A CRUSHING TRUTH FOR ART:
Martin Heidegger's meditation
on truth and the work of art in
Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes

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Dedicated to the memory of
Dr. Bernard Zylstra,
who first asked for a thesis
on Heidegger
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PERSPECTIVES

'Christian philosophy' ... What do these words mean? They can be written down. One may think them through. The descriptor is a specifically religious designation; the described, however, has nothing necessarily to do with religion, much less Christianity, because philosophy is an independently-human exercise of deepened rationality. Therefore the phrase 'Christian philosophy' is an oxymoron born, perhaps, as if in a dream but not yet exposed to the light of critical thinking. The two spheres -- religious and philosophical -- are properly divided and connected by not much more than the enthusiastic but illegitimate play by some with only words.

One joy of being at the Institute for Christian Studies, at least for me, is that I have learned how specious the preceding argument and any of its kind really are. Aware of the religious motivations of any thought I have, whether philosophically disciplined or not, I return for the sake of spiritual discernment to these opening lines and unmask their presuppositions by asking: what kind of faith supports this accusation of illegitimacy, the bald assertion of human independence, the automatic bifurcation of religious and philosophical interests?
This line of questioning suggests a secularizing and
humanistic bias at the core of the attack on Christian
philosophy. An elucidation of differing faiths or funda-
mental commitments and dialogue about their consequences
for relative perceptions of the world, etc., is the most
obvious introductory move for Christians to work themselves
into that realm where there is the opportunity to think
beyond a certain depth. But this tactic will succeed only
if the general discussion does not exceed its limit. The
dialogue may be reduced to a hotly-contested dispute with
little more than the self-assertion of opinionated individuals
at its basis. So one task, at least for the Christian, is
to re-think the foundations of thinking itself, to seek
for the conditions which render any human activity possible.

Christians normally appeal to divine revelation in
search of foundations of any kind. It is perfectly legitimate
to identify the aspects of this revelation, to locate them
in specific and authoritative forms of witness which range
from Jesus Christ and the Scriptures to the Spirit operating
in the church. One thing, however, has been traditionally
forgotten as a background to these so-called special forms
of revelation. That is not best considered as the subject
of any particular doctrine. For the creation order, itself
revelatory of God's will, essentially religious, and
normative, is the setting within which occur all of the
discrete acts of redemption for torn, broken, sinful
creatures -- human thought-processes included.

The whole creation is formed historically. Opportunities for human development emerge from time to time and their implementation by specific generations cannot be understood merely by deduction from evidence of the past. New views of man in the world appear as if from a source that cannot be grasped by our calculation, and they may be judged as the guiding ideas of a particular period in response, for better or worse, to God's directive for the eventual redemption of history itself.

One such opportunity occurred as aesthetic theory began to gain acceptance in England and Europe during the eighteenth century. People, of course, had been thinking about art for millennia before the advent of modern Western culture. But their reflections tended toward the adulation of Beauty at the expense of reducing especially the artist's function to handiwork with merely pleasing though often useful objects. The situation did shift for art and artist, however, during the mid to latter portions of this, the eighteenth century, the age of enlightenment and early romanticism, though the theoretical writings of Lessing, Addison, Shaftesbury, Kant and others followed the much more insistent and original demands for aesthetic independence from artists themselves (such as Lessing, Mozart, Hogarth).

Theory does only heed the call of human experience. It was the courage of specific artists establishing no longer
a craft but a way of life and producing, in the process, aesthetically-defined entities, which instigated the modern vision of art. But if there is any one signature to the understanding of this emancipation it was Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790).

Here Kant analyzed certain background conditions for human art production and appreciation. He located a specific region, an aesthetic dimension -- one applicable for all that exists yet illuminated primarily in human perspective, according to judgments of taste, genius for art-creation, the illimitable experience of the sublime in nature, the definition of art as the concentrated, limited result of gifted activity.

The Christian thinker may preserve this discovery as pertaining to an essential aspect of creation. But there is no religious need to rely either on Kant or on the subsequent history of aesthetic theory, especially the latter, as if its mere existence were self-justifying.

Hegel, in his *Lectures On Aesthetics* (1830), gave aesthetics a name but ignored the insight behind Kant's work -- that any sphere of life belongs to a creation order and is not ultimate. Hegel thus collapsed the entire field of aesthetic theory into the study of the history and systematics of Art -- art magnified and shorn of its roots as the first-level absolute appearance of the philosophically-almighty Spirit.
Then Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885) crystallized the modern adulation of art in the image of the perfect artist, the Superman.

Martin Heidegger, the twentieth-century German thinker, finds modern aesthetics to be theoretically dislocated, dangerously subjectivist and frankly nihilistic. He suspects aesthetic theory of having reduced human ways of being with art to the calculation of judgments with experience, an experience which prompts the conditions under which art dies.

Heidegger seeks, of course, for an authentic return to art, to art as poeetry, to art as exhibitor of life, to art as evidence of truth. He begins to think this way, however, only during the mid 1930s, when he not only reads but appropriates the poets and first prepares *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* (*The Origin Of The Work Of Art*), a long essay finally published in 1950.

*Der Ursprung* is a prime textual source for the major shift in Heidegger's lifetime path in thought. However, *Der Ursprung* has been rarely studied in depth in English-speaking circles. I hope to contribute to the analysis of the text but only within a larger and more significant context.

One way to understand this context is simply to introduce the shift, or so-called Kehre (turn). It has been the subject of repeated debate among Heidegger scholars and
can be articulated in glaringly disparate ways: 1) Heidegger forgot how to think in a philosophically responsible manner shortly after 1927, year of the publication of his famous Sein und Zeit (Being and Time); 2) Heidegger began to think, if meditatively, only during the 1930s with his conversion to Hölderlin's poetry; 3) Heidegger both did and did not shift from early to late, for all of his moves were preoccupied throughout with the single concern -- the question of the meaning of Being, the ontological cornerstone for the history of Western thought since the early Greeks; 4) Heidegger's way of thinking is, from beginning to end, impervious to the criticism which dissects what responds only to a different source.

I believe each of these views is incorrect. They distort precisely what did happen with Heidegger during that very real but enigmatic Kehre. This turn is not so much one of fundamental preoccupation -- Heidegger continues to probe the question of the meaning of Being and its correlates, such as truth; the shift involves the way by which he approaches and appropriates his concerns. The Kehre is an issue of perspective, it indicates a renewed way of thinking which in the 1930s begins to turn mythological.

A so-called mythological way of thinking is only incidentally related to the modern themes of symbol and myth. For the 'mythological tendency' has surfaced in authors throughout the world for many centuries: Lae-Tzu of ancient
China, Meister Eckhart and Jacob Boehme of medieval Germany, and the later Martin Heidegger. The historical peculiarity for Heidegger is that his Kehre occurs within a confrontation with modern science, its methods, results, and general view. Heidegger is at least an heir to the problems which aesthetic theory has both addressed and created: such as, how to bridge the gap between subject and object in aesthetic experience without falling prey to the self-consciousness which induced the split initially. It is precisely here, in response to this very modern question, that Heidegger's thinking assumes its typical, generally recognizable bent in the mythological direction with such characteristics as a fondness for ineluctable mystery, a penchant against the academy, the reversal of common or accepted perspectives, and the use of an artistically-informed dialectic.

_Der Ursprung_ is written quasi-poetically, its language cast in an ineffable aura. But the words, which now resemble incantations more than statements of fact, are just preliminary evidence for my thesis. Heidegger's mode of deliberating, his meditative posture, may be deciphered for what it is by reading the terms of its chosen problem, fundamental direction of research, and language of renewal ever against the enteleological coordinates which encompass and define the entire effort.

To speak of 'enteleological coordinates' is to enter the realm where Christian philosophy begins. Such characters are
not marks on a graph but, from one side, concentration-points of meaning and, from the other, law-spheres by which the creation is ordered. These laws have no resemblance to Platonic Forms. They are not self-subsistent entities, of whatever supernatural status. They do not even exist as such, but hold or obtain as the necessary conditions for what does. As directives or commandments, these laws are the historically operative, flexible yet encompassing, 'hands' of the living God.

To his credit, Heidegger thinks so deeply in Der Ursprung that he earns most every right to teach about the questions of origin, method, history of aesthetics, meaning of the work, art, truth, significance of poetry, and the dire condition of art today. Heidegger's grasp of the fundamental issues is exceptional, though his mythologizing tendency perverts the normative understanding of them all. While ruggedly grappling with the terms which collect around the aesthetic sphere, which define the language of its law, Heidegger also reduces that dimension to itself, merges subject and object as Art -- to which he therefore imputes every other issue as a feature of this self-generating absolute. Art becomes its own creator, determining for itself the times in which it is revealed to us mortals in the world.

But the key for interpreting this situation is Heidegger's mythologising move. This seizes upon the question of the
origin, discovers in it an inwardly-defined genetic process by which the cosmos is repeatedly made, reduces given history to an epiphenomenal tale told by those who knew the essential secrets, and, in Heidegger's case, justifies all this about art in the name of truth. He gives to art its sovereign meaning, its own being, character and history, and beckons even humans -- specifically the Germans of his time -- to its special call.

In another name and tongue, without, of course, the political overtones, Heidegger's way of thinking is very popular today, especially among those, even North Americans, who eschew the effects of technological reasoning on their lives and prefer a different and supposedly more rounded and poetic existence.

A Christian cannot help but acknowledge the cultural force behind this general view, for he or she fails in the effort required to defeat such a power. Christian thinking today only provides the possibilities for decisive action, its methods are ironic and apparently negative, its point of departure is merely an outpost at the boundary of this world and it can barely command even a teacher/student relationship. Its mode of conversation is spoken silence in suffering. But this does not mean the end of Christian reflection.

Heidegger's Der Ursprung may be considered according to a variant of the deconstructive method currently utilized.
The essential steps of his thought shall be presented, though on a level different than one of Heidegger's choosing. He works within a dialectic defined by the motif of fall and redemption, which directs his thinking between aesthetic theory and art, respectively. But for Heidegger there is no basic and unbridgeable distinction between these moments of fall and redemption, as they fall into that same process by which the truth of all things is governed. For Heidegger truth and error are the same. What then of normativity in judgment of the entire sphere encircled by art?

Since the eighteenth century art has come into its own. Is there a way to safeguard it, in anticipation of normativity in the dialogue, from those who would exploit art for their fine-sounding purposes? Does aesthetic theory not have a calling, and is not at least part of it the protection of art? Art cannot be a savior, for both it and the dimension it reveals are too fragile.
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Religious background. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) knew as a youth that there is one light, one source of truth in the world. He knew that light came and walked the soil of the earth, participating in all human activity yet without sin. Heidegger also knew that this man, who testified to his presence at the moment of creation, was eventually rejected by an intrinsically hostile humanity. Heidegger also acknowledged the signs of this man's remembrance -- the crucifix, the occasion of bread and wine -- in the Roman Catholic tradition of worship.

But the certainty of this knowledge was too difficult for Heidegger to sustain. Burdened by the concerns of an increasingly secularized age, extraordinarily gifted in the pursuit of philosophy but with a penchant for the obscure, and incited to break free of an apparently pat tradition, Heidegger chose to substitute a differently molded truth for what he had previously confessed (a confession that had at one time, though abortively, sought confirmation in the priesthood). Now the fruits of Heidegger's mature decision are unique though inwardly ambiguous investigations of the plight and possibilities of the time. His writings and published lectures address serious issues with creativity. They also dissent from trust in Christianity.
Understood merely as anecdotes about a personal situation that did transcend the circumstances of youth, these reminders of religion might seem superfluous — especially to the Heidegger-savant without any use for Christianity. And Heidegger rebuffed Christian theology with increasing force after 1927, eventually to the point of mocking the conditions for its possibility. He never acknowledged the claim of Scripture on his thought. But Heidegger also never did extirpate that sense though crucial facet of his intellectual constitution: a religious desire for salvation which operated most recognizably in its propulsion of the man throughout his perpetually restless journey of reflection, yet which also crystallized time and again into specific and even typical formations.

A turn in the labyrinth. A survey of the entire range of Heidegger's work for even the most rudimentary guidelines may give one the uneasy feeling of peering into a labyrinth. Themes become perspectives, not theses. Words become allusions within a privatized code, not terms. Thoughts become emphases in a reflective current, not concepts. Later writings both develop and repeal the results of previous productions. Heidegger apparently outperforms even Plato by merging Parmenides' stasis and Heraclitus' flux in his every move within the whole. Insistent that his entire philosophical project is guided by the single question of the meaning of Being, Heidegger nevertheless confirms the radical break,
turn, or shift in direction which he undertook halfway through
to call even Being and meaning into question. Perhaps
Heidegger is a mystery, a thinker of inscrutable proportions
but without significant form.

However, if one desires to penetrate into Heidegger's
thinking with a coordinated perspective in mind, then he may
enter, if not elsewhere, in the vicinity of the turn (Kehre).
Is this perhaps Heidegger's word for conversion? If so, then how?

Kehre: the move to art. In 1935/36 Heidegger gave lectures
on art and Hölderlin. He had been reading Hölderlin seriously
for years, and by this time certainly kept more than an
acquaintance with German and Greek literature. He had referred
to the kinship of poet and philosopher and quoted Sophocles
at the conclusion of his inaugural address in 1930, and had
even referred to poetry as authentic language in Sein und
Zeit (1927). But H.G. Gadamer notes the surprise among
Heidegger's students that their teacher was beginning, in
1935, to evince a different kind of attitude toward art
than before.

Sein und Zeit may have been an elaborate puzzle within
which to decipher one's route to personal authenticity. And
Heidegger did not present specific theses, conceptual proofs
and a univocal vocabulary in elucidation of the meaning of
human existence. He merely veered on doing so because his
analyses were ontologically layered and his riddles phenome-
logically structured by specific degree. Thus poetry, for instance, was permitted merely a controlled context within which it could play its (small) role.

No wonder that people were amazed to hear Heidegger in 1935/36. He was appropriating Hölderlin and the work of art as essential sources for the course of an altered, more meditative, way of thinking.

Heidegger published a minor essay in 1937 entitled "Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung." But he kept Hölderlin in his heart as he re-worked for more than ten years the 1935/36 lectures on the work of art and its origin. Gadamer rightly claims that their eventual publication in 1950 as Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes is the event by which Heidegger testifies to the meaning of his turn.

Detour through Malraux. Der Ursprung is the first systematic witness to Heidegger's burgeoning and radical commitment to what has been otherwise called "a vague deity known as Art."

The religious implication of these (quoted) words is not forgotten by the man who authored them in his study of art as the modern absolute. Malraux writes:

In this context the religious vocabulary may jar on us; but unhappily we have no other. Though this art is not a god, but an absolute, it has, like a god, its fanatics and its martyrs and is far from being an abstraction.

But Malraux is also too far from abstractions to be far from
saying the truth: "(Art) is not a religion, but a faith."\textsuperscript{12}

His comment makes sense within its context, in which 'religion' is understood primarily in institutional terms and thus may be distinguished from the more generalized application of the word 'faith' to include possibilities for any human being. It just so happens that, in litigating these possibilities, Malraux gives at least an equal opportunity to the modern and distinctively secular faith in the (religiously-neutralized) absolute of art. Therefore Malraux's language is full of sensitively-minded indecisions (not a god/an absolute, absolute/like a god, not an abstraction/vague, an absolute/a deity). What is the osession in Malraux which allows him both to apologize for and to employ effectively a 'religious vocabulary'? Is there in Malraux avoidance of an even deeper truth than admission to the modern commitment to art?

A clue may be found in his following comment on 'Art': "Not a sacrament, but the negation of a tainted world...."\textsuperscript{13}

Thus Malraux probes beneath the apparent identity of a particular modern faith in order to suggest how it operates in commitment to its 'vague Deity'. Yet Malraux's suggestion inadvertently reveals a troubling antinomy: doubly negative motives not only form the heart of a modern attitude but circumscribe the image of its god as well. Then what kind of 'Deity' is this? Has it the power to save? There are some words from the stock of available 'religious terms' which Malraux overlooks but which at least graphically
present the credentials of this faith as -- a process of
divination, idolatry in a secular way.14

If Malraux can be credited as author of some perceptive
lines that almost twitch with their religious nuances, then
he should also be spared from full responsibility for the
larger apotropaic situation. He created neither the modern
fetish for art nor the possibility for similarly-minded
occurrences throughout human history. Malraux is liable, if
at all, only in the degree to which he succumbs to this alien
spirit with its tempting offer of 'Art' as negation of an
otherwise 'tainted world.'

The same variables held for our reading of Der Ursprung.
A verdict on Heidegger's turn to art will not sustain an
appeal, however, if it relies solely on his admission to
the deed:

We inquire ... in order to be able to ask more
truly whether art is or is not an origin in our
historical existence, whether and under what
conditions it can and must be an origin.15

What must be clarified is the way Heidegger commits himself
to that art as origin. What must be specified are Heidegger's
motives toward art in Der Ursprung.

Thesis: a question of truth. Der Ursprung reveals a mytho-
logizing tendency in which the meaning of art is traced
regressively as Heidegger returns through critique of 'ordinary
conceptions' to discover the mystery and primitivity of (what he supposes is) the origin. My reference to this feature of Heidegger's thinking in *Der Ursprung* is not overt philosophical news. Yet Heidegger's mythologizing receives inadequate articulation -- even from Adorno -- when understood merely in terms of his departure from the discipline of philosophy and his embrace of mystically-tinged thinking with poetically-substantiated sources. Heidegger is entirely irrelevant only for those prejudiced rationalistically. His 'mythologizing' manner is but an indication of a way of thinking rooted within the genesis of its own truth.

"Die Wahrheit ist in ihrem Wesen Un-wahrheit." Hofstadter's translation -- "Truth, in its nature, is un-truth" -- is accurate; reflecting even the place where Heidegger puts his hyphen in this central passage from *Der Ursprung*. But Hofstadter's rendition does not suggest the further nuances of "Unwahrheit" in German: 'falsity, misrepresentation'; and of its kin "Unwahrhaftigkeit": 'insincerity, dissimulation; mendacity, untruthfulness.' Heidegger's hyphen and Hofstadter's protective translation only cosmetically belie the thrust of Heidegger's view that truth incorporates dissimulation; concealment, mystery and the uncanny within its very nature. Heidegger says that, "The proposition, 'the nature of truth is untruth,' is not, however, intended to state that truth is at bottom falsehood. Nor does it mean that truth is never itself but, viewed dialectically, is always also its opposite." This dialectic, according to Heidegger, is not an issue to
be resolved primarily by the powers of human reasoning. The relevant opposition within truth can be defined as the negation of a negation but may be elucidated only in terms of the process by which it is revealed.  

Truth is historical. It is an event which occurs subject to the chosen circumstances of its arrival. Thus truth -- first revealed as a legitimate but uncanny concern in the language of the ancient Greeks -- has been further restricted, fated to temporal dissolution, and rendered susceptible to error at every turn throughout its interpretation in the subsequent tradition of Western metaphysics. And this tradition -- instigated by Plato, consummated by Hegel, culminated in Nietzsche -- is fallible precisely for its having forsaken the natural fallibility of truth for one or another notion of its perfection. But Heidegger's truth becomes itself in struggle with its mysteriously congenital taint. The historical character of truth implies that Heidegger is capable not only of appropriating, subversively, the meaning of metaphysics but also of tracing the source of this disease back into the self-generating, self-overcoming circle of truth itself. Truth is equally capable of appearing with unexpected plenitude, blessings and opportunity for the recipients of its munificent motion. Truth is an inwardly motivated power which produces possibilities for the fall and redemption of everything under its rule. Truth is its own origin and is therefore the ontological bossom within which
Heidegger develops the contours of his mythologizing turn to art in *Der Ursprung*. Art is one of the most original and least sullied ways in which truth happens.23

Heidegger insists that art has fallen under the domination of Western aesthetic theories (metaphysics of art) and, in truth, must be restituted to its pristine condition. Yet truth is untruth and is therefore accountable within its own historicity for both the error of aesthetics and the possibility of a new beginning for art. The thrust of Heidegger’s inwardly divided, historically vulnerable truth is his correlation of fall and redemption motives in a cosmoseny of Western culture’s theater for ... not so much the arts as for ... Art.

Martin Heidegger’s *Der Ursprung* powerfully witnesses to his abilities as a thinker. We shall find him grappling seriously with fundamental ontological issues as he seeks a place for art in human affairs. Heidegger is more than sufficiently educated in the history of Western philosophy to make that history a cipher in the movement of his own thinking. He is well-prepared to rebut criticism from rationalistically-minded colleagues in philosophy. He may not exhibit an encyclopedic knowledge of the works and history of art, even from a single period, but such is not his purpose in *Der Ursprung*.

Heidegger uses art in a way which Malraux recognizes and ponders as a modern faith. It is not merely that Heidegger negates the tainted world of metaphysics in his appeal to the transcendent, self-originating Art. He builds a world around
Art, supplying it with a total history, a capacity for fall
and redemption, rule over the meaning of artists and art works,
and confirmation in the name of truth. But such 'Art' exists
only as the result of Heidegger's mythologically-oriented
hystasis of what is really an irreducible created sphere
of specifically-qualified aesthetic activities and their
interpretations.²⁴ Heidegger's 'Art' is evidence of his
attempt to 'breach the boundaries' of normatively-interrelated,
creaturely realities in order to seize upon a single aspect in
hopes of salvation for his own way in thinking. Will he then
breathe both curse and cure on the already justified zone of
aesthetic functionning?

The interrogation of Heidegger will continue, though not
before we have decided upon a more mundane concern: where to
begin the analysis of Der Ursprung?

Heidegger does not proceed in this essay according to
conventional scholarly techniques. He avoids a certifiable
method for his thinking. His evidence is anything but inde-
dependently verifiable. Even the first pages of Der Ursprung
appear to be already interpreted from an invisible source. It
seems as if virtually every step in Heidegger's meditative
journey is at least but no more than a reflection of every-
thing else.

Yet a clue may be found at the close of the tale of
Heidegger's production-process of the text itself.

The production mystery: a question of dating the text. When
Heidegger began to lecture in 1935 on the work of art he was undergoing some major transformations in his way of thinking. Over the next fifteen years he consolidated these changes while writing *Der Ursprung*, published in 1950 but dated 1935/36.

The fastidious historian should be amused at Heidegger's cross-dating and be even perplexed at the gap of silence between 1935-50, of which Heidegger acknowledged only that he made alterations in the language of the text. We do not have 'hard facts' because Heidegger's lecture notes from the mid 1930s are not available. So no basis for comparison exists regarding his pre-publication editorial process. The finished product is free of the intellectual sedimentation that often appears in works created over an extended period of time (compare the two editions of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, for example). As if this evidential silence were not already exasperating, Heidegger's only admission -- that of changes in language -- feeds suspicion in the knowledge that at this time language was the forum for his thinking.

Heidegger's essay is subject neither to the demands of intellectual autobiography nor to the constraints of newspaper reportage; nor, for that matter, to bibliographical omissions. But the complaint of the fastidious historian highlights one crucial feature of Heidegger's manner in writing *Der Ursprung*: it appears to be an anachronistic throwback to the ancient days when texts were authored anonymously, even cultically, in the mists of the mountains. This Heidegger is no longer the writer
of 1927 who, in Sein und Zeit, boldly announced the philosophical foundations for a radically secular, twentieth-century view of man. Der Ursprung is the testament to another, more mysterious agenda.

In Der Ursprung we have a text which asserts its own enigmatic terms, bounded precariously between two rather distinct but related time coordinates. The bibliographical situation suits the author perfectly: in terms of his dialectical inclinations, the gulf between 1925 and 1950 announces the transitional status of Der Ursprung in Heidegger's ultimate philosophical program, and their linkage suggests the resolution with which he binds the text's historical beginnings and its published end. Even in these terms Der Ursprung represents a text within a text, a commentary on the circumstances of its path to production. These circumstances submit to the demands of time -- which according to the text is not a series of calculable 'now' moments but a mysterious process of return to an origin that itself instigates the entire cycle. Time gathers itself. In the end it collects its own beginning despite the weight of intervening years. Its structure is circular without static perfection implied in the figure.

Heidegger reflects these views in the most apparently mundane aspects of his essay. But he heightens the impression of the text's precarious temporal status, its transitional identity, its obdurate imperfection with the addition of an epilogue.

The presence of an epilogue suggests that what Heidegger
says in Der Ursprung requires commentary and reinforcement. If in Heidegger's thinking the end is the beginning, then we should commence our study of Der Ursprung with the epilogue. Yet for Heidegger the end is also the beginning of the end. His epilogue is eschatologically-tinged with meditations on the possible death of art. He is convinced that art is presently in crisis.

Thus Heidegger begins his Der Ursprung at the end, with reflections on the fall and demise of art. The occasion for his remarks is not the specific mismanagement or worse of any particular work of art but some judgments by G.W.F. Hegel more than a century before on the imminent collapse of the meaning of art in modern times.
Epilogue: Hegel and the fall of art into its predicament.

Heidegger writes in the epilogue of Der Ursprung:

Almost from the time when specialized thinking about art and the artist began, this thought was called aesthetic. Aesthetics takes the work of art as an object, the object of aisthesis, of sensuous apprehension in the wide sense. Today we call this apprehension experience.

... Experience is the source that is standard not only for art appreciation and enjoyment, but also for artistic creation.... Yet perhaps experience is the element in which art dies. The dying occurs so slowly that it takes a few centuries.

To be sure, people speak of immortal works of art and of art as an eternal value.... Does this talk about immortal works and the eternal value of art have any content or substance? Or are these merely the half-baked cliches of an age when great art, together with its nature, has departed from among men?²⁷

This commentary seems to reel under the shadow of G.W.F. Hegel: author of lectures in aesthetics (last delivery notably during the winter of 1828-29) that in Heidegger's words are "the most comprehensive reflection on the nature of
art that the West possesses . . .", 28 Hegel is -- for Heidegger -- representative of the science of aesthetics in the modern sense of the term, and is thus accountable for the reduction of art to object for human experience. Even so, Heidegger hesitates to accuse Hegel personally for this development but views him as the one through whom has been 'perfected' the metaphysical type of reflection liable for the historical demise of Western art. Yet to what extent is Heidegger himself subject to this metaphysics? It appears from the quote above that Heidegger acquiesces in that nothing he says at least on the surface is not also something of which Hegel might have been the original author. The themes, terms, and agenda of this passage from Heidegger's epilogue were patented by Hegel. 29 But there is another side to what Heidegger declares here. His underlying resistance to Hegel surfaces in his questioning spirit and in what may be a guarded *reductio ad absurdum*. The situation can be clarified, first of all, by noting that Heidegger's credit to Hegel for having announced for the first time, in the consummate terms of aesthetic theory, the irrevocable spiritual irrelevance of art for modern times may be studiously uncomplimentary. Heidegger's labored though ironical attitude to Hegel is exemplified in a later portion of the epilogue, where he responds to Hegel's death of art theme as specifically as his way of thinking permits. How does Heidegger make this theme his own? 30
He interprets some of Hegel's assertions --

'Art no longer counts for us as the highest manner in which truth obtains existence for itself.

'One may well hope that art will continue to advance and perfect itself, but its form has ceased to be the highest need of the spirit.

'In all these relationships art is and remains for us, on the side of its highest vocation, something past.'

-- by inverting them with thoughtful distortion into questions which seek but have not yet decided on the truth:

But the question remains: is art still an essential and necessary way in which that truth happens which is decisive for our historical existence, or is art no longer of this character? If, however, it is such no longer, then there remains the question why this is so. The truth of Hegel's judgment has not been decided; for behind this verdict there stands Western thought since the Greeks, which thought corresponds to a truth of beings that has already happened. Decision upon the judgment will be made, when it is made, from and about this truth of what is. Until then the judgment remains in force.

It may still remain in force but only as a shell of Hegel's
(own dialectical) intention to declare art's inevitable collapse in the spiritual progress of world history. Heidegger shuns Hegel's triumphally subjectivistic and spiritualistic prejudices in formulating the conditions under which he will interpret Hegel's judgment.

Heidegger confronts Hegel with negatively poised, fractionally inclined questions with 'truth' their keyword. For Heidegger truth is subject neither to facts nor to human verdicts. His commitment to truth as un-truth leads him, first of all, to undermine the self-certainty of Hegel's judgment and then to appropriate the verdict as a sign of the critical, existentially perplexing and potentially ruinous situation for art. But the truth is not merely that art is suffering through a fall. For this is its moment of un-truth. Heidegger identifies the crisis for art as only one aspect of the truth which motivates him. As a negation of the negation of art, the other side of truth guides him back through Hegel in mythological fashion on a journey of return to question the origin of Western thought with the Greeks. In meditation on this origin, Heidegger hopes to decide, in time, on the roots of Western aesthetics as these have consequently crystallized in Hegel's tragically unwitting declarations. Heidegger's regressive purpose is not just to delineate the source of an apparently defunct tradition. He reflects on the truth of that origin in order to redeem for art the possibility of a new beginning.
The first word of Der Ursprung is "Ursprung," robbed of its definite article to heighten the mystery of beginning. Heidegger begins the text in search of a response to what has already transpired in the epilogue. From this perspective we introduce Der Ursprung in its full sweep.

Return to the origin. Heidegger's gambit in Der Ursprung gives the impression that I am wrong to suggest that at least a variation on the theme of creation does not belong to his arsenal of essential motives in thinking. I am not referring here to the supposition of artistic creativity, which Heidegger reproaches at the outset. His first words seem to announce quite innocently the ontological constitution of the world as that may be found at the source:

Origin here means that from and by which something is what it is and as it is. What something is, as it is, we call its essence or mature. The origin of something is the source of its mature. The question concerning the origin of the work of art asks about the source of its nature.

Heidegger's language is too burdened by explanation to match "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ..." in simplicity and depth. His discursiveness already introduces a disquieting note, but the attempt must be considered worthy until we learn that, in Heidegger's view, not everything originates in the best possible way.
There is no concluding 'that it was good' in Heidegger's sketch of the beginning, for he immediately mentions the nefarious intrusion of the 'usual view' -- dominated by the pull of subjectivity. And this reference entirely disrupts the mood of ontologically-organized innocence:

On the usual view, the work arises out of and by means of the activity of the artist. 34

Compelled to confront this bias, Heidegger must interpret specifically what he means even though his self-conscious effort will inevitably remove him from the quietude of the origin:

But by what and whence is the artist what he is? By the work; for to say that the work does credit to the master means that it is the work that first lets the artist emerge as a master of his art. The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nevertheless, neither is the sole support of the other. In themselves and in their interrelations artist and work are each of them by virtue of a third thing which is prior to both, namely that which also gives artist and work of art their names -- art. 35

Despite Heidegger's appeal to the prior or middle figure which generates both artist and work, subject and object, in its enclosure, his break, his moment of separation from this
pristine beginning has already been accomplished. Not entirely without significance is that Heidegger, echoing Nietzsche's declarations on the vapidity of 'being,' rhetorically admits: "Art -- this is nothing more than a word to which nothing real any longer corresponds." 37

The first words of Der Ursprung are evidence of Heidegger's search for redemption in Art -- the primordial, all-inclusive, ontological foundation for whatever they customarily divides. But all he knows at the beginning is an a-normatively conceived circle of language in which art is self-consciously divulged as an already-differentiated origin. In this case the net effect of his introduction has been to establish the basic vocabulary of his ensuing argument and to locate the circle within which he thinks.

The circle: in critique of method. Heidegger says of the realm where he meditates, moves and has his being:

Thus we are compelled to follow the circle. This is neither a makeshift nor a defect. To enter upon this path is the strength of thought, to continue on it is the feast of thought, assuming that thinking is a craft. 38

Were I to seek for an account and strict justification of method in Der Ursprung, then I should be disappointed. This failure will be disconcerting to those trained, for instance, on a philosophical diet of logical positivism. But Heidegger refuses to comply with the strictures of modern
ways of thinking which, despite differences, stem from Descartes in their obsession for the methodological calculation of self-conscious certainties. 29 Heidegger commits himself in Der Ursprung to following a circle of festively non-ration-

distic meditation.

The critical side of what Heidegger means by the circle is actually the overcoming, the abolition of methodological circumspection in the determination of the meaning of art. Heidegger suggests two approaches for the ordinary and self-deceptive practice of aesthetics.

One is that the nature of art can be understood by a comparative examination of actual art works. But, Heidegger rejoins, how can we know our examination is based on works of art, that is, on the genuine articles, if we do not know beforehand what art is? Can we rely on our comparative methods if we are not even 'certain' of the standard -- art -- by which their veracity will be judged?40

A key to Heidegger's maladversion to the accepted methods of art-study may be found in his comment on the second possible route: the meaning of art cannot be derived by deduction from higher concepts.41 Such a deduction also presupposes in advance the characteristics that will logically frame the work of art. Heidegger's deflation of the appeal to 'higher concepts' reveals the source of his misgivings about both the comparative/empirical and logically deductive paths.

The focus of Heidegger's concern is on the uncritically-
determined epistemological point of departure for the customary ways of 'treating' art. Their common view is that a work of art is an object for perusal, scrutiny and identification by a subject full of his own certified methods.

Heidegger challenges the employment of this subject/object scheme as illegitimate for 1) its reduction of the original integrity of art to human thought-constructions, derivative at that, and 2) its self-justification of human motives in the name of rational technique. But the bifurcation of intimate human acquaintance with art into a game for cognoscente itself hides presuppositions which, when uncovered by Heidegger, will embarrass the search for intellectual domination in the aesthetic sphere. Heidegger intends to shatter the self-complacency of the usual attitudes, despite the expectation that he will be accused of shocking violations: "Anyone can easily see that we are moving in a circle. Ordinary understanding demands that this circle be avoided because it violates logic."42

So Heidegger turns to art, the prior term, and begins to follow its circle. This circle is but the shape of the origin and the figure for truth. Yet, at this early juncture, Heidegger's circle is still relatively empty, consisting of the three coordinates of art, work, and artist. Its full content will only appear in reading the steps of Heidegger's way through Der Ursprung. However, even now we may peer into the void with which he begins and discuss especially its negative implications.43
**Comments on Hegel and others.** What other German philosopher denounced customary philosophical understanding in the introductions of some of his most important books? It is fitting for us now to re-introduce Hegel, that Owl of Minerva, whose spirit is beginning to settle more deeply into the shadows of Heidegger’s thinking in *Der Ursprung*.

Was it not with 'consummate' philosophical style that Hegel, in his *Verlesungen über die Ästhetik*, combined the powers of both comparison and logical deduction in determination of the spiritual significance of art for all time? Did not these lectures trace the historical development of art through comparison of the symbolic, classical, and finally romantic stages? Did not Hegel identify the logical structure of art as the immediate level of absolute self-awareness, in which the meaning of art is deduced as the appearance of beauty in relation to both the principles of mind and the necessities of nature? Did not Hegel also bind up the meaning of art with a methodologically certified interpretation guaranteed by his philosophical investment in ultimate, and self-justified, ideas? The evidence says so, though if so, then, despite Heidegger’s contrary silence in his introduction to *Der Ursprung*, we have re-discovered the key suspect in Heidegger’s continuing case against aesthetics and even more depths to his suit against Hegel.

In the Greek sense of the word as 'turn' or 'way,' Hegel is Heidegger’s *topos* for a Western tradition in the scrutiny of art whose inheritance he turns from, but without
which entirely, at least for the moment, he cannot find his own way.

Now Heidegger is an outsider to Hegel's general will and testament for the future progress of philosophy; he seizes upon a significant part of the whole and, instinctively, parries it into the question of the truth of the subject/object relation in the interpretation of art. Heidegger circles around the issue in Der Ursprung. He identifies the subject/object framework as the realm within which aesthetics and the cult of experience can flourish. But then this epistemological relationship is also the setting within which art may die. Convinced at once of the truth and the un-truth of the aesthetic attitude, of its power both to identify and induce the crisis of art, Heidegger initiates the search for an origin which transcends the Hegelian problematic.

His journey is not also without traces of recollection at having stood before 1950 on the partially submerged and sinking berth of existential phenomenology.

Heidegger's dialogue with Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Husserl and his own Sein und Zeit can be deciphered with varying degrees of resonance even in the introduction to the circle of Der Ursprung.

Kierkegaard's critique of aestheticism in the two volumes of Either/Or appears in the distant background of Heidegger's rejection of autonomy for both artist and the aesthete's sphere. Kierkegaard's notion of repetition,
however, drives to the heart of what Heidegger means by circular thinking. 48 Nietzsche certainly inspires Heidegger to uncover the motives of those who would mask their will to dominate art by their development of aesthetic theories. And Nietzsche’s myth of the eternal return confirms Heidegger’s mythologizing inclination to seek a new beginning for art in the cycle of generation within the origin itself. 49 Husserl’s phenomenology helps Heidegger to question the self-justification of aesthetic theories and to re-establish the pre-theoretical terms of the debate: artist/artwork and the appeal to the middle term — art — as that appears prior to both and gives each a name. 50 Heidegger’s phenomenological background surfaces in his effort to embody more concretely the stark Hegelian terminology of aesthetic subject and object. Thus Heidegger investigates the relationship of artist and artwork on the basis of a prior genesis encircling the entire region of art. Heidegger’s way of thinking here is implicitly phenomenological, though his motives here cannot be fathomed without explicit reference to Sein und Zeit.

In this publication Heidegger develops a hermeneutical circle as the double-edged, phenomenologically-arranged context for 1) the dissolution of the reified categories of the Western metaphysical tradition and 2) the self-contained appropriation of the conditions necessary to elucidate potentially authentic human existence. In slightly less dense terms Heidegger commits himself to the language of the circle
in *Der Ursprung*. He still proceeds on the conviction that the phenomenon (of art) will appear of itself upon the eradication of errant human thought-constructions. He still works on the basis of a critique/response mode of thinking. Yet these are merely thematic similarities between *Sein und Zeit* and *Der Ursprung*. The 1935-50 text is witness to such a differently refined mode of thinking that the meaning of its circle changes. Heidegger's earlier attempt at ontological re-structuration within the hermeneutics of the fall and rejuvenative possibilities for the human Dasein is now understood as merely preliminary. In *Der Ursprung* Heidegger does not presuppose human existence but seeks rather for the origin of the conditions which will possibly render that existence humane. Finding this origin in art Heidegger denies the bias toward human subjectivity, not only as that surfaces in his *Sein und Zeit* but also as it appears among the contributors to the general movement dubbed existential phenomenology.

Heidegger may be indebted to these rebels for insights in his own effort to re-think and break free from the tradition. But he disavows Kierkegaard's isolation of truth as subjectivity, Nietzsche's adulation of the will and Husserl's drift in the direction of the transcendental ego as insufficiently radical antidotes, particularly to Hegel's hypostasis of absolute subjectivity. Their commitments actually crystallize the last remnants of a disintegrating Western inheritance, and fail to confront the metaphysical past in its entirety.
It is therefore no accident that one of the very few philosophical figures named in Der Ursprung is Hegel. But it is also true that Heidegger does not mention Hegel by name throughout the main body of the text. I identified the undercurrent of critical dialogue with Hegel in Heidegger's introduction to Der Ursprung. That undercurrent pervades the rest of Heidegger's argument inasmuch as it deepens the critique/response, fall/redemption (in art) motives which we have already traced from his epilogical return through Hegel to the beginning with the origin.

The circular origin in truth: the first redemptive evidence. We have noticed -- though not necessarily in terms that Heidegger would acknowledge -- the insufficiency, the ontological relativity, the immediately negative aspect of the truth in his introduction to the theme of art as origin. Heidegger's dialectic permits no more opportunities at the beginning than either implicit critique of or positivistic acquiescence to Hegel's agenda for art. Thus Heidegger forfeits the possibility for a normative beginning. He will not assert anything more at the start than the already compromised context and direction of his search. But for Heidegger it is true that Hegel's aesthetics is untrue. Heidegger will not build on the assertion of truth in order to reverse triumphalistically every point in Hegel's program. The truth must still be found. And Heidegger seeks for it in festive meditation upon the thin, still empty but present
circle within which is generated the truth of art as origin.

At the center of his 'festivities' is Heidegger's interpretation of the word for truth. For him truth is not the correspondence of human judgment and objective fact. Such a correspondence theory is merely evidence of the human, all-too-human desire to manage the circumstances of existence in the most intellectually expedient and forgetful ways. In rejecting this reduction, Heidegger first retrieves the ancient Greek word for truth, ἀλήθεια, which he translates as the whiddemness or 'unconcealedness of beings.'

He focuses on the privative in the Greek (α-) as evidence that truth is neither a certifiable subjective state nor an objective piece of information. Truth is un-truth. Truth is a negatively-inclined happening or event in which, in battle with its own dissimulative and fugatory tendencies, it shines through the realm of beings to reveal them in their finite authenticity. Truth is inwardly motivated. Hence the most that can be said of truth is that it is the mysterious opening, the uncanny clearing or setting within which the historical destiny of art, for instance, is decided. Truth for Heidegger is but the name for the process by which the fall and redemption of art is revealed.

Therefore, in the light of truth, Heidegger confronts Hegel's apotheosis of spirit. He deconstructs Hegel's verdict on the death of art. He dismantles Hegel's logical synthesis of subject and object, preferring instead to merge them in view
of their common origin. He rescues art from Hegel's supposedly scientific grip. He returns to time the question of genealogy. And he replaces Hegel's idea of totality, an instance of which defined art, with a moving, self-generative cycle of ontological coordinates (i.e. the circle). Art is in truth its own origin. Heidegger's spirit in thought is mytho-logical and his fundamental commitment is to the salvation of his own thinking in appeal to art. He will return to the origin and wait there for the emergence of the art he seeks.

Interlude. Is Heidegger's thinking in Der Ursprung still hermeneutical? It had been that way in Sein und Zeit. Yet this label fades in significance as Heidegger removes human existence from the center of his analyses. Hermeneutics, of course, had traditionally focussed on the ways a feeling, historical or creative subject approached a text, artwork or mind from the past; in Sein und Zeit Heidegger deepened the general effort to interpret the temporal conditions of being human. But, by the time of Der Ursprung, he thinks in a circle with a different orientation and root. For the origin is self-generating, it is its own beginning not subject to the factors of self-consciousness. An ontological concern now takes precedence, though naturally it informs Heidegger's handling of the mere surface questions of perspective, comparative modes of thinking and avenues for philosophical communication.
One implication of Heidegger's circle is that his interlocutor must either fall into it and proceed acceptingly along the meditative steps or remain outside as a metaphysical interleper. Heidegger keenly realizes that his way of thinking is not conceptually neutral. Unfortunately, neutrality is an issue he defines only in confrontation with the secularized and scientifically-geared terms of modern Western thought. He ignores the possibility that religious motives may direct the course of his thinking more than he knows. Heidegger fails to recognize some of his most fundamental presuppositions.

A way to elucidate these hidden axioms is through a kind of mimesis not subject to but knowledgeable of their effect on Heidegger. He never employs the language of 'fall' and 'redemption' and never admits its power to articulate the contours of his thought. Yet such lack of evidence is only apparently exculpatory in connection with a thinker inclined not to allow the usual opportunities for open communication into his meditative sametum. Heidegger's way of thinking in Der Ursprung is exceptionally closed, insular, and combative. I therefore counter by testing him with a different language which may have heuristic appeal.

1) The introduction of fall and redemption motives in a mythological direction accounts for Heidegger's style of writing and manner of thinking. He represents a rare breed among twentieth-century art interpreters. He tries to divine
the inner workings of art in a way much more reminiscent of mystics settled in the hills than of current philosophical analysts of the logic of language.

2) The debate between Heidegger and anyone committed to reason is essentially fruitless. The two sides think at cross-purposes at the expense of the philosophical pursuit of truth. Advantages, then, accrue to the interpretative language of mythologizing/fall/redemption in that it confronts Heidegger, reads Der Ursprung, and refers to presuppositional issues without having to succumb to his alternatives.

3) Saying that Heidegger’s thought is mythologically-oriented toward art is not merely to describe but also to assess it. He reduces the question of the Origin of all things to the given realm of temporal processes, retrojects the birth and death aspects of these processes onto a supposedly self-generating, primal ultimate, calls it Art, merges with its cycle of becoming, and appeals to it for redemption from destructive modern tendencies. Now, is this an assessment or the repetition of empty words?

One may easily accuse Heidegger of sheer speculation in Der Ursprung. But such a response only serves to avoid a unique, twentieth-century representative for a certain kind of thinking, and fails to account for the appearance of this tendency throughout history. The mythologizing attitude is not just a personal decision. It is an occasionally realized yet typical way for human beings to interpret the general
spheres, the law-coordinates, of the creation order. In Der Ursprung, Heidegger neglects every other consideration by which the universe can be judged in order to meld his preferred themes into the aboriginal, self-generating Art which has been described. This effort is mythologically-oriented for its (attempted) circumvention of creaturely norms in search of a prior genesis.

The language of fall and redemption not only identifies the dialectical motives behind Heidegger's turn but also subjects them to the fundamental question of normativity. If Heidegger initiates his reflections with a (supposed) fall, then he neglects the need for good and ineradicable beginnings. The best he then can do is to incorporate the fall-motive into the solution of his concerns. This situation clarifies Heidegger's definition of 'truth' -- the core term of Der Ursprung. His appeal to truth as justification for his path in thought only confirms its absence of normativity: "Truth is un-truth."

4) The fall/redemption motif is an effective background for understanding why the analysis of Der Ursprung should start with the epilogue. Scholars do begin this way, perhaps for the sake of convenience but only to introduce the inscrutable Heidegger. One might want to mention Hegel, themes from the history of philosophy, and Heidegger's remarks on art as a riddle. Yet relief from the angst of immediately interpreting the first page of Der Ursprung will not come from
such practical maneuvers. One must relinquish convenience and discover why the epilogue is also the beginning.

Heidegger wrote the epilogue after 1936, though also not after 1950. Given the history of the essay's composition, this fact means that the epilogue belongs, as received, to the essential body of text. 57

The move from the epilogue to the initial page of Der Ursprung appears to be in violation of the ordinary codes of human reading, though even this residivism is part of the mimetic search for the Heideggerian compromise of the nature of truth. The double beginning of this interpretation indicates the interplay of fall/redemption motives in Heidegger's strategy for organizing Der Ursprung.

5) The general theme of fall and redemption also accounts for my interjection of this interlude, though only in the sense that I have paused between the two versions of this schema in reading Der Ursprung. The first has been introduced as between the crisis for art and the origin in its circle. The second repeats the essential motives of the first but then develops in its own way as the full articulation of Heidegger's thought in the main portion of the text.

Heidegger will remember everything that has already transpired. He will discuss how aesthetics deform art. He will continue to explore the steps along the original circle and also begin to define them in, as it were, a ladder
of transcendence: from thing to work, from work to truth, from truth to art.

As for Heidegger's entire program in *Der Ursprung*, the gyre may be the better representation. Whatever the image for his thinking is, it must be temporally circumscribed and dialectically shaded in the regressive spiral to the truth of art as origin.

We have already traced Heidegger's thought from (1) to (2). Now we are moving to (3) and then from there to (4), in hopes of returning again to (1).
The history of aesthetic error. Heidegger's reduction of the reduction of art to thing. Inasmuch as Heidegger does not construct his ontological universe from a stable of self-substantial, eternal, objective realities, he cannot deduce from their equally determinate definitions a sort of a priori critique of Western aesthetics. Heidegger seeks for historically positioned angles or perspectives, for the appearance of truth subject to time. In *Der Ursprung* he hopes to penetrate into a unique perspective on behalf of art. But in the genesis of Heidegger's view there are refractory angles and questionable horizons at virtually its moment of inception. Therefore his attack on Western habits of thinking proceeds along the line of an internally based, reductio ad absurdum argument.

Heidegger's procedure naturally raises questions concerning the depth of his loyalty to his own philosophical inheritance. It is not quite precise to say that Heidegger intends to abrogate Western thought completely. Nor does he view his own interpretation of traditional categories as a token dusting of intellectual skeletons from the distant and irrelevant past. Heidegger needs this history as the ontological hieroglyphics within which he hopes to decipher for himself the transmission of truth from the profound world of the pre-Platonic Greeks. Even Heidegger appeals to a source of dialectically-touched normativity at the start of his reduction of Western aesthetics.
Heidegger's representation of the early Greeks in Der Ursprung cannot, however, enter too directly into the discussion of the theme. Were it to do so then Heidegger's cherished ancients would be rendered as susceptible to the full impact of his reduction as anyone within the subsequent Western metaphysical tradition. Thus Heidegger traces only a few but essential lines in his portrait: the ancient Greeks were marvelously privileged by the revelation of mysterious Being, limited presence, and finite truth in their art, thinking and speech. But Heidegger has no intention of imitating the customs of these people. His own motives do not permit immediate reproduction of any sort. Heidegger discerns; in fact, the tragic but inevitable submission of these Greeks to the other side of the truth that made their language so specific, their thinking so timely. Their instinctive and ecstatic experience of Being and time fell prey to the hubris of believing that time can be conquered through the creation of static entities in art and in thought. Yet it was not the best, throbbing sculptures which demuded the original Greek experience. It was a fate, implicit from the beginning, which led them to the thing as prototype for the interpretation of anything which might be. And this tendency was consolidated with Plato's reification of transcendent forms (and Form), each defined by its own quality and thus not only sundered from the realm of ordinary appearance but also, as a metaphysics of bifurcation, ineluctably separated from the integral vision of the ancient Greeks.
The currents of these effects and responsibilities do force Heidegger into a decision: he will break with Greek thinking as it turns metaphysical and will preserve the memory of what occurred before. Heidegger justifies this move by retrieving the ancient Greek word for truth -- \textit{aletheia} -- which with his negatively oriented translation permits him both to recall an authentic past and to seek, without subservience to the intervening tradition, a new beginning for art.\textsuperscript{62}

Heidegger is an ontologically-inclined revolutionary. The critical thrust of his argument is that Western man, so confident of his ability to understand the interstices of the universe, remains oblivious to his own prejudices toward the work of art. Heidegger finds throughout Western history, at least since the time of Plato, a very strong tendency to dominate the work by treating it as if it were a 'mere' thing with aesthetic qualifications of one or another definition. This inclination has obscured the self-originating power of art. Its integrity, its meaning have been lost and forgotten.

The early Greeks had a word for truth which Heidegger recalls and renders as 'un-concealedness,' meaning that truth is a process of self-revealing within a hidden and mysterious background. Westerners since that time have forgotten this context, looking instead to concepts and categories -- such as allegory and symbol -- for the definition of how art is beautiful. Judgment thus becomes the locus of aesthetic truth.
This move, which Plate instigated with his logical demarcation of the real status of Ideas, is one that Heidegger radically rejects. Truth for Heidegger is not the certainty of a set of propositions, nor is error the lack of either consistency or verifiability for others. Heidegger's perspective suggests that his handling of the supposed errors of Western aesthetic theories will not degenerate into a mere shuffle between alternative propositional systems. Rather Heidegger hopes to meditate his way into the heart of the situation, identifying the motives of the theoretical frameworks which, despite their apparently internecine battle for supremacy in philosophical circles, tragically continue their common effort to subdue the artwork by force of will and ratiocination. With his therapeutic regression to the source of the difficulty Heidegger will press for a human awakening to the origin, truth and being of art.  

Art lies hidden but still vibrant beneath the foot of metaphysical man.

Yet Heidegger's treatment of the history of Western thought is not without its own violence. By no means is Heidegger's return to the origin of the work of art regulated by a saintly attitude toward what prevents him from getting there. He treats the human beings who think within the context he hopes to overcome as nameless creatures belonging to a history anonymously determined as untrue by the fate of the ancient Greeks. He reduces the apparently reductive Western tradition of art-interpretation to the lowest level of absurdity,
i.e., its mishandling of the thing. The irony is clever because it eventually gives Heidegger the opportunity to claim art for himself. But his dialectical humor ends with our introduction of the question: if metaphysics has no avenue to art, then how can it be held responsible for producing a certain crisis except as Heidegger's derisive choice for an a-normative beginning within the circle of his own transcending steps in thinking? Is at least a part of Martin Heidegger that shadowy metaphysical man he yearns to subdue?

Consider that when Heidegger refers to the relationships of 1) substance/accidents (as developed in the Greek language), 2) concept/manifold of sensations, and 3) form/matter, we know enough, given Heidegger's preference for primary thinkers, to name Aristotle, Kant and Plato as his interlocutors in assessment of the thing.

Heidegger's critique is not equally trenchant toward each of these philosophers. He is decidedly protective of Aristotle. Heidegger accuses the Romans of having thoughtlessly translated the fluid and primordial language of the Greeks into the propositional grid of their Latin. Thus what with Aristotle had been integrally-conceived processes within the thing were fractured and ossified as such in the mistaken belief that lingual subject and predicate were, in their connection, the model for reality. And by now it is commonplace, apparently natural, to correlate the structure of the sentence -- assumed to be true -- with the identity and
characteristics of a given entity. Introducing the language of subject and predicate, Heidegger begins to demur:

A simple propositional statement consists of the subject, which is the Latin translation, hence already a reinterpretation, of *hupokeimenon* and the predicate, in which the thing's traits are stated of it. 69

The translation of the Greek into Latin was for Heidegger no innocent process:

Beneath the seemingly literal and thus faithful translation there is concealed, rather, a translation of Greek experience into a different way of thinking. Roman thought takes over the Greek words without a corresponding, equally authentic experience of what they say, without the Greek word. The rootlessness of Western thought begins with this translation. 70

How did such rootlessness occur? With their stabilization of truth in the correlation of sentenceness and thing-structure, the Romans not only encouraged the development of what was to become, with Descartes, the problematic of epistemological subject and object but also presupposed and thus forgot the original source of their translations in the "basic Greek experience of the Being of beings in the sense of presence." 71

The integrity of the thing is violated by the human obsession for interpretations which command merely its surface appeal.

Yet for Heidegger the inner being of the thing is always there,
always available in undisguised presence for those who know how to seek for it. It is in light of this presence that Heidegger remembers, if not the name then the significance of, an Aristotle rooted in the authenticity of Greek experience.

It appears that Heidegger and Aristotle have so much in common with their 1) study of the history of relevant philosophical concerns, 2) elucidation of the self-originating power of nature (phusis), 3) retrieval of the language of the Being of beings, 4) attempt to overcome ontologically-dichotomous interpretations of whatever is (whether Platonic or metaphysical as such), and 5) appeal to the self-disclosure of the thing as evidence for the development of one's way in thinking. It is therefore quite understandable that Heidegger would want to protect Aristotle from the vagaries of Roman forgetfulness.

Now Heidegger's defense of Aristotle may well serve, for instance, as a clue for independent scholars parsing the Latinate, Christianized Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas from the thought of The Greek Philosopher. But Heidegger's allocation of metaphysical guilt between Aristotle and the Romans is itself suspect. For Aristotle systematized the first Western grammar of philosophical logic, identified the locus of truth in the consistency of propositional subject and object, and sought for rational control over every entity he found by classifying it according to a pre-arranged whole.
Are the Romans -- whoever they may be in Heidegger's historiography -- then responsible for the rootlessness of Western thought? Or is even Aristotle tainted? What about Heidegger's narrative?

It is too mild to say that Heidegger depicts Aristotle without intellectual objectivity. Heidegger dissimulates with a protective cover for Aristotle in his search for redemptive footings within the erroneous history of metaphysics.

Heidegger grants Aristotle a very good memory for the primordial Greek experience of the thing. And Heidegger builds on this blessing in order to ask again the question of the often violated thing. Yet it was precisely the Greek preoccupation with the thing as "standard type of" being which led to the demise of their thinking in metaphysics.

Heidegger should also deny Aristotle any access to the work of art. Aristotle's Poetics, for instance, may be rich with the profundities of Greek life though it presupposes that theater and poetry are aesthetically-qualified things subject to rational control. 77

Heidegger is much less inspired to defend the reputation of Kant. Coincidentally Heidegger identifies the aistheton -- a word later to be applied to the discipline of aesthetic theory though used by Kant without that implication in his epistemology -- as that which is perceptible to "sensations in the senses belonging to sensibility." 78 Thus Heidegger reduces Kant's view of the thing as aistheton to the smallest
circle, according to which "a thing is nothing but the unity of a manifold of what is given in the senses." Heidegger debunks Kant, and taking advantage of Kant’s use of the word 'aesthetic' enlarges his theme to accuse aesthetic theory of studying the most isolated sensations of human experience.

Kant is usually understood as the father of the 'Copernican revolution' in philosophy, in which the subjective, human factor in the acquisition of knowledge is given at least formal constitutive responsibility. This functional capacity divests the human being of direct access to the 'thing in itself' and permits understanding of only these features of the object apparent to a post-Newtonian scientific perspective. This Kant allows for the sake of preserving the other side of the equation, namely the freedom of man which provides artistic and moral conduits to the permanent truths of the universe. Heidegger thus compromises everything that is decisive for Kant, insisting instead that what is important is merely Kant’s desire for proximity to the thing:

In the thing-concept just mentioned there is not so much an assault upon the thing as rather an inordinate attempt to bring it into the greatest possible proximity to us.

How can Heidegger say this, given Kant’s battle to restrict human understanding to the appearances of reality?

Heidegger misreads Kant for his own 'strong' purposes, in
connection with a violation perhaps necessary to refute the
bad memory of a generation of neo-Kantians predominant
decades before Der Ursprung was published. But Heidegger
reduces Kant to such a level of absurdity that one wonders
if he, author of an hotly-contested but certainly informed
book on Kant in 1929, is not now in Der Ursprung sacrificing
the intellect for his own mythologizing purposes.

A mysterious, larger truth motivates Heidegger to intro-
duce palpable falsehoods in his review of Western mis-apprehen-
sions of the thing -- to say nothing of what might be his
attempted theft of art from the hands of the tradition. Because
of his commitment to truth as un-truth, Heidegger must launch
his own steps in thinking from questionable grounds in
communion with denial and negativity.

Thus far we have accompanied Heidegger in commentary on
a good deal of philosophical terrain. Yet his invocation of a
third position does not imply that Heidegger is seeking next
to conjure a synthesis between Kant and Aristotle. Heidegger's
way of thinking in Der Ursprung is dialectical, to be sure,
though its mode of penetration into the history of error is
anything but synthetic and positive in the beginning. Heidegger
proceeds negatively, regressively from Aristotle to Kant and
then to Plato, master architect of the form/matter scheme
which supposedly has dominated art theory and aesthetics to
this day.

Though Heidegger is certain of Plato's role in instigating
the reign of Western metaphysics -- a metaphysics defined by its methodologically wilful, intellectually domineering search for the qualities of reified, supratemporal, transcendent categories95 -- he begins with Plate to shift the general terms of his debate. A sign of this is Heidegger's mention of art theory and aesthetics in the course of a discussion which had been limited to the vocabulary of the thing. It is as if, having identified the original culprit within the circle of his own thinking, Heidegger is now sufficiently stimulated to render judgment on the entire metaphysical tradition while advancing toward the work of art he seeks.

The transcending term for Heidegger's transition is more than useful in his meditative maneuverings. Reinterpreting the context within which Plate's form/matter design is relevant, Heidegger finds Plate guilty of a category mistake for applying matter and form beyond their appropriate home in the realm of equipment to that of things in general and to artworks in particular. The key is the theme of equipment. Heidegger admits that tools, in contrast to mere things, are fashioned and formed from a pre-given, inert material for human purposes and according to plan. Yet even this interpretation does not account for how equipment works. Heidegger will turn to the artwork for what work means. Thereby he not only steps into his own reflective territory but also leaves Plate behind.

Heidegger introduces the realm of use-objects in order
1) to incorporate an ontological level he has employed since
*Sein und Zeit*, 86 2) to erode the supposed applicability of
form/matter to things in general, 3) to insinuate domineering
motives in the emergence of form/matter as key to the meaning
of metaphysics, 4) possibly to mock the Platonic conviction
that poetry and the arts -- considered as illusions of illu-
sions -- could be good only if utilized for the education of
especially the young to noble pursuits, 5) to notify us that
his experiment with the thing -- when aesthetically qualified
an artwork -- concludes with a detour, namely the use of
terms appropriate to equipment, and 6) to indicate that
Heidegger's trust in art theory and aesthetics is nil -- they
make use of the artwork -- and that a different route must be
taken to allow the work to speak of and for itself.

But Heidegger uses Plato. He neglects much of what is
significant in the author of a republic whose welfare system
demands honest effort from its artists. Heidegger's identi-
fication of matter/form as a philosophical scheme with
historical though hackneyed weight and influence fails to
account for the fact that Plato was certainly not inclined to
predisposed, thoughtlessly intellectual formulas. Plate's
way of thinking was dialogical, allowing for constant realign-
ments in the way all his categories related. Plate did not
baptize the form/matter framework. Thus he cannot be held
responsible for the ways by which the categories of form and
matter have been employed throughout the history of Western
aesthetics. Plato was not a Platonist. Plato's remarks on art, poetry and the beautiful are occasional, set within a context that is itself artful; he can be considered even less an instigator of the drive to aesthetic theory in the West than Aristotle, his pupil, and Kant, his eighteenth-century admirer. Not that Plato is necessarily beyond review: a genuine dialogue with him might begin with his ontological realism on the other side of his exceedingly flexible powers of thought-construction. But Heidegger's interpretation is superficial in assigning only so much significance to Plato as is required by his reductive search for an opportunity to move to more constructive ontological sites.

Heidegger does not, however, allude in this portion of Der Ursprung to a thinker very important for his account of Western interpretative disasters. This is Nietzsche, on whom Heidegger had lectured and written from the mid 1930s to well after 1950 and who was a formidable influence on the direction of Heidegger's mature thinking. Heidegger is firmly convinced that Nietzsche's struggle with nihilism is the culmination of the meaning of Western metaphysics. Nietzsche happened to crystallize and succumb to this nihilistic tendency with his doctrine of the will to power. Therefore Nietzsche serves Heidegger well as a figure through whom the destiny of Western thought is revealed. Heidegger critiques aesthetics precisely for its efforts to dominate and control art though, in doing so, he resists Nietzsche's idolization of will in the image of the Superman. Heidegger sympathizes
with Nietzsche's assessment of the philosophical tradition as Platonism and returns with him to at least the memory of the ecstatic ancient Greeks. In fact the challenge for Der Ursprung is to find a way -- beyond metaphysics -- to heal the rift which Nietzsche had inserted between truth and art. Nietzsche's myth of the eternal return is reflected in Heidegger's path of meditation within the self-generating circle of art. The similarities between Nietzsche and Heidegger are not superficial but indicate a common approach -- called mythological -- to their investigation of universal philosophical concerns. So Heidegger in Der Ursprung and Nietzsche, for instance in Jenseits von Gut und Böse, are equally fascinated by the mystery of genesis and the question of origins. It is therefore no cause for astonishment that Heidegger prefers to presuppose Nietzsche in the violently reductive 'historical' section of Der Ursprung. Heidegger will choose another, more intimate, setting for dialogue and even confrontation with his nineteenth-century cohort.

A further thinker noticeable for his absence from Heidegger's list is Hegel. That Hegel would not be mentioned has been anticipated. But why should Heidegger not bring his argument with Hegel to the surface? It may be, from one side, that Heidegger's mythologizing instincts force essential dialogue into a more poetic, submerged region of thought and, from the other, that Heidegger still is unable to overcome
the 'truth' of Hegel's verdict on art in modern times. Yet
a comparison here between Hegel and Heidegger is crucial:
there is no better indirect way to account for Heidegger's
historical perspective.

Both Hegel and Heidegger think dialectically in the
general sense of the term, \(^92\) incorporating the 'negative,'
the contradictory element into their conceptions of the truth.
They grant this negativity the power to unfold the truth, as
it occurs in history. But this introduction suggests no
more than that Heidegger learns from Hegel that truth is
historical, and that history is not subject to the law of
non-contradiction.

Though Hegel includes the 'negative' as a moment while
advancing toward the full disclosure of truth, he never begins
his analyses on an antithetical basis. He prefers instead to
let his conclusion be the culmination of an affirmation
initially presupposed. Hegel's view of the development of
this affirmation -- as history -- is optimistic, charged with
progressive inclinations in the interpretation of world events.
Hegel may have been idealistic, though he stood generally, if
not factually, in line with the pervading assumptions of his
European culture. History develops in stages; these follow
not only circular configurations (the idea of a single period)
but also decisively linear steps.

Hegel is certain that the philosophical mind of modern
Europe has exhausted the spiritual significance of that kind
of art so revered in less enlightened times. The very constitution of art has now been understood by the course of a philosophical logic which, though it transcends art in determination of its own concepts, also redeems artistic products from the past into objects for aesthetic contemplation and refined experience. The overwhelming feature of Hegel's thought is that its ultimate is the history of philosophical awareness coming to terms with itself. Therefore all things worthy of interpretation, art included, are put in their place -- a place preserved in the memory of absolute self-consciousness.

Heidegger refuses to define his thinking in terms of self-consciousness. He never appeals to the sanctity of mind. Yet he certainly maintains the inner integrity, the freedom, and the necessity of his thought. Thinking, for Heidegger, is nothing but itself. For it has been given to itself from its own, hidden origin. There is then, at least in Der Ursprung, no objective correlate to which Heidegger is bound. He works within his own circle, one divulged neither by subjectivity nor by objectivity but, rather, by its historical direction.

Heidegger's view of Western history is essentially pessimistic, insisting that its development has been regressive. Heidegger breaks history into stages but only as they indicate periods significant as evidence for the deterioration of Western habits in the reception of art. He declines to put his philosophical correspondents in chronological order and rejects the notion that time consists of a linear
series of discrete 'now' moments. If Heidegger refers to anything from the past, he immediately undermines its temporal status (and if he does not, it is because of the negation of a negation, as with the early Greek word for truth). Heidegger gathers up the entire history of Western metaphysics and subjects it to an antithetical, essentially negative and reductive inner critique. During his detour through aesthetics, Heidegger presents us the ruins of a ruinous culture.

Yet Heidegger participates in this destruction-process. He mis-reads, he reduces off the mark of truth -- understandably so, if one notes his way of thinking. Heidegger could have distinguished between the methodical search for historical evidence and the question of his disagreements with what was uncovered. But this would not be Heidegger. He is already stepping into the circle of his own thinking as he begins the history section of Der Ursprung. The subject and object of his interpretation are merged from the start. Therefore the negativity, the reduction, inner critique and antithetical attitude belong to Heidegger. They describe his beginning with a fall and his determination, at the same time, to overcome it. Such an effort is typical of a mythologizing way of thinking; here the history of aesthetics is no more than a phase in the externalization of the origin. Heidegger must repeat this event for himself in order to discover the more constructive aspects of the inwardly swirling, wheeling truth. He has been critically preparing the move to deliverance.
From thing to work, through Van Gogh's painting of equipment. Heidegger concludes his discussion of the thing with two points:

First: the dominant thing-concepts are inadequate as means of grasping the thingly aspect of the work.

He finds in the thing a reality resistant to imposed thought-constructions, appeals for a return to letting the thing be, but leaves the thing as a question in order to expose the dominant assumption which took us to it initially:

Second: what we tried to treat as the most immediate reality of the work, its thingly substructure, does not belong to the work in that way at all.

To approach the artwork as if it had a thingly substructure and aesthetically-qualified superstructure is traditional, common for aesthetics; but then the work is reduced to artistically-defined equipment, serving the functions of human pleasure.

Heidegger now asks about equipment, for he recognizes that it belongs to a realm between thing and work. Tools are man-made. They work for us. So Heidegger turns to what makes equipment such as it is, though with the warning that it not become a new synthetic term. In other words, Heidegger is definitely transcending from thing to equipment to work, but only in the temporarily regressive search for prior ontological levels.
What is a piece of equipment? Heidegger reminds us that by this time we must know enough to avoid the usual encroachments of philosophical theories. The task, therefore, is simply to describe the way in which equipment appears. Why not then begin with a pair of peasant shoes? Why also take the trouble to start from scratch when a painting by Van Gogh will serve as point of departure?

Heidegger reminds us that the shoes are built in such a way and that the peasant woman happens to use rather than reflect upon them in her everyday walk. This usefulness rests on something else, which Heidegger calls 'reliability.' Thanks to their reliability, an unobtrusive handiness and presence, the shoes work to give the woman an earth to stand on and a world to live in. Reliability is key to the meaning of equipment. Yet Heidegger realizes all this only through Van Gogh's painting. He irrupts into an extraordinary account of those painted shoes — an account which deserves to be quoted in full:

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness
of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbirth and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the earth, and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself. 99

Heidegger's description is anything but defined by the exigencies of neutralized and calculating theoretical thought. He evokes in an earthy way that rich and fated world of which the painted shoes speak. Most striking is Heidegger's language. He has written his commentary by virtually merging a quasi-poetical surface and a deeply-wrought philosophical base. The philosophical question is not yet difficult. It is profound, for Heidegger, by repeating the old phenomenological call for a return from aberrant thoughts to 'the things themselves' but with the addition that it is not so much things or even equipment that matter, in this new beginning, as art. Heidegger has finally managed, for himself, to get into that region of
direct communication with the artwork. Consequently he responds to Van Gogh with almost poetic praise.

Heidegger believes that artist and philosopher are subject to the same truth, that despite their differences they are communicants in the same knowledge. Heidegger appeals as he thinks Van Gogh does. In response to the question of equipment, Heidegger says, "This painting spoke." What Heidegger recognizes, in language, is the revelation of truth through Van Gogh: "The art work let us know what shoes are in truth." And: "Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, is in truth. This entity emerges into the unconcealedness of its being." The realms of art and truth imply no obligatory conflict. It is precisely the supportive emergence of truth which gives the work, in art, the opportunity to rest within itself.

Heidegger's thesis is now so different from Sein und Zeit in 1927. In that book, at that time, he reserved an utterly unique place for humanity in decisions on the world, events and things. In Der Ursprung, however, Heidegger spurns the question of human distinctiveness. He would rather give the first measure of reliability to tools, half-things. He discovers what equipment is by seeing the truth which enters the window of art. So art is not so much the product of human hands as the event by which the truth of things sets itself to work, comes to a stand, and reveals the core meaning of, say, a pair of peasant shoes.
It is at least significant that Heidegger, a quintessentially primordial thinker, should choose a pair of peasant shoes for examination. But more telling is the way in which he has finally reached the alliance of truth and art. That has been through a self-sanctioned dispossessions of Van Gogh's painting.

Heidegger's interpretation of the Van Gogh is not as unmediated as he might have wanted. His account accords much better with an already-prepared view, existentially-tinged with poetic impulses for rugged nature, than with a self-critical concern to find and disclose the truth of that particular painting in its relevant context. Therefore Heidegger neglects the painting as a painting. He may not be an art historian and professes not to be an ordinary theoretician. Yet he is responsible for his decisions in deciphering works of art. By thus absorbing the painting into a testimony for his own thought Heidegger glosses over the separate and full integrity. Failing to distinguish subject and object in his transcending move from artwork to truth, Heidegger expropriates the Van Gogh. It is a typically mythological step in leaving the 'reality' behind for the sake of a higher unity.

Heidegger now stands in awkward demuciation of his chosen predecessors in the metaphysical/aesthetic tradition. Could it be that Heidegger is repeating the 'mistakes of the past' in precisely the manner he has conceived them? He too quickly assumes too much intimacy in reading Van Gogh. He foists his own categories -- world and earth -- onto the painting as if
it were still something to be exploited, that is, as an illustration for the forthcoming discussion of these themes. Heidegger translates the pictorial language of Van Gogh in as apparently pat a fashion as the Romans with their Latin supposedly did to the Greek. Had he realized what he was doing and taken some distance from his description, Heidegger might have displayed a winning irony. But there are no traces of gentle mockery or even of levity in his words. What, then, of a compensatory and ironic retribution against the 'truth' which led Heidegger through Van Gogh?

It is not that Heidegger in Der Ursprung focusses merely on a translation from the Greek word for truth. This text has been described as transitional, a search without the most solid foundation, for its deferential turn to a subsidiary language. Considering the entire range of Heidegger's writings, one does realize the predominance of the 'Being'-question and the relative subordination to it of the other essential categories. Yet at the conclusion of his turn from thing to work and truth, in this section of Der Ursprung, Heidegger repeats the pivotal word of his vocabulary:

What matters is a first opening of our vision to the fact that what is workly in the work, equipmental in equipment, and thingly in the thing comes closer to us only when we think the Being of beings.

He is obviously thinking through how and why art is, rather than for it not to be at all. Moreover, Heidegger has utilized
forms of the verb 'to-be,' and not just for emphasis, in his depiction of the truth in Van Gogh's art.

Nor is it merely that Heidegger, as a mythologizer, is antiquated and therefore incapable of conforming to more currently acceptable standards of art interpretation. He appears to be very much aware of modernity by addressing certain issues in the name of truth: he relativizes the idea of beauty, suggests a non-representational view of how truth works in art, and indicates the unique identity of the artwork as a phenomenon irreducibly prior to calculating thought. But Heidegger's conversation with recent trends in aesthetics still fails to vindicate that uncanny, obtrusive element in his actual handling of the Van Gogh painting. He undermines what the work represents, if only to deny its objectivity; he may not deduce the qualities of art from a given notion of beauty, though he does subject the work itself to a different truth.

Heidegger's approach to Van Gogh does seem peculiar. Its ambiguities appear to prevent him from making 'progress' toward a firm foundation beyond aesthetics. Heidegger relies on the powers of neither deduction nor induction, and his steps in thought only clear a path -- as if in wandering through woods without a compass or in crossing a river along mossy rocks. He obtains his evidence by the clandestine and almost gnostic elucidation of ever-receding themes. We are entering a mysterious world on a philosophical order yet akin to Yeats's numinously geometrical drama. Therefore Heidegger seeks for
truths about the secret combinations of the universe which are not open to usual viewing. His concern is not for normativity, which halts at the occasion and repetition of 'error,' but rather how the truth, already assumed as deflective, dissimulatory, and negative, reveals the work's inner being. That Heidegger's presentation carries shadows from the past is just part of his process of discovery.

For Heidegger the artwork is not the human representation or imitation of an entity that happens to be there; rather, the work reveals the essence of a situation. Of 'the essence' is that which is crucial or decisive for the being of the thing portrayed. Van Gogh's painting spoke to Heidegger because those shoes opened up the truth of the peasant woman's existence. Art then is that process by which the truth sets itself to work and comes to stand as a work. Finally encountering the ontological priority of the artwork, rooted in truth, and presupposing his privileged access to its region, Heidegger can now return to aesthetics and subvert its point of departure with yet another reversal. The way to determine even the 'thingly' character of the work proceeds not from thing to work (as has been traced in Der Ursprung) but from work to thing, as a genuine painting works to show the reliability of some given equipment. It is as if Heidegger is dusting his own shoes before preparing to leave for another town, or voiding a conversation before the ultimate speech. He will begin again, with a negation which delivers from the aesthetic curse. The basis for whatever certainty there is in Der Ursprung is first
indicated here, at the threshold of his meditation on the primal link between the work of art and truth.

The artwork uncovers in its distinctive way the Being of beings. In at least Der Ursprung, this uncovering, the event or happening of truth, occurs decisively in the work of art. If this is Heidegger's renewed summary of the circle, then how does he deepen his acquaintance with the work in order to gain access to the truth of its structure?

Earth and world: principles for the structure of the artwork. Heidegger now translates the question of truth into a search for the principles which govern the structure of the work. Structure is a question of definitive relationships.

Heidegger realizes that works of art stand in relationship ... to collections and exhibitions. Critics busy themselves with art. Dealers sell it. But Heidegger denies that these relations are the ones which let the artwork be. They still reduce the work to subjective and objective terms. They portray art as re-presentative, that is, as the temporally presupposed, certifiable, decision on the truth of what is. In what relations, then, should the artwork be construed?

Heidegger opens up for us a view of a Greek temple. The temple was not first built into an already existing environment. For the marble, the brilliant light of day, the evening sky, the landscape come into their own through the temple's standing there. It stands for itself but represents nothing. Heidegger is now willing to disclose how the artwork can be
an origin, as so it once was for the ancient Greeks. In its standing there, the temple first clears and illuminates the movement of the earth, the rising and emerging of things (phusis). It is upon this rising and emerging that man dwells as upon a ground. This ground is called the earth. Earth is that from which things arise and it shelters everything that so emerges without violation (that is, with a concealment measured only by itself). Now the artwork sets itself back into and -- in marble, paint, song -- reveals the earth upon which humans have their being. The work lets the earth be itself. Such 'letting-be' contrasts sharply with present-day efforts to mastery of nature by technical-scientific control. For Heidegger the earth is such as it is only as the self-secluding, the impenetrable process of self-sustaining. Hence no traces of work-material or earth appear wasted in the artwork: "All things of earth, and the earth itself as a whole, flow together into a reciprocal accord." The temple also stands there as 'something' that has been built, erected or set up. A statue is raised, a tragedy is presented. The temple has been set up in dedication to the praise of the holy ones. In the work of art, the holy is opened up as holy and the god is first invoked into the realm for his or her presence. But what fully thrusts up in the artwork is an entire region of openness. "Tower up within itself, the work opens up a world and keeps it abidingly in force." What is a world? It "is the ever-nonobjective to
which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being."\textsuperscript{116} The world grants the time to things beneath its sway:

By the opening up of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening, their remoteness and nearness, their scope and limits. In a world's worlding is gathered that spaciousness out of which the protective grace of the gods is granted or withheld.\textsuperscript{117}

What is the worlding of the world? It is the world's self-activity, a doubling of itself into itself to create the horizon for its spaciousness. Here the Open is traced,\textsuperscript{118} Being is revealed, the gods abide, and essential decisions are made on behalf of humanity: "The world is the self-disclosing openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of an historical people."\textsuperscript{119}

As we already know from \textit{Sein und Zeit}, Heidegger has consistently given a leading role to the concept of world. As the referential totality of (human) Dasein's relationships, 'world' there constituted the pre-thematic context for all projections of Dasein's concern. Heidegger sketched the history of various views of 'world,' enumerated four ways in which the term could be taken, and chose to analyze that concept in which Dasein could be said to live. The world, as the web of daily preoccupations, was understood to give Heidegger's interpretation of Dasein its matter-of-fact situation or facticity.\textsuperscript{120}
It is certainly then a surprise that Heidegger in Der Ursprung understands the work of art to be that which opens up a world and keeps it there. The work is the preferred and chosen arena within which a world appears, and in such a way that cannot be otherwise duplicated. The connection between work and world is not causal, but reciprocal according to the relationship of principle and its field or site of disclosure.

Perhaps even more startling is that now Heidegger imputes to world the grace/curse of gods and the force of decisions affecting an historical people. But what is mystifying in Heidegger's present thinking is the correlation of world and earth in the work of art. Is 'earth' also a principle, a constitutive source?

The concept of earth does not have any precedent in Heidegger's writings. Such a notion raises mythical and gnomic implications which have no home in the analytical world of philosophy and belong best to a poetic view of things. Heidegger had been reading Hölderlin's poetry intensively during the mid 1930s, and it is certainly no coincidence that his lectures from that time began to show the effects of this study. As H.G. Gadamer testifies, it is unquestionably from this poetic source that Heidegger brings a concern for earth into Der Ursprung.

We remember Hölderlin's poetic word for the toil of the quiet sun, for rose blossoms, for morning walks in the woods,
and for the "Earth, the very Earth that seemed to/ Smile on me then, now is changed and shrunken."122 Yet it is "our Earth, the hallowed."123 Hölderlin means to protect the earth, as if by giving it a home in language he can nurture its creatures back from the destructive secularization of the modern world. But, as he says in "Heimkunft," the night of our lives is almost gone, the first beam of morning has appeared and a resurgent Chaos is earth in the loving discord of its elements:

There in the Alps a gleaming night still delays and, composing

Portents of gladness, the cloud covers a valley agape.

This way, that way rears and rushes the breeze of the mountains,

Teasing, sheer through the fire falls a bright beam, and is lost.

Slowly it hurries and wars, this Chaos trembling with pleasure,

Young in appearance, but strong, celebrates here amid rocks

Loving discord, and seethes, shakes in its bounds that are timeless,

For more bacchantically new morning approaches within.124

Then we recall Heidegger's word for earth as the inviolate shelter. Earth persists, its bounds are timeless, and it is the first source of succor for its strength in yielding -- as the mountain spring cannot be bottled by the dams below.

Hölderlin's words are naturally more buoyant than Heidegger's, though the poet also grants spiritual impulses to earth which the philosopher denies. Even when, for Heidegger, a stone is broken open it reveals nothing more than the dull weight already disclosed.125 And Heidegger rejects Hölderlin's appeal to the
genius through whom the reign of the poetical may return. We shall find in Heidegger only a grudging acceptance of the originality of the artist, and this because of his opposition to metaphysics as, in the end, a subjectivism. Yet Heidegger permits these differences. For him the poet's office or way of being is not the same as the thinker's. The two rest on intimately "different mountainpeaks." The one meditates, the other gives utterance. Heidegger's calling is to think through Hölderlin's poetry and to prepare the way for a 'poetical dwelling' by humans on the earth. While not a literalistically-minded subscriber to Hölderlin, Heidegger appropriates the poet's language as an accompaniment and consistent source for his own thinking path. They search in common for ways to protect the earth from violation by the savagery of modern, industrial, calculating man. But this kinship with Hölderlin only begins to explain Heidegger's motivations for incorporating 'earth' as a constitutive feature of the work of art. And why does he correlate world and earth in account of the artwork?

The response to the first concern must be understood in terms of Heidegger's view of the way the artwork stands in itself. He will not accept the modern interpretation of this phenomenon, in which the work is defined as autonomous in its aesthetic sphere. For this autonomy is only a projection, reflected into objectivity, of an isolated and intellectualized human consciousness. This is wrong because, as the phenomena
indicate, the ancient Greek temple first allows the marbled earth to be set forth as self-concealing, i.e., as not reducible to thought-constructions. The earth juts into the stone of that temple in a way not accessible to human calculations. In maintaining this, of course, Heidegger contradicts the prejudice toward human subjectivity or genius which has coursed through the tradition of Western art interpretation. He finds in earth a counter to the temptation from aesthetics that all entological coordinates of the artwork be theoretically justified. But Heidegger also critiques the other side of the aesthetic equation by taking the thing -- to which the work had been reduced -- back up into the earthly domain. By introducing earth as a constituent, and not just as a theme, for the account of how art works, Heidegger is able to circumvent aesthetics in its entirety and to retrieve the priority, the standing there, of the artwork for his own steps in thought.

The response to the second concern follows from Heidegger's search for the relationships in which art truly stands. He has found them to be earth and world as they participate in the appearance of the work. In the consolidation of his dialectic, Heidegger considers the artwork both as the site of intersection for two entological principles and as a unique and irreducible origin by itself. The work is at once the middle term and the encircling figure for its coordinates. But for Heidegger this means only that an essified aesthetic sphere is not at the heart of art. The work is a structure
replete with tension between opposites. Even the word 'work' indicates that something occurs within its orbit. The work of art is a field for the occasion of great events. Art is that kind of happening which Heidegger conceives in terms of the 'strife' between earth and world at the core of the work.

The unity of the artwork consists in both the setting-up of a world and the setting-forth of earth. Yet this source of unity for world and earth is not simply one of repose. It is an event which involves both motion, the highest state of agitation, and rest or inner concentration. In a way reminiscent of Heraclitus's notion of intimate striving within the harmony of all things, Heidegger perceives an essential conflict at the center of the artwork. The world, resting upon earth, strives to surmount it, to project its destiny in time. The earth, as the sheltering or concealing agent, tends to draw the possibilities for things back into itself and to keep them there. Heidegger insists that this battle is not an abstract or theoretical one. It is a struggle in which the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion of their own maturities. In this dialectic of identity and difference there is no rigid self-insistence but rather a mutual surrender by the contestants to the circle of the artwork's original appearing. The relationship between world and earth is measured, for a particular time, by the prior crystallization of the work in existence.

The artwork does not, however, resolve the opposition
between earth and world. Works of art actually instigate this
strife and consist in the outcome of the struggle. Their full
identity, unity, or mode of repose is only achieved through
the battle from which they emerge:

It is because the struggle arrives at its high
point in the simplicity of intimacy that the unity
of the work comes about in the fighting of the
battle.

And when the work's identity comes to be assumed, when it no
longer reveals the strife within its high point of simplicity,
then it is ready for the museum, for collections, for the
dealers, and for the aestheticians. But under these conditions
the artwork is no longer true to itself.

Heidegger's transition to the issue of truth is neither
strong nor fully detailed. He makes his move with a brief
paragraph culminating in basic questions: "how does truth happen
in the fighting of the battle between world and earth? What
is truth?" Then again, from Heidegger's perspective, a
lengthy disquisition or calibrated explanation would miss the
mark. Truth has been presupposed since the introduction of the
Greek temple. Because truth is not an entity but a process, it
can only be elucidated against a foregound of discrete factors.
Truth may be the background illumination of the work of art,
though for that reason it is central. Heidegger finds the
artwork to be the open arena where world and earth struggle
intimately for a decision on the event of truth. Or, from the other side, the battle between earth and world is but a sign for the work of truth in art.

Yet we shall recognize the interplay of these features only after Heidegger's arching, transcending move back to the primal root of truth itself. His steps in thinking will still not be constructive according to traditional philosophical demands. Heidegger neither forms an idea of truth from evidence in the artwork nor deduces what art must be from the prior, ultimate concept of truth. He promulgates no better, mere 'true' view. But he knows that truth appears in the artwork and new returns to the fundamental though inconceivable question of how that truth can be. Heidegger's meditative path traces the fine line at the border of cognition, in the dialectical, back-and-forth search for a mystery which disappears with its localization in any term.

What is truth? A systematic answer to this question best approaches its theme through the element of difference and the presupposition of negativity. For Heidegger's truth is viable and present first through the motion of critique.

Heidegger is trying to overcome a very long and entrenched tradition in Western thought, according to which truth means "the agreement or conformity of knowledge with fact." In this methodologically determined version of 'like knows like,' the mark of truth is the consistency of human judgment with its controlled object. The proposition which expresses that
judgment is subject to logical calculus, of whatever sort, and may be measured only by validity or correctness. In his typical way, Heidegger will let this epistemological relationship stand, though now only as detritus from his deeper probing of the source for the initial appearance of the isolated fact. Heidegger does not argue his 'thesis' ever against another. He would rather undermine the presuppositions which have bolstered the construction of 'truth' between an artificially-determined subject and object. Yet Heidegger will not turn, in thinking of presuppositions, to the openly subjectivist regions of personal commitment and choice for grounding. Even when such a move has religious bearings, as with Kierkegaard's dictum that 'truth is subjectivity,' it still unfortunately reflects and confirms the claim elsewhere to objectivity. Heidegger's 'letting-be' of the subject/object schema involves neither confirmation nor tolerance. That relationship is simply the first thing that has been given to him to decipher. As for the a-normativity of beginning with the critical element, Heidegger displays no concern. He has already contributed to the distortion-process -- allegedly due only to the Western preoccupation with intellectual certainty -- by depicting the deformer's preferred view of knowledge and truth in the most theoretically abstract terms. Heidegger then incorporates that abstraction into the course of his destructively-attuned dialectic. There, within the epistemological view of truth in things, he turns regressively to the 'non-intellectual' side
of the situation and asks: how does this 'fact' emerge from its hidden environment and eventually assume the shape of information? With this question Heidegger is not suggesting a second tier of reality behind the apparent, objectified layer -- as if he then might trace the relationships of cause and effect between the different entity-levels. This would just duplicate the problem he intends to expose. For Heidegger there is only one realm open to experience, though it keeps to its own, self-imposed boundary line or limit. That essential boundary is signed by time, the mysterious process by which all things and events are circumscribed in finitude. Now time is not a thing, it is the definition of the Being through which beings occur. If time is the enteleological limit, then traditional thought attempts to bypass it by proposing the notion of intellectual perfection. Such a project, however, cannot thwart the demands of time; it can only forget by presupposing them with a concept like representation and its idealising kin, allegery and symbol; wherein the event of knowledge is recapitulated long after its truth has disappeared. Such forgetfulness not merely converts into the hubris with which aesthetics, for instance, threatens the very existence of art. It also covers up -- but does not eradicate -- that fertile area where time occurs just beneath the objectifying surface. Here time may be found -- by those who know -- as the self-originating and therefore hidden condition for the appearance of any thing before the gaze of human intellect. Time generates both itself and its other, the relatively understood
and soon encrusted fact. Time is the happening thanks to which we can ask 'why is there anything rather than nothing at all?'. And time maintains these privileged and encompassing relationships because of its conjunction with Being prior to any of its modes of management of the commerce between things. For time sunders the conspicuously-there, ordinary realm of being; though in a double sense of transformation: 1) it creates the different meaning of Being as the surmounting and self-negating, non-objective event by which beings are revealed as they are; 2) time defines itself precisely as that decisive event in the production of history. This history is not just of any kind. It refers to the unique destiny of Western culture which, since the Greeks, has increasingly struggled with the problem of objectivity. This is the problem which Der Ursprung -- in perfect coincidence with traditional language-families in philosophy -- handles under the aegis of truth. As Heidegger says, "This nature of truth which is familiar to us -- correctness in representation -- stands and falls with truth as unconcealedness of beings."

We have already seen that 'unconcealedness' is Heidegger's translation of aletheia, the ancient Greek word. It is, I believe, more than likely that Heidegger's translation is suspect. A review of the dictionaries and extant Greek texts indicates that the Greeks meant by aletheia both truth and truthfulness; though without the additional and nugatory interpretation which Heidegger forwards. Heidegger iden-
tifies the initial a- of the word, but takes this as a reflection for his own negative dialectics written in twentieth-century philosophical German. However, as Heidegger admits, he is not trying to revive Greek thinking nor, for that matter, engaging technically in the enterprise of philology. Heidegger's translation is best taken as questionable on general intellectual grounds, but as still significant as evidence of his tendency to seek the foundations for thought in a mythologized past.

But is 'truth,' at any rate, the keyword of Der Ursprung? What about the 'origin,' especially in consideration of the title of the text? And the word 'origin' seems to elucidate the question of time for Heidegger more directly than does that of truth. Now these questions and proposals are appropriate ... though only as an introduction to the general issue of Heidegger's primary vocabulary. Heidegger is the one to say: "It all rests on the nature of truth." Nor does he begin Der Ursprung just with the origin. That is his first word for a process of thought already questioning the truth of Hegel's verdict on art. But this is not to isolate 'truth' as the ultimate term here. There is no reason to bifurcate what with Heidegger is a kinship of words. The basic language of Der Ursprung is, as it were, a relatively congenial family situation. Time is the origin in its self-gensis. Time is truth in its pattern of concealing/unconcealing. Heidegger will return to the theme of art as origin at the conclusion of the body of the text. But he must first build a foundation. It
is therefore no accident that 'truth' appears at both the physical and intellectual centers of Der Ursprung.

Heidegger has been slowly assembling his case after the initial critique of aesthetics. But, due to his regressive manner of thinking, he could not deduce from world and earth the truth which he discovered in the Van Gogh. Heidegger could merely mention that truth in terms of the battle, and even then in the most halting way. His problem is that he can only proceed by the negation of a negation and is thus still vexed by how to overcome the subject/object relationship of aesthetics as he moves through the more constructive themes. Heidegger feeds, meditatively speaking, off of his opponent until there is nothing left of that and must, despite his innovative cookery with earth, find his own source. These are not the best, happiest, or most normative circumstances for foundation-building. The negatively-dialectical adulation of conflict will reappear in the ontological structuration of the truth to which Heidegger appeals. Yet he takes the leap and discovers aletheia. It has been for Heidegger just a question of timing as to when this step would occur.

The master-stroke of this move to un concealedness is that Heidegger is now able to consolidate both the critique and response sides of his thinking in a single term. While metaphysics seizes upon the idea of what is there, as something already un concealed, Heidegger remembers the hidden, mysterious conditions under which truth appears. He will retrieve that
truth even in its reduction to fact. Only from the non-verifiable boundary region of something-coming-to-be-true can one follow the derivative formation of human judgments about the present evidence. Then Heidegger reads those judgments, as the history of Western philosophy, back into the source from which they came. He is working within a circle where time and truth, which are the same, also engender the terms of their differentiation into objectivity. The mediating figure here is un-concealedness which, with its hyphen indicating the double negation, opens up both the background mystery and foreground facts. In the turn to un-concealedness Heidegger is obviously mythologizing. He translates away from the hard, positive evidence in favor of a prior, synthetic unity. Yet Heidegger has found his fundamental term and, through it, salvation from traditional calculative thinking. 150

It has been mentioned, as if it were a fault, that Heidegger is not speaking here in the language of Being. Then he would have introduced the crucial category of the ontological difference, according to which Being is not a being. In that negation consists not only time but also the clearing by which Being deferentially reveals beings for themselves. I believe this argument can be overstated, as if there were something magical about certain words. At least the principle of the ontological difference appears here, in Heidegger's illumination of truth. That the concern for truth takes precedence does not also mean that there is not a constant undercurrent
of preferred ontological reference. The theme of truth may be too closely linked with general philosophical problems -- particularly in the adjudication of the subject/object relation -- to highlight Heidegger's distinctive way of thinking. Yet what he does with truth is the genuine issue. Heidegger identifies Being with the unconcealedness of beings. And if the complaint continues, that *Der Ursprung* is transitional because of Heidegger's preoccupation in it with truth, then let us take both truth and transition out of that box, wed them, and realize that precisely for its passing, insubstantial nature does truth illuminate the entire region of being.

Truth, for Heidegger, cannot be presupposed by human beings. The edge of his critique of subjectivity is felt in the mention of presuppositions, because if that criticism were not there then Heidegger could easily be said to assume a certain truth for himself. What intrudes is Heidegger's mythologizing turn, which obviates human self-awareness in the merger with primordial reality. Truth "puts us into such a condition of being that in our representation we always remain installed within and in attendance upon unconcealedness." We do not first have a thought which, for situating purposes, is then compared with an extant horizon beyond. Heidegger is pondering a different kind of subject-ivity. For humans are subject, initially, to an entire realm, the whole of the unconcealed, and only within its manifestation do any of our judgments indicate anything. As Heidegger says:
With all our correct representations we would get nowhere, we could not even presuppose that there already is manifest something to which we can conform ourselves, unless the unconcealedness of beings had already exposed us to, placed us in that lighted realm in which every being stands for us and from which it withdraws.

We have already encountered Heidegger's notion of world and of worlding as a preliminary tracing of the Open. Despite the similar theme of spaciousness between them, however, the world is in comparison a second order of essential reality. It is, for instance, limited by earth, which is its other. The Open or region of unconcealedness is defined simply by itself. That definition involves a self-limitation or privatization in that the Open never appears as a single entity. In this sense Heidegger still grants a certain priority to beings, for nothing, as it were, can happen without them. Yet the primary direction of his dialectic carries him back to that vast, overriding expanse within which we live, move and have our being. It is as if Heidegger is illuminating the field of creation in its fullness:

And yet -- beyond what is, not away from it but before it, there is still something else that happens. In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing, a lighting. Thought of in reference to what is, to beings, this clearing is in a
greater degree than are beings. This open center is therefore not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting center itself encircles all that is, like the Nothing which we scarcely know.

Heidegger's mention of the 'Nothing,' however, forces me to reconsider the helpfully meant but probably inappropriate translating device of a creation order. The element of negativity surfaces at the very moment of his elucidation of the Open. One reading of Heidegger's indirect motives will perceive that the Nothing is stationed where it is, at the boundary of the encompassing, to thwart the transcending realization of the Creator/creature relationship. Heidegger intends to keep the realm of unconcealedness unto itself, to maintain its self-sufficiency but without recourse to notions of plenary subsistence. Some crucial factor of difference must be introduced so that, because of its intimate sundering, the Open can provide access to the beings that we are not and to the being that we are.

If the lighting center permits beings, for the first time, to be revealed in their various ways, then it also encircles the processes by which things are concealed. As Heidegger insists: "Each being we encounter and which encounters us keeps to this curious opposition of presence in that it always withholds itself at the same time in a concealedness." The source of this concealing is not, however, to be located simply in the tangled interaction of mere entities. Were Heidegger
to leave the account at this, then he would be just resurrecting the old metaphysical prejudice against finite events and make his Open vulnerable to perfection in timelessness. Ruggedly aware of the cornerstones of his thinking, Heidegger follows concealment into the heart of the open sphere. Concealing occurs there in two related ways.

The first has already been encountered in the subtleties of Heidegger's argument. The thing resisted encroachment from the metaphysical categories because of its uniquely impervious mode of being. The Greek temple, which stood there, could not be reduced to the calculative intricacies of representation. And earth withheld itself -- in principle -- from that which happened along its managed surface. The common theme here is 'refusal,' at least in Hofstadter's mellowing translation of Versagen. The German also suggests denial, failure and breakdown in relationships. These phenomena have elsewhere been known as the results of the power of sin, though for Heidegger they testify to the irreducible breach within the order of being. Heidegger's way of thinking is mythological and he therefore prefers to read the evidence of difference into the region of mystery at the limit of human awareness. And what is more inexplicable than that things are rather than not at all? As Heidegger says: "Beings refuse themselves to us down to that one and seemingly least feature which we touch upon most readily when we can say no more of beings than that they are."¹⁶⁰ Heidegger quickly adds that such a concealment as refusal is not
simply due, as for Kant, to restrictions on human understanding. Human reasoning is fettered to the calculation of surface modulations at every turn, though, for Heidegger, only because of the prior boundary established in the foundation of beings themselves. That is time, the essential mark of finitude. Time is the boundary through which things come to be, while it remains hidden from any being due to its self-imposed limit. Thus in the clearing, which is the event of truth, there is the ontologically equi-primordial and historically dominant process of concealing, denial and ruination. It is curious that Heidegger mirrors the traditional defamation of the temporal realm with his correlation of time and refusal, the latter being a term of resistance to the discovery of truth. The difference for Heidegger is that he does not seek deliverance from the rule of mortality in an eternal beyond. He defines his own redemptive steps, though at the doubled edge of liberation from metaphysics and acceptance of negativity and antithesis in the ontology of truth. Yet Heidegger is sufficiently tenacious to make the next move which, reminiscent of Nietzsche’s fiat that 'truth is a lie,' un- covers the concealment of truth in dissembling.

We have already witnessed this phenomenon in Heidegger’s treatment of Western philosophical history. And we have seen it in a more sympathetic way in Heidegger’s discussion of the Van Gogh. Dissembling, for Heidegger, is not an occasion -- first of all -- for outright deception. It is, however, the permitted fruit of how one "being places itself in front of
another being, the one helps to hide the other, the former obscures the latter, a few obstruct many, one denies all." 163 The keyword here for Heidegger is simulation. Things reflect back into each other in apparently clear but actually refractory ways. There is a constant turbulence along the paths of passing things. Only in consequence of this (shifting) point of departure does Heidegger account for how humans make mistakes, go astray, transgress, or "overreach" themselves. 164 At the root of human error is the dissimulatively-temporized event of truth.

In his typical manner, Heidegger is not particularly concerned about the proper distinctions between refusal and dissembling. He is too serious for propriety. When he says that concealment "conceals and dissembles itself," he means that:

... the open place in the midst of beings, the clearing, is never a rigid stage with a permanently raised curtain on which the play of beings runs its course. Rather, the clearing happens only as this double concealment. The unconcealedness of beings -- this is never a merely existent state, but a happening. 165

It is precisely in its character as an event that Heidegger elucidates the unity of truth in its difference. Truth is temporal, with the origin of its condition resting to the side of negativity: "The nature of truth, that is, of unconcealedness, is dominated throughout by a denial." 166 Heidegger then admits: "Truth, in its nature, is un-truth." 167
This is not to say that truth "is at bottom falsehood. Nor does it mean that truth is never itself but, viewed dialectically, is always also its opposite." 168

The negative thrust of these paradoxes -- which form the heart of *Der Ursprung* -- not only defy traditional assent to the law of non-contradiction as arbiter of truth. Heidegger is so far removed from the Western mainstream, with its trust in rationality, that even his dialectics are not of the logically enhanced and determined sort (e.g. Hegel). Yet Heidegger certainly thinks consistently within his appointed terms; they are markers for the extremities of a mythologically-unified situation within which he follows the self-circling, opening and closing movements of truth. The connections he seeks -- for instance, between concealing and unconcealing -- can only be articulated through their common source. Truth is then, for Heidegger, not simply the hoax of a word. It is the pristine origin which generates its own, self-engulfing terms of opposition. Truth is the first and ultimate appearance of negativity. Heidegger does not shy from the final step in identification of this truth as the arena for, and happening of, the primal conflict of the universe:

Truth occurs precisely as itself in that the concealing denial, as refusal, provides its constant source to all clearing, and yet, as dissembling, it metes out to all clearing the indefeasible severity of error. Concealing denial is intended to denote
that opposition in the nature of truth which subsists between clearing, or lighting, and concealing. It is the opposition of the primal conflict. The nature of truth is, in itself, the primal conflict in which that open center is won within which what is, stands, and from which it sets itself back into itself.\textsuperscript{169}

Hofstadter translates "is won" from "erstritten wird."\textsuperscript{170} The German is a form of the verb, 'streiten,' which actually means to 'quarrel, fight, struggle or contend for.' But Hofstadter is right to include the element of winning or victory. For Heidegger's open center has been wrestled from the grip of Western metaphysical nihilism and redeemed back as viable ontological territory from the deep recesses of the primordial conflict. It is no accident that Heraclitus is the one Pre-Socratic explicitly referred to in Der Ursprung.\textsuperscript{171} Heidegger adulates war as the measure "which steers all things through all things."\textsuperscript{172}

The acceptance of aboriginal, constitutively-justified strife delivers him, guides him into the new and different truth of the Open. Not concerned for the larger and more penetrating question of normativity in determination of the truth of things, and having made his final if tendentious and less than peace-loving decision, Heidegger is now prepared to summarize with a series of steps descending again to the work of art.

Conflict does not occur without a context, a battle is not without its field. Such a meetingplace is the Open. Heidegger mentions that to the Open -- which is unconcealedness in spatial
terms -- there belongs a world and earth. Yet in consolidating, even legitimating, the connections merely suggested before, Heidegger heeds the intervening lesson from the dialectics of truth. Conflict within truth is prior to the deduction of any relationships between sets of relatively apparent phenomena. Therefore "world is not simply the Open that corresponds to clearing, and the earth is not simply the Closed that corresponds to concealment." Every decision -- which opens up one among many worldly possibilities -- is realized only against something not mastered, hidden, the source of more than intellectual confusion. Earth is not closed as such but emerges in its double motion as the self-concealing. Heidegger says of these shifting marks of opposition: "World and earth are always intrinsically and essentially in conflict, belligerent by nature." Strife is the common term for correlation between the differing ontological levels of world/earth and the Open. Yet, at least for Der Ursprung, such enveloping warfare is decided primarily through the work of art. In "setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the fighting of the battle in which the uncealedness of beings as a whole, or truth, is won." Art is the instigating, mediating and redeeming act of truth in the midst of things.

With his attention so focussed on art, Heidegger breaks with classical notions of beauty as the transcendent source of meaning for certain types of pleasurable experience. He will re-introduce beauty into his fold of categories only upon the
supposition of truth: "Beauty is one way in which truth occurs as unconcealedness." The last paragraph of Heidegger's epilogue contains an excellent summary of the perceived historical relations between truth and beauty. It is enough to say here that Heidegger relativizes the beauty-issue for the sake of a prior critique of aesthetics. At the source of his search for the foundations of metaphysics he finds _aletheia_. Because this truth is for him the original phenomenon, Heidegger appropriates beauty only as a more surface kind of objectively-contrary event, the shining illumination from elsewhere of an essentially hidden entity gathered into the work of art (e.g. peasant shoes in the Van Gogh).

One might think that Heidegger's fusion of truth and art will prevent him from at least the sort of excesses found in the Western traditions of beauty-worship. Truth is, after all, a sober concern. But truth, for Heidegger, is much different from results of the scientific search for trustworthy evidence. And art, for him, is not just a piece for passersby on the occasion. Heidegger's artwork is meant to be, in truth, the redemptive negation of a tainted world. He grants an entire, if mythologically-located, realm to art for its genetic roots in the event of truth. Now he will begin to appeal to this art -- a still hidden region within the depths of thought -- for deliverance from the curse which Hegel was the first to see.

Heidegger's language will gravitate, again, toward the keyword of the origin. He intends to retrace the steps of his initial move, but this time from origin to epilogue and with the full
power of truth-in-art behind him.

It is not by chance, therefore, that the theme of truth continues to pervade the discussion. Eager to disclose the conditions by which art may yet appear as its own origin, Heidegger seeks for the entological coordinates which will make that appearance possible. One such coordinate has already been discovered: that art is an origin through its own work. But the question of the artwork was resolved only by reference to negative truth. We have followed Heidegger’s interrogation of the first evidence of negativity in Western aesthetics, recognized that art works through Van Gogh’s painting, determined the structure of the work in the struggle between world and earth, and traced all of these dialectics back into the source of truth itself. The central achievement of Der Ursprung is Heidegger’s synthesis of truth and art in the battlefield of time. In the work of art one finds the event of truth. This correlation bolsters Heidegger’s search for new directions in art history.

A more distinctly religious vocabulary best distinguishes the motives behind Heidegger’s presently shifting meditative steps. His probe for the unity of truth and art is concerned with the grounds for justification. Without a fundamental basis beyond thought, a ‘primitive’ assurance from the bosom of the universe, Heidegger can proceed no further in the journey to authentic art. That he does continue is evidence of his confidence in a truthfully-achieved redemption in art, which now must be ‘worked’ through in
a process of sanctification and a time for mere constructive interpretation.

Heidegger's move to art will be presented, though as a sketch with the essential question remaining: if he fails to uncover the art he desires, then is this failure due to his preferred mode of thinking en route or to the a-normativity of the foundations upon which his final quest is built?

Art and the four-fold originating. In keeping with his critique of subjectivist aesthetics, Heidegger has left the creativity of the artist far from view. Constrained by the evidence, however, Heidegger introduces the theme but with the qualification that thoughts on creation always be oriented toward the work of truth. Creation is a kind of origin; the created work is worked out, brought forth.

Heidegger pauses by the Greek term *tekhne* which, in the standard translations, indicates the craft of making. Yet mythologising impulses force him away from according a technical base to art production, a base which, furthermore, has become the obsession for artistic self-definition. Insisting that the Greeks meant by it only the mode of knowledge through which beings were brought to light, Heidegger bypasses *tekhne* in order to re-focus attention on the created aspect of the work. He provides a gallantly non-subjectivistic definition of artistic creation: "to create is to cause something to emerge as a thing that has been brought forth." The circularity of this remark is modified by its intended reference to the processes of time. Creation is a function
of the work’s temporality. Art becomes a work in the way truth happens. The event of truth in the work is the bringing-forth of a being that has never been before and will never come to be again. The artwork, therefore, comes to take a stand, to pose a temporally unique and irreplaceable thesis.285 By opening itself up the work reveals the encompassing Open. The work serves as a conduit for truth with, for Heidegger, two implications for its created status. An artwork’s structure is not simply given; it is evidence of an historical event, viz., the dated confluence of world and earth in their strife. The work’s configuration or Gestalt is the record of how the ontological rift was composed at the time.286 Craftsmanship never explains how truth is fixed in place in the figure. In contrast to all other modes of human activity, work with art is unique in that its created element is part of the work itself. This introduces Heidegger’s second point. The work exists as such. That it is -- this remains the irreducible and overriding phenomenon. One can only acknowledge the inexplicable facticity of a particular work. So the artwork’s reality is not exhausted from the side of its having been created.

The artwork stands on its own, it maintains a solitary kind of being. Yet the way in which it exists startles and displaces us. In submission to this transformation we find our accustomed ties to the world shorn away. We therefore restrain our daily activities, preoccupations and needs in order to stay within the truth that is happening there. Precisely in our self-restraint do we let the created work be what it is. Heidegger calls this letting-be by the name of ‘preserving.’ Preservation is also an origin, for
only through it does the work become real. 187

Who preserves the artwork? Perhaps remembering his own
language in Sein und Zeit in the account of authentic existence,
though now demanding a different responsibility from humans,
Heidegger says it is the thinker who preserves ... in the "sober
resolution of that existential self-transcendence which exposes
itself to the openness of beings as it is set into the work."189
A thinker is not necessarily a professional philosopher but one
who meditates on, takes his time with, or 'whiles' by the side
of the artwork in the Open. Preservation never succeeds in the
account of privatised judgments of taste, however full of expert-
tise such an effort might be. In his gestic fashion, Heidegger
prefers an ecstatic thoughtful leap into the work to heed its
(culturally corroded) artistry.

Art for Heidegger is coming to resemble a totality of its
own. It is the link of interconnection for three distinct origins:
1) the work of art as the origin of the strife between world and
earth, 2) the artistic creator who gathers this strife into the
rift of the work, and 3) the art preserver with a memory for the
event of truth in the work. Heidegger thinks of these three in
conjunction with a fourth, that is, the origin of the inner
movement and direction of the artwork.

Art occurs when truth advances into the work it is building
and encounters a response in the self-projection or composition
of the work itself. In this correlation, replete with tension
between competing terms, Heidegger identifies the process that
he calls 'poetry.'

Poetry is neither world flight nor whimsicality. It is the communicative source at the heart of the ontological difference. It is the word of mediation within the primal conflict. Poetry first declares the Open itself, speaks to the horizon for the event of truth. In this sense poetry is redemptive though, for Heidegger, without any implication of divine revelation in the Word. The Open lets poetry happen within the silence of its self-enclosure. Heidegger's reading of poetry emphasizes its capacity for making or construction, as in the Greek sense of poiesis. Poetry wrestles truth into the work and sets it there: "All art, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of what is, is, as such, essentially poetry." As clearing transcendence, poetry projects the Open into the design of the work. It is, of course, doubtful that this kind of poetry can be understood in terms of the powers of human imagination. If poetry is the origin (as projection) which directs truth and the work of art into their unity, then it has no essential root in specifically human faculties. Therefore the nature of poetry is not exhausted by the culturally accepted, tangible arts, though its manifestation in poesy, the linguistic work, is privileged among the others. To account for this privilege Heidegger appeals to the right view of language.

The primary purpose of language is not to serve as a medium for explicit human expression, as a vehicle for the transmission of information. Language brings beings such as they are into the
Open for the first time: "Where there is no language, as in the being of stone, plant, and animal, there is also no openness of what is...." Language gives things their names as they appear for blessing or curse in the round of the Open. Therefore language not only differentiates among entities but reaches back to say the unsayable source, the rugged and encircling silence. Poesy occurs in language because language is the memory-base for the illuminatory transcendence of original poetry.  

But what does Heidegger mean as he continues? "The nature of poetry, in turn, is the founding of truth." Founding is not the creation of foundations ex nihilo but, rather, the humanly-related, historical preservation of the prior event of truth. Heidegger understands poetry as founding in terms of the bestowing, grounding, and beginning of art. Poetry’s temporal structure is revealed in the unity of the aspects of founding. The artwork bestows a truth which can be neither proven nor derived from the past. Art is an overflowing, bountiful gift not subject to the calculative schemes of man. Nevertheless, the work does not bring its gift into an historical void. It is put in place, grounded on the solid earth of an already cast, existent people prepared for the task of preservation. Art thus works to ground and establish the world of a people on its land. Finally, the work of art provides a genuine beginning, an historically effective origin which, in Heidegger’s view, bears no resemblance to anthropological concepts of primitivity. Out of what has been prepared and preserved for the longest time, though inconspicuously,
the work of art takes a beginning leap. With this move art insti-
gates the strife between a new world and earth, sets the standard
for what is to come, and obtains its stature as an historical
foundation. The first time art gained this position was with
the early Greeks -- long before 'Being' could be named and con-
solidated in metaphysics. And art has maintained its primacy
throughout the history of the West. Even with the transformation
of the realm of beings in the Middle Ages and modernity, the
worlds that emerged were fixed in place by the figure of truth
in art. "Whenever art happens -- that is, whenever there is a
beginning -- a thrust enters history, history either begins or
starts over again." Art history is not the record of a sequence
of temporal events, it is the differentiation of the event by
which a people receives its appointed task in the endowment of
truth. At the root of historical beginning is unconcealedness,
that which "sets itself into work, a setting which is accomplished
by art." Heidegger begins to summarize the main text of Der Ursprung
by noting the irreducible ambiguity in the words: "Art is the
setting-into-work of truth." It appears that truth is at once
subject and object of the setting. Yet Heidegger refuses to
clarify the situation within the dialectic of these terms. They
do not exhibit the type of thinking which reflects the prior
truth that art is historical. As such, art is the creative
preserving of truth in the work. Art also happens as poetry, or,
as art itself. Poetry is a way of founding in the triple sense
of bestowing, grounding, and beginning. As the founding event, art is essentially historical. As historical, art lets the event of truth happen. Within the intimate striving between world and earth, art is the "spring that leaps to the truth of what is, in the work." To bring something forward by a leap, to bring it into being out of its own source -- "this is what the word origin (German Ursprung, literally, primal leap) means." Heidegger now concludes that the origin of the work of art is art. Art is itself, a self-encircling and total sphere, the origin of its own nature. The language of the origin is "thought by way of the nature of truth." Art is therefore a distinctive way in which truth occurs, that is, becomes historical for a people's existence.

It would seem that, with this stream of finalizing interconnections in the language, Heidegger is drawing the circle of his meditation to a close. Yet he continues with a disruptive question, phrased as in the repetition of a statement of purpose:

We inquire ... in order to be able to ask more truly whether art is or is not an origin in our historical existence, whether and under what conditions it can and must be an origin.

Such reflection cannot force art and its coming-to-be. But this reflective knowledge is the preliminary and therefore indispensable preparation for the becoming of art.

The art Heidegger seeks has not yet come. In deciphering the
renewal of Heidegger's concern, however, one should not accuse him simply of dereliction in delivery of promised goods. The failure at the end of the main text is not just due to Heidegger's inability to produce the work of art. The final breakdown is a plea in a time of need and must be read as a sign for the measure of his entire circle of thought. If Heidegger is no longer foundering but foundering and if his probings have been exposed as insufficient, then he (and we) knew these things would happen from the beginning of his conversation with Hegel. In preparation for his return to the epilogue and the repetition of its dialogue with the 'truth' of Hegel's verdict on art, Heidegger completes his own fall into negativity. A concluding plunge may still remind his readers of art's questionable presence.

Heidegger confronts the Germans to whom Der Ursprung has been most intimately addressed with responsibility for that reminder concerning art. Are they still content with the refined acquaintance of the aesthetic past? Or do they recognize the decision which Heidegger calls for with respect to the question of art as origin? Are the Germans ready for the breakthrough of this origin into their lives? Is this concern even ripe for preservation? Heidegger chooses to give the final word to Hölderlin, poet in an inhospitable time who challenges the German people to an as yet unmastered test with his knowledge; too, of departure from the origin:

Reluctantly
that which dwells near its origin departs.

--- "The Journey," verses 18-19
CONCLUDING REMARKS

That Heidegger gives the last word to the poet is, of course, a reversal of the traditional assumption since Plato's, viz.; of the independence and finality of philosophical thought. Heidegger had already deferred to Sophocles in 1929 and to Hölderlin in 1936. He now, in Der Ursprung, intensifies his commitment and confers ultimate authority to the poetic word. What Heidegger means by poetry -- abstractly, the original correlation of truth and artwork -- is crystallized in the life, the hymns, fragments and legacy of Hölderlin. Hölderlin becomes the one who says and gives the trustworthy, infallible and therefore revelatory sign from the depths for these destitute times. His is not, as such, a happy poetry but one spoken in sorrow, in awareness of the modern departure from the origin. Heidegger appropriates Hölderlin's bestowal of truth as essentially negative. The infallibility of this word demands from Heidegger the suffering which must be accepted before art is to occur in full.

Therefore Heidegger must keep thinking, even to a point beyond his beloved poet's saying. He has no other alternative in preparing the way for that phenomenon different from aesthetics. Yet, as Heidegger proceeds to the epilogue in lieu of art, he still sets the possibility of that work coming into the open region of the meditative riddle: "The foregoing reflections are concerned with the riddle of art.... They are far from claiming to solve the riddle. The task is to see the riddle."212 The mystery of art is
Heidegger's final court of appeal in an epilogue that is, more empirically, the textual evidence for his restless, searching circle of reflection.

Heidegger repeats the epilogue in his steps in thought, not just in the effort to deepen his meditation but also to merge its beginning and end in the unity of the interpretative circle. The path of his thinking returns to the event from which it emerged. Yet the irony is that Heidegger merely introduces the epilogue by a mysterious truth not empowered with evidence of its historical efficacy, that is, without the coming of the work of art. He is now confronted by a self-induced responsibility which threatens the core of his program: that of facing -- again -- Hegel's verdict on the imminent collapse of art in the reluctant certainty that the measure of thought in Der Ursprung has been insufficient in depth and power to overcome the source of that judgment, viz., aesthetics as a branch of the traditional metaphysics. Is Heidegger's criticism of aesthetics true more than as a foil for his preferred mythology? Or does he grant a dialectically insurmountable truth to Hegel from the philosophically encompassing yet non-productive and dubious origin of his own thinking? To answer these questions is to notice where his meditation begins -- a fall in search of redemption -- and then to realize that Heidegger, thanks to his doggedly systematic manner, must renew the move from the crisis for art to the origin and then to the history of aesthetics, to the Van Gogh, to the battle, etc.

Therefore Heidegger's circle does appear vicious, though more
than simply in the tautological sense. He is caught within a broadly-based vice, one he excuses with reference to his pattern of thinking en route. A person continues in this circle for only so long, however, before realizing that it is fundamentally closed and even totalitarian, tied to the advocacy of the form and moment of its intellectual self-imprisonment. *Der Ursprung*'s most significant historical reference -- to Hegel's remarks on the demise of art -- is also its chosen, irremediable mark of opposition. Furthermore, the lack of salvific evidence at the conclusion of the main text, with just the well-meant but prooftexted deferral to Hölderlin to state the tragically negative case, is consistent with and results from Heidegger's self-denial of access to the exit he still seeks from metaphysics. Is not truth not itself, but the history of its un-truth and a possibility for its own transcendence in the origin? Fall/redemption language identifies Heidegger's motives regarding 'truth.' It specifies how his thinking goes awry from the beginning and carries the interpretation through to the failure at the end. This language is not religiously dogmatic. It occurs, rather, at every key sign in the reading of Heidegger's mythologizing tendency, with reference to his self-generating, self-encircling absolute which prevents him from breaking through to direct contact with genuine aesthetic realities.

Such a critique is different from many others. The way it is built on flexible ideas of interpretation, and not on concepts localizing acceptance or disagreement, may be seen in comparison. Bartky, for instance, calls Heidegger a 'cognitivist,' still
utilizes the fall/matter scheme for him, provides no dialectical transition from thing to work, and fails to recognize the tension between world and earth. She may disagree with Heidegger, yet her arguments cannot hold if they have not grasped his motives for thinking in their troubled unity. Halliburton too simply works within a duality/unity dialectic, thus reducing while accusing Heidegger of presupposing the unity beyond the dualism of subject and object. Lentrecchia also moves in this critical direction. Both, therefore, miss the inner twist of negativity in Heidegger’s conception of the ontological difference or in his fusion of truth and un-truth. The relationship, for Heidegger, between Western metaphysics and the truth of its origin is more precisely understood in terms of his mythologizing perspective, which projects both difference and identity onto the contours of ultimate self-genesis. Richardson perceives the presence of a difficulty in Der Ursprung, but specifies it no further than the ‘obscurity of poetizing.’ He appeals to the transitional nature of the text and anticipates resolution of the problem in the writings that come later. This approach appeals for its generosity, though it glosses over the essential and instructive tensions in the text. My approach is not like any of these, particularly in its identification of heuristic principles which transcend but also diagnose the patterns of Heidegger’s thought and language.

Such principles have been expressed in the language of fall/redemption motives in the mythologizing context. That fall
and redemption are read this way corresponds to what they interpret: the non-objective work of truth. If 'fall/redemption' indicates the religious direction of Heidegger's thought in Der Ursprung, then 'mythologizing' provides its general structure in locale. Yet these terms are critical and not merely descriptive. They are positioned negatively in presentation of the material. Der Ursprung has been challenged especially in connection with those aspects of Heidegger's thinking, the history of aesthetics, for instance, that claim a relationship to commonly accessible realities. Yet this negative emphasis diminished with Heidegger's appropriation of the Van Gogh, and then virtually disappeared as we followed Heidegger into what he had to say for himself. This kind of interpreting, therefore, identified the steps of Heidegger's thinking in their nuanced and differing contexts. Its impulses did not subvert but rendered possible an elucidation of Heidegger's meditation in its systematic character.

It is, indeed, the systematic side of Heidegger's thinking which contributes most heavily, though indirectly, to aesthetic theory. To have related so many essential categories pertaining to the work of art in its finitude, in recognition of the fundamental question of truth, is Heidegger's magnificent achievement in Der Ursprung. His rugged, sustained searching through the field of ontological coordinates may not be patterned after a high order of logical consistency. But this is not the one requirement for philosophy. Some of Heidegger's insights regarding these coordinates are remarkably original, even to the point of
being creative. The inclusion of the art-preserver is prescient, particularly in light of only more recent developments toward reader-inclined interpretation and the history of art-reception. If 'earth' is valuable for students of painting, architecture and sculpture, it is also useful to remind others of the necessity for limiting-concepts in aesthetics. Heidegger's interconnection of the themes of truth and time, work of art and the battlefield of world and earth, contributes to the modern redistribution of emphasis from beauty and classical form. He is modern in one further, though perhaps unintended respect, namely that by grappling systematically with the terms of his choosing Heidegger elucidates some sides of the aesthetic sphere as it is manifest in these twentieth-century times (e.g., non-representative status of the work). He presupposes the idea of such a sphere or dimension -- transcending human will or ratiocination -- by directing his thought in obedience to the circle.

Yet Heidegger fails to perceive the law-side of the aesthetic dimension by materializing its structure in the work of art itself. Subjecting himself to this work, Heidegger imputes to it the essential features of a divinity that generates the history of both its fall and redemption. In opposing modern aesthetics, Heidegger also has fallen into its most characteristic trap: the elevation of art to ultimacy. The a-normativity of such a move -- the laws of creation cannot be broken, only disobeyed -- comes to the surface with Heidegger's articulation of truth as intrinsically negative. With such an assumption he can meditate effectively only in opposition to the very sources
that sustain him. Heidegger criticizes aesthetic theory precisely through his misunderstanding of it. He insinuates a battle into the structure of the work that, as art, maintains its integrity nevertheless. He justifies that battle on the supposition of inwardly-divided truth and then, for respite from this impossibility, asks for an origin that has not happened. Heidegger still renders the allusiveness which characterizes aesthetic phenomena by logic, a speculative one, that is, for its violation of the law of non-contradiction. Art obtains its significance for Heidegger not so much for itself as for how he thinks it can serve as source of resistance to the curse of calculative reason.

Heidegger's grasp of many systematic issues need not drive his reader into a nether realm where, in a sense, all and nothing is artful. We should remember how modern art and poetry have assumed a form of autonomy in the midst of general cultural crisis. Their rich textures reveal the voice of human suffering better recognized by an attitude which Heidegger never perceives. That is love for an order of reality which, with its details and nuances and in the play of undaunted imagination, still survives at the boundary of this abused creation and even presses occasionally into grateful human service.

It is not possible to deduce the feasibility of Christian philosophy. Christian metaphysics is no longer an acceptable enterprise. Yet a kind of thinking motivated a certain way is and always will be possible. For it is defined by the current of the thought, by the nature of its striving, by the character
of its ideas and its willingness to communicate in the face of rejection. A Christianly-informed thinking on issues pertaining to aesthetic activity cannot derive its responsibilities in the present situation though it can, if the opportunity is there, protect art, in its fragility, from those who would love it misguided.
NOTES

1 Martin Heidegger was born in south-west Germany, in the agricultural community of Mesakirch, Baden. First attracted to the priesthood, he studied briefly at a Jesuit seminary. His philosophical interests had been spurred, when an eighteen year old gymniast, by reading the gift of a local pastor -- Franz Brentano’s Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seiendem bei Aristoteles (on the manifold meanings of 'being' in Aristotle). Heidegger studied philosophy at the University of Freiburg, where he learned the phenomenological method from Husserl. While teaching at the University of Marburg, he published Sein und Zeit (1927), an event which shook European philosophical circles. Shortly after he returned to Freiburg to teach, Heidegger became involved with the growing Nazi movement. He lectured on its behalf and, after Hitler came to power, was appointed rector of the University. He soon left the party but never, even after World War II, apologized publicly for his earlier affiliation. At the close of the war, the new German government prohibited Heidegger from teaching regularly. Heidegger wrote at his hut in the Black Forest, and eventually did give the occasional lecture. He was buried, according to his will, in a Roman Catholic service.

3 Gadamer writes, "(Heidegger) called this intellectual experience 'the turn,' not in the theological sense of a conversion but in the sense he knew from his way of talking. The term 'turn' refers to a bend -- a hairpin or switchback -- in the path that goes up a mountain. One does not turn around here; rather, the way itself turns in order to continue going up." But Gadamer's recollection is of Heidegger's intellectual experience in physical terms. This kind of reference is only a distant analogy to Heidegger's personal history of thinking the meaning of Being. What is wrong with the word 'conversion,' especially when Gadamer (or Heidegger) must take the effort to belittle precisely this interpretation? Conversion is only secondarily a theological term; it is first a religious one, in which a person's fundamental direction in life shifts forward to the root from which he or she came. As a descriptive term, conversion is better suited in the account of Heidegger's 'turn,' though also not without other, even physical, analogies to the event. Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Apprenticeships*, trans. Robert R. Sullivan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 50-51.


11 Malraux, p. 28.

12 Malraux, p. 28.

13 Malraux, p. 28.

14 The emphasis here is on the activity or process and not on what is idolized. In the case of a doubly-negative motivation, one defines an entity or principle precisely by its opposition to what is spurned, and then repeats the negation in a transcending step not only to obtain freedom from the tainted realm but to account for it as well. The philosophical language of 'absolutization' is often preferred for its veneer of religious neutrality, though one should recognize the deeper and more instinctual impulses at work. 'Divination' is the word for Heidegger's motives.


21 Therefore the process by which truth is revealed takes precedence over the terms by which it is analyzed. An older format interprets Heidegger according to the irrational/rational split, within which it is obvious to which side he would be relegated. Yet Heidegger is aware of the debate with these categories and, as a thinker beyond the calculation of truth, moves in a different direction. New modes of description must be found to articulate his position.

22 Heidegger's terminology of truth, origin, Being and art is a family-language, with non-identical though interconnected points of lingual concentration. See page 73.

23 Another way is the path of thought. The thinker and poet belong together in their difference. Cf. Heidegger, "What Is Metaphysics?", p. 360.

24 Key to the idea of an aesthetic sphere is that all of the activities which occur in it are specifically-qualified, that is, placed within the subject/object relation unique to their kind. The aesthetic realm is temporal without any indication of self-genesis, and the aesthetic idea is definite without implications of self-regulated totality. Heidegger takes the cultural product from this sphere and imputes to it, as art, all the features which would otherwise remain interrelated but distinct. For the account of the aesthetic sphere, see: Calvin Seerveld, Rainbows For


26 Heidegger, "The Origin," pp. 79-81 for text of epilogue; p. xxiii for bibliographical comment. The epilogue was not written after 1950, year of first publication.


30 The first step of Heidegger's negative appropriation is indecision -- a markedly modern condition of human existence.


43 Heidegger mentions the void or nothing throughout Der Ursprung as the most distant term of the circle within which he works: "The Origin," pp. 53-54, 74. See also, Arthur Waley, ed., The Way And Its Power: A Study of the Tao Tè Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought, 6th ed. (1934; rpt. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1968). This book, traditionally ascribed to Lao-Tzu, builds on the theme of nothing in a mythologizing way quite similar to Heidegger. The difference is, of course, when Heidegger's Western modernity shows.

45 Hegel sometimes depicted himself as the Owl of Minerva, meaning that he stood in wisdom of the darkening of the West.


49 The Superman, for Nietzsche, wills to become himself. But, as indicated by his precursor, Zarathustra, there is law and self-regulation for the genesis of such willing in submission to the possibility of eternal return: "To redeem the past and to transform every 'It was' into an 'I wanted it thus!' -- that alone do I call redemption!" Cf. Fr. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, tr. with intro. by R.J. Hollingdale (1961; 7th rpt. Penguin Books, 1971), p. 161.


51 Martin Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, pp. 231-235, 436-437. In these pages Heidegger assesses how deeply he has probed the question of the meaning of Being. Sein und Zeit is preparatory for disclosing only the direction of the coming task -- fundamental ontology of the meaning of Being -- through an analysis of Dasein's temporality. Though not in direct contradiction to his motives in Sein und Zeit, Heidegger later seeks for a different language and thought for his meditations. Sein und Zeit therefore assumes a preliminary role as Heidegger's total project is conceived.
52 Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript.
Nietzsche, The Will to Power, tr. Walter Kaufmann and R.J.
Hollingdale and edited by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random
House, 1967).
Edmund Husserl, Ideen Zu Einer Reinen Phänomenologie und
Phänomenologischen Philosophie, edited by Walter Biemel
Note particularly Heidegger's eventual preoccupation in
critique of Nietzsche, a critique initiated in lectures
during the mid 1930s.
Cf. Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche: Erster und Zweiter Banden
(Neaks, 1961).
Martin Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking? Tr. with intro.
by J. Glenn Gray (Harper Colophon Books; New York: Harper


54 See note #51. Even while writing it, Heidegger realized
that Sein und Zeit merely cleared a path to the essential
concern: retrieval of the question of the meaning of Being.
The ontological concern surfaces in "The Origin" in connec-
tion with a language of the origin and of truth. (Heidegger
certainly is 'beyond' the distinction between truth and being
traditional since Aristotle.) Heidegger is searching for
the ontological foundations of philosophy. These are assumed
without reference to human subjectivity, which metaphysics
has seized upon and even Sein und Zeit too closely inter-
rogated as Dasein (Being-There).
55 See pp. 73-74 of this paper for how Heidegger's 'truth' and 'origin' relate in his family language. The focus here is on truth as keyword in the explication of "The Origin." If for him truth is central, then the origin is essential at the questioning along the boundaries. The format of "The Origin" reveals this interconnection between the terms.


58 W.B. Yeats, A Vision (1925 prv; rpt. London: MacMillan, 1974), pp. 67ff. The diagram on p. 34 is imaginatively adapted for structure from Yeats' notion of the 'Great Wheel.' Yeats is also a mythologizer in his theory behind the later poetry.

59 Not that 'self-substantial,' 'eternal,' and 'objective' are necessarily identical terms. They do tend, however, to be for Heidegger, inasmuch as they represent the Platonic object of his general critique of metaphysics.


62 The prongs of this dialectic stem from Heidegger's view of truth as historical and, as such, intrinsically negative. Heidegger's dialectic resists the stereotype of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. He seeks a new beginning for art in remembrance of the early Greeks.


64 'Being' language still pervades the background of "The Origin." See pages 57-58 of this essay.

65 Adapted from Gerard Manley Hopkins' lines:

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod. ('God's Grandeur')


One should not be inclined, because Hopkins poetically maintains a theme similar to Heidegger's, to infer a 'mythologizing' tendency in the poet. Hopkins' language belies any such effort. It is too full of rich, structured density with emphasis on the inscape appearing to the visual and sound surface. Furthermore, 'mythologizing' is a technical term reserved for philosophers of a certain kind. We should therefore distinguish, for instance, between Yeats' later theory and poetry. And we should not insert Heidegger's way of thinking into Hölderlin,
whom Heidegger reveres.

66 Heidegger's tendency in "The Origin" to read philosophical positions anonymously is curious for his attack on 'das Man' (humanity in general; as mass) in Sein und Zeit and ominous for his earlier sympathy to the Nazi cause (during the 1930s, at the least).


75 Richard McKeon, ed. with intro., The Basic Works of Aristotle, pp. 7-37 (Categories).


80 Heidegger's move here is regressive, returning from the later correlation of aesthetics and the matter/form schema to isolate Kant's 'aesthetic' of human sensibility. The Kant-discussion also anticipates, in dialectical fashion, Heidegger's notion of aesthetics ("The Origin," p. 27), though of course Kant is reduced to a step along the path.


84 Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 27.

85 See note #59. Heidegger vilifies reification, supratemporality and false transcendence through their combination in the single critique of Platonism. Heidegger's tendency toward language-groupings is again apparent.


87 The traditional identification of Plato as idealist (versus
Aristotle as realist) makes little sense after Kant’s re-formulation of the terms. Aristotle, actually, realized Plato’s form-realism in the middle period by distinguishing the logic of definition from the structures defined. Plato had, for a time, identified the form of x with x itself.

88 Heidegger, Nietzsche.


91 Heidegger, Nietzsche.

92 Not that a process of dialogical thinking is unwarranted. It is normative for finite human beings. Yet, one may make ‘something’ of the process itself by formulating a dialectic in the speculative quest for truth within the parameters of contradiction. Such an approach violates the logical norm though it also, and more deeply, confuses conceptual negation with conflict in reality — with this conflict supposedly resolved in some presupposed absolute in or out of time. Dialogue, however, is a mode of philosophical communication which seeks for truth according to its aspects.

94 Heidegger proceeds along the critical steps of his path in thinking by an internal critique consistently directed to and mediated by the structure of the circle itself (i.e., the event of truth).


102 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 35.

103 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 36.


110 The language of principle and structure is not Heidegger's. But they are mediating terms of transition, with 'principle' meant for its reference to the origin and 'structure' for its ability to include non-representation in the disclosure of the arena where truth is at work.

Kockelmanns suggests which temple Heidegger may be thinking of in Joseph J. Kockelmanns, Heidegger On Art And Art Works, pp. 141-142. It might be the temple of Neptune (Poseidon) in Paestum, an ancient Greek colonial city in Lucania, Italy.

112 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," pp. 41-43. The 'nothing' of non-representation correlates with the negativity of Heidegger's truth. Also, Heidegger's notion of 'standing-there' is a unique development -- for a temple -- from his previous view of 'being-there' in Sein und Zeit.

By phusis, Heidegger is alluding most directly to Aristotle, whose Physics he considers a work of crucial importance. For Heidegger, Aristotle's use of the word phusis is not always uniform, except that he tends to read the movement of things
in their domain or in general by the concept of their 'being-
ness.' Aristotle thus obscures while preserving Heraclitus'
early notion of phusis as the coming-to-presence, self-
concealing Being-process. Cf. Richardson, Through Phenomenology
To Thought,' pp. 309-316.


115 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 44.

116 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 44.


Yet, world and the Open are not identical for Heidegger. See
page 77 of this paper.


120 Martin Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, p. 56.


122 Michael Hamburger, tr., Friedrich Hölderlin: Poems And
Fragments, Bi-lingual ed. with preface, intro. and notes by
p. 113.


124 Michael Hamburger, tr., Friedrich Hölderlin, p. 255.

126 Michael Hamburger, tr., Friedrich Hölderlin, p. 251.


Heidegger's fascination with 'great art' reflects Hegel's apotheosis of 'great culture.' Is there then, surprisingly, little or no room in Heidegger for everyday folk art?

auf Grund von Zwist und Schuldigkeit."


137 Elizabeth S. Haldane And G.R.T. Ross, trs., The Philosophical Works Of Descartes, Vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 92. This reference is to the four precepts of logic, found in Discourse on the Method, with the following as part of the third: "The third was to carry on my reflections in due order, commencing with objects that were the most simple ... in order to rise ... by degrees, to knowledge of the most complex, assuming an order, even if a fictitious one, among those which do not follow a natural sequence relatively to one another."

138 Kierkegaard leaves untouched the process of acquiring objective 'truths' as approximation, Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 23ff.


140 The word 'definition' here means limitation or horizon, in recognition also of its more common, objectively-oriented sense.

141 How is it, for instance, that art has come to be? Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 65. The general question of
the meaning of Being, however, is not a universal category for application to specific entities. Heidegger's formulation of the question in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* -- "why is there anything at all, rather than nothing?" -- is transformed in "The Origin" into the crisis for the work of truth in art. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 1.

142 The difference between Being and beings, known as the ontological difference, means that because Being is not a being it shines through to reveal beings as they are.

143 Heidegger does not grant cultures other than those rooted in the history of Greek experience an awareness of the correlation of Being and time. Hence they are not capable of the error of ontological forgetfulness, nor are they cognizant of the problematic of objectivity. In an era of international communication, itself the fruit of dominating Western modes of thought, non-Western cultures confront but cannot fathom the source of a pervading nihilism.


145 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, compilers, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 63-64. Truth is opposed to the lie, to appearance, to exercise or parade, to falsity.

147 Still, Heidegger argues only one side of the old philological line that we do not know really what the pre-Platonic Greek words mean by themselves. He asks: why do we no longer know the sources of our own history?

148 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 60. Heidegger also remarks: "What the word 'origin' here means is thought by way of the nature of truth." (p. 80)


157 Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysics also incorporates the Christian concept of the Creator/God under the sweep of error. He tends to delineate his points of negative effect with the memory of a Thomistic reading of Christian doctrine very much in mind. Yet Heidegger seems unwilling to probe the Biblical motives for a deconstruction of onto-theological speculation, and turns for an event of truth-revelation in
the language of the early Greeks. That Heidegger cannot find it there, except by unwarranted and speculative reading, makes sense to anyone committed to the event of Biblical truth.


159 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," pp. 53-54.


161 To what extent does Heidegger's seizure of negativity in the double negation of metaphysics commit him to that which he would transcend?


165 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 54.

166 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin," p. 54.


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