feature of aesthetic awareness, and reminds us that 'art is knowledge and the experience of the work of art is a sharing of this knowledge'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.87)

The third phenomenon that Gadamer isolates is the concept of the festival, which he describes as 'the inclusive concept for regaining the idea of universal communication', (Gadamer, 1986f, p.12) and with this in mind it is the shared aspect of the festival that is of prime importance for Gadamer. A festival, he states, 'is meant for everyone', (Gadamer, 1986f, p.39) it takes the form of a communal event in which people are united in a shared celebration and, although it is a universal experience, it can be related to and understood in terms of one's own cultural milieu. However, whilst suggesting that the question of the temporal structure of the festival could provide a way to our understanding of 'the festival character of art and the temporal structure of the work of art', (Gadamer, 1986f, p.41) Gadamer stresses that art needs to find its own place unrestrained by prevailing cultural perceptions. This claim has particular relevance in the case of modern art, which is distinguished by its lack of conformity to the traditional expectations. Furthermore, Gadamer's view of the temporal aspect of art indicates a departure from Heidegger's notion of our encounter with the work of art, which he views as a singular event. His enquiry into the temporal structure of a festival, what precisely constitutes a festival, and the festive character of a festival, leads Gadamer to conclude that, regardless of the solemnity or the joyfulness of the occasion,

...a festive occasion is always something uplifting which raises the participants out of their everyday existence and elevates them into a

kind of universal communion. Consequently, the festive occasion possesses its own sort of temporality. (Gadamer, 1986d, p.58)

It can be seen by this that the temporal structure of a festival has a uniqueness, which challenges us to adapt ourselves to a different management of time from that which we experience within the daily routine, thereby offering a form of escapism from the vicissitudes of life and removal from a consciousness of the perceived pressure of time. Gadamer makes an analogy between our obliviousness of the movement of time in the case of the festival, and the way we take time to dwell upon and 'tarry' with the work of art, thereby bringing time to 'a standstill'. In his view, '[T]he essence of our temporal experience of art is in learning how to tarry in this way', adding that, 'perhaps it is the only way that is granted to us finite beings to relate to what we call eternity'. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.45) Gadamer's concept of tarrying [*Verweilen*], which he initially encounters in an early essay, by Heidegger, describes our mode of encounter with the work of art, "Tarrying" takes time, and in tarrying we lose ourselves in the thing and, thereby, lose track of time. Where Heidegger would have us await the sudden flash of insight, Gadamer requires us to develop the habit of tarrying with things'. (Dostal, 2002b, p.256) 'To tarry is not to lose time', states Gadamer, and he likens the experience of tarrying to that of the 'back-and-forth' of a conversation. In tarrying with the work of art we are allowing the artwork to be a part of the conversation and to thus impart its knowledge which, as the other participant in the conversation, we take time to recognise and imbibe.

Making a further enquiry into our understanding of the term 'art', Gadamer returns to antiquity and he situates art within the realm of Aristotle's notion of '*poietike episteme*, the knowledge and facility appropriate to production'. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.12) This knowing is a necessary attribute of both the craftsman and the artist and, in Gadamer's view, it is when the work of craftsman and the work of the artist becomes separated from the activity of production, that the distinction between theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge becomes evident. However, the completion of the work also raises the question of its purpose and its potential for use and of how to respond to Plato's insistence that 'the knowledge and skill of the producer are subordinate to considerations of use and depend upon the knowledge of the user of the

product’.<sup>49</sup> (Gadamer, 1986f, pp.12-13) Considering Plato’s assertion, Gadamer confronts the pertinent question which, he states, ‘is how to distinguish “art” from the mechanical arts within this general concept of productive knowledge’. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.13) And, his search for an answer leads him to the ancient Greeks, where he encounters the view that art is merely an imitation of nature and therefore lacking a ‘real’ identity of its own, which in turn raises further philosophical problems. Notwithstanding the ancients’ view of art as imitation and in an attempt to overcome the problems which this notion imposes upon the position of art, Gadamer turns his attention to the way that Aristotle views poetry which, for Gadamer, as for Heidegger, is considered to be the most ‘eminent’ form of art. For Aristotle,

“Poetry is more philosophical than history.”...history only relates how things actually happened, whereas poetry tells us how things may happen and teaches us to recognize the universal in all human action and suffering. Since the universal is obviously the topic of philosophy, art is more philosophical than history precisely because it too intends the universal. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.13)

In Aristotle, Gadamer sees an endorsement of the philosophical value of art, leading him to a second consideration of the concept of art which, according to Gadamer, goes ‘beyond the limits of contemporary aesthetics. “Fine art”, is in German *die schöne Kunst*, literally “beautiful art.” But what is the beautiful?’ (Gadamer, 1986f, p.13) Gadamer asks, and with this query, he leads us to the question of the concept of the beautiful and to its inherent importance in our understanding of art as a self-shining.

#### **4.7 The Importance of the Beautiful within our Understanding of Art**

As already mentioned, the ‘concept of the beautiful’, its being at work, is pivotal to Gadamer’s enquiry into the philosophical significance and truth of the artwork. And although since Plato the notion of the truth of the work of art had been destabilised, Gadamer returns to Plato to establish a connection between the concept of the beautiful and the concept of the true, which he finds in Plato’s dictum that *alētheia* is the essential element of the beautiful. In line with Heidegger, Gadamer applies the notion of *alētheia*

---

<sup>49</sup> See; Plato, *Republic*, 601 d-e

to his search for the truth of art. As we have seen, Heidegger was the first thinker in modern times to retrieve and radicalise the notion of *alētheia* from antiquity, interpreting it to mean unconcealedness. However, by exploring the question of beauty from within the question of being, Heidegger does not place an emphasis on the beautiful in the way that Gadamer does, and whereas he does not deny the concept of the beautiful, what he decries is the aesthetic approach to beauty that has been espoused by the metaphysical tradition leading to, as he sees it, a forgetfulness of being. However, in a further invocation of Plato and contrary to Heidegger's contention that the forgetfulness of being and of the finitude of being begins with Plato, Gadamer claims that it is in the 'tradition of Platonism that the conceptual vocabulary required for thought about the finiteness of human life was developed'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.443) Gadamer's retrieval of Plato and Platonism, his more nuanced and arguably richer reading of the metaphysical tradition, marks the very difference between Heidegger and Gadamer.

Continuing his exploration of the concept of the beautiful, Gadamer stays with the ancient Greeks and having found in Plato not only affirmation of the link between the beautiful and the true that he is looking for, he also finds a link to the concept of the good and even, Gadamer states, to the concept of *arête*, denoting virtue and excellence which in ancient Greece represented the ideal, the highest human attainment. He notes that the concept of the beautiful 'moves very close to that of the good...insofar as it is something to be chosen for its own sake', (Gadamer, 1979, p.435) therefore, as this shows, it is the unconditional aspect of each of these concepts that determines their closeness. Aristotle makes a distinction between the good and the beautiful whereby he 'determines that "good" always has to do with praxis, but "beautiful," in contrast, has to do above all with unchanging things...', (Gadamer, 2007f, p.203) by which he means, 'order', 'symmetry' and 'the definite'. For Plato, the beautiful can be seen in the symmetry of the heavens, which ties in with Heidegger's observation that what 'the Greeks meant by "beauty" is discipline'. (Heidegger, 2000, p.140) However, Plato does not consider the beautiful in relation to the creative arts and, by reminding us of Plato's banishment of the poets from his utopian state, in the *Republic*, on the grounds that all art is mimetic and therefore it 'stands at a double remove from the truth', (Gadamer,

2007f, p.204) Gadamer makes it clear that Plato does not share Aristotle's view of poetry, but, considering the poetic nature of Plato's writings, there is a certain irony to his dismissal of poetry. Taking a very different approach to that taken by Plato, Aristotle rehabilitates the notion of mimesis and, rather than emphasising the difference between the imitation and the thing itself, he views mimesis as a positive event. Furthermore, in drawing our attention to 'the natural human tendency toward imitation and the natural pleasure we all take in imitation...he claims the joy we take in imitation is really the joy of recognition'. (Gadamer, 1986a, p.98) Which means that, for Aristotle, when we recognize something we re-cognize it *as* something that we already have an awareness of. Therefore, by accepting Aristotle's theory, viewing art as mimetic does not deprive it of its autonomy, nor does it represent an obstacle to the ontological status of the work of art.

This particular adaptation of Aristotle's thinking as a means of reinterpreting Plato's concept of mimesis in art appears to place Gadamer in a position similar to the one that previously aroused his own criticism of Aristotle, whereby he was prompted to make the observation that 'Aristotle often over-or even misstated the positions of others in order to make his own argument clear.' (Zuckert, 1996, p.73) However, this is not to suggest that Gadamer is accusing Aristotle of misunderstanding Plato.<sup>50</sup> What Gadamer takes from Plato is his theory of the shining forth of the beautiful and by emphasising that the beautiful should be understood in terms of an image that shines forth, he overcomes the negative connotations of mimesis, as he explains

...in the case of the beautiful it makes no sense to ask whether what appears in the image of the beautiful is the thing itself or a copy because the beautiful has the purely evidential character (*das Einleuchtende*) of what shines forth (*Vorscheinen*). (Baker, 2002, p.145)

---

<sup>50</sup> However, according to Catherine Zuckert, Gadamer maintained that 'Aristotle transformed Platonic philosophy understood as the search for wisdom into metaphysics and a science of ethics...As a result...Plato's understanding of the essentially open-ended character of human existence, and Plato's sense of the "light" in which and through which beings were disclosed as such, were lost'. (Zuckert, 1996, p.73)

And, by thus reinforcing the metaphysical quality of the beautiful, he further distances it from the notion of mimesis, which bodes well for his argument whereby he seeks to substantiate the artworks' claim to truth by means of the concept of the beautiful. In the *Philebus*, Gadamer detects a change of emphasis, by Plato, noting that the importance of mimesis is superseded by the concept of the beautiful, the concept of truth, and the concept of the good. And, in what appears to be an amalgamation of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, the beautiful is seen to be an essential part of the concept of the good, which 'only permits of being grasped within the threeness...of beauty, symmetry, and truth'. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.205) This, as pointed out by Gadamer, indicates the importance for Plato of seeing the good as beyond being, and to be understood in terms of the one and the many, and furthermore it highlights 'the important point that it is in the "measured" character of appearances that beauty presents itself'. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.205)

In a discussion on the question of the 'measured', Gadamer takes issue with what he perceives as a misinterpretation of Plato's dialogue the *Statesman*, by the twentieth-century scholar of the classics Werner Jaeger, concerning the topic of the measure. He disagrees with Jaeger's statement that Plato's notion of measure is aligned to mathematical exactness, and accuses him of missing the point completely, which is, as Gadamer sees it, that 'the exact itself...has to do with doing the appropriate, the fitting, and the needful at the favorable moment'. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.205) And, in what could be viewed as an attempt to bring Plato and Aristotle together, Gadamer's reading of Plato takes it to mean that the measure represents the 'median between opposites',<sup>51</sup> which indicates a seemingly uncharacteristic move away from the mathematical, by Plato, who has been deemed, by Aristotle, to be a Pythagorean. However, whilst Gadamer concedes that Plato does appear 'as more a meta-mathematician than as a metaphysician', (Gadamer, 2007f, p.206) he claims that this does not represent a conflict with the Greek way of thinking. Furthermore, merging the metaphysical view with the empirical could, as he sees it, protect art from the suggestion of imitation, whilst still allowing the rules of the mean to apply.

---

<sup>51</sup> As Gadamer explains, Plato's theory of the measure pre-empts Aristotle's doctrine of 'the mean', i.e., 'the median between opposites', in which he defines the concept of the ethos and of virtue in his *Nicomachean Ethics*.

With an observation that further merges the thinking of both Aristotle and Plato, Gadamer clarifies that in Plato's dialogue<sup>52</sup> 'the "the exact itself" has to do with doing the appropriate, the fitting, and the needful at the favorable moment'. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.205) The exact can be described as the 'common core' or 'unitary effect' [*Wirkungseinheit*] And, in the case of a work of art, as with any communication between humans, this understanding of the exact or the measure is crucial in ensuring that the harmony of the situation is maintained. By way of illustrating the importance of the appropriate measure, Gadamer draws our attention to the discord that can occur, stating that 'the smallest deviation from the proper is bad. A single bad note in music, as well as in human dealings with each other, already disturbs the harmony and the agreement', (Gadamer, 2007f, p.205) furthermore, he adds, even if it is not possible to say what should have been, we know it is the lack of mean that highlights the discordance in each case.<sup>53</sup> Plato emphasises 'the importance of making correct distinctions, which he calls dialectic, and through dialectic, of turning away from those "wise people" who are blind to exactness'.<sup>54</sup> (Gadamer, 2007f, p.206) By further pointing out the problem of mistaking mathematical accuracy with the 'exact itself', Gadamer highlights the crucial importance of engaging in thoughtful contemplation, prior to any course of action.

However, staying with Plato and with his later work the *Philebus*, Gadamer detects a turn in Plato's thinking in the way that the metaphysical and the practical combine for the purpose of a common interest. This merging is made evident by Plato's convincing argument for the indispensable role of the mathematical element of art, which is also true of all facets of our existence, whereby he maintains, 'if arithmetic and

---

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Plato, *Statesman*, 284e ff

<sup>53</sup>In *The Enigma of Health*, Gadamer discusses Plato's thoughts on the question of 'measure', deeming them to be of relevance in enhancing our understanding of the world of modern science. He tells us that Plato makes a distinction between two different kinds of measure, maintaining that '[T]he first is that which is used when one wants to take a measurement and the procedure is brought to the object from without. The second is the measure which is to be found within the object itself'. (Gadamer, 1996, p.98) The Greek term *metron* is used to describe the former type of measure, and the measure which is to be found within the object is referred to as *metrion*. In German, Gadamer states, the term '*das Angemessene*' refers to what is appropriate or fitting, which he links to 'that *inner* measure which is proper to a self-sustaining living whole'. (Gadamer, 1996, p.98)

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Plato, *Statesman*, 285a

the sciences of measurement and weighing were taken away from all arts, what was left of any of them would be, so to speak, pretty worthless'. (Plato, 1975, p.359) However, the convergence of Plato's and Aristotle's thinking of the concept of 'the mean' is seen, by Gadamer, to have positive implications for art and, as he views it, to be significant for 'the question of what makes art, art, and of what the absoluteness and contemporaneity of art are based on'. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.206) Furthermore, Gadamer implies that Goethe's response to the artwork can be seen as an endorsement of his search for the truth in art, by pointing out that Goethe would not be moved to make such a fulsome exclamation as "So true, so full of being!" in response to a mere copy of something. Goethe's reaction, whereby he confirms the metaphysical and ontological aspects of art, can be more appropriately understood as the encapsulation of an instinctive emotion, which is almost beyond linguistic expression and which, for Gadamer, amounts to an endorsement of art as an intensification and increase of the fullness of sense of being. This response, by Goethe, to what could be termed as a 'sublime' or metaphysical experience, brought about by the event of the encounter with the artwork, prompts Gadamer's pronouncement that whether art is imitative or completely devoid of any attempt to copy, as in the case of some abstract art, that

[W]orks of art possess an elevated rank in being, and this is seen in the fact that in encountering a work of art we have the experience of something emerging-and this one can call truth! (Gadamer, 2007f, p.207)

With this positive assertion, in which he reaffirms the transfigurative claim that art makes on us, Gadamer establishes a place for art, which takes it beyond Hegel, who questions the continuing hierarchy of art in its role of enabling the disclosure of truth.

#### **4.8 Modernity and Autonomy: The Creative Artist**

In a brief assessment of the place of art within Western culture throughout the ages and up to modern times, Gadamer makes the observation that art was not singled out for any special recognition in either 'ancient times' nor in the 'Christian Middle Ages'. He explains that the reason for this lies in the unquestioning acceptance by which art found 'its place in life', by which he means it was adapted by the traditions of

the day in both its visual and linguistic forms. Art was used as a medium for the propagation of the Christian message, through iconic stylised images and ornate volumes of scripture, and through the literary arts it represented the ‘myths’ and ‘sagas’, of antiquity in ‘ever new ways’. However, whilst enshrining the historical and timeless aspect of art, these ‘new ways’ often included disparate views and, as Gadamer notes, they gave rise to discord between ‘poets and...philosophers’ each in their own ways ‘seeking the truth’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.207) The Middle-Ages heralded turbulent times for art, when the authenticity of word and image was called into question and internal tensions gave rise to iconoclastic acts and, as Gadamer perceives it, change only came with the advent of modernity and autonomy, which set the stage for the emergence of ‘the creative artist’.

With the ‘rebirth’ of humanism in the Renaissance came a new recognition for the accomplishments of human art and culture, together with a revival of the original classical works of the Greek and Latin authors. And since, as Grondin reminds us, ‘the Renaissance was a “rebirth” of antiquity, one could trace back the seeds of humanism to Greek antiquity itself and more specifically to Socrates and his concentration on “merely” human affairs...’ (Grondin, 1997, p.158) With the focus on human achievement in the Renaissance, the creative artist was ranked alongside the creator, God, viewed as another kind of God (*alter deus*). However, rather than interpreting this to mean an assault on the divinity of God, humanism, as can often be perceived, is not synonymous with atheism but can rather be understood as an endorsement of the human position as well as an acknowledgment of the divine, which had predominated in the Middle-Ages. And, in line with the concept of creation, it can be taken as a manifestation of the omnipotence of the divine creator.

In the age of Enlightenment, what Grondin identifies as a second form of humanism emerged through the works of ‘Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, and Winckelmann, all of whom followed the Renaissance in viewing man as a being whose constant task can only consist in perfecting his own self...’ (Grondin, 1997, p.158) It was the age when Immanuel Kant delivered his famous dictum, ‘*sapere aude*’ and the autonomy of the human being was gaining prominence and it was, according to Gadamer, the age

when ‘art achieved its highest rank’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.207) Following Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who coined the word aesthetics, Kant moved aesthetics to the centre of philosophical debate. However, Gadamer credits Hegel’s lectures on aesthetics and their development by the art historian Heinrich Gustav Hotho, with exerting the greatest influence on art up until the twentieth-century, at which stage, he states, ‘aesthetics no longer dealt with the beautiful but with art’. (Gadamer, 2007f, p.207)

The effects of the Enlightenment were not only felt in the realms of art, but also in the area of science, with the liberation of thought which finally permitted an acceptance of new discoveries. As Gadamer observes, when ‘[W]estern culture moved away from the closed, geocentric image of the world and the Copernican turn caused unimaginable infinities to open up, this sparked new directions for scientific investigation’. (Gadamer, 2007f, pp.207, 208) With the advances in science and technology, knowledge and inventiveness combined to assist in the attempts by humans to conquer the world and to subjugate nature. Science continues to pursue the quest to overcome the challenges of nature, in diverse areas such as genetic engineering, or space exploration. This shift in emphasis from religion to science, following the Enlightenment, was felt throughout the arts which were no longer employed in the service of the propagation of religious beliefs. In place of this it was, Gadamer states, ‘the experience of order’ which art in all its forms, particularly music, came to represent for a more elitist society, thereby effectively isolating art and fostering an aesthetic appreciation of works of art. As science and scientific method continue to dominate and replace the metaphysical concepts of antiquity, Gadamer reminds us that ‘aesthetics in the form of the philosophy of art took over the place that had formerly been held by cosmology and philosophy of nature in the realm of classical metaphysics’, (Gadamer, 2007f, p.208) and with the support of aesthetics the philosophy of art attained a new higher rank. The traditional acceptance of the subjective aesthetic approach to the question of art in the twentieth century, with its resultant alienating effect, represents a challenge which is confronted by Heidegger and Gadamer, within their separate critiques of aesthetics and the aesthetic consciousness.

A ‘third’ form of humanism emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, with a renewed reverence for the ancient Greek and Latin classical works, a study of which provided what was considered to be ‘a truly humanistic education’. (Grondin, 1997, p.158) However, as history records, the atrocities which occurred in Germany during the Second World War placed the concept of humanism into question and led to serious debate, not solely in philosophical circles, concerning our possibilities for recovery from such a massive violation of human dignity. The shock waves of the time brought a global response and a renewed awareness of the question of humanism.<sup>55</sup>

Grondin makes the claim that ‘the issue of humanism...can enable us to understand what is profoundly at stake, and strikingly different, in the philosophies of Heidegger and Gadamer...’ adding that, ‘Gadamer is a humanist and Heidegger isn’t’. (Grondin, 1997, p.157) Moreover, he claims that on the issue of humanism Gadamer took a ‘step, or leap, beyond Heidegger’. (Grondin, 1997, p.157) However, I would like to argue with this claim on two counts. First, the implication here is that by not subscribing to the traditional understanding of humanism, one is left behind and lacking in concern for humanity. However, in his ‘Letter on Humanism’ (1947), Heidegger refutes this notion and makes it clear that although he does not espouse the traditional conception of humanism, he does not condone inhumane acts, further explaining that ‘[H]umanism is opposed because it does not set the *humanitas* of the human being high enough’. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.251) Second, by warning us of the folly of attempting to ‘be “against” Heidegger—or even “for” him’, adding that ‘[O]ne cannot circumvent thinking so easily’, (Gadamer, 1994c, p.112) Gadamer makes it quite clear that one’s thinking cannot be measured against Heidegger. And, whereas there are clearly differences in the individual approaches by Heidegger and Gadamer to the question of humanism, this cannot, in my view, be seen as measure of one’s achievement over the other. In the next chapter the relevance of the question of humanism, in relation to the thinking of Heidegger and Gadamer, will be explored in greater detail.

---

<sup>55</sup> This global concern led to the drafting of a new constitution in Germany, in which it ‘established as its first and guiding principle the “inviolable dignity of man” (*die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar*)’ (Grondin, 1997, p.158). And the recently formed United Nations drafted ‘The Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ (1948), which enshrined the principle that ‘recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world’. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

## 4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to analyse and support the importance of Gadamer's unique contribution to the philosophical debate concerning the fundamental question of truth (and untruth), in the event of the encounter with the work of art. I have shown that, whilst following Heidegger's thinking in certain areas and always mindful of his intellectual debt to Heidegger, by engaging with Plato, Gadamer succeeds in developing a distinctive philosophical hermeneutics of the humanities, from within a metaphysical register, in a way that Heidegger, who was intent on overcoming or recovering from metaphysics, was unable to do. Apart from the ancient Greeks, it has been shown that, together with Heidegger, the other major influence on Gadamer's thinking came from Hegel, although Gadamer makes the point that the notion of conversation and dialogue, which is central to his hermeneutics, differs entirely from Hegel's dialectic.

In his first significant publication *Truth and Method* (1960) which, is concerned with the problem of the hermeneutics of universality, Gadamer, begins with a discussion on the question of truth as it emerges in the experience of art. And, he attributes the philosophical importance of art to the unique way that it allows truth and untruth to be revealed and concealed which, in his view, presents 'the most pressing challenge to the scientific consciousness to acknowledge its own limits'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.xiii) Throughout his entire career, Gadamer is mindful of the limitations of natural science in acknowledging the truth of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), which is unverifiable by scientific method, in its search for intensive rather than extensive clarity. However, by pointing out that interpreting and understanding are not exclusive to the sciences, Gadamer indicates the universal structures of his hermeneutical investigation, which he admits to basing on 'finitude' and 'the historical character of Dasein'. Moreover, although he brings out the playful aspect of art, he rejects the subjective aesthetic approach to art, which only serves to distort our understanding of the artwork's role in enabling the emergence of truth. And, in what can be attributed to the influence of Heidegger, he adopts the Greek notion of *alētheia*, denoting disclosure, as a means of understanding the intensified increase in being through the disclosure of truth in art. However, whilst his notion of truth is

unmistakably Heideggerian, Gadamer's philosophy, which is based on the commonality and solidarity of the hermeneutic experience, is dialogical in ways that Heidegger's is not. Gadamer views the experience of truth as a slow mediated experience where we take time and 'tarry' in open and open-ended dialogue and conversation with another, and with the work of art. He points out the value of tarrying, in affording us both access to, and time for recognition of truth, whereas, for Heidegger the experience of truth makes a sudden impact upon us, comparable with Heraclitus' bolt of 'lightening', read through Hölderlin, which one could equate to a Damascus account of an experience of religious revelation.

The question of language, which is the cornerstone of philosophy in that it lives through the *logos*, is central to Gadamer's hermeneutics, and within this chapter I have given an account of the way that Gadamer illuminates the importance of language's intrinsic role in facilitating understanding, thereby leading to self-understanding, through dialogue and conversation. It has been shown how, by re-engaging with the Greeks, he succeeds in rehabilitating a dialogical method of hermeneutic reading and interacting with the world. Furthermore, I have drawn attention to Gadamer's response to the constraints which the rise of scientific method imposes upon the role of language, whereby he appeals to Kant whose enjoinder 'dare to think' leads us towards a certain enacted freedom of thought and a means of reconciling the empirical with the rational. Gadamer claims that conversation, as a participative and shared experience between individuals, informs and influences the viewpoint of all participants and in the case of art, even when it is not linguistic 'it speaks to the self-understanding of *every* person...' (Gadamer, 2007b, p.129) thereby placing further emphasises on the importance of language and the value of art in contributing to self- knowledge.

A significant aspect of Gadamer's hermeneutics is his theory of the importance of play and how it is connected to art and to the absoluteness of art. It has been shown that by means of the concept of play and through our participation in play we are afforded an understanding of the structures of society and an enhanced capacity for self-understanding. When Gadamer speaks of play he refers to the various ways in which the word 'play' is used, including 'the play of light, the play of the waves, the play of a

component in a bearing-case, the inter-play of limbs, the play of forces, the play of gnats, even a play on words. In each case what is intended is the to-and-fro movement which is not tied to any goal which would bring it to an end'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.93) Furthermore, what he refers to as the play of art can be understood as a form of participative dialogical interaction between the spectator and the work of art. The spectator, as a participant in the play, is called upon to take a greater look at the artwork in a dialogical event which goes back and forth incessantly and without completion. This incompleteness in the case of the artwork echoes an inherent feature of the limitations of our understanding in our search for truth. Allied to the concept of play is the concept of symbol which, as Gadamer illustrates by referring to the significance of the ancient Greek notion of symbol (*sumbolein*), is also indicative of our search for completeness, or attempts to put things together. Furthermore, art as festival, which highlights the playful aspect of art in a communal, shared event has also been discussed within this chapter. By bringing out the participatory and temporal aspect of these phenomena, Gadamer suggests, they could allow us an understanding of the autonomous temporal structure of art and its relevance within our lives. Although Heidegger also discusses the notion of play, he does not relate to it in the same way as Gadamer does, but rather, he stresses the rules, which circumscribe the freedom of play. And, for Heidegger, because we are finite beings, 'Death is the... most elevated play in which humans are engaged in on earth, a play in which they are at stake'. (Heidegger, 1991b, p.112) With this Heidegger reveals the tensions involved in play, which are inherent within every aspect of human existence, in that humans only remain in and at play as long as it represents a challenge and so long as they are at stake.

Furthermore, within this chapter, I have analysed how Gadamer takes a distinctive approach in his treatment of the concept of the beautiful and its closeness to the concept of truth, which is of pivotal importance for his enquiry. He returns to the ancients where, he states, we are enabled to 'see that in art and the beautiful we encounter a significance that transcends all conceptual thought'. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.16) And, staying with the ancients, having inherited the notion of *alētheia* in connection with the emergence of truth in art, Gadamer looks to Plato, where he finds a connection between *alētheia* and the beautiful. However, it has been pointed out that although

Plato considers the notion of the beautiful as that which ‘shines forth’ he does not consider the beautiful in connection with the creative arts. Moreover, Gadamer has to overcome Plato’s theory of mimesis in relation to art, which, as I have shown, he succeeds in doing by appealing to Aristotle. In addition, by looking to the metaphysical aspect of the beautiful Gadamer further distances the concept of the beautiful from the notion of mimesis. And, by re-engaging with the ancient Greeks, he can be seen to treat the question of the beautiful and of the ‘image’, closely allied to the ‘word’ from within a metaphysical frame, whilst managing to ground the experience of truth and confirm the ontological status of art. As he understands it, the role of the beautiful ‘is to bridge the chasm between the ideal and the real’. (Gadamer, 1986f, p.15)

I have concluded this chapter with a brief outline of Gadamer’s assessment of the place of art throughout the ages of Western Culture, up to and beyond the rebirth of humanism, the effects of which were felt not solely in the area of art but also within the natural sciences. Religion was seen to relinquish its hierarchal position to science and the work of art became an object of aesthetic pleasure, changing its status and bringing it within the province of philosophy where art assumed a new higher rank. Within the following chapter, as previously mentioned, I intend to re-examine the question of humanism, in relation to work of both Heidegger and Gadamer, in the light of Grondin’s claim that it is in this area that the differences between each of these thinkers can best be understood. Furthermore, their individual thoughts concerning the dominance of science, scientific method, and its far-reaching effects on the work of art and on our entire Western culture, will be critically discussed and analysed. It will be seen that both of these thinkers stress the importance of understanding in order to live in an increasingly technological world.

## Chapter Five: The Question of Truth in Art

### 5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter of my dissertation I intend to discuss the project's overriding and unifying objective, which concerns the special position of art within human existence in its role of enabling an unfolding of truth, as explored through the phenomenological investigation of Martin Heidegger and, following Heidegger, further developed by Gadamer's hermeneutics. Whilst, as we have seen, both Heidegger and Gadamer each treat the question of truth in their own distinctive way, I have shown that the common thread that brings their thoughts closest together is the question of the work of art and their recognition that through the work of art a transfigurative truth emerges that is not constrained by the scientific requirement of proof. Throughout this chapter the importance of the artwork, its claim to truth and claim on the human being, and the way that it links the philosophy of these two thinkers will be further discussed. In addition, I will reflect on the diverse approaches taken by each of these thinkers, including Heidegger's orientation towards the future, which is made evident from his earliest writing, through his understanding of finite Dasein, understood as being towards death. And, the historical approach which is characteristic of Gadamer's philosophy wherein, whilst in agreement with the notion of our finitude, he identifies the crucial importance of the past in defining what we are and what we have become in dialogue with the other. Furthermore, it will be seen that, in divergence from Heidegger, the metaphysical approach which Gadamer takes to his enquiry rather than constituting a 'correction' of Heidegger, as Walter Lammi suggests,<sup>56</sup> offers Gadamer the means by which he is enabled to take from Heidegger and make Heidegger's work accessible 'in a new way' and 'in a new register'.

So far in this thesis I have given a critical account of Heidegger's extensive enquiry into the central philosophical questions of Truth and Being, how they intersect, and how, truth is given the freedom to show itself. Particular attention has been given to Heidegger's treatment of the question of truth and its manifestation in the work of art,

---

<sup>56</sup> Cf. (Lammi, 1991)

which he sees as one of the founding events of truth. This critique of Heidegger's work has been followed with an analysis of the response from Gadamer who, from being one of his earliest pupils, continued throughout his career to acknowledge his intellectual debt to Heidegger. Mindful of this, I have examined how in his privileged position as an immanent critic, whereby he both transforms and remains faithful to Heidegger, Gadamer succeeds in developing his own distinctive philosophical hermeneutics. And, whilst critical of certain aspects of the metaphysical tradition, he can be seen to engage with metaphysics, especially Platonism, in a way that Heidegger attempts to avoid. Moreover, I have suggested that by means of his hermeneutics, wherein he appeals to Plato and finds already within the tradition of Platonic thought much of what Heidegger was seeking, Gadamer is enabled in some ways to move beyond Heidegger, in particular when it comes to the nature of 'image', 'truth', and the 'word'. Gadamer's originality comes to the fore in his development of the concept of 'play' (*Spiel*), as a means of understanding the ontological structure of art which, together with an understanding of the structure of the society in which we exist, leads ultimately to self-understanding, as a continual understanding differently.

In response to an invitation by Heidegger, following the publication of *Truth and Method* in 1960, Gadamer writes an introduction to the Reclam edition of 'The Origin of The Work of Art', in which he endorses Heidegger's theory of how, by means of conflict, which he equates to a conflict of world and earth, truth is enabled to emerge in the work of art. Gadamer states that

...No one can ignore the fact that in the work of art, in which a world arises, not only is something meaningful given to experience that was not known before, but also something new comes into existence with the work of art itself. It is not simply the manifestation of a truth, it is itself an event. (Gadamer, 1977a, p.224)

With this approval of the theory of the disclosure of truth by world, juxtaposed with its concealment by earth, which Heidegger, in the 1930s calls the *Ereignis*, [Event] Gadamer indicates how closely his thinking is connected to Heidegger's. However, Gadamer's failure to identify his own theory of truth within *Truth and Method* has

attracted some criticism, leading to speculation that the position he takes in relation to truth is essentially the same as that taken by Heidegger. This criticism is not without foundation, by adopting the notion of *alētheia*, in line with Heidegger, Gadamer can be seen to subscribe to Heidegger's theory of the way that the work of art facilitates the disclosure of truth, albeit, as I will show, with a different emphasis on the way this happening of truth occurs. Furthermore, Gadamer appropriates the notion of 'event' to describe the phenomenon of the opposition of the revealing and concealing of truth in the work of art. He makes it clear that the phenomenon of revealing and concealing is not solely applicable to the truth of art, but is a characteristic of all instances of the event of truth, stating that,

[T]he conflict between revealment and concealment is not the truth of the work of art alone, but the truth of every being, for as unhiddenness, truth is always such an opposition of revealment and concealment. The two necessarily belong together. (Gadamer, 1977a, p.226)

We can see by this that concealment is an integral and necessary aspect of all being, without which it would lack 'an inner depth of self-sufficiency that Heidegger calls its "standing-in-itself"', (Gadamer, 1977a, p.226) resulting in a total levelling of being which would render it indistinguishable. This contrast, as an inherent feature of all instances of disclosure and concealment, is a universal phenomenon which permeates all facets of existence. However, although Gadamer, together with Heidegger, describes the manifestation of truth as an event, he gives a very different account of how this event occurs. For Gadamer the event of truth happens as a result of a process of mediation, dialectic and conversation, in which we are required to 'tarry' and take our time with the event of the encounter, whereas for Heidegger our confrontation with truth always takes place as a sudden, abrupt, and unmediated occurrence which, in recalling Heraclitus, he likens to a lightning flash. It has been suggested, by Dostal, that Heidegger's concept of the immediacy of the experience of truth has also been equated to accounts of religious instants of revelation. (Dostal, 1994, p.49)

Having singled the question of art out as a unifying aspect of their thought, two of the significant areas in which Heidegger and Gadamer can be seen to diverge concern their treatment of metaphysics and their approach to the question of humanism. And, with his observation that '[E]very humanism is either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one...every humanism remains metaphysical' (Heidegger, 1998b, p.245) Heidegger makes a direct connection between the area of metaphysics and that of humanism, thereby, to some extent, indicating his position on the question of humanism. By starting in *Truth and Method* with a discussion on the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), Gadamer's position concerning humanism becomes clear at an early stage. Grondin succinctly states, that 'Gadamer is a humanist and Heidegger isn't', which leads him to make the further claim that 'the issue of humanism...can enable us to understand what is profoundly at stake, and strikingly different, in the philosophies of Heidegger and Gadamer'. (Grondin, 1997, p.157) With Grondin's claim in mind, I intend to analyse both the question of metaphysics and the issue of humanism in relation to the work of these two thinkers and thereby observe the way in which these issues can be seen to impact upon their thinking. In addition, attention will be given to the individual ways that Heidegger and Gadamer treat the question of science and technology including how they each stress the need for understanding the implications of living in an increasingly technological world. It will be made clear that, whilst acknowledging science's contribution to knowledge, they both recognise the threat that science holds for thinking and that both have an awareness of the dangers and ethical implications which accompany scientific and technological advancement, which can only be ignored at our peril. However, Heidegger suggests that the 'saving power', which is required to protect us from the extreme danger of advancing technology, could possibly come from within the realm of art, where the unconcealment which is a feature of art, affords us the freedom to step-back and contemplate the effects of technology. For Gadamer, language, which is the cornerstone of his philosophical hermeneutics, could, by means of dialogue provide the key to understanding the advances of modern technology. With both thinkers offering a way to understand and live in an increasingly technological world, albeit in different ways, we are offered hope for the future.

## 5.2 The Challenges of Metaphysics

For Gadamer it has never been a question of freeing oneself from this metaphysical tradition in anticipation of a thinking that is “beyond metaphysics.”...Unlike Heidegger, who forecasts the “end of metaphysics,” Gadamer looks toward its transformation, informed by human finitude. (Wachterhauser, 1994a, pp.150, 151)

With this observation Brice Wachterhauser encapsulates the very different ways in which each of these thinkers approaches the question of metaphysics. However, it is not made clear in Wachterhauser’s claim that whilst Gadamer did, as he states, subscribe to the notion of finitude, he nonetheless worked from within a framework of metaphysics, in a way that Heidegger was unwilling and therefore unable to do. Having, from the outset, made the declaration that he is intent on ‘overcoming metaphysics’, thereby implying that he intends to pursue his enquiry from outside the metaphysical framework, metaphysics remains an issue for Heidegger, throughout his entire philosophy. The compelling question of metaphysics, asked by Leibniz, to which Heidegger draws our attention, is contained in the query ‘Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?’ (Heidegger, 2000, p.1) And, for Heidegger, it is the suppression of the ‘nothing’ by metaphysics that is problematic, as it can be seen to be in direct conflict with the notion of human finitude, which is a fundamental tenet of his enquiry into the meaning of being, in fact, of Heidegger’s entire philosophical thought. However, any attempt to overcome the metaphysical tradition is fraught with difficulties arising from the problem of how, for the purpose of discussion, to gain a vantage point from outside. This is a situation which can be equated to the difficulties we encounter when attempting to discuss the question of being.<sup>57</sup> Heidegger responds to this problem by clarifying that the question ‘what is metaphysics?’ extends beyond metaphysics, in that it ‘springs from a thinking that has already entered into the overcoming of metaphysics’. (Heidegger, 1998c, p.231) And whilst not attempting to argue with Pascal’s position, he maintains that a query of this nature ‘belongs to the essence of such transitions that, within certain limits, they must continue to speak the language of that which they help

---

<sup>57</sup>Cf. §1.1. Blaise Pascal highlights the paradox of attempting to define the concept of being, by pointing out ‘...in order to define being one must say ‘It is...’ and hence employ the word to be defined in its definition.’ (Heidegger, 2010a, p.4) Pascal thereby illustrates the impossibility of attempting such an enquiry from a disinterested point of view.

overcome', (Heidegger, 1998c, p.231) which suggests a tacit admission, by Heidegger, of the impossibility of completely surmounting the metaphysical tradition. Gadamer's retrospective reflection that, within his later work, 'Heidegger himself modified the overcoming [*Überwindung*] of metaphysics and replaced it with a coming to terms with [*Verwindung*] metaphysics', (Gadamer, 1997b, p.171) gives further support to this assessment of Heidegger's position.

Notwithstanding, Gadamer, as already noted, differs significantly from Heidegger in his approach to metaphysics. In fact, within his philosophical hermeneutics his awareness of the relevance of our metaphysical heritage is clearly manifested by his appeal to our 'effective historical consciousness', which he fears has been compromised by Kant's treatment of aesthetics. This is not to suggest that Gadamer is an advocate of metaphysics, but rather that he is cognisant of the debt that we owe to over two-thousand years of a metaphysical tradition, and the impetus for thinking that this tradition engenders. His appreciation of tradition and of its importance within the human sciences is encapsulated by the following statement.

To stand in tradition and heed it is clearly the way of truth that applies in the human sciences. So too all criticism of tradition that we achieve as historians, serves in the end the goal of connecting us up with the genuine tradition in which we stand. Being so conditioned is not an impairment of historical knowledge, but rather a moment of truth itself. (Gadamer, 1994h, p.29)

In a further move away from Heidegger, Gadamer thus leaves us in no doubt about the importance of tradition and the need for dialogue in furthering our knowledge and understanding of our place within this tradition, ultimately leading to self-knowledge. With Heidegger's attempt to think away from metaphysics in mind, Gadamer advises us that the matter of 'overcoming metaphysics' should not be understood as a call for a complete break with the tradition of metaphysics. And, by linking the notion of 'overcoming' (*Überwinden*) to 'convalescing' or 'coming to terms with' (*Verwindung*), he explains that 'overcoming' within this context does not mean that it should be put in the past and forgotten, but rather, that we should retain an awareness of the place of metaphysics in the shaping of Western philosophy. Moreover, bearing in mind that

Hegel is deemed responsible for the demise of Western metaphysics, Gadamer advises, that ‘we must “stay with”...[Hegel] in a special way’, (Gadamer, 1976a, p.100) seeing in Hegel the means of enhancing our understanding of Heidegger’s treatment of metaphysics, which has been the source of considerable confusion and misinterpretation. In addition, Dennis Schmidt directs us to Heidegger’s dialogue with Hegel, for the purpose of dispelling any such confusion. Schmidt is of the view that Heidegger’s argument for ‘overcoming metaphysics’ can be found in his ‘lifelong dialogue with his predecessors’, (Schmidt, 1982, p.17) which is encapsulated in his encounter with Hegel. In this encounter with ‘the self-proclaimed “completer” of metaphysics’, (Schmidt, 1982, p.17) as Schmidt describes Hegel, we are afforded ‘unique access’ to Heidegger’s attempt to disengage with metaphysics. As Heidegger views it, Western metaphysics which is responsible for a forgetfulness of being, by which he means it disregards the notion of our finitude, starts with the ancient Greeks in the thought of Plato and Aristotle and ends with Hegel’s concept of absolute knowledge.

However, despite Heidegger’s critique of Hegel’s theory of absolute knowing, it is interesting to note the commonality between their thinking that we are alerted to by Gadamer, who remarks on ‘how persistently Heidegger’s thought circles around Hegel and how he continues even to this day to seek new ways of demarcating his own thought from Hegel’s’. (Gadamer, 1976a, p.103) Two areas in particular where Heidegger’s thinking comes close to Hegel can be found, first, in the assimilation of history into his thought, which is evidenced by his recourse to the ancient Greeks, and second, as Gadamer points out, in ‘the hidden and unnoticed dialectic that attaches to all essentially Heideggerian assertions’. (Gadamer, 1994e, p.71) This ‘unnoticed dialectic’ referred to by Gadamer, which is a feature of Heidegger’s enquiry, becomes evident in the way that he supports a claim, by first enquiring into the source of the problem and then suggesting a counter-argument before reaching a conclusion.

In making the observation that Heidegger is not alone in attributing the collapse of two-thousand years of Western metaphysics to Hegel, Gadamer maintains that this is a view which is supported by historical facts. Since Hegel, he claims, Western

philosophy has been the preserve of academia and it has rested with writers and thinkers outside the academic discipline of philosophy to satisfy the need for ‘a philosophical vision of the world’. (Gadamer, 1976a, p.100) However, what Gadamer queries is our understanding of Hegel’s theory of the absolute and its role in Western thought, asking if it should be seen as a ‘completion’ or a ‘fulfillment’, and furthermore, as will be shown, he questions how this relates to our understanding of the position of art.

Does such absolute knowledge imply that finally all errors lie behind us? Or is that philosophy of absolute knowledge a first encounter with the entirety of our history... When Hegel, from the viewpoint of the philosophy of the absolute concept, speaks of art as a thing of the past...Is he saying that art no longer has a purpose, no longer states anything? Or did he mean that art is a thing of the past in respect to the standpoint of absolute concept, because it was always and will always be preliminary to conceptual thinking? (Gadamer, 1976a, p.101)

The question concerning Hegel’s judgement on the position of art, which is posed by Gadamer, has also been raised by Heidegger, who conjectures that this was not intended, by Hegel, as a denial of the possibility that many new artworks and new art movements would arise. And, there is in fact no denying that since Hegel a significant amount of influential art has emerged, art which confronts us with the fundamental issues of existence and thereby challenges us to think. In the area of the plastic arts, one only has to call to mind the work of artists, such as Paul Cézanne, Vincent van Gogh,<sup>58</sup> Paul Klee,<sup>59</sup> and Pablo Picasso, whose painted images have prompted considerable responses from Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and other thinkers of their time.

In an ‘Epilogue’ to ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’ Heidegger considers Hegel’s pronouncement on the end of art, and he takes the view that what Hegel calls into question is the primacy of art as a means of allowing the happening of truth. He suggests that the question Hegel is asking is if art still has the essential element that

---

<sup>58</sup> Cf. §3.6 For discussion concerning Heidegger’s treatment of van Gogh’s painting of a pair of shoes.

<sup>59</sup> Dennis J. Schmidt writes, ‘The impact upon Heidegger of discovering Klee’s paintings and of reading his theoretical writings was great, and the consequences of this discovery were not simply to confirm Heidegger’s own views but to change them’. (Schmidt, 2013, p.1)

makes it possible for the happening of truth to occur or if this position has been usurped by philosophy and religion. Therefore, the search for the 'essence' of art, which is the stated aim of Heidegger's investigation in his essay, can be understood as a response to Hegel. However, by reminding us that any discussion on what art may be is solely determined in relation to being and to how art provides a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, he makes it clear that the fundamental concern of the essay, as with all of Heidegger's writings, is the question of being. This leads Heidegger, by means of a critique of the aesthetic approach to art, to challenge the metaphysical thinking that continues to predominate and impede our understanding of being. And, by highlighting the aesthetic treatment of the work of art as an object of 'sensory apprehension' which, he dismissively states, is referred to as an 'experience' [*Erlebnis*], speculating that 'perhaps experience is the element in which art dies', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.50) Heidegger effectively isolates and bemoans the destructive aspect of aesthetics.

Heidegger attributes the misconceptions which pervade the traditional aesthetic approach to the beautiful to Arthur Schopenhauer's understanding of the Kantian definition of the beautiful, as an object of 'disinterested delight', believing it to be "...fatally misinterpreted by Schopenhauer." (Heidegger, 1991a, p.111) He maintains that Schopenhauer's reading of Kant portrays the aesthetic state as 'one in which the will is put out of commission and all striving brought to a standstill; it is pure repose, simply wanting nothing more, sheer apathetic drift'. (Heidegger, 1991a, p.108) If this assessment of Schopenhauer's understanding is accurate, it does in fact represent a misreading of Kant, who unambiguously clarifies his application of the term 'disinterested' in relation to beauty. From his statement that 'a judgment about beauty in which there is mixed the least interest is very partial and not a pure judgment of taste', (Kant, 2000, p.91) it is made clear that Kant is at pains to distance himself from a subjective determination of taste. Moreover, he clarifies his use of the term 'disinterested', by stating that '[A] judgment on an object of satisfaction can be entirely **disinterested** yet still very **interesting**, i.e., it is not grounded on any interest but it produces an interest...' (Kant, 2000, p.91) Therefore, Kant's explanation belies any suggestion that 'disinterestedness', within this context, is synonymous with apathy, and affirms it rather as a form of impartiality, which suggests that it precludes any form of

subjectivism. Furthermore, in Heidegger's view, having mistakenly accepted Schopenhauer's findings, Nietzsche takes issue with Kant, whilst missing the closeness which his own thinking bears to Kantian aesthetics, and he thereby effectively perpetuates the misunderstanding, which has been espoused by the tradition. Heidegger identifies the source of the problem with tradition's thinking as a misinterpretation of the term 'interest', thereby leading to what he views as

...the erroneous opinion that with the exclusion of interest every essential relation to the object is suppressed. The opposite is the case. Precisely by means of the "devoid of interest" the essential relation to the object itself comes into play. The misinterpretation fails to see that now for the first time the object comes to the fore as a pure object and that such coming forward into appearance is the beautiful. The word "beautiful" means appearing in the radiance of such coming to the fore. (Heidegger, 1991a, p.110)

And with this Heidegger brings to mind Heraclitus, for whom the lighting [*die Lichtung*] illuminates 'bestows the shining, opens what shines to appearance' (Heidegger, 1984a, p.103) and thereby allows it to shine forth.

As Karsten Harries states, the significance of Heidegger's essay on art, is 'the way it invites us to think the essence of art in opposition to the aesthetic approach'. (Harries, 2009, p.3) Furthermore, Harries explains that Heidegger's challenge to aesthetics can be seen as a challenge to our modern world, due to the fact that by understanding art primarily in aesthetic terms 'it denies art its essential ethical function...[and] threatens our humanity'. (Harries, 2009, p.3) However, Heidegger's assertion towards the end of his essay that '[W]henver art happens, whenever, that is, there is a beginning, a thrust enters history; history either begins or resumes' (Heidegger, 2002b, p.49) could be understood as an affirmation of the continuing relevance of art in its special position as a purveyor of truth and thereby an acknowledgement of its relevance in a contemporary world. Moreover, by seeing the historical aspect of art as the 'creative preservation of truth in the work', (Heidegger, 2002b, p.49) Heidegger takes a positive view for the future of art. Having thus highlighted the diverse ways in which Heidegger and Gadamer treat the question of the

work of art whilst in agreement about its role in enabling the enactment of truth, within the following section of this chapter, I intend to enquire into the question of humanism and the way it relates to the work of each of these thinkers.

### 5.3 The Question of Humanism

For humanism, the true dignity of mankind does not reside in its actual state, but in the idea that it can be cultivated and elevated to its higher destiny... (Grondin, 1995a, p.130)

With this observation, Grondin can be seen to suggest that the ‘true dignity of mankind’ has, according to humanistic thinking, yet to be achieved. However, I would like to challenge this notion by arguing that the true spirit of humanism lies in its recognition of the innate dignity of ‘mankind’, which includes the potential to enhance its understanding. Although it has been suggested that the first seeds of humanism can be traced back to Socrates, for Heidegger, who rejects the notion that humanism could ‘gain currency’ in the great age of the Greeks, (Heidegger, 2002a, p.70) our first encounter with humanism occurs in Rome, ‘it therefore remains in essence a specifically Roman phenomenon’. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.244) The Romans, as Heidegger explains, make a distinction between humans [*homo humanus*], by which they mean the Romans, and barbarians [*homo barbarous*], who shared neither the virtue [*virtus*] nor scholarship of the Romans or the Greeks. And, whilst attributing the start of humanism to the Romans, he acknowledges the influence that the thinking of ‘late Greek civilization’ had in its inception. The re-birth of humanism, which celebrated human accomplishment in the arts and sciences, during the Italian Renaissance, was treated with suspicion in certain areas where the emergence of human culture and the recognition of the achievements of ‘man’ were perceived as both impertinence and a threat to the divinity of God. This negative approach to humanism, which surfaced during the Renaissance, was also extended to the realm of science with its emergence from the Dark Ages accompanied by new discoveries standing in testimony to ‘man’s’ ingenuity. The legacy of the prejudices which surfaced in the Renaissance, and which rest upon a misunderstanding of the humanist philosophy, is reflected in what emerges as the anti-humanism of the present day, which tends to equate humanism to atheism.

However, although, as Grondin observes, the forerunners of scientific discovery of the time, including ‘Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon, and Descartes...were great humanists’, (Grondin, 1995a, p.128) the humanistic approach to knowledge, whilst not in conflict with the findings of science, extends beyond the scientific notion of correctness.

The humanism which emerged in the twentieth-century saw a revival of the ancient Greek and Latin classics, the study of which was purported to comprise a humanistic education. The humanistic thinking whereby, mindful of the dignity and potential of humankind, we are constantly in pursuit of learning from others prevails into the present age and can be evidenced in the academic study of the humanities. Moreover, this notion that the human being is continually striving towards self-improvement brings to mind Aristotle’s theory of the teleological aspect of humankind, propelling us towards attainment of the ultimate ‘good’. Staying with the Greeks, the notion of the human being as an ‘*animal rationale*’, which is attributed to the early Greeks, is contested by Heidegger, who takes the view that in its translation from Greek to Latin, this definition became distorted and, as he sees it, ‘conditioned by metaphysics’, reminding us that metaphysics, which ‘does not think the difference between being and beings’, (Heidegger, 1998b, pp.245, 246) misses the truth of being. By drawing our attention to the biblical teaching, which informs us that ‘man has been made out of ashes’ and, in addition, ‘that man was made in the image of God [*imago dei*]’, (Grondin, 1995a, p.129) Grondin, who appears to be in agreement with Heidegger’s contention concerning the emergence of humanism in Rome, claims that since ‘its inception, humanism rests on a theological understanding of man’s position in the universe’. (Grondin, 1995a, p.129) It is this notion of a likeness to God that elevates us above other forms of life and motivates us towards self-improvement, and is the basis for the present day concept of human dignity.

As already mentioned, in the first part of the twentieth-century the notion of human dignity faced a blatant affront and ‘Man’s inhumanity to man’ (Burns, 1994, p.41) was witnessed on a shocking and monumental scale, which effectively destabilised the notion of humanism. The injury to the dignity of humanity, inflicted by the atrocities of the Second World War, led to a re-evaluation of the notion of

humanism and prompted Jean-Paul Sartre to write his essay 'Existentialism and Humanism' (1946). Sartre's essay, combined with the shocked reaction to such unprecedented acts of inhumanity, gave rise to Jean Beaufret's question to Heidegger, "'Comment redonner un sens au mot 'Humanisme'? [How can we restore meaning to the word "humanism"?]' (Heidegger, 1998b, p.241) Moreover, it invoked a response from Heidegger in the form of an open letter, published as 'Letter on Humanism' (1947). The significance of Beaufret's question which reflected widespread concern was, 'whether or not one could still have faith in human reason and its promise of emancipation after Auschwitz'. (Grondin, 1995a, p.138) Within this section of my work, I intend by means of an analysis of his reply, to uncover how Heidegger responds to the question of humanism through his philosophy of being, which is central to all of his thinking. Furthermore, mindful of Grondin's observation that it is through the issue of humanism we are enabled to understand the significant differences between the thinking of both of these philosophers, I will explore Gadamer's work in juxtaposition with Heidegger, and will thereby highlight the differences in the way each of these thinkers treats the traditional notion of the question of humanism.

### **5.3 (a) Heidegger on Humanism**

Predictably, Heidegger's discourse on humanism leads him into a discussion concerning being. He begins by isolating the notion of action, which is a central tenet of Sartre's essay on humanism. From Sartre's existentialist viewpoint, we first of all exist and afterwards we define ourselves by the actions we choose. Heidegger starts his reply by probing into the meaning of action, stating that the essence of action, which we tend for the most part to ignore, is, 'accomplishment'. By which, he explains, is meant

...to unfold something into the fullness of its essence, to lead it forth into this fullness...Therefore only what already is can really be accomplished. But what "is" above all is being...in thinking being comes to language. Language is the house of being. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.239)

With this insight, Heidegger brings out the dynamic aspect of thinking, together with its reliance upon language, which is a defining feature of every human being. Furthermore,

he clarifies that in the case of thinking, its action is in that it thinks and it thereby forms a fundamental part of our relationship to being. Heidegger views thinking as the highest form of action or *praxis*, stating that thinking, 'is *l'engagement* by and for the truth of being'. (Heidegger, 1998b, pp.239, 240) Thinking is the task of philosophy, and Heidegger cautions against allowing ourselves to be caught-up in the technical interpretation of thinking, with its metaphysical overtones, which he traces back to Plato and Aristotle, and to thereby encounter what he describes as the abandonment of being. Having established the pivotal role of thinking and its inseparable connection to being, Heidegger comes to the central question that has been raised by Beaufret which, as we have seen, is concerned with the possibility of restoring meaning to the word 'humanism'. He does not give a direct response to Beaufret's enquiry but, rather, he queries the notion of retaining the word 'humanism', with the observation that despite the fact that '-isms' have been suspect for some time, there still remains a demand for new ones and, he adds, the ancient Greeks did not have need for headings and did not even call thinking 'philosophy'. It appears from this that Heidegger is not only rejecting the term 'humanism', but is in fact suggesting that there is a need to rethink our conception of what it is to be human, indicating a suspicion towards anthropology.

To this end, Heidegger critiques Sartre's view of humanism, as outlined within his essay 'Existentialism and Humanism', and whereas he is in agreement with certain aspects of Sartre's argument, he is critical of what he perceives as his reliance upon Cartesian subjectivism. Furthermore, in Heidegger's view, Sartre's existentialist claim that existence precedes essence is dependent upon a metaphysical understanding of these terms. It is, he claims, a reversal of the metaphysical statement that '*essentia* precedes *existentia*', arising out of Plato's thinking and, as Heidegger contends 'the reversal of a metaphysical statement remains a metaphysical statement'. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.250) This means that Heidegger is unsympathetic to Sartre's conception of humanism, on the grounds that it remains within the tradition of metaphysics and anthropology and therefore it misses the fundamental understanding of being.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> For Sartre, the effect of existentialism, which maintains that existence precedes essence, and that we are, in Heideggerian terms, 'thrown' into the world with neither a preconceived purpose nor a precondition to fulfil a particular role, is, following our 'thrownness' into the world, we are rendered entirely responsible for our own existence. Furthermore, he defends the thinking that links humanism to

Throughout his essay, Sartre argues that existentialism, by upholding the concept of human freedom and acknowledging the dignity of the human being, can justifiably be considered to be humanism.

Whilst accepting the appropriateness of Sartre's use of the term 'existentialism' to describe the priority of existence over essence, Heidegger makes it clear that this notion of 'existentialism' does not in any way represent the views he presents in *Being and Time*. Furthermore, as he sees it, what Sartre is failing to capture is the more original fundamental relationship of the human being to the truth of being, which is the determining factor that makes a human 'being'. '...the human being is in that he ek-sists' (Heidegger, 1998b, p.251) Heidegger states, and he explains that "Ek-sistence," in fundamental contrast to every *existentia* and "*existence*," is ek-static dwelling in the nearness of being'. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.261) By using the term 'ek-sists' in this way, Heidegger places an emphasis on the salient feature of what it is that constitutes a human being, namely its being there as being open and opened. Therefore, what he appears to be saying is that the essence of the human being is in its way of being, i.e. in its projective existence, which would suggest that essence and existence are equiprimordial. He takes issue with the traditional notion of the subject object, espoused by Sartre, which has its roots in Cartesian subjectivity, thus placing it within the realms of metaphysics and therefore, as Heidegger argues, it fails to recognise the higher dignity of humankind or the destiny of being. By disassociating himself from the traditional concept of humanism, Heidegger reassures us that this does not mean there is a failure on his part, to recognise the dignity of human beings but rather, he claims, it is to see beyond humanism to the special relationship of the human to being. Heidegger opposes what he perceives as the shortcomings of the humanist tradition, which he outlines as follows, by stating that

---

the notion of existentialism, by pointing out that existentialism is a doctrine that 'does render human life possible; a doctrine, also, which affirms that every truth and every action imply both an environment and a human subjectivity'. (Sartre, 1948, p.24) Moreover, in response to his 'adversaries' Sartre claims that the notion of subjectivism can be understood in two ways. 'Subjectivism means, on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity'. (Sartre, 1948, p.29) In other words, displaying Kantian overtones, Sartre advises that in choosing how to act and affirming the correctness of our action we are obliged in the interest of humankind to evaluate the implications of a universal application of such action.

...the sole implication is that the highest determinations of the essence of the human being in humanism still do not realize the proper dignity of the human being. To that extent the thinking in *Being and Time* is against humanism. But this opposition does not mean that such thinking aligns itself against the humane and advocates the inhuman, that it promotes the inhumane and deprecates the dignity of the human being. Humanism is opposed because it does not set the *humanitas* of the human being high enough. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.251)

Whilst Heidegger thus outlines his reason for not espousing the traditional conception of humanism, nevertheless, he clarifies that he wants to distance himself from the type of behaviour or action that violates, as he states, the ‘dignity’ of the human being. By recalling the notion of our involuntary ‘thrownness’,<sup>61</sup> by means of which we are situated in our facticity, Heidegger can be seen to be in agreement with Sartre, in making it clear that we do not decide upon the order of being, but rather that ‘[T]he advent of beings lies in the destiny of being’. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.252) Therefore, it is incumbent upon the human being, through a responsible choice of action or *praxis* to find our place within this destiny. Furthermore, in what can be understood as an indirect reference to our ethical responsibilities, Heidegger encapsulates the nature of our relationship to being by pronouncing that ‘[T]he human being is the shepherd of being’, with the further claim that, ‘[I]t is this direction alone that *Being and Time* is thinking when ecstatic existence is experienced as “care”’. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.252) And, as we have already seen, as beings in ‘care’ we manifest our ‘solicitude’ and ethical concern for the other.

Throughout his ‘letter’ of response, Heidegger is intent on keeping his distance from the metaphysical definition of humanity in which the notion of being is reduced to the limits of the human capacity to understand it, which he sees as a feature of humanism. He perceives in Beaufret’s question both a desire to retain the word ‘humanism’ and an admission that the meaning of this word has been lost. This loss, in Heidegger’s view, can be attributed to the fact that ‘the essence of humanism is

---

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Being and Time*, For Heidegger’s development of the notion of ‘thrownness’, to describe a characteristic of Dasein which, he states, ‘is meant to suggest the facticity of its being delivered over’. (Heidegger, 1962, p.174) Cf. Also; discussion on Dasein’s ‘thrownness’ - Chapter One of this work.

metaphysical', (Heidegger, 1998b, p.262) and therefore, it lacks a basic understanding of the question of being. Heidegger clarifies that he does not discount the dignity of humanity, but he is in search of a more fundamental understanding of what it is to be human. With this in mind, he sees in his critique of humanism the possibility of raising an awareness of the '*humanitas* of *homo humanus*' in a more primordial way if, he adds, in what can be seen as an oblique reference to the Second World War, 'the world-historical moment did not itself already compel such a reflection'. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.263) Furthermore, Heidegger assures us that despite a popular misconception to the contrary, he is not advocating the negation of issues such as 'humanism', 'logic', and 'ethics', but is looking for a more fundamental understanding of these issues, such as can be found in the pre-Socratics, whose depth and breadth of thinking, in his view, has yet to be surpassed.

In his discussion on the question of humanism, Heidegger unequivocally rejects the popular conception of the humanistic tradition. However, having assured us that speaking against something does not constitute approval of the opposite position to that which one opposes, he further cautions against a reliance upon logic to think that a counter-opinion necessarily points towards a negation of something and 'that this is "negative" in the sense of destructive'. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.264) As already mentioned, Heidegger makes it clear that his argument against humanism concerns the fact that, in failing to recognise its innate dignity, 'it does not set the *humanitas* of the human being high enough'. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.251) Therefore, whilst agreeing with the claim that Heidegger cannot be classified as a humanist, I argue that, given his detailed account of the reasons why he does not subscribe to the traditional notion of humanism, together with his acknowledgement of the dignity of the human being, his response does not indicate a failure, on his part, to recognise the intrinsic worth of the human being. Heidegger approaches the question of humanism in a way that is characteristic of all his enquiries, namely by attempting to find the essence of what it is to be human.<sup>62</sup> There clearly is scope for a fuller discussion concerning Heidegger's

---

<sup>62</sup> However, although Heidegger is insistent, within his 'Letter on Humanism', that his position on the question of humanism cannot be viewed as an endorsement of inhumane acts, his failure to break his silence and directly confront the question of the evils which were perpetrated in Germany during the first part of the twentieth-century is questioned by David Farrell Krell, who views this silence as 'disturbing'.

response to the question of humanism, which is however outside the remit of this thesis.<sup>63</sup> In the next section of this chapter I intend to examine Gadamer's treatment of the question of humanism which, Grondin claims, could be viewed as a response to Heidegger.

### 5.3 (b) Gadamer on Humanism

Even if Gadamer doesn't deal directly with Heidegger's position on humanism...his philosophical perspective can be understood as a defense of humanism and hence as a response to Heidegger's repudiation of the humanistic tradition. (Grondin, 1997, p.161)

Whilst accepting this claim, I would argue that Gadamer's entire philosophical investigation can be viewed as a response to Heidegger as, by his own admission, the influence which Heidegger's thought exerted on his philosophical work, surpassed that of any other thinker, including Plato and Hegel. Furthermore, as we have seen, Heidegger's influence on Gadamer's work is particularly evident in the area of his treatment of the truth claims of art where, following Heidegger, he adopts the ancient Greek notion of *alētheia* to describe the event of truth. However, this is not to suggest that Gadamer is purely a mouthpiece for Heidegger. It has already been shown within this work how Gadamer succeeds in developing his own distinctive philosophical hermeneutics, his own voice, leading him on a unique path of enquiry in the area of art and in the humanities, by means of which, in some ways, he can be seen to move beyond Heidegger. Gadamer's achievement in taking the argument further than Heidegger is recognised by Brice Wachterhauser, who attributes this success to the fact that 'while Heidegger is theoretically more original than Gadamer, Gadamer is more fruitful in that he has attempted to make the debate more focused by consciously

---

Furthermore, he queries the effectiveness of Heidegger's thought in helping us 'to think about those evils that continue to be so very much at home in *our* world'. (Krell, 1993a, p.216) Moreover, despite Hannah Arendt's fulsome acclaim of Heidegger's 'letter', which she hails as 'his most splendid effort', Krell is of the view that Heidegger's account is inconclusive and lacks clarity in some areas, stating that '[H]owever splendid the "Letter on Humanism," it should only serve to call *us* to *thinking*'. (Krell, 1993a, p.216)

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger's failure to either explain or apologise for his misguided political affiliations, together with his continued silence concerning the inhumane atrocities of the Second World War has aroused severe criticism. And, despite his repeated claim that his failure to give meaning to the term 'humanism' does not constitute an endorsement of inhumane behaviour, this lacuna in Heidegger's writing leaves one with the constant sense of 'an elephant in the room'.

applying Heidegger's thought to a host of issues rooted in the human sciences'. (Wachterhauser, 1994b, pp.7,8) However, Wachterhauser's statement is misleading, because although it suggests the breadth of Gadamer's enquiry, he appears to overlook Gadamer's position as an original thinker in his own right, one who is not just parasitic upon Heidegger and who is not solely concerned with Heidegger's thinking. Having previously acknowledged within this thesis that, in Heidegger, Gadamer finds an impetus for an original approach to his own hermeneutical enquiry, his originality as a thinker is discussed in detail, giving particular attention to his treatment of 'play', the social and participative event of conversation, and 'humanism'. The question of the play of art, including the social, interactive and communal aspect of the play of festival, is developed, by Gadamer, in a way that Heidegger, given his antipathy towards 'publicness' and his penchant for the secretive or the rare, not to mention the 'they-self', failed to do.

In 1960 two significant events occurred which served to establish Gadamer's autonomy as a thinker, these included the publication of his magnum opus *Truth and Method*, and his written introduction in response to Heidegger's request, to the Reclam edition of 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. The invitation to write an introduction to the essay on art, coming after his major publication, could be viewed as an acknowledgment of Gadamer's philosophical prowess, by Heidegger, which had been absent following the publication of *Truth and Method*. And, as is clearly indicated by Gadamer's admission that, 'writing remained a torment for me. I had the terrible feeling that Heidegger was standing behind me and looking over my shoulder' (Gadamer, 1997a, p.15) Heidegger's approval was important for Gadamer. Furthermore, Gadamer admits that the ideas Heidegger expressed, in the three lectures which were combined to create his essay on the artwork, came so close to his own questions and his own 'experience of the proximity of art and philosophy' that they prompted him to follow with an 'immediate response'. Thus, he claims, leading him, through his philosophical hermeneutics, 'to adhere to the line of questioning of this essay *and the later Heidegger* and to make it assessable in a new way'. (Gadamer, 1997a, p.47) The question of whether Gadamer succeeds in accomplishing this aim or if, in the process, he reduces or domesticates Heidegger's thinking, effectively

‘depriving it of much of its challenge’ (Bernasconi, 1993a, p.173) has, according to Robert Bernasconi, been raised by Jürgen Habermas, only to be later dismissed and, as Bernasconi’s further observation indicates, Gadamer’s attempts to present Heidegger in a more accessible language were considered to be successful.<sup>64</sup>

In the forward to the second edition of *Truth and Method*, Gadamer indicates the direction of his philosophical enquiry, which is concerned with understanding the conditions of our existence in the world, which are outside our control. Moreover, in marked contrast to Heidegger, Gadamer recognises the relevance of the question of humanism in furthering this understanding, as he makes clear in the following explanation

...My real concern was and is philosophic: not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing...My starting point is that the historic human sciences, as they emerged from German romanticism and became imbued with the spirit of modern science, maintained a humanistic heritage which distinguishes them from all other kinds of modern scientific experiences, and especially those proper to art. In Germany...the tradition of aesthetic humanism remained vitally influential in the development of the modern conception of science. (Gadamer, 1979, pp.xvi, xvii)

From the outset, Gadamer makes a connection between the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*], the science of human events, and the question that distinguishes these events from the natural sciences, the science of natural laws which is, he claims, the question of humanism. He takes the view that the human sciences can best be understood by starting from the tradition of humanism and thereafter his work continues to be permeated by the humanistic tradition. Furthermore, Gadamer points out that the human sciences, far from considering themselves inferior to the natural sciences possess a ‘proud awareness of being the true heirs of humanism’. (Gadamer,

---

<sup>64</sup>Robert Bernasconi refers to Jürgen Habermas’ critique of Gadamer, in which the question concerning Gadamer’s representation of Heidegger is raised. And, he makes the observation that ‘Habermas is not alone in thinking that one of Gadamer’s major contributions has been to present the work of the later Heidegger in a more accessible language than Heidegger was either prepared or able to do himself’. (Bernasconi, 1993a, pp.171, 172)

1979, p.10) The humanism that Gadamer espouses dates back to the German revival of the classics, through the work of Goethe, Schiller, and other authors of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century. And, in line with Renaissance thinking, this traditional concept of humanism supports the notion that it is the task of the human being to keep striving towards perfection. Gadamer makes the point that,

The idea of self-formation or cultivation...was perhaps the greatest idea of the eighteenth century, and it is this idea which is the atmosphere breathed by the human sciences of the nineteenth century, even if they are unable to offer any epistemological justification for it. (Gadamer, 1979, p.10)

Furthermore, as we have seen, Gadamer draws attention to the influence that aesthetic humanism exerted on the development of modern science. It is this humanist tradition with, what he perceives as, its constant drive towards the metaphysical notion of the ideal that Heidegger attempts to distance himself from.

Although his work concerns a study of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*], Gadamer, accepts the necessity of a methodical approach to his enquiry, which is synonymous with the natural sciences, albeit with a difference, as a way towards attaining understanding of the truth of the human sciences. And, whilst not entering into any discussion concerning contrasting scientific methods, he makes it clear that the difference occurs 'not in the method, but in the objectives of knowledge'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.xvii) He is not against scientific method per se, but only decries the scientific method of insistence on the verifiability of truth. As Gadamer puts it,

the real problem that the human sciences present to thought is that one has not properly grasped the nature of the human sciences if one measures them by the yardstick of an increasing knowledge of regularity. The experience of the socio-historical world cannot be raised to a science by the inductive procedure of the natural sciences. (Gadamer, 1979, p.6)

He clarifies that both the human sciences and the natural sciences each pursue knowledge in their own distinctive way and he points to the absurdity of attempts by

either of the sciences to arbitrate on the other's field of activity. Gadamer elaborates by reasoning that '[M]oral preaching in the guise of science seems rather absurd, as does the presumption of a philosopher who deduces from principles the way in which 'science' must change in order to become philosophically legitimate', (Gadamer, 1979, p.xvii) thereby clearly delineating the two distinctive and authentic roles for both the human sciences and the natural sciences. Failure to acknowledge this distinction can, as Gadamer states, lead to a fallacious expectation that the human sciences can be measured 'by the yardstick of an increasing knowledge of regularity', (Gadamer, 1979, p.6) and he further emphasises that there is no place for the intrusion of method by the natural sciences on the socio-historical world.

According to Gadamer, one of the leading humanistic themes is the concept of *Bildung*, which had its inception in the humanism of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment period, which championed the talents and the potential of the individual human being. The term *Bildung* was synonymous with the humanistic notion of self-improvement, which was achieved by means of engaging with tradition and culture, exploiting our potential in all facets of human existence.<sup>65</sup> Hegel refined the meaning of *Bildung*, recognising it as a condition for the existence of philosophy, to which Gadamer adds it is also a condition for the existence of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*]. He states that 'The cult of *Bildung* in the nineteenth century preserved the profounder dimension of the word, and our notion of *Bildung* is determined by this'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.11) And in order to link it to the traditional humanistic approach to the development of one's talents, Gadamer explains that 'Bildung is intimately associated with the idea of culture and designates primarily the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.11) It is worth noting that by rehabilitating the term *Bildung*, Gadamer is not suggesting an elitist approach to the gathering of cultural knowledge, but rather he clearly makes a distinction between being cultured and the accumulation of knowledge.

---

<sup>65</sup> Broadly speaking, the notion of *Bildung* is understood as a reference to culture, however, as Grondin points out, '[T]he term *Bildung*...has several meanings in German, so that it is impossible to give one single equivalent in translation...In human culture, *Bildung* means the uniquely human way of developing inherent dispositions'. (Grondin, 2003, p.24)

The cultured person, as Gadamer sees it, is one who is receptive to the views of others, has an openness and willingness to learn from the other and, in Socratic fashion, possesses an awareness of the limits of their knowledge. Conversely, the pedant, who may have a fund of factual knowledge, is one who assumes a dogmatic attitude of authority in relation to their knowledge which precludes questioning and dialogue and consequently, in Gadamer's view, leaves them unaware of the level of their own ignorance. As Grondin reads it, '[T]o be able to adopt a distance with respect to particularity, beginning with one's own, is what constitutes essential knowledge, that of culture and formation, because it transforms us', (Grondin, 2003, p.26) thereby confirming Gadamer's insistence upon the need for openness in order to allow for the transformative effects of truth. Gadamer's perception of the necessary attributes of a cultured person gives further support to the importance of being receptive to other viewpoints, which are ascertained by means of dialogue and participative conversation, and form a basic tenet of his entire philosophy. Furthermore, Gadamer's thinking is clearly compatible with the traditional humanistic view towards potential achievement, but with an emphasis on finitude, in line with Heidegger's theory of the finitude of factual life.

Having isolated *Bildung* as a defining characteristic of humanism, Gadamer discusses the communal aspect of 'leading humanistic concepts' under the various headings of '*sensus communis*', 'judgement', and 'taste', all of which constitute a mode of living together. '*Sensus communis*' (common sense), he states, 'is not nourished on the true, but on the probable' adding that it is 'the sense that founds community'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.21) Gadamer draws an analogy between '*sensus communis*' and the Aristotelian theory of '*phronesis*' (practical knowledge/practical wisdom), which is distinct from the rational scientific concept of knowledge (*episteme*). Furthermore, by invoking Vico, he grounds the notion of '*sensus communis*' as a 'concrete generality that represents the community of a group, a people, a nation, or the whole human race', (Gadamer, 1979, p.21) thereby stressing the importance of the communal aspect of living. 'Common sense is seen primarily in the judgments about right and wrong, proper and improper, that it makes'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.31) With this statement, Gadamer makes it clear that judgement is an integral aspect of common sense, that it is

synonymous with common sense. Following on his discussion of judgement Gadamer turns to the concept of taste which, he confirms, ‘undoubtedly includes a mode of knowing’, (Gadamer, 1979, p.34) and rather than making the suggestion that it can be understood in a subjective way, he states, on the contrary that it is ‘through good taste that we are capable of standing back from ourselves and our private preferences’. (Gadamer, 1979, p.34) And, he further insists that taste is not private but is rather a social, communal, phenomenon that can be in conflict with one’s personal predilections. All of Gadamer’s leading humanistic concepts share a commonality, which is to be found in their connectedness to the notion of community and to the social aspect of living well and living together.

Therefore, it can be seen that Gadamer’s understanding of what it is to be a humanist is clearly concerned with a way of being and behaving with the other and towards the other in a communal context. In his later writings following *Truth and Method*, particularly in *The Relevance of The Beautiful and Other Essays*, wherein he develops the question of the transformative effects of art as play, festival, and symbol, Gadamer’s understanding of humanism as a mode of living and acting in a mutually harmonious way is central to his argument. Furthermore, as we have seen, in his final word on the philosophical significance of the work of art, ‘The Artwork in Word and Image: “So True, So Full of Being!”’, Gadamer, displaying his humanistic view, looks to the role that the work of art plays in the formation of our culture.

Gadamer’s position on the question of humanism is in marked contrast to that of Heidegger. As we have seen in his response to Jean Beaufret, Heidegger makes it clear that he opposes the traditional notion of humanism on the grounds that ‘it does not set the *humanitas* of the human being high enough’. (Heidegger, 1998b, p.251) Moreover, he insists that his opposition to humanism does not mean that he endorses the inhumane or deprecates the dignity of the human being. Heidegger argues that ‘the essence of humanism is metaphysical’ (Heidegger, 1998b, p.262) because, in his view, in line with Plato it reduces our understanding of every form of being to the human perspective, to how it appears to the human eye and soul, and it is this thinking which is at the root of his resistance to humanism. In his attempts to overcome or recover from metaphysics

and what he sees as the metaphysical notion of humanism, Heidegger hopes to establish an understanding of being, which would not be subordinate to human reason and would therefore be resistant to technology's attempts to subsume the human being. However, by criticising the traditional notion of humanism, with its endorsement of the status of humanity and its cultural expressions, Heidegger inadvertently leaves the primacy of technology unopposed and uncontested, thus jeopardising the position of humanity.

Gadamer, who has from the outset espoused the traditional notion of humanism, in taking a completely opposing view, maintains that in order to survive the possible threat of modern technology 'It is on the humanistic tradition that we must rely. In its resistance to the claims of modern science it gains a new significance'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.18) Therefore, it can be seen from Gadamer that an endorsement of the status of humanity is the way to oppose the possible takeover by technology, together with the threat of erosion of the autonomy of the human-being. It follows from this that Heidegger's attempts to distance himself from the metaphysical notion of humanism effectively leave a vacuum into which technology can enter unopposed. As this is clearly not Heidegger's intention it places his rejection of humanism into question and, given his appeal to the realm of art as a means of understanding technology, suggests a dichotomy in Heidegger's approach to the question of humanism. This finding brings to the fore the thought that Gadamer, by working from within a metaphysical framework, succeeds in thinking out the unthought in Heidegger concerning the question of the traditional notion of humanism.

#### **5.4 Science and Technology: Its Relevance to the Work of Art**

Science is—even as one reproaches it—the alpha and omega of our civilization'. (Gadamer, 1994i, pp.37, 38)

Gadamer thereby acknowledges the intrinsic position of science within Western Civilization. For both Heidegger and Gadamer, coupled with a sense of underlying threat emanating from the area of science and technology, there is an awareness of the significance and importance of science, of science's contribution to knowledge, and of the way it continues to shape the modern world. In the intervening years, up to and into

the twenty-first century, continuing scientific and technological advancements stand as testimony to Gadamer's vision, and highlight the relevance of Heidegger's enjoiner, written in the same period, to avoid complacency in our thoughts about the effects of technology. As science and technology continue to occupy a significant place in the modern era, the inter-dependency between each of these phenomena is increasingly evident. For the purpose of its development modern technology relies upon scientific knowledge and on the other hand, modern science can be seen to rely upon technology as a means of enabling its methods of research. It is the realisation that there is no way to escape from the influence of science and technology which leads Heidegger to stress that what is of prime importance is the way that we perceive each of these phenomena. The origins of Western science can, as Gadamer observes, be traced back to ancient times, where its development by the Greeks caused a separation of the West from the Orient. However, Heidegger tells us that what we understand as science in the modern era differs completely, not only with the ancient Greek practice, which he states 'was never exact precisely because, according to its essence, it neither could be, nor needed to be, exact', but also from the '*doctrina* and *scientia* of the Middle Ages'. (Heidegger, 2002a, p.58) Modern science, with its reliance upon method, dates back to Descartes, in the time of the Renaissance of the seventeenth-century.

...since Descartes's classic formulation of the rule of certainty has been considered the authentic ethos of modern science, only that which satisfied the ideal of certainty satisfied the conditions of truth...This essence of modern science defines our whole life...The whole world of planning and technology grows out of modern science with its step-by-step law...Science itself is technology... (Gadamer, 1994i, pp.37,38)

Whilst acknowledging the value and significance of science, within Western civilization, it is modern science's insistence on a monopoly of the question of truth that both Heidegger and Gadamer take issue with and which leads them back to the ancient Greeks, where, in *alētheia*, they recover the Greek conception of truth which, as we have seen, is central to their separate treatments of the work of art.

#### **5.4 (a) Heidegger; Understanding Technology**

With the assertion that '[E]verywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it', (Heidegger, 1977, p.4) in his lecture 'The Question Concerning Technology' (1953), Heidegger highlights the dominance of science and technology in the Western world of the mid-nineteen fifties. Mindful of this, he emphasises that pivotal to our way of living with technology is the way in which we understand it. By this he is not referring to our perception of the products of technology, nor is he suggesting that we should become preoccupied with the various phenomena which accrue from technology. He is rather, as he states, concerned with gaining an understanding of the elusive quality, which is beyond the control of human beings, namely the essence of technology. It is, Heidegger claims, only by means of understanding technology that we will attain, what he describes as a 'free relationship' with it. In his lecture on the question of technology, by means of what Gadamer refers to as his 'unnoticed dialectic', Heidegger explores the question of the essence of technology. To this end, he queries the popular conception of technology, which contends that it is a means to an end, and he argues that this view does not capture its essence. Rather than seeing the essence of technology emanating from the Scientific Revolution, Heidegger's investigation takes him to a more originary source, in returning to the ancient Greeks. The instrumental definition of technology as a means to an end, with the added implication that it is a technique which can be mastered by the human being, reduces our awareness of its potential for dominance. However, Heidegger's warning that the 'will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control', (Heidegger, 1977, p.5) conveys our sense of impotency in the face of the impending danger of technological advances. The dangers that can occur, when technology in the task of harnessing of nuclear power slips out of our control, have been manifested in situations of industrial nuclear explosions with their unquantifiable and uncontrollable consequences.

The instrumental view of technology, which is popularly subscribed to, is what prompts Heidegger to question philosophy's acceptance of Aristotle's doctrine of the four causes. He identifies a problem with our understanding of the term 'cause' within the context of Aristotle's theory, maintaining that its meaning has been lost in

translation, and that ‘[W]hat we call cause [*Ursache*] and the Romans call *causa* is called *aitia* by the Greeks, that to which something else is indebted [*das, was ein anderes verschuldet*],’<sup>66</sup>. (Heidegger, 1977, p.7) However, he maintains that indebtedness had broader more inclusive connotations for the Greeks, for whom the verb *aitia* is understood in the sense of ‘to occasion’ which, as Heidegger views it, describes ‘the essence of causality thought as the Greeks thought it’. (Heidegger, 1977, p.10) Heidegger asks how Aristotle’s four ways of being indebted and bringing something, which is not already present, into presence can be seen to be in unison and he finds the answer that he seeks in Plato. In the *Symposium*<sup>67</sup> Plato states that ‘[E]very occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiēsis*, is bringing-forth [*Her-vor-bringen*]’. (Heidegger, 1977, p.10) With this observation, Plato identifies ‘bringing-forth’ as the unifying characteristic that Heidegger is seeking. Heidegger attempts to transcend the popular conception of what constitutes the essence of technology, and to make a connection between the notion of ‘bringing-forth’ and the essence of technology. He accomplishes this by tracing the origin of the word technology to the Greek term *technē*, associated with the act of doing or making which, he states, applies not only to the activity of the craftsman but also to ‘the arts of the mind and the fine arts’. Hans Ruin encapsulates the ancient Greek understanding of *technē* by making the following observation

*Technē* was essentially the name for a creative and productive form of knowledge, an intellectual virtue comparable to other intellectual virtues, notably scientific knowledge and wisdom. As such it also had something to do with *truth*. (Ruin, 2013, p.354)

Heidegger links *technē*, in its role of making or bringing forth that which is not yet clear, to *poiēsis* (poetry) which is a means of bringing forth truth. Furthermore, he observes that in ancient Greece *technē* and *epistēmē* [knowledge] were linked by their role in bringing forth. And, by establishing the connection between *technē*, *poiēsis*, and *epistēmē*, Heidegger successfully moves away from the instrumental definition of

---

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Footnote, No. 5, for an explanation of the understanding of this German expression and its broader implications. (Heidegger, 1977, p.7)

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Plato’s *Symposium*, 205b

technology as ‘a means to an end’ towards an understanding of technology in terms of disclosing and revealing truth.

Moreover, Heidegger adds clarity to his argument by explaining that bringing-forth, in the sense in which the Greeks thought it, means ‘comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment...The Greeks have the word *alētheia* for revealing. The Romans translate this with *veritas*. We say “truth”’. (Heidegger, 1977, pp.11, 12) Having argued against the instrumentalist definition of technology as ‘a means to an end’ and, by asserting that technology is a way of revealing, Heidegger points out that linking technology to revealing can be problematic in that it requires and utilises human involvement in the act of revealing. Furthermore, whilst acknowledging the role of human involvement in the advancement of technology, he emphasises that ‘unconcealment itself’ is never a human handiwork, thereby indicating the limits of human control over technology. The wider implications of human involvement in this area concern the danger that technology will subsume the autonomy of the human being in all acts of revealing, thereby, effectively resulting in the inclusion of the human being as an instrument in the service of technology. This is what Heidegger refers to as the ‘gathering’ of the human being in technology’s role of revealing, and he calls it ‘*Ge-stell*’ [Enframing]<sup>68</sup>. In his view, ‘*Ge-stell*’<sup>69</sup> is what constitutes the essence of technology, and he sees it not just as the essential characteristic of technology, but also as a defining characteristic of the modern age. Bearing in mind the potential threat of being taken-over by technology, it is worth noting Heidegger’s advice that the only way in which the human being can transcend the danger posed by technology is by human reflection, which essentially amounts to a reiteration of his initial caution that, in order to live with technology, we need to develop an understanding of it.

---

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Footnote: ‘The translation “Enframing” for *Ge-stell* is intended to suggest, through the use of the prefix “en-“, something of the active meaning that Heidegger here gives to the German word...the reader should...remember that Enframing is fundamentally a calling-forth. It is a “challenging claim,” a demanding summons, that “gathers” so as to reveal...’ (Heidegger, 1977, p.19)

<sup>69</sup> Cf. §3.3 For discussion concerning Heidegger’s appendix to ‘The Origin of The Work of Art’, which post-dates his lecture on technology, in which he invokes the notion of *Ge-stell* to describe the event of truth in the artwork.

Due to the all pervasive character of technology, understanding cannot occur from outside, we are not privileged with the ‘view from nowhere’ therefore, it is necessary to approach the question in an oblique way, which brings Heidegger to the question of art. In ancient Greece, as we have seen, *technē* not only applied to technology but was also used in reference to the work of art before our approach to art was complicated by ‘aesthetic’ appreciation. ‘Art happens as poetry’, (Heidegger, 1993c, p.202) states Heidegger, finding support in Plato, who tells us that ‘[T]he poetical thoroughly pervades every art, every revealing of coming to presence into the beautiful’. (Heidegger, 1977, p.34) The possibility of understanding the essence of technology is, Heidegger states, to be found in a realm that is in some ways similar to technology, whilst fundamentally different in other respects. He sees the realm of art to be such an area, however, he cautions us against allowing ourselves to be distracted by aesthetics and to thereby miss its revelation of the truth of being. Moreover, as he sees it, there is an added complication concerning the possibility that in our questioning of technology we will lose sight of the essence of art.

#### **5.4 (b) Gadamer’s View of Science and Technology**

Throughout this thesis, Gadamer’s acknowledgement of the value of science and its contribution to knowledge has been made clear. Furthermore, as we have seen, rather than rejecting the notion of scientific method, in his hermeneutical investigation of the human sciences Gadamer employs scientific methodology. He argues that it is the objectives of knowledge, rather than the method of discovery, that allow us to differentiate between natural science and the human sciences. The problem with the natural sciences, as he sees it, is their failure to recognise a truth which does not satisfy their method of proof. However, he makes the further observation that

[T]he methods of the natural sciences do not encompass everything that is worth knowing, not least that which is most worth knowing, namely the final purposes that all control of nature and human beings must serve. In the human sciences and philosophy it is knowledge of another kind and order that one expects. (Gadamer, 1994h, p.26)

And in what can be seen as a defence of the human sciences, Gadamer highlights what he considers to be the narrow scope of the natural sciences by their effective dismissal of the truths of religion, philosophy, and ‘issues of worldview’, which are unverifiable by scientific method and which, in his view, seemed to have been more effective in their support of an orderly society, than the modern sciences.

In line with Heidegger, Gadamer is aware of the far reaching implications that a rapidly advancing scientific and technological world pose for human existence. Furthermore, due to a complacency whereby humanity is resigned to accept its own limitedness, he detects a lack of confidence in philosophy’s competence to supply a broader, more comprehensive account of knowledge than that which satisfies the method of the natural sciences. Writing in the 1970s, and echoing Heidegger’s apprehension, Gadamer warns us about the pervasive effect of modern technology, with its increasing threat to human autonomy and freedom, stating that

[A] result of technology is that it leads to such a manipulation of human society, of the formation of public opinion, of the life conduct of everyone, of the disposition of each individual’s time between job and family, and it takes our breath away. (Gadamer, 2001, p.3)

Gadamer’s assessment of the effects of technology seem to be particularly relevant in the age of rapidly advancing computer technology, where we are offered easy access to the internet and to social media and which paradoxically, by bringing faceless ‘friends’ to our fingertips, invades our autonomy and effectively creates a greater distance between ourselves and the other. Whereas Heidegger has singled art out, as a potential answer to enable us to retain our autonomy and further our understanding in a world that is dominated by science, Gadamer places his hopes on language. Both of these thinkers look to the area of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] to increase our understanding and thereby rescue us from the perceived threat of science and technology. And, for Gadamer, this understanding is attained by means of questioning through dialogue and conversation, for the purpose of which we rely upon language.

Gadamer revisits the problem of science's insistence on its supremacy in the arbitration of truth and its consequent failure to recognise the 'full scope' of the question of truth. In his view, this effectively undermines the integrity of the human sciences and prompts him to ask

...how far it lies directly in the conduct of science that there are so many questions, the answers to which we must know, that it nevertheless forbids us. It forbids them, however, in that it discredits them...declares them meaningless. (Gadamer, 1994i, p.35)

He thereby illustrates the restrictive influence of science by prohibiting the pursuit of knowledge which is undefinable by scientific method. However, as we have seen within this work, Gadamer expresses confidence in ability of language to transcend scientific dominance and to appeal to conversation of philosophy.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Within this chapter I have indicated the unifying aspect of my thesis, which is concerned with the truth claims of art, as investigated by means of Heidegger's phenomenological enquiry and the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer. It has been shown that both of these thinkers, whilst pursuing their individual paths of enquiry into the manifestation of truth, take the view that through the work of art an unfolding of truth occurs, which is unrestrained by scientific method and therefore exceeds the notion of truth as correctness. Having adopted the term *alētheia*, which Heidegger reclaims from antiquity, to describe the unfolding of truth, and whilst finding areas of agreement, it can be seen how Gadamer continues, by developing his own unique approach to the question of the truth claims of art. Furthermore, it has been shown that the phenomenon of concealing and revealing, whereby truth becomes manifested through the artwork, is also applicable to all instances of the manifestation of truth.

The areas in which the thinking of Heidegger and Gadamer diverges, is first made evident by Heidegger's stated intention to 'overcome' metaphysics, which he views as an impediment to our understanding of the question of being. The challenges

posed by the question of metaphysics and the individual approach to this question, where Gadamer is able to work from within a less critical view of metaphysics than Heidegger, have been highlighted and discussed within this chapter. Furthermore, taking into account Grondin's claim that the defining feature which separates Gadamer from Heidegger is the question of humanism, I have investigated their individual treatment of this question. And, I find, in agreement with Grondin's conclusion, that Gadamer is a humanist and Heidegger is not. However, by taking Heidegger's response to Beaufret into account, I have also made the argument that although he cannot be classified as a humanist, this should not be taken to mean that he is unsympathetic to the concerns of what it is to be human, but rather that he seeks a more fundamental understanding of the essence of humanity.

The third significant issue that has been discussed within this chapter, concerns the question of science and technology, the way that Heidegger and Gadamer both respond to this question, and its relevance to the work of art. It has been shown, that whilst both of these thinkers are cognisant of the importance of science's contribution to knowledge and aware of the way in which science and technology shape modernity, they each advise vigilance in our approach to these phenomena. Heidegger stresses the importance of understanding technology as a means of guarding against becoming a part of the technological machine and, as we have seen, the possibility of gaining this understanding is, in Heidegger's view, to be found in the realm of art. In Gadamer's view, the problem with the natural sciences is, due to their insistence on verifiable proof, according to the standards of scientific method, they fail to recognise the truths of the human sciences and philosophy. Furthermore, Gadamer also warns us about the pernicious effects of modern technology and its manipulation of society and, in agreement with Heidegger, he takes the view that the way to live with the effects of science and technology is through developing an understanding of them. For Gadamer this understanding is achieved by means of language.

As the intervening years, throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, have demonstrated, the development of science and technology continues to advance and to define our world. It is therefore incumbent on human beings, by taking

an informed approach, whilst remaining vigilant to the potential dangers, to benefit from the undeniable advantages which science and technology continue to offer.

## Conclusion

The overriding theme of this dissertation concerns the question of being, its intrinsic connection to truth, and the way that art is inseparably linked to both of these fundamental questions of philosophy. The enigmatic questions of being and truth are at the core of every philosophical search for understanding. However, this does not mean that we have solved the riddle of being or that it does not present a constant challenge to our thinking. The knotty difficulties which are encountered when we attempt to interrogate the question of being, to say what it might mean, have, in Heidegger's view, since the time of Plato and Aristotle, caused it to be neglected, suppressed, avoided, and even deemed it to be altogether superfluous. Plato and Aristotle, in their own distinct ways, did not solve the question of 'being' but, rather, recognised that due to our familiarity with the notion of being, and due to its enigmatic nature, we stopped asking the question which continues to perplex and unsettle thinkers. This prevailing tendency towards an acceptance of the familiar, and an avoidance of the unsettling and apparently superfluous, together with perceived apathy towards the basic question which could lead to a better understanding of the meaning of being, impels Heidegger to recover and radicalise the question of being, starting from the ancients, and to subject it to further scrutiny. At the outset of his enquiry into the meaning of being, Heidegger clarifies that he attributes our lack of attention to this fundamental question, to our obliviousness and unquestioning approval of what has become altogether taken for granted and familiar to us, namely the tradition of Western thought. Therefore, throughout his entire philosophical career he attempts to transcend philosophical thinking and, by means of a radicalised phenomenological attitude, to discover, thematise and appropriate those metaphysical themes and strands which have obscured the originary thinking that forms the unthought basis of this tradition. Or as Heidegger puts it in his lectures on *Plato's Sophist*, 'Ruthlessness toward the tradition is reverence toward the past, and it is genuine only in an appropriation of the latter (the past) out of a destruction of the former (the tradition)'. (Heidegger, 1997, p.286) It is precisely the tension here between 'ruthlessness' and 'reverence' which this thesis has explored by addressing the questions of being and truth in Heidegger's and Gadamer's distinct and yet overlapping

thought-models. Against more standard readings of the Heidegger and Gadamer relation, I have argued that it is not a question of being slavishly for or against one thinker or the other, of being engaged in a philosophical siege mentality, but that holding them together in a creative tension is the best way to bring them into dialogue with one another. This is a dialogue which does not paint one as the victor and the other as the vanquished, but allows the problems, tensions or issues they are concerned with to be framed and analysed on their own terms.

The question of art, which is central to this thesis, is not to be treated as a separate concern to truth and being but, rather, is to be understood as inextricably linked to these questions, in particular when it comes to its role in enabling the disclosure of truth to occur in a most transformative manner. Therefore, in his major enquiry into the question of art which is to be found in his 1935 essay 'The Origin of The Work of Art', Heidegger endorses this connection, by informing us that his thinking about the question of art is 'completely and decisively directed solely toward the question of *being*'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.55) Moreover, the question of being is the one abiding thought that remains with Heidegger throughout his entire philosophical career. It is also the question that presents the greatest challenge to philosophical enquiry, due to the fact that because we are *in being* we are confronted by the problem of how to attain a neutral position from which we can make our enquiry into the elusive and arguably unsettling question *of being*. We have seen how Heidegger tackles this particular dilemma by means of an interrogation of that neutral, existential, historically situated, being, namely Dasein; that being which is in a unique position as the only being that has a pre-ontological awareness of its own being and its relation to the question of being as such, the motivation for pursuing such a question necessarily stemming from its own finitude. In naming this being Dasein, he emphasises the verbal and non-substantive way of being of this being as both the interrogator and the interrogated. And, through his investigation of the constitutive existential-ontological condition of Dasein, as being coextensively in truth and in untruth, that is, in its various derivative and non-derivative modes of being in the world, including its more and less authentic relations to the others, Heidegger repeatedly attempts to lay bare the existential-ontological structure of

the world of the human being and the human being's basic structures of existence within that world.

It became obvious to me that any attempt to investigate the problematic concerning the ontological importance of art in its role of enabling truth disclosure, as detailed in Heidegger's 1935 seminal essay on art, would first necessitate an understanding of his approach to the question of being as a necessary propaedeutic to understanding what comes after it. To this end, in my first chapter, I have provided a detailed explication and critical appraisal of Heidegger's analysis of the meaning of being in *Being and Time*, which includes his extensive enquiry into the questions of truth and untruth, which inherently pertains to Dasein's more primordial being in truth and untruth, to its disclosedness [*Erschlossenheit*] and closedness [*Verschlossenheit*], the latter indicating Dasein's tendency towards falling away from itself and into the captivating power of the 'they-self'. Hence, within this enquiry, Heidegger confirms the intrinsic connection between truth and being, namely the being of Dasein as the way into the question of the meaning of being as such, with his unequivocal claim that '*there is*' truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is'. (Heidegger, 1962, p.269) Therefore, any discussion concerning the question of being must also encompass the question of truth, and the truth of existence cannot be uncoupled from the question of truth as such, because truth and being cannot be uncoupled from one another.

In an essay from 1930 entitled 'On The Essence of Truth', Heidegger continues his exploration of truth, by enquiring into the nature, or better essence, of truth, which also concerns the truth of being. And, by analysing the openness of Dasein, in its opening up the clearing or open region whereby truth is granted the freedom to manifest itself in the first place, Heidegger comes to the conclusion that the essence of truth is freedom, in terms of the freed up or opening of spacing for truth to appear. The notion of openness and freedom, whereby truth is freed to disclose itself is an abiding theme of Heidegger's thought and, as previously acknowledged, the essence of all Heidegger's thought is traceable back to *alētheia*, understood as a disclosedness that makes a claim

on the human being and in fact gives the human being its very humanity in responding (or failing to respond) to this prior claim.

With respect to this, I have sought to show how art fulfils a unique role in enabling the disclosure of truth to appear and of providing a preserving response to this truth claim, by taking as my starting point an analysis of Heidegger's treatment of the work of art, followed by Gadamer's response to it, in which he draws on Heidegger's analysis of the being-at-work, or the work-being [*Werksein*], of the artwork and, by means of his own philosophical hermeneutics, he shows art's unique position in its role of allowing truth the freedom to disclose itself in the transformative event of the encounter with the work. The uniqueness of art's position is made clear, by Gadamer's observation that through the work of art an experience of truth occurs 'that we cannot attain in any other way'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.xiii) Furthermore, as we have ascertained from Heidegger, the human being and its distinct way of being is an essential element within any event of the disclosure of truth, therefore, this also holds true in the case of the truth of the artwork, whereby the disclosure of truth through the work of art is a reciprocal event, which requires our attentive participation and responsiveness. Moreover, in informing us that '[T]he artwork is a challenge for our understanding because over and over again it evades all our interpretations and puts up an invincible resistance to being transformed into the identity of the concept', (Gadamer, 1997a, p.44) Gadamer effectively places art outside the domain of subjective aesthetic appreciation.

In a move away from the traditional aesthetics, Heidegger looks to early Greek thought and finds in one of Heraclitus' fragments that 'the phenomenon of truth in the sense of uncoveredness (unhiddenness)...shows through'.<sup>70</sup> (Heidegger, 1962, p.262) Therefore, by taking the Greek word *alētheia*, to be understood as disclosedness, he develops the concept of the disclosure, or unconcealedness of truth occurrence, through the work of art. This disclosure, Heidegger assures us, 'is not the crude key that unlocks every enigma of thinking...*Alētheia* is the enigma itself—the matter of thinking' (Heidegger, 1998a, p.332) and as such this riddle or enigma continues to

---

<sup>70</sup> This claim, by Heidegger, is contested by Paul Friedländer, who maintains that 'the passage from Herakleitos cannot prove anything for or against...[*alētheia*] as unhiddenness. (Friedländer, 1964, p.225)

challenge us to think. Furthermore, by granting truth the freedom to disclose itself, and by understanding truth as a freeing disclosure, in what is a marked distinction from the aesthetic appreciation of art, we are participant-recipients in the eventlike process of truth and not subjective adjudicators of truth. However, Heidegger's appropriation of *alētheia*, in support of his concept of truth, does not go unchallenged. Most notable amongst his critics is Ernst Tugendhat, whose main argument concerns Heidegger's perceived failure to accommodate the notion of bivalence in his concept of truth, with the result that any discussion concerning the question of truth is rendered meaningless. A further critique of Heidegger's theory comes from the philologist, Paul Friedländer, whose argument is based upon what he considers to be an inaccurate assessment, by Heidegger, of the etymology of the term *alētheia*. Both Tugendhat's and Friedländer's critiques have been discussed in greater detail in chapters one and two, respectively.

Notwithstanding, these challenges to Heidegger's theory of truth, Gadamer who does not identify any specific theory of truth of his own, although perhaps we could call it a more dialogically focused recipient-participant structure or communal notion of truth, appropriates the notion of *alētheia*, from Heidegger. And, by re-engaging with the Greeks he develops what is unthought, or unsaid, in Heidegger's various attempts to probe past those arguably calcified concepts of truth found within the metaphysical tradition, through an analysis of the artwork in its various forms, and thereby succeeds in showing the relevance of art in enhancing our understanding being and truth of the world, and our self-understanding within that world. Gadamer's hermeneutical enquiry of the question of art begins with an investigation into the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*], which he, following Dilthey, distinguishes from the natural sciences. And, although he acknowledges that methods of modern natural science could have a relevance to the social world, he points out that the distinguishing feature between the natural sciences and the human sciences is to be found in the objectives of their research. The human sciences are more in line with other extra-scientific experiences, 'especially those proper to art', (Gadamer, 1979, p.xvii) which means that, unlike the natural sciences, they are not confined by an insistence on the verification of truth. However, although Gadamer's discussion on the work of art commences in *Truth and Method*, where he introduces the concept of play to describe the mode of being of

the work of art, his more original and detailed contribution to the discussion is to be found in a later collection of essays, which have been explored within this thesis. In an original approach to the question of art, Gadamer succeeds, by means of an analysis of play, in bringing out the transformative effects of our encounter with artworks, and furthermore, he highlights the relevance, or better enactment or performance of art within the context of our everyday activities, including our engagement with others by means of symbol, ritual, and festival. Moreover, in line with Heidegger, Gadamer continues to acknowledge the role of art in enabling the disclosure of truth, which is not bound by the scientific method of verification and therefore, 'issues the most pressing challenge to the scientific consciousness to acknowledge its own limits'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.xiii)

The concept of the beautiful is central for Gadamer, not in an aesthetic sense, but in the way that it allows him to develop the notion of the shining-forth of the beautiful, its self-manifestation as needing nothing else to be what it is, in terms of an image that shines-forth and allows truth to come forth and disclose itself. Through Plato, Gadamer finds confirmation of the connection between the concept of the beautiful and *alētheia*, which he is looking for as further support for his argument concerning art's participation in the event of the disclosure of truth. Furthermore, staying with Plato, in a way that Heidegger never did, he makes a connection between the concept of the beautiful and the concept of the good, confirming that the common and communalising feature of both of these concepts is in that they are each chosen on their own merits. Although the concept of the beautiful is not treated at any great length by Heidegger, he acknowledges its connection to truth by confirming that the beautiful 'belongs to the advent of truth'. (Heidegger, 2002b, p.52) Therefore, by viewing the beautiful as a predicate of truth, he clearly does not associate it with aesthetic pleasure and given his intention to think outside or away from metaphysics, he is not sympathetic to an aesthetic appreciation of art and the beautiful, due to its subjectivist implications.

Down through the ages there is evidence that the phenomenon of art has constituted an integral part of our human existence. From the pre-historic cave paintings to the installations of the modern day, the universal wealth and breadth of

artworks continues to inspire and inform us. However, although there is scope for a lengthy discussion concerning the extensive and diverse works of art and their important contribution to our understanding, which I feel could be the subject of a separate thesis, I have, of necessity, confined my discussion of the question of art to the work of two twentieth-century Western philosophers. Furthermore, I have concentrated for the most part on their treatment of the visual arts, whilst understanding that the arguments which each thinker makes can be understood to have a universal significance. As a starting point for my discussion concerning the philosophical importance of art, I have provided an analysis of Heidegger's seminal essay on the work of art, in which he focuses on particular artworks as a means of demonstrating the way that art participates in the event of truth. Moreover, it has been shown that although Heidegger confines his discussion to a few chosen works of art for the purpose of making his argument, he succeeds in illuminating the role of art, in general, in its facilitating the disclosure of truth. Furthermore, as a means of exploring the universal relevance of Heidegger's theory, by applying his approach to a work of 'modern' art, by Picasso, I have shown how, as in the case of van Gogh's artwork, this artwork succeeds in disclosing an undeniable truth, and thereby endorses Heidegger's concept that the work of art has a distinctive role in enabling a disclosure of truth. However, although the work of art can have an instant impact, I support Gadamer's theory that in our encounter with art we need to take time and 'tarry' with it in order to allow the truth of art, its truth-claim, to speak to us.

Gadamer's notion of play which, as mentioned previously, he introduces into the realm of art, brings art into our everyday world of experience and furthermore, through his development of the notion of play, festival, and ritual we are afforded an understanding of the structures of society, as participative and based on finite and vulnerable solidarities. In addition, recounting ancient Greek practices, within the context of play allows Gadamer to bring out the historical aspect of being, in that our understanding in the present is dependent upon the past and upon the future. This is again made evident in the 'play of art', as Gadamer refers to it, whereby we are afforded a reflective glimpse of ourselves as we are, what we have become, and what we could potentially be. Furthermore, the phenomenon of play is not just peculiar to the human

being, but is also a feature of the entire animal world; however, within the world of play the human being is distinguished from other animals through a practice of adherence to rules within the structure of play. Although Heidegger also discusses the notion of play in his 1955-56 lectures entitled, *The Principle of Reason*, he does not develop it in the same way or to the same extent as Gadamer, rather, he places emphasis on the regulatory aspect of human engagement by stressing the rules which circumscribe the freedom of play. For Heidegger, the ultimate act of play for human beings concerns the enigma of death, which he describes as the ‘most elevated play in which humans are engaged in on earth, a play in which they are at stake’. (Heidegger, 1991b, p.112) Heidegger thereby reveals the tensions involved in play, by indicating that humans only remain in and at play as long as it represents a challenge and so long as they are at stake.

Within the broad range of questions which are discussed by Heidegger and Gadamer, which span the history of Western philosophy, an abiding theme that remains, for both thinkers, is the question of the connection between truth and art. As Gadamer admits, his hermeneutics of the human sciences was guided by the question of art and throughout his long and prolific career he continued to write about the philosophical relevance of the work of art and its significance in allowing an event of truth to occur. And, whilst Gadamer never ceased to acknowledge his intellectual debt to Heidegger, claiming that ‘In Heidegger the development of thought in the philosophical tradition came to life because it was understood as answers to real questions’, (Gadamer, 2007c, p.11) it has been shown, within this thesis, that his position understood as both immanent critique and philosophical synthesis, is mindful of his own claim that one can be neither for nor against Heidegger, Gadamer refashions Heidegger’s thought from within, by re-engaging with the Greeks, by inhabiting the tensions found in Heidegger’s attempts to demonstrate both ‘ruthlessness toward the tradition’ and ‘reverence toward the past’, and he does this inhabiting by emphasising the shared communally open-ended and dialogical nature of philosophical thought.

Whilst each of these thinkers has an individual way of approaching the problematic challenges which are at the centre of their thinking, what I have discovered in working on this thesis is that both Heidegger and Gadamer continue to respond to

real questions and in so doing act as an impetus for further questioning and further thinking. However, what also becomes clear is the tension filled space that separates their individual thought models. The most notable area of tension manifests itself with Heidegger's stated intention of 'overcoming' [*Überwinden*] metaphysics. In Heidegger's view, metaphysics begins with Plato's doctrine of ideas, which heralds the beginning of the forgetfulness of being and culminates in Nietzsche's will to power. However, Gadamer takes issue with what he sees as an overly simplistic acceptance of a doctrinal reading of Plato's explicitly dialogical ways, and he suggests that what Plato is attempting to do is to take thinking 'beyond all existing things' which 'ultimately represents a countermovement against the "metaphysical" interpretation of Being as merely the being of beings'. (Gadamer, 2007c, p.31) Given the plausibility of Gadamer's argument, I contend that this 'hermeneutical-phenomenological' approach, by Plato, is at one with Heidegger's ways of thinking and could therefore, be seen to bring Plato's and Heidegger's thinking closer together. Whilst, mindful of the influence that metaphysics has exerted on traditional thinking, Gadamer is aware of the debt that we owe to over two-thousand years of the metaphysical tradition, of its multifaceted nature and richness, and of its importance within the human sciences, and therefore he does not share Heidegger's suspicion of the metaphysical tradition as a monochromatic pattern of thought, circling obsessively around the question of an enduring substance underlying all changes. Moreover, in what could be seen as a softening and an appropriation of Heidegger's approach, Gadamer suggests that 'overcoming' [*Überwinden*] in this instance could be understood as 'coming to terms with' [*Verwinden*], or convalescing, which means, in this instance, that metaphysics is not discarded, but rather, it is accommodated and recognised as more than the sum of its various voices and theories.

As previously stated, the questions concerning being and truth are at the core of every philosophical discussion, which is no less the case for the present thesis. However, by placing art at the centre of this discussion, whilst highlighting its proximity to these fundamental issues, the emphasis of my enquiry has been given another focus. What becomes clear from my research is that art is a phenomenon that permeates every facet of our existence and reflection upon art enhances our

understanding in general and thereby, our self-understanding. The universality of the question of art is clearly defined by the works of Heidegger and Gadamer, whose broad ranging discussions concerning this question serve to emphasise the pivotal importance of giving it due recognition.

In bringing the unifying objective of this thesis together in the final chapter, what becomes strikingly evident is the extensive range of questions which challenged the thinking of Heidegger and Gadamer, and the illuminating response which both of these thinkers provide. When confronting the growing threat of science and technology in the twentieth-century, the advantages of the scientific world and its noble contribution to knowledge is acknowledged. However, the need to understand the implications of living in an increasing technological world in order to avoid being subsumed by it is stressed by both thinkers. For Heidegger, the question of understanding technology can only be approached in an oblique way and he suggests that understanding the essence of technology could possibly be found in the realm of art. He makes the connection between technology and art by appealing to the Greek term *technē* which, he maintains, was not only applied to technology, but also used to describe the work of art. In the realm of art Heidegger sees similarities to the realm of technology, whilst being fundamentally different in other respects.<sup>71</sup> However, he cautions against the possibility of allowing our perception to be distracted by aesthetics, causing us to miss the true meaning of being. Heidegger's response is restrained by his attempts to distance himself from metaphysics. Whereas Gadamer, who does not share Heidegger's antipathy to the metaphysical tradition, responds to the impending threat of technological advances by suggesting that we need to rely upon the humanistic tradition and 'its resistance to the claims of modern science' (Gadamer, 1979, p.18) as a means of combating the threat of technology. Furthermore, although Heidegger and Gadamer both advocate understanding as the route to living with technology, without being subsumed by it, their way of achieving this understanding is very different and this difference is to be found in their reading of the metaphysical tradition.

---

<sup>71</sup> Cf. § 5.4. (a),

The abiding theme throughout this thesis concerns the inseparable questions of truth and being, and in particular the way that the work of art fulfils a unique role in enabling an occurrence of truth. Therefore, through an analysis of the work of Heidegger and Gadamer, with particular emphasis on their treatment of the work of art, in which they each separately explore art's role in facilitating an emergence of truth, I have shown how, by departing from the traditional aesthetic approach to art, they succeed in highlighting art's unique role in an uncovering of truth 'that we cannot attain in any other way'. (Gadamer, 1979, p.xiii) Furthermore, although both the areas of agreement and the areas where the thoughts of Heidegger and Gadamer diverge have been pointed out and discussed, my dissertation is neither intended to be simply a comparative account nor an evaluation of the work of these two thinkers. But, rather by occupying the tension filled space between Heidegger and Gadamer, I have sought to highlight the contributions which they have each made in furthering our understanding. With particular emphasis given to the way, through their phenomenological-hermeneutical enquiries, that they succeed in establishing the importance of art in enhancing our understanding of the fundamental questions of truth and being, ultimately leading to our self-understanding.

## Reference List

Ambrosio, F.J., 1986. 'Dawn and Dusk: Gadamer and Heidegger on Truth'. *Man and World*, 19(1), pp.21-53.

Ambrosio, F.J., 1987. 'Gadamer: On Making Oneself at Home with Hegel'. *The Owl of Minerva*, 19(1), pp.23-40.

Baker, J.M.J., 2002. 'Lyric as Paradigm: Hegel and the Speculative Instance of Poetry in Gadamer's Hermeneutics'. In R.J. Dostal, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.144-66.

Bernasconi, R., 1993a. 'Bridging the Abyss: Heidegger and Gadamer'. In *Heidegger in Question: The Art of Existing*. New Jersey: Humanities Press. pp.170-254.

Bernasconi, R., 1993b. 'The Greatness of the Work of Art'. In *Heidegger in Question: The Art of Existing*. New Jersey: Humanities Press. pp.99-116.

Bernet, R., 1994. 'Phenomenological Reduction and the Double Life of the Subject'. In T. Kisiel & J. van Buren, eds. *Reading Heidegger from the Start: Essays in His Earliest Thought*. Translated by F. Renaud. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.245-67.

Biemel, W., 1993. 'Elucidations of Heidegger's Lecture; The Origin of Art and the Destination of Thinking'. In J. Sallis, ed. *Reading Heidegger*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp.370-82.

Bowie, A., 2003. *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*. Second Edition ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Brogan, W.A., 1984. 'The Battle between Art and Truth; a Reconsideration'. *Philosophy Today*, 28(4), pp.349-57.

Burns, R., 1994. *The Poetical Works of Robert Burns*. London: Senate.

Chiurazzi, G., 2011. 'Truth Is More Than Reality. Gadamer's Transformational Concept of Truth'. *Research in Phenomenology*, 41(1), pp.60-71.

Crowther, P., 2006. *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dahlstrom, D.O., 2001. *Heidegger's Concept of Truth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dahlstrom, D., 2003. 'The Clearing and its Truth: Reflections on Tugendhat's Criticisms and Heidegger's Concessions'. *Etudes Phenomenologies*, pp.3-25.

Dahlstrom, D.O., 2007. 'Transcendental Truth and the Truth That Prevails'. In S. Crowell & J. Malpas, eds. *Transcendental Heidegger*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp.63-73.

Dahlstrom, D.O., 2013. 'Truth'. In F. Raffoul & E.S. Nelson, eds. *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. pp.361-66.

Dastur, F., 1999. 'Heidegger's Freiburg Version of the Origin of the Work of Art'. In J. Risser, ed. *Heidegger toward the Turn: Essays on the Work of the 1930s*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.119-42.

Davey, N., 2016. 'Word, Image, and Concept'. In N. Keane & C. Lawn, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Inc. pp.242-47.

Dostal, R.J., 1994. 'The Experience of Truth for Gadamer and Heidegger: Taking Time and Sudden Lightning'. In B.R. Wachterhauser, ed. *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.47-67.

Dostal, R.J., 2002a. 'Gadamer: The Man and His Work'. In R.J. Dostal, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.13-35.

Dostal, R.J., 2002b. 'Gadamer's Relation to Heidegger and Phenomenology'. In R.J. Dostal, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.247-66.

Dostal, R.J., 2002c. 'Introduction'. In R.J. Dostal, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.1-12.

Dostal, R.J., 2003. 'The Development of Gadamer's Thought'. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 34(3), pp.247-64.

Duits, R., 2007. On Tugendhat's Analysis of Heidegger's Concept of Truth. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 15(2), pp.207-23.

Figal, G., 1998. *For a Philosophy of Freedom and Strife; Politics, Aesthetics, Metaphysics*. Translated by W. Klein. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Figal, G., 2009. 'Introduction'. In G. Figal, ed. *The Heidegger Reader*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp.1-32.

Friedländer, P., 1964. *Plato: An Introduction*. Translated by H. Meyerhoff. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1976a. 'Hegel and Heidegger'. In *Hegel's Dialectic*. Translated by P.C. Smith. London: Yale University Press. pp.100-16.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1976b. 'The Idea of Hegel's Logic'. In *Hegel's Dialectic*. Translated by P.C. Smith. London: Yale University Press. pp.75-99.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1977a. 'Heidegger's Later Philosophy'. In D.E. Linge, ed. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. London: University of California Press. pp.213-28.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1977b. 'Man and Language'. In D.E. Linge, ed. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Translated by D.E. Linge. London: University of California Press. pp.59-68.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1979. *Truth and Method*. Second English ed. Translated by W. Glen-Doepel. London: Sheed and Ward.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1986a. 'Art and Imitation'. In R. Bernasconi, ed. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by N. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.92-104.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1986b. 'Composition and Interpretation'. In R. Bernasconi, ed. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by N. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.66-73.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1986c. 'Poetry and Mimesis'. In R. Bernasconi, ed. *The Relevance of The Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by N. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.116-22.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1986d. 'The Festive Character of Theatre'. In R. Bernasconi, ed. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by N. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.57-65.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1986e. 'The Play of Art'. In R. Bernasconi, ed. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*. Translated by N. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.123-30.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1986f. 'The Relevance of the Beautiful'. In R. Bernasconi, ed. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by N. Walker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.3-53.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994a. 'Kant and the Hermeneutical Turn'. In *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.49-59.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994b. 'Martin Heidegger-75 Years'. In D.J. Schmidt, ed. *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. New York: State University of New York Press. pp.15-27.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994c. 'Martin Heidegger-85 years'. In *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. New York: State University of New York Press. pp.111-20.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994d. 'Plato'. In D.J. Schmidt, ed. *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.81-93.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994e. 'The Language of Metaphysics'. In *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.69-79.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994f. 'The Marburg Theology'. In D.J. Schmidt, ed. *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. New York: State University of New York Press. pp.29-43.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994g. 'The Truth of the Work of Art'. In *Heidegger's Ways*. Translated by J.W. Stanley. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994h. 'Truth in the Human Sciences'. In B.R. Wachterhauser, ed. *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Translated by B.R. Wachterhauser. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.25-32.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1994i. 'What is Truth?'. In B.R. Wachterhauser, ed. *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.33-46.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1996. 'Philosophy and Practical Medicine'. In *The Enigma of Health: The Art of Healing in a Scientific Age*. Translated by J. Gaiger & N. Walker. Stanford: Stanford University Press. pp.92-102.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1997a. 'Reflections on My Philosophical Journey'. In L.E. Hahn, ed. *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*. Translated by R.E. Palmer. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company. pp.3-63.

Gadamer, H.-G., 1997b. 'Reply to Jean Grondin'. In L.E. Hahn, ed. *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*. Chicago: Open Court. pp.171-72.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2001. 'On the Philosophic Element in the Sciences and the Scientific Character of Philosophy'. In *Reason in the Age of Science*. Translated by F. Lawrence. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. pp.1-20.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2004. *Truth and Method*. Second, Revised ed. Translated by J. Weinsheimer & D. Marshall. London: Continuum.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007a. 'A Look Back over the Collected Works and Their Effective History'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Translated by R.E. Palmer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.409-27.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007b. 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Translated by R.E. Palmer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.123-31.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007c. 'Autobiographical Reflections'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader*. Translated by R.E. Palmer. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.3-38.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007d. 'Heidegger and the Language of Metaphysics'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Translated by D.E. Linge. Evanston, Illinois, United States of America: Northwestern University Press. pp.345-55.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007e. 'Language and Understanding'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader; A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.89-107.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007f. 'The Artwork in Word and Image: "So True, So Full of Being!"'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.: Northwestern University Press. pp.195-224.

Gadamer, H.-G., 2007g. 'The Heritage of Hegel'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader: A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Translated by F.G. Lawrence. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.322-44.

Galt Crowell, S., 2007. 'Heidegger and Husserl: The Matter and Method of Philosophy'. In H.L. Dreyfus & M.A. Wrathall, eds. *A Companion to Heidegger*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. pp.49-64.

Gasché, R., 1999. 'Tuned to Accord: On Heidegger's Concept of Truth'. In J. Risser, ed. *Heidegger toward the Turn*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.31-49.

George, T., 2011. 'From Work to Play; Gadamer on the Affinity of Art, Truth, and Beauty'. *Internationales Jahrbuch für Hermeneutik*, 10, pp.107-22.

Grondin, J., 1995a. 'Humanism and the Hermeneutical Limits of Rationality'. In *Sources of Hermeneutics*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp.125-39.

Grondin, J., 1995b. *Sources of Hermeneutics*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Grondin, J., 1997. 'Gadamer on Humanism'. In L.E. Hahn, ed. *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company. pp.157-70.

Grondin, J., 1998. 'Gadamer's Aesthetics: The Overcoming of Aesthetic Consciousness and the Hermeneutical Truth of Art'. In *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp.267-71.

Grondin, J., 2003. *The Philosophy of Gadamer*. Translated by K. Plant. Chesham: Acumen Publishing Limited.

Grossmann, A., 1990. 'Hegel, Heidegger, and the Question of Art Today'. *Research in Phenomenology*, 20(1), pp.112-35.

Harries, K., 2009. *Art Matters: A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art"*. Springer.com: Springer.

Hegel, G.W.F., 1993. *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*. Translated by B. Bosanquet. London: Penguin Books.

Heidegger, M., 1962. *Being and Time*. First English ed. Translated by J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Heidegger, M., 1971. 'What Are Poets For?'. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by A. Hofstadter. London: Harper & Row. pp.91-142.

Heidegger, M., 1977. 'The Question Concerning Technology'. In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by W. Lovitt. London: Harper & Row. pp.3-35.

Heidegger, M., 1984a. *Early Greek Thinking*. English ed. Translated by D.F. Krell & F.A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M., 1984b. *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Translated by M. Heim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Heidegger, M., 1991a. *Nietzsche: Volumes I and II; The Will to Power as Art, The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. Translated by D. Farrell Krell. New York: Harper Collins.

Heidegger, M., 1991b. *The Principle of Reason*. Translated by R. Lilly. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Heidegger, M., 1993a. 'On the Essence of Truth'. In D. Farrell-Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. London: Routledge. pp.111-38.

Heidegger, M., 1993b. 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking'. In D.F. Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. London: Routledge. pp.431-49.

Heidegger, M., 1993c. 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In D.F. Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. Translated by I. Harper Collins Publishers. London: Routledge. pp.143-212.

Heidegger, M., 1993d. 'The Question Concerning Technology'. In D. Farrell Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. Translated by D. Farrell Krell. London: Routledge. pp.308-41.

Heidegger, M., 1993e. 'The Way to Language'. In D. Farrell Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. Translated by I. Harper Collins Publishers. London: Routledge. pp.397-426.

Heidegger, M., 1993f. 'What is Metaphysics?'. In D. Farrell Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. London: Routledge. pp.90-110.

Heidegger, M., 1997. *Plato's Sophist*. Translated by R. Rojcewicz & A. Schuwer. Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Heidegger, M., 1998a. 'Hegel and The Greeks'. In W. McNeill, ed. *Pathmarks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.323-36.

Heidegger, M., 1998b. 'Letter on Humanism'. In W. McNeill, ed. *Pathmarks*. Translated by F.A. Capuzzi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.239-76.

Heidegger, M., 1998c. 'Postscript to "What is Metaphysics?"'. In W. McNeill, ed. *Pathmarks*. Translated by W. McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.231-38.

Heidegger, M., 2000. *Introduction to Metaphysics*. 7th ed. Translated by G. Fried & R. Polt. London: Yale University Press.

Heidegger, M., 2002a. 'The Age of the World Picture'. In J. Young & K. Haynes, eds. *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by J. Young & K. Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.57-85.

Heidegger, M., 2002b. 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In J. Young & K. Haynes, eds. *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by J. Young & K. Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.1-56.

Heidegger, M., 2009a. 'Art and Space'. In G. Figal, ed. *The Heidegger Reader*. Translated by J. Veith. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp.305-09.

Heidegger, M., 2009b. 'On the Origin of the Work of Art; First Version'. In G. Figal, ed. *The Heidegger Reader*. Translated by J. Veith. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp.130-50.

Heidegger, M., 2010a. *Being and Time*. Revised edition of the Stambaugh translation ed. Translated by J. Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Heidegger, M., 2010b. *Logic: The Question of Truth*. English edition ed. Translated by T. Sheehan. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Heidegger, M., 2013. 'The Provenance of Art and the Destination of Thought (1967)'. *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, 44(2), pp.119-28.

Held, K., 2000. 'The Controversy Concerning Truth: Towards a Prehistory of Phenomenology'. In *Husserl Studies*. Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp.35-48.

Kant, I., 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Translated by P. Guyer & E. Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

King, M., 2001. *A Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Kockelmans, J.J., 1984. *On the Truth of Being: Reflections on Heidegger's later philosophy*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Krell, D.F., 1993a. 'Introduction; Letter on Humanism'. In D.F. Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. London: Routledge. pp.214-16.

Krell, D.F., 1993b. 'Introduction; to The Question Concerning Technology'. In D.F. Krell, ed. *Basic Writings*. Translated by D. Farrell Krell. London: Routledge. pp.308-41.

Lammi, W., 1991. 'Hans-Georg Gadamer's "Correction" of Heidegger'. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52(3 (Jul. - Sept., 1991)), pp.487-507. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2710048> [Accessed 09 May 2013].

Lawn, C., 2004. *Wittgenstein and Gadamer; Towards a post-analytic philosophy of language*. London: Continuum.

Mitchell, A.J., 2010. *Heidegger Among the Sculptors; Body, Space, and the Art of Dwelling*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Mulhall, S., 1996. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and Being and Time*. London: Routledge.

Nicholson, G., 2002. 'Gadamer--A Dialectic Without End'. *Symposium: The Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 6(2), pp.181-93.

Nicholson, G., 2014. 'Truth and Unconcealedness'. *Gatherings: The Heidegger Circle Annual 4*, pp.70-85.

Palmer, R.E., ed., 2007a. 'Concluding Dialogue with Jean Grondin: A Look Back over the Collected Works and their Effective History'. In Gadamer, H.-G. *The Gadamer Reader*. Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.: Northwestern University Press. pp.409-27.

Palmer, R.E., 2007b. 'Introduction to, The Artwork in Word and Image: "So True, So Full of Being!"'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader*. Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A.: Northwestern University Press. pp.192-94.

Palmer, R.E., 2007c. 'Introduction; The Heritage of Hegel'. In R.E. Palmer, ed. *The Gadamer Reader; A Bouquet of the Later Writings*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.322-26.

Plato, 1975. 'Philebus'. In *Plato, in Twelve Volumes; The Statesman; Philebus; Ion*. Translated by H.N. Fowler & W.R.M. Lamb. London: Harvard University Press. pp.197-399.

Plato, 2003. *The Symposium*. Translated by C. Gill. London: Penguin Books.

Ramberg, B. & Gjesdal, K., 2014. 'Hermeneutics'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Winter 2014), Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/hermeneutics/> [Accessed 30 May 2015].

Richardson, W.J., 1974. *Through Phenomenology to Thought*. 3rd ed. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Risser, J., 1999. 'Introduction'. In D.J. Schmidt, ed. *Heidegger toward the Turn*. New York: State University of New York Press. pp.1-16.

Ruin, H., 1994. *Enigmatic Origins; Tracing the Theme of Historicity through Heidegger's Works*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Ruin, H., 2013. 'Technology'. In F. Raffoul & E.S. Nelson, eds. *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*. London: Bloomsbury Academic. pp.353-59.

Sallis, J., 1993. 'Deformatives: Essentially Other Than Truth'. In J. Sallis, ed. *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp.29-46.

Sallis, J., 2007. 'The Hermeneutics of the Artwork'. In G. Figal, ed. *Hans-Georg Gadamer*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag. pp.45-57.

Sartre, J.-P., 1948. *Existentialism and Humanism*. First English ed. Translated by P. Mairet. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

Schatzki, T.R., 2007. 'Early Heidegger on Sociality'. In H.L. Dreyfus & M.A. Wrathall, eds. *A Companion to Heidegger*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp.233-47.

Scheibler, I., 2001. 'Art as Festival in Heidegger and Gadamer'. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 9(2), pp.151-75. [Accessed 10 July 2014].

Schmidt, D.J., 1982. Between Hegel and Heidegger. *Man and World*, 15(1), pp.17-31.

Schmidt, D.J., 2005. *Lyrical and Ethical Subjects: Essays on the Periphery of the Work, Freedom, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Schmidt, D.J., 2011. 'On the Idiom of Truth and the Movement of Life; Some Remarks on the task of Hermeneutics'. In G. Figal, ed. *Internationales Jahrbuch fur Hermeneutik*. Mohr Siebeck. pp.41-53.

Schmidt, D.J., 2013. *Between Word and Image*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Schrag, C.O., 1973. 'The Transvaluation of Aesthetics and the Work of Art'. *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 4(3), pp.109-24. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43154951>.

Sheehan, T., 1999. 'Martin Heidegger'. In R.L. Arrington, ed. *A Companion to the Philosophers*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.. pp.288-96.

Sheehan, T., 2005. 'Dasein'. In H.L. Dreyfus & M.A. Wrathall, eds. *A Companion to Heidegger*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp.193-213.

Taminiaux, J., 1993. 'The Origin of "The Origin of the Work of Art"'. In J. Sallis, ed. *Reading Heidegger*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. pp.392-404.

Thomson, I.D., 2011a. *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomson, I.D., 2011b. 'Heidegger's Aesthetics'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Summer), Available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/heidegger-aesthetics/> [Accessed 3rd January 2013].

Tugendhat, E., 1994. 'Heidegger's Idea of Truth'. In B.R. Wachterhauser, ed. *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.83-97.

Wachterhauser, B.R., 1994a. 'Gadamer's Realism: The "Belongingness" of Word and Reality'. In B.R. Wachterhauser, ed. *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.148-71.

Wachterhauser, B.R., 1994b. 'Introduction: Is There Truth after Interpretation?'. In B.R. Wachterhauser, ed. *Hermeneutics and Truth*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press. pp.1-24.

Watson, S.H., 2006. 'Heidegger, Paul Klee, and The Origin of The Work of Art'. *The Review of Metaphysics*, 60(2), pp.327-57. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org.libraryproxy.mic.ul.ie/stable/20130779>.

Wrathall, M.A., 1999. 'Heidegger and Truth as Correspondence'. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, 7(1), pp.69-88.

Wrathall, M.A., 2007. 'Truth and Unconcealment'. In H.L. Dreyfus & M.A. Wrathall, eds. *A Companion to Heidegger*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. pp.337-57.

Young, J., 2001. *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zuckert, C.H., 1996. *Postmodern Platos: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida*. London: The University of Chicago Press.