The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

College of the Liberal Arts

THE RELEVANCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL IN MARTIN HEIDEGGER

A Dissertation in

Philosophy

by

Joey Balay

©2014 Joey Balay

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014
The dissertation of Joey Balay was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Dennis Schmidt
Liberal Arts Research Professor of Philosophy, Comparative Literature, and German
Dissertation Adviser
Chair of Committee

Veronique Foti
Professor of Philosophy

Leonard Lawlor
Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy
Director of Philosophy Graduate Studies

Daniel Purdy
Professor of German and Slavic Languages and Literatures

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.
This dissertation attempts to elucidate the relevance of the beautiful in Western society today by appealing to Martin Heidegger's historical interrogation of the relationship between being, truth, and beauty. The motivation for this inquiry is two-fold. First, it departs from the characterization of beauty at present as a subjective and critically defunct value, noting that such a perspective is made problematic when one considers beauty's more universal status in mass culture. Second, it is observed that while Heidegger has often been recognized as one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century, his critique of Western aesthetics has prompted many critics to suggest that he is not a thinker of the beautiful. In response to these observations, I argue that Heidegger helps elucidate the deeper significance of beauty today by showing how it belongs to the illuminating and erotic experience of understanding.

More specifically, I contend that while Heidegger's philosophical project is typically understood in light of its interrogation of the question of being, this inquiry is situated in a wider retrieval of the early Greek and Christian unity of the Transcendentals - those basic concepts such as truth, beauty, and goodness that help support being’s disclosure. In particular, through his reading of figures like Heraclitus, Sophocles, and Plato, Heidegger indicates that beauty belongs to the ancient Greek notion of alētheia or unconcealment. For Heidegger, this broader notion of disclosure shows that beings do not simply lay around as already present entities or ideas, but come into being in generative events of understanding, events that erotically draw us into their claim and illuminate the world anew.

In considering the role of beauty in this experience more carefully, Heidegger suggests that it belongs to both the in-apparent generation of a given appearance, as well as the radiant
quality of the resulting appearance. He argues, however, that this complex character of beauty is effaced in the ensuing Western tradition of *aesthetics*. For beginning with Plato, and continuing into modernity with figures like Kant and Hegel, beauty becomes associated simply with the sensuous world of appearances and the feeling that it produces in the human subject. This development comes to a head, however, in Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche and the will to power of modern technology. For Heidegger shows that it is precisely the historical development of the aesthetic interpretation of beauty that helps motivate the uncontrollable production of new forms and appearances today, and that threatens to turn natural and human life into aesthetic resources.

Over against this dangerous consolidation of the aesthetic interpretation of beauty, I conclude by examining Heidegger's claim that a re-interrogation of art, and particularly of figures like Hölderlin, Cézanne, and Klee, may help show beauty's more originary unity with truth and being. Significantly, however, in this suggestion there is also a potential recovery of *the good*. For I propose that in the recognition of beauty's more significant role within the experience of understanding, there is the possibility for a more concerned attunement toward the various appeals made upon us by mass culture.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................... vi

Introduction: The (Ir)Relevance of the Beautiful ................................................................1
i. Statement of Problem..................................................................................................... 2
ii. Beauty's Eidolon: A Brief History of the Problem of the Beautiful ....................... 4
iii. Retrieving the Question of the Beautiful in Heidegger ......................................... 13

Chapter 1: Beauty and the Early Heidegger ................................................................. 22
i. Introduction.................................................................................................................. 23
ii. Situating the Question of the Beautiful in Heidegger's Student Work ............... 27
iii. The Double Being of the Beautiful in the Phenomenology of Religion ............ 40
iv. Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 58

Chapter 2: The Implicit Structure of Beauty in Being and Time ............................ 61
i. Introduction.................................................................................................................. 62
ii. A Response to the Critical Appeal to Kantian Aesthetics in Being and Time ...... 64
iii. The Existential Retrieval of the Beautiful ........................................................... 68
iv. The (In)Authentic Call of Beauty in the Structure of Conscience .................. 76
v. Conclusion: Summary of the Beautiful in Heidegger's Early Work .................. 81

Chapter 3: The Retrieval of the Beautiful in the Greeks at the Turn .................. 85
i. Introduction.................................................................................................................. 86
ii. The Thinking of the Beautiful in the Anfang of the Early Greeks .................... 90
iii. The Metaphysical-Aesthetical Transformation in Plato ..................................... 113
iv. Conclusion: Art and Beauty? .................................................................................. 126

Chapter 4: From Aesthetics to Technology: Beauty in the Modern Age ............ 134
i. Introduction.................................................................................................................. 135
ii. From Proto Aesthetics to Dominant Aesthetics .................................................. 138
iii. Kant, Nietzsche, and "The Beginning of the Terrible" ......................................... 144
iv. The Shining of Technology ................................................................................... 154
v. Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 161

Chapter 5: The Question of Beautiful Art Today ................................................... 163
i. Introduction.................................................................................................................. 164
ii. The Origin of the Work of Art ............................................................................... 167
iii. Hölderlin's Word for Being .................................................................................. 181
iv. Conclusion: Heidegger, Cézanne, and Klee on the Appearing of Appearance ... 197

Conclusion: Mindfulness and Letting-Be .................................................................... 209

Bibliography ................................................................................................................... 218
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee - Dennis Schmidt, Veronique Foti, Leonard Lawlor, and Daniel Purdy - for their time, incisive comments, and patience. I would especially like to thank my dissertation advisor, Dennis Schmidt for his tireless support and dedication to my intellectual journey. I am grateful to my friends, colleagues, and interlocutors at Seattle University, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, and The Pennsylvania State University for their conversation, inspiration, and hospitality. Most of all, however, I would like to thank my wife and editor, Jillian, my son, Arlon, my mother, Cindy, my father, Mike, my brother, James, and my grandparents, Arlon and Sally. They are the people without whom I could not have undertaken this journey, and for whom I have always wanted to write something beautiful.
Beautiful things show that man belongs in the world...

-Immanuel Kant

For the beautiful is nothing
but the beginning of the terrible, a beginning we but barely endure,
and it amazes us so, since calmly it disdains
to destroy us...

-Rainer Maria Rilke
Introduction
I. Statement of Problem

The title of this dissertation challenges the post-modern reader in several ways. In the first case, the question of beauty's relevance today is likely to appear to many as a non-starter. On the one hand, this follows from the way that beauty is commonly associated with a unique experience - typically surrounding nature or art - that appeals to us suddenly and with a quality of self-evidence. For this reason, beauty is more often associated with the subjectivity of a feeling than with something that we can debate the relevance of, like an object or a fact. On the other hand, beginning in the late nineteenth century the notion of the beautiful has come under strong criticism from both artists and theorists for its outmoded association with representational art and conservative bourgeois values, a critique that has led to its substitution with a number of other aesthetic possibilities including the abject, the performative, and the sublime. In this way, the relevance of the beautiful has also become something of a defunct claim in contemporary culture, one that is not only obvious, but passé.

There is another important sense, however, in which this title serves as a challenge here. For it also raises the question of the status of the beautiful in the work of the twentieth century

---


2 In the aforementioned essay, Gadamer writes: "[I]t belongs to our natural sense of the beautiful that we cannot ask why it pleases us. We cannot expect any advantage from the beautiful since it serves no purpose. The beautiful fulfils itself in a kind of self-determination and enjoys its own self-representation" (Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other essays*, 14).
German philosopher, Martin Heidegger. In this case, the provocation extends from the common belief that while Heidegger is a key thinker of the concept of art, his rigorous critique of traditional aesthetics and his search for an ontological reconsideration of the artwork indicate a critical disinterest in the notion of beauty. Such a position is captured in a standard reference text like Michael Inwood's *A Heidegger Dictionary*, which states:

He [Heidegger] dislikes the word *Aesthetik*, from the Greek *aisthēsis*, “perception,” since it focuses on the audience at the expense of the artist and the work, and on the superficial, perceptible beauty of the work [...]. The work embodies truth first of all, and sensory beauty only secondarily.³

Accordingly, to propose the question of the relevance of the beautiful in contemporary culture more generally, and in Heidegger's thinking specifically, is a gesture that at the outset seems to be precluded by a more striking irrelevance. Over against these assumptions, the following dissertation argues that Martin Heidegger offers an incisive interpretation of the history of the beautiful, an interpretation that helps us to better understand its unrecognized significance today. I contend that this begins with how Heidegger exposes an untenable paradox in the supposed self-evidence of beauty's appeal and yet its critical denigration and subjectivism, a paradox that threatens to efface the more pressing way that beauty functions across the various discourses of mass culture. In order to make this point, however, Heidegger traces the essence of the beautiful back to its original unity with being and truth in the ancient Greek notion of *unconcealment* (*alētheia*), a complex phenomenon within which beauty serves as the generative and erotic quality of new understanding.

This fundamental way in which beauty helps a given truth claim *draw us* into the radiance of its appeal, is something that Heidegger argues has largely been forgotten today. Significantly, Heidegger indicates that while this confusion surrounding the beautiful is in many

ways more urgent today - given the poverty of its understanding and the extreme aestheticism of mass culture – an element of misunderstanding has always surrounded the concept of beauty. Indeed, he suggests that, in its essence, beauty may even be fundamentally related to a certain notion of deceptive appearance. This is supported by the fact that in the original Greek characterization of unconcealment (*alētheia*), one finds an aspect of semblance in the way that beauty draws one erotically and immediately into the claim of a given appearance at the same time that it causes one to lose site of the wider horizon of understanding.

While Heidegger's re-thinking of this complex character of the beautiful in the ancient Greeks represents the basis for his response to the question of the beautiful today, the real critical force of his reading is found in how he traces the historical amplification of this problematic up through the modern and post-modern eras. In order to better prepare for this historical analysis of the problem then, it will be helpful to begin here with a general overview of this lineage of the beautiful. In doing so, I propose that the specific question of beauty's status today, along with the unique nature of Heidegger's response, will be brought into sharper focus.4

II. Beauty's *Eidolon*: A Brief History of the Problem of the Beautiful

In my opening, I have suggested that a historical reflection on the beautiful finds a phenomenon that has always constituted something of a contested experience in human existence. Indeed, one could say that human history even originates, in some sense, with this problematic. Homer and Ovid, for example, observe that the world's first beauty contest was brought about when Eris, the goddess of strife, threw a golden apple inscribed with the word

---

4 The following overview is not intended to represent Heidegger's reading of this history. It is intended to give a more standard account of the history of beauty, while emphasizing its problematic status. As we shall see in the course of the following dissertation Heidegger echoes many of these interpretive points, while challenging many others.
kalliste (most beautiful) amidst Athena, Aphrodite, and Hera. When Paris was appointed by Zeus to judge this bitter rivalry, however, he was seduced by Aphrodite’s promise of yet another beauty, Helen, cause of the Trojan War. In this way, what began as a divine problematic became a mortal problem as well.

The complexity of beauty in the early mythological tradition follows, in particular, from the way that its radiance and loveliness (ekphanestaton erasmìōtaton) seems to carry with it the promise of truth, goodness, and happiness (kalokagathos), and yet, as a figure like Stesichorus notes, also "an eidolon" or "deceptive illusion." Thus one not only hears of Aphrodite, Athena, Hera, and Helen, but also of Pandora, that "beautiful evil" (kalon kakon) whom Hesiod suggests was able to bring misery to mankind only because she first appeared to bring fair and lovely tidings.

It is this ontological, epistemological, and ethical ambivalence that made beauty a central topic for the intellectual pursuits of the early Greeks, and that helped support the tragic view of the human condition. This tragic view was transformed, however, with the emergence of philosopha theoria, and the attempt to offer a theoretical account of the world. One hears in the

8 The reference here is to Stesichorus's famous Palinode to Helen. See Plato, Phaedrus, 244a.
9 See Hesiod, Theogony, Loeb Classical Library, trans. Glen Most (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 560-612; Works and Days, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 60-105. Hesiod suggests that upon encountering Pandora's "beautiful evil" (kakon kalon) humankind is left only with the hope (elpis) of happiness. As the only thing remaining in Pandora's box when she opens it, hope constitutes something of an interpretive mystery, at once preserved and yet withheld from humans. Elsewhere, Alexander Nehamas expresses this ambiguity of the beautiful as the hiatus between "the promise of happiness" and its fulfillment. See Alexander Nehamas, Only the Promise of Happiness (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010).
10 See Norman Austin, Helen and her Shameless Phantom (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994).
Pythagoreans, for example, that beauty is a universal principle of harmony belonging to the formal order of the cosmos,\(^\text{11}\) and in Xenophon that beauty, like goodness, can be reduced to the property of usefulness.\(^\text{12}\) As with so much else that comes down to us in history, however, it is Plato who is typically considered the first thinker to successfully interpret beauty within a comprehensive theoretical system. For Plato's remarkable achievement seems to be that he retains beauty's sense as an appearance of the true and the good, and yet grounds this appearance in the stable foundation of the Forms (eidē). Thus Plato writes in the *Philebus* that the good is found only in the conjunction of "beauty, proportion, and truth," which are to be regarded "three as one."\(^\text{13}\) In this move, however, Plato replaces the contested hiatus of the tragic tradition and emphasizes a more harmoniac unity of the Transcendentals.

In the Medieval period, it is precisely the relationship between these Transcendentals that represents the leading problem. On one hand, this is found in debates about which concepts to include in the official list of Transcendentals, with some thinkers advocating a more comprehensive table (for example, being, truth, goodness, beauty, unity, and thingness), and others admitting a more restricted set (for example, only being, truth, and unity). While certain concepts were universally accepted in this catalogue (for example, being), beauty was one of the most controversial. At the center of the debate was a disagreement about how to define beauty, and its fittingness as an expression of the Godhead. For while some theologians argued that


\(^{12}\) See Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Loeb Classical Library, trans. E.C. Marchant and O.J. Todd (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3.8.5. Along with the notions of the good and of fair appearance, the useful constitutes the third possible definition that *Liddel and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1945) offers for the entry on *Kalos*. While it is traditionally argued that different authors appeal to these different senses of *kalos* in their writings, one could argue that the more complex sense of *kalos* is captured precisely in the unstable interrelation of these three different senses. That is, one might say that the real sense of *kalos* belongs precisely to the way that it presents only an appearance of goodness and utility without being co-extensive with them.

beauty's *harmonic* essence was an appropriate expression of God's orderly creation, others complained that beauty's *aesthetic radiance* was an inappropriate reminder of the sensual world and its erotic appetites.\(^\text{14}\)

In the modern period, this debate concerning the Transcendentals was redirected into a new concern with the systematic scientific description of the world, a description in which the place of beauty seemed difficult to locate. Central to this conceptual transformation, however, was the increasing restriction of the notion of truth to the empirical and logical measurement of nature. In turn, beauty no longer seemed to belong to epistemological and ontological concerns, but became increasingly associated with the experience of subjectivity. In David Hume, for instance, beauty, like goodness, is tied to *value or feeling*, and belongs to the problem of *taste* as opposed to *fact*.\(^\text{15}\) Similarly, for Immanuel Kant beauty is associated with a special kind of sense perception (*aesthēsis*) and feeling of life (*Lebensgefühl*), reserved for the experience of wild nature and art, and studied by the new field of *aesthetics*.\(^\text{16}\)

Kant recognized better than anyone, however, that there is ultimately something of a tension here in the attribution of qualities like *feeling* and *subjectivism* to the beautiful, and yet the persistent belief in its universal and genuine significance. Indeed, one might say that in the modern world, the *eidolon* of beauty reappears just in this inability to reconcile beauty with truth, being, and goodness at the methodological level, a frustration that threatened to reintroduce Pandora's chaos into the ordered architectonics of the period. It was both in disaffection with these accounts of the beautiful and with the segregated methodology of the modern project more


generally, that the cult of beauty briefly flourished in German Romanticism and Idealism. For figures like Schelling and Schiller, it is just this complex irreducibility of the beautiful to systematic thinking that points the way to the integration of our different conceptual powers in a higher form of Absolute Truth.\textsuperscript{17} As Hegel’s \textit{Aesthetics} shows, however, this is a position that could not be sustained. For Hegel argues that the manner in which ideal beauty unifies us with Spirit concerns only an incipient unity, one that belonged to the ancient Greeks, but which gives way in the course of history to the philosophical-scientific concept.\textsuperscript{18}

In raising the question of the beautiful again today, it is necessary to recognize how our current perspectives grow out of the background of this complex history. Indeed, one might say that the strong critique of beauty found in both aesthetics and philosophy around the turn of the twentieth century is really just a continuation and response to the transformation that the thinking of beauty undergoes in the modern age. One finds, for instance, the emergence of an epistemologically driven neo-Kantianism and Positivism during this period, a philosophical position that argues that statements about phenomena like beauty are the equivalent of \textit{goobledygook}.\textsuperscript{19} At the same time, one hears in a host of thinkers frustrated with the Enlightenment project itself - thinkers ranging from Karl Marx\textsuperscript{20} to Tristan Tzara\textsuperscript{21} to Jean-

\textsuperscript{19} See Kelly Dean Jolley, \textit{Wittgenstein: Key Concepts} (Durham, United Kingdom: Acumen Publishing, 2010).
Francois Lyotard— that both art and cultural critique must turn to new values and new aesthetics in order to challenge the antiquated bourgeois framework and its beautiful illusions.

Despite the different motivations at work in these objections, it is significant that these positions against beauty limit their response to predominately modern conceptions of the beautiful. That is, in contrasting the traditional aesthetic of pleasure with more politically conscious alternatives like the abject or the absurd, much of the avant-garde tradition shows itself to be responding to a particularly Kantian notion of beauty. Accordingly, these positions fail to see how their own approaches may resonate with that older and more tragic thinking of beauty found in figures like Hesiod and Homer. Similarly, one could argue that the scientific rejection of beauty in Positivism's epistemological Puritanism fails to consider how certain Pythagorean or Platonic accounts of the harmonic order of beauty may contribute to a richer description of their own pursuits. In overlooking these different historical valences surrounding the notion of beauty, such tendencies not only overlook a more complex thinking of the beautiful, they fail to recognize beauty’s ineliminable place in human experience.

Following this last claim, it is important to recognize that beauty has remained a significant phenomenon in the contemporary world. This is perhaps best expressed in two ways today, the first and most obvious of which is the ubiquitous aestheticization of Western culture in the last hundred years. For while the avant-garde tradition may have objected to the privilege of beauty found with the rise of bourgeois institutions like the museum and the opera house, it is

---

23 While a host of other concepts have been appealed to in order to challenge the beautiful, it is perhaps the marginal and disruptive characterization of the sublime within Kant's own work that has made it a particularly fitting expression for these concerns. As someone like Lyotard argues, in the *unpresentability* of the sublime one finds a challenge to the privileged position of transcendental subjectivity and rationality at the heart of modernity, a challenge that makes the sublime more properly post-modern. See Jean-Francois Lyotard, “The Sublime and the Avant-Garde” in *The Inhuman*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Redwood City, California: Stanford University Press, 1992).
clear that beauty is no longer confined to high art or encounters with nature, but permeates the technological and commercial ethos of Western culture more generally. And while the objects that we find beautiful today might have changed from picturesque gardens and portraits of royalty to the dancing plastic bag in a film like American Beauty, the claim that these beautiful objects make upon us remains powerful.24 Indeed, a recent article from the Free Press on the release of the new Apple iPhone and iPad, observes that a company like Apple sells its products specifically through an appeal to "beauty" which is almost '"magical' [...] offer[ing] unto us, in exchange for the fruits of mere days or weeks of labour, mesmerising portals to a better, beautiful, more enchanted world..."25

With this intractable refusal of beauty to disappear from our world, it is not surprising that it has undergone a resurgence as a critical topic in roughly the last twenty years. For example, scholars like Wendy Steiner26 and Elaine Scarry27 have each argued more recently that the desensitizing turn to the ugly in the avant-garde has led to a suppression of not only beauty, but of the feminine and the ethical, a finding that indicates the important need to recover beauty in our lives. Elsewhere, Dave Hickey has pointed out the continued marketability of beautiful art in the artworld, as evidenced by the tremendous success of artists ranging from Robert Mapplethorpe to Georgia O'Keeffe to Thomas Kinkade.28 And in developing fields like analytic

---

24 Allan Ball and Sam Mendes, American Beauty (Dreamworks, 1999).
28 See Dave Hickey, The Invisible Dragon: Essays on Beauty (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). A host of more recent art exhibitions dedicated to the question of beauty further support such a claim. See, for example, "Regarding Beauty: A View of the Late 20th Century" (Hirshron Museum of the Smithsonian, 1999).
aesthetics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science, there has been an effort to define beauty as an aesthetic property, a structure of consciousness, and an evolutionary marker.

Collectively, this resurgence has prompted Peter Schjeldahl, one of the most famous art critics in the United States today, to announce that "beauty is back." But one might ask just what it means to say, "beauty is back." For as another critic has recently noted, there appears to be something almost nostalgic in the recovery of a Schillerian conception of beauty here, one which betrays a general disaffection with the alienation of post-modernism and a longing for the return to an ideal solidarity that never existed. Indeed, when one considers the foregoing reflections, it seems much more to be the case that beauty never really left our world in the first place, but has only come to permeate Western culture in a more insidious fashion.

Accordingly, the recovery of beauty today must be measured against a parallel claim - found, for instance, in thinkers from the critical theory, gender studies, and race theory traditions - which suggests that the issue surrounding beauty today involves not so much its absence or recovery, but rather the pervasive failure to critically recognize the complex ways in which it helps make present things like racial identity, gender, and the idealized order of the

30 See Elaine Scarry. Scarry not only argues for a recovery of beauty on feminist and ethical terms, but attempts to account for it as a structure of perception compatible with the philosophy of mind.
34 See Theodor Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, ed. and trans. Robert Hullet-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Culture Industry" in Dialectic of Enlightenment, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr and trans. Edmund Jephcott (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2007). Adorno argues that the individual promise in natural and artistic beauty exceeding the universality of a conceptual paradigm is appropriated today by the false promise of Individualism in contemporary mass culture, and given back to the people in service of just those Enlightenment ideals that the avant-garde wished to oppose in the first place.
aesthetic world in which we live. Interestingly, a current debate in the natural sciences indicates that such a problem belongs even to so-called objective spheres of truth. This debate concerns the notion of *data beautification*, or the practice of editing and modeling data through colorizations, layered photography, pixel manipulation, and enlargements. Such a process is used, for example, in the construction of the images produced by the Hubble Telescope.

Defenders of this practice argue that they are only making more explicit what already exists, but which perhaps cannot be clearly seen by the human eye. However, critics point out that such practices pander to journal publications, institutional funding, and the public's demand for glossy colorful images.

What is most interesting about this last example, however, is not the disagreement between the two positions, but how both sides seem to agree that beauty is an additional property that can be super-added or removed from objective truth claims. That is, neither side considers that beauty might be integral to the experience of how a distant solar system is able to count as something significant and true for us in for the first place. In overlooking the possibility that beauty belongs to this more basic experience of understanding itself, such reflections not only...

---

37 More specifically, these theorists argue that the simple dismissal of beauty's critical significance only serves to efface, and thus makes more pernicious, the way that continued appeals to beauty promote oppression, while its naive recovery reinforces certain biases and prejudices encoded in our social conceptions of beauty that have not been sufficiently investigated. Both Wolf and Taylor argue that beauty is largely a socially constructed phenomenon that marginalizes women and racial minorities by reproducing an inherited European patriarchal system, a process that is concealed all the more deeply by a society that, in bad faith, imagines itself to be post-racist, post-sexist, and post-beautiful. Elsewhere, in both Dialectic and Enlightenment and Aesthetics, Adorno suggests that beauty has largely been co-opted by the discourse of capitalism, which in turn, deploys the beautiful as the false promise of hope and individualism in its empty truth claims.


39 Paul Taylor has pointed out that the scientific view that beauty represents an objective property belonging to certain objective entities and not others, can also lead to troubling consequences. For example, Taylor notes a recent study published in Psychology Today that claims to offer objective proof that humans find black women less physically attractive than other races. The article, written by Satoshi Kanazawa and entitled, "Why Are Black Women Less Physically Attractive Than Other Women?" was published May 15, 2011, peer reviewed, and said to be based on strictly objective claims. It was subsequently removed after numerous complaints. See Paul Taylor, *Race: A Philosophical Introduction* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press), 49.
show that beauty remains an important question for us, but they indicate that the ancient tension between beauty, truth, and semblance expresses itself in a unique way at present. Indeed, one might say that the *eidolon* of beauty returns today in the way that our historical inheritance of modernism's subjectivism and post-modernism's critique collectively effaces beauty's position in our major cultural discourses and truth claims. That is, while beauty is appealed to by everything from advertisements, to campaign speeches, to scientific publications, the entrenched impression that beauty is a subjective, antiquated, and innocuous phenomenon ultimately precludes our ability to consider just how this appeal is related to the basic experience of truth and understanding in these claims.

These historical reflections suggest that while beauty has always constituted something of a contested phenomenon, particularly in its relationship with truth, being, and goodness, this problem is an especially significant and complex one today precisely for the way that it is perceived as *unproblematic*. At the same time, it is by taking up the question of the beautiful from this *historical perspective* that I believe one discovers an important means to understanding a phenomenon that otherwise eludes our contemporary sensibility. Having indicated the importance of this historical consideration for the question of beauty more generally then, I now wish to turn to a more specific overview of Heidegger's historical response to this question.

**III. Retrieving the Question of the Beautiful in Heidegger**

The following study argues that Martin Heidegger offers a unique insight into the historically problematic experience of the beautiful adumbrated above. It must be observed from the beginning however, that Heidegger's work approaches the question of the beautiful from the broader context of his lifelong interrogation of the question of being, the most fundamental
concept in philosophy. In Chapter 1, I show how Heidegger's philosophical career begins with an inquiry into the question of the unity of being and those other basic Transcendentalts (truth, beauty, oneness, goodness, etc.) identified in the early Greek and Christian traditions. This question, which Heidegger first inherits through an encounter with Aristotle, is one that he pursues in his student dissertation and habilitation through a phenomenological reconsideration of transcendental logic and a close re-reading of the medieval theologian, Duns Scotus.

Immediately following his student work, however, Heidegger's thinking undergoes an important methodological transformation, inspired by Christian mysticism (especially St. Augustine, Meister Eckhart, and Martin Luther) and the historical re-conception of phenomenology, a transformation that manifests itself in his hermeneutics of facticity and phenomenology of religion. At the heart of this thinking is a strong critique of the traditional philosophical and Christian interpretation of being modeled on the presence of beings or objects; instead, Heidegger argues that being manifests itself through the historically contested experience of the human being's factual search for God/being. It is in the context of this hermeneutic re-interpretation of the Transcendentalts that Heidegger offers his most explicit engagement with the notion of the beautiful in his early work. Specifically, Heidegger delineates a two-fold description of beauty here, a complex account that persists in his thinking thereafter. On one hand, he follows Eckhart and Augustine in pointing to how beauty helps characterize the mysterious and invisible call of God/being, a relationship to which he argues the authentic individual must be attuned. On the other hand, he argues that beauty also characterizes the erotically radiant quality of new appearances in the world, a relationship to which lovers of
worldly possessions and *theologians of glory* are dedicated.\(^{40}\) Ultimately, Heidegger does not collapse this thinking of the beautiful into either of these definitions, but suggests that its complex character lies in just this ambivalence.

Departing from this foundational encounter with the beautiful in his early work, in *Chapter 2,* I show how Heidegger's attempt to existentialize the basic Transcendentials results in his comprehensive study of the *existentials* of Dasein in *Being and Time.*\(^{41}\) At the same time, following a conversion to philosophical atheism during this period in his life, Heidegger moves away from the religious-metaphysical lexicon of the Transcendentials used in his earlier work. Despite the absence of a more specific reference to beauty, however, I argue that one continues to find the same basic structure of the beautiful from his early work repeated in the central analyses of his *magnum opus.* This is expressed in at least three ways. First, it follows from the repetition of Heidegger's close connection between beauty and the notions of radiance and light in his thinking of unconcealment (*alētheia*) and clearing (*Lichtung*). Second, it is found in the association of beauty with Dasein's ecstatic ability to *stand out* towards a world, and *in* towards itself/being. Finally, it is witnessed in the persistence of Heidegger's two-fold interpretation of Dasein's relation to the invisible "calling" of god/being/conscience on the one hand, and the inauthentic allure of appearances in the world on the other. Drawing these aspects together, I conclude that there remains an important, albeit implicit, structure of beauty in Heidegger's most famous work.

\(^{40}\) This is a phrase that Heidegger borrows from Luther to emphasize the church's description of God in terms of objective presence, splendor, and accessibility. By contrast, Heidegger follows Luther's claim that the human's more genuine relation to God is one fraught with darkness, absence, and mystery.

\(^{41}\) Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time,* trans. Joan Stambaugh and revised by Dennis Schmidt (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010)/Gesamtausgabe, Band 2 (Frankfurt, Germany, Vittorio Klostermann, 1977). Henceforth, all parenthetical citations to Martin Heidegger's work will be to the English translation, followed by reference to his collected works in German, abbreviated as *GA* and followed by the volume and page numbers.
As is generally known today, Heidegger's thinking undergoes another important development after the publication of *Being and Time*. While this development is manifold, it is marked most significantly by a turn away from the specific analysis of Dasein, and toward an investigation of the historical interpretation of being in the various epochs of Western thinking. In particular, Heidegger returns to the ancient Greeks here in an attempt to think anew their founding interpretations of being. In Chapter 3, I show how this re-engagement (*Auseinandersetzung*) with the Greeks also allows Heidegger to further think the complex notion of beauty that he previously finds in the Christian tradition. Specifically, Heidegger contends that in the pre-Socratic and tragic thinkers, beauty is unified with being and truth in the notion of unconcealment (*alētheia*). Pointing to a figure like Heraclitus, Heidegger observes that beauty once again exhibits a two-fold character associated, on the one hand, with the in-apparent generation of appearance, and on the other, with the radiance of the resulting appearance. At the same time, however, Heidegger concludes that this double being of the beautiful introduces an aspect of semblance into the notion of unconcealment precisely on account of the way that its erotically radiant appearance causes human beings to forget the in-apparent work of how such appearance is possible - an instability that culminates elsewhere in Sophocles' tragic description of the beautiful.42

42 While Heidegger scholarship has generally overlooked the significance that Heidegger affords to the beautiful, there is another group of critics who have attempted to argue for an association between Heidegger's thinking and the sublime. See Lewis Coyne, "Heidegger and the Problem of the Sublime" *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* 10, no. 1 (2013): 18-28; Jeffrey Librett, *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1993); Jan Rosiek, *Maintaining the Sublime* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000); Julian Young, "Death and Transfiguration: Kant, Schopenhauer, and Heidegger on the Sublime" *Inquiry* 48, no. 2 (2005): 131-144, and *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 43fn43. I contend that the complex retrieval of the beautiful to be examined in Heidegger's thinking here is an important corrective to both of these problematic critical perspectives. Heidegger makes almost no mention to the sublime in his corpus whatsoever. By contrast, with the exception of *Being and Time*, Heidegger persistently engages the beautiful by name throughout his work, referring to it in his *Nietzsche* lectures as one of the "basic words" (*Grundwörter*) of our history (Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, Volume I, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991] 143/GA 6.1, 143). More importantly, however, the nature of Heidegger's retrieval
In these same Greek interpretations, Heidegger proceeds to show how this originally complex thinking of beauty is lost with the onset of the aesthetic tradition. Specifically, I examine Heidegger's important reading of Plato, in which he argues that the original unity of being, truth, and beauty is separated. According to Heidegger, with Platonic philosophy being is relocated from its originary relationship with the generation of appearance to the non-sensible realm of the Forms (εἶδη), while beauty becomes uniquely associated with human perception in the sensible realm (αισθήσις). At the same time, Heidegger concludes that beauty's subsequent association with technical and technological production is also prepared for here. For Heidegger argues that while τεχνē originally enjoys a broad sense in the early Greek tradition, referring to human knowing more generally, in Plato it becomes restricted to a sense of beautiful production aimed at successfully bringing forth the look of the eidē.

In Chapter 4, I turn to an examination of how the proto-aesthetics of Plato is transformed into the dominant aesthetics of the modern period, leading to what Heidegger describes as the mass aestheticization of modern technology at present. According to Heidegger, this begins with a figure like Descartes, for whom the transcendental subject and its experience of objects becomes the locus of the modern description of our basic concepts of being, truth, and beauty. Heidegger suggests that this privilege of human perception (αισθήσις) shows the aesthetic character of modern thought in general. However, the dominance of aesthetics is shown more precisely here in its association with the beautiful. For in a thinker like Kant, the epistemic of the beautiful shows its real significance. Heidegger is critical of the aesthetic tradition's attempt to increasingly separate and demarcate different experiences like beauty and sublimity. In turn, Heidegger aims to recover a more originary notion of the beautiful in the ancient Greeks and Christians associated with the tragic unity of being and truth in αλήθεια. In doing so, Heidegger recovers a concept that is irreducible to the aesthetic tradition, and which can be seen to include and subvert the various qualities afforded to the modern description of beauty and sublimity alike, qualities like the pleasure and pain of eros, the presentation of appearance and the nothingness of concealment, etc. For a rare exception to Heidegger's silence on the sublime, see his essay "Remembrance" in *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. Keith Hoeller (New York: Humanity Books, 2000), 142/GA 4, 119.
regularity of the natural world is juxtaposed with the experience of the beautiful in wild nature and art, an experience where the inability to subordinate the form of an object under a concept throws the subject back on itself and reveals its essence as the transcendental producer of forms. According to Heidegger, this special association between sensuous beauty and form is one that Nietzsche both repeats and ultimately takes to its limits. For in Nietzsche's appeal to this strange feeling of the beautiful, the modern subject gives way to the wider metaphysical goal of the production of form and *the will to power*.

Connecting Heidegger's reading of the aesthetic tradition to his interpretations elsewhere of modern technology, I proceed to show how the place of beauty in Nietzsche's will to power ultimately helps characterize Heidegger's account of Western culture at present. This is evidenced, in particular, by Heidegger's description of the imperative in contemporary Western culture toward the production of ever-new forms and values. Significantly, within this pursuit Heidegger contends that the modern subject becomes only one more resource amongst others subordinated to the anonymous will to power. In all of this, however, Heidegger concludes that the aesthetic interpretation of the beautiful remains the "basic determination" via its fundamental drive to production and concealed relationship with being and truth - a conclusion that has been prepared for both by the way that semblance essentially belongs to beauty, and by the basic aesthetic interpretation commenced in Plato.

In his important essay, "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger suggests that in the extreme danger of aesthetic technology today, a potentially "saving power" is found in reflecting more closely on the essence of beauty, art, and technology. While this reflection begins with just the kind of historical re-interrogation traced up to this point, in *Chapter 5, I*

---

examine more closely Heidegger's reading of the possibility of an originary relationship between beauty and art. This begins by acknowledging Heidegger's challenge to the aesthetic interpretation of beauty in his important essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in which he argues that beauty belongs to the unconcealment of being (alētheia) that takes place in great art. More specifically, Heidegger rejects the aesthetic association of beauty with art's production of the feeling of pleasure in the spectator, and argues that beauty refers to the radiantly and generatively present appearance of a historical world as it is essentially disclosed in the artwork.

While Heidegger's indication of a more fundamental interrelation between being, truth, and beauty in the artwork is provocative, this early essay represents only a first attempt, one that has not yet fully confronted the important difference between the art of the past and the art of the present, and that has not worked out the more subtle relationship between being, truth, and beauty therein. Consequently, I show that in his encounter with Hölderlin, Heidegger works out these details more carefully. Most importantly, Heidegger believes that in the poetry of Hölderlin one not only encounters the unconcealment (alētheia) of a historical world, but the aesthetic loss of the originary relationship between being, truth, and beauty - a finding that helps distinguish the (post)modern world and the unique possibility of art today. At the same time, Heidegger offers a closer examination here of the character of the beautiful in this (post)modern artwork. Specifically, he argues that Hölderlin retrieves a Heraclitean notion of the beautiful, in which beauty is recognized for both its in-apparent work of bringing appearance together, and for the radiant quality of the resulting appearance. Importantly, however, Heidegger concludes that the upshot of this disclosure in the (post)modern artwork is not simply a revival of the Greek

---

44 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in Basic Writings, 166/GA 5, 26.
perspective, but the possibility for a deeper insight into the self-concealing nature of being, truth, and beauty (*alētheia*).

While Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin represents, in many ways, the high point of his optimism about the ability of the artwork to help recover a deeper understanding of being, truth, and beauty today, in his late work Heidegger becomes critical of both (post)modern art's ability to grasp the ontological relevance of these questions, and of his own philosophical attempt to thematize this relationship. More precisely, I argue that Heidegger increasingly comes to see that the challenge the artwork presents is one that must be expressed in the medium proper to itself, namely in appearance, and not through the logocentric discourse of philosophy and theory. In his last years, however, Heidegger believes that he finds just such a showing in several visual artists, most notably Paul Cézanne and Paul Klee. In the paintings of these two artists, Heidegger suggests that what is seen is nothing less than the in-apparent work of appearing within the singularity of a given appearance, a profound experience that he suggests both attests to the dynamic (un)concealment of being in its original unity with truth and beauty, and the collapse of his own ontological distinction between being (*Sein*) and beings (*Seiende*).

With this final development in Heidegger's thinking, the nature of the artwork's challenge to the aesthetic-technological interpretation of the contemporary world also changes. For it is no longer expressed by the momentous founding of a historical community's new understanding of being. Rather, Heidegger suggests that a more originary relationship with *alētheia* extends from the quiet encounter that an individual might have with these paintings alone, one that resists collective discourse and speaks from a voice of silence. Following this clue, in my **Conclusion**, I argue that while Heidegger notoriously resists the association of his thinking with an ethics, one finds the possibility here for refiguring that lost Transcendental in his work, *the good*. 
Specifically, I contend that in his challenge to think more carefully not only the originary unity of being, truth, and beauty, but how the tendency towards self-concealment and semblance belongs to beauty's double nature in this dynamic, the possibility for a more careful attunement to this vulnerability is made possible.
Chapter 1
Chapter 1
Beauty and the Early Heidegger

I. Introduction

While Heidegger's investigations into the questions of art and aesthetics are generally well known, it is commonly held that he is not a thinker of the beautiful. This view extends in large part from Heidegger's critique of the aesthetic conception of beauty as a subjective feeling of pleasure, and his attempt to uncover a more fundamental ontological consideration of art. As is also well known, Heidegger's critique of aesthetics is bound up with his more general deconstruction (Destruktion/Abbau) of the history of metaphysics and the interpretation of being modeled on the presence of beings, objects, or ideas. Re-reading this tradition, Heidegger seeks to show instead the how of being's disclosure, or what he calls "presence-ing" (An-wesen) in its temporal-historical activity.

This second observation points to a more fundamental account of why Heidegger may not be a thinker of the beautiful. In a comparison between Heidegger's thinking and Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutics, Brice Wachterhauser has expressed this point by noting that Heidegger's dismissal of beauty belongs to his more general neglect of those concepts traditionally supporting the interpretation of being, namely the Transcendentals (e.g. Oneness, Truth, Beauty, etc.). Wachterhauser writes:

In my opinion, Gadamer shows that Heidegger was right to think that the question of Being was inseparable from the question of truth but shortsighted in [...] [his] failure to sustain reflection on the connection between the question of Being and the issues of the one, the beautiful, and the Good. Even though his early writings touch on the transcendental a number of times (even as late as the Basic Problems of Phenomenology), Heidegger never made the transcendental central to his ontology.

45 See, for example, Michael Inwood, A Heidegger Dictionary, 19.
46 See, for example, Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art"/GA 5.
Wachterhauser's comments suggest that in Heidegger's singular focus on the question of being he is not only critical of the way that the tradition has interpreted this central notion, but he overlooks the place of those important supporting concepts of being.

As I have suggested, Wachterhauser is not alone in his interpretation here; indeed, his reflections represent the standard critical perspective regarding Heidegger's thinking of the beautiful.\(^4\) At the same time, however, one will note that there is also a strong critical emphasis in Heidegger scholarship on the significance of notions such as light (Licht), shining (Schein) and clearing (Lichtung) for Heidegger's thinking.\(^5\) Such terms and relations are not only used by Heidegger to characterize the manifestation of being generally, but to help unpack his central notion of unconcealment (alētheia). A cursory historical reflection on such terms recognizes however, that many of these are synonymous with the concept of beauty in the Western tradition, indicating a less obvious possibility for considering the place of beauty in Heidegger's work.

It is against the background of these considerations that I wish to begin my examination of Heidegger's early work. Specifically, I will argue that contrary to the common claim that Heidegger is not a thinker of beauty, he develops an increasingly complex consideration of beauty precisely as part of his deconstructive retrieval of the Transcendentals, an interpretation that results in his account of radiant disclosure (alētheia) in Being and Time. More precisely, I want to make three claims about the beautiful here. First, I will argue that Heidegger ultimately

---

\(^4\) Several critics have noted that Heidegger offers a more complex thinking of beauty than a simple rejection of its aesthetic interpretation. See, for example, Veronique Foti, *Heidegger and the Poets* (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books, 1992), 5-6; Karsten Harries, *Art Matters* (New York: Springer, 2009), 188-190; Iain Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 63fn39; Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001). However, the majority of these observations are limited to passing comments or footnotes, thereby further supporting the general view that Heidegger's engagement with beauty is of minor importance.

\(^5\) This theme of the "shining" of being and its unconcealment (alētheia) has been a particular focus of Heidegger scholars ranging from Jacques Taminiaux to John Sallis to Günter Figal.
retrieves a notion of beauty associated with erotic radiance, which helps characterize the clearing \( (Lichtung) \) of Dasein's disclosure in unconcealment \( (alētheia) \). Second, I will suggest that it is this same erotic quality of radiance that helps explain why Dasein is drawn into the event of disclosure. Third, I will argue that Heidegger offers a fundamentally ambivalent or double reading of beauty, in which beauty supports both an inauthentic "aesthetic" relationship expressed by a delight in beautiful objects and ideas in the world, as well as an authentic relationship expressed by an insight into how this radiance first extends from God's/Dasein's invisible call. Ultimately, I conclude that beauty for Heidegger cannot be reduced to either its authentic or inauthentic, aesthetic or non-aesthetic character, but functions as an equiprimordial existential of being's disclosure capable of being appropriated in different ways.

The present chapter focuses on two moments in the development of Heidegger's early thinking of the beautiful. First, I will show that in Heidegger's earliest works - his student dissertation and habilitation - one finds a concerted engagement with the ancient-medieval doctrine of the Transcendentals as part of his attempt to consider the question of being and the possibility of a logically grounded division of knowledge. While the neo-Kantian emphasis of this work initially focuses on the relation of being with unity \( (unum) \) and truth \( (verum) \) more than the good \( (bonum) \) or the beautiful \( (pulchritudum) \), I argue that one finds a less obvious relation of beauty associated with the emanation or light of God/ens/being. Prima facie, such a notion may be said to hail from the medieval paradigm that Heidegger focuses on in his habilitation, namely to Duns Scotus. However, I will show that the specific emphasis on a light metaphysics follows more closely from a neo-Platonic Eckhartian thinking that ultimately runs counter to the epistemological framework of Heidegger's Scotian project. Accordingly, I suggest that the beautiful first shows itself in Heidegger's thinking as part of an ambivalent tension between a
traditional metaphysical approach to the question of being and the categories, and the beginning of a radical self-critique of this formal method.

In the second section, I will show that this early interest in beauty's unity with being does not disappear from Heidegger's work, and that Heidegger offers a more concerted engagement with this relationship in his investigations into the phenomenology of religion in the early 1920's. In this period, Heidegger engages in particular with the mystical Christian tradition represented by figures like St. Paul, St. Augustine, Meister Eckhart, and Martin Luther in order to challenge his own previously formalistic treatment of the being/categories question. In what amounts to a proto-formulation of his deconstruction of aesthetics in the 1930's, Heidegger lays out a complexly double reading of the beautiful here. On one hand, he observes that in its originary sense, beauty calls authentic Dasein into the radiant mystery of God/ens/being. On the other hand, he follows Luther in arguing that the metaphysical tradition has reified this calling/revealing into an ocular aesthetics of determined values, objects, and ideas. With this transformation, however, Heidegger concludes that the dogmatism of the Church and Western philosophy effectively replaces the more mysterious first sense of beauty with an idolotrous aesthetic emphasis on the visibility and knowability of God/ens/being.

I conclude by observing that despite Heidegger's subsequent philosophical atheism, he continues to retrieve an existentialized version of many of the basic Transcendentals discussed in this early work. In this process, the double account of the beautiful found in his engagement with the Christian tradition remains at the heart of his thinking of the unconcealment of being. Specifically, I contend that while Heidegger moves away from the religious and metaphysical lexicon of his early work, beauty continues to help him think the erotically radiant quality of truth and being in his retrieval of the ancient Greek notion of alētheia. In this way, I propose
that Heidegger effectively recovers a non-metaphysical understanding of the unity of these three Transcendentals, a unity that he will continue to re-think in Being and Time and in his historical turn in the 1930's.

II. Situating the Question of the Beautiful in Heidegger's Student Work

Heidegger's engagement with the question of beauty begins with what may be described as a conspicuous absence. Such a description extends from the fact that on one hand, Heidegger was a largely scholastic thinker during this time, exploring problems concerning being, the categories, and the Transcendentals. On the other hand, the predominately neo-Kantian milieu in which he was educated emphasized an epistemological approach to such issues more than ethical or aesthetic consideration. Along with Husserl's early phenomenology, this scholasticism and neo-Kantianism constituted the primary influences on Heidegger's first major philosophical investigations, in which he attempted to contribute to the development of a transcendental logic accounting for the basic categories of knowledge and the division of the sciences.

In his dissertation, The Doctrine of Judgment in Psychologism: A Critical-Positive Contribution to Logic (1913), Heidegger brings these influences to bear, in particular, on the contemporary problem of psychologism - the question concerning how sense or meaning is generated in relation to the natural and psychic processes that appear to accompany it. Departing from an examination of the leading views of the day, Heidegger argues that such

---


52 Die Lehre vom Urteil im Psychologismus. Ein kritisch-positiver Beitrag zur Logic (1913), GA 1.
positions fail largely as a result of a more fundamental failure to appreciate the difference between the a-temporality of logical sense and the temporality of psychic-physical activity. In turn, the solution that Heidegger provides is to posit something like an ontological difference between being (ens), defined roughly as objects in space and time, and a-temporal logical sense. For according to Heidegger, temporal beings cannot give rise to what is categorically distinct in a-temporal logical sense; rather, the latter are determined by the former in the unitary act of judgment.

While the details of this early study are not particularly significant for our purposes here, what is interesting to recognize is how Heidegger's investigation of a contemporary problem like psychologism can be expressed as a question about the unity of the Transcendentals. As is well known, the Transcendentals concern that doctrine of concepts surrounding and supporting the most basic concept of all, being, with which they are said to be convertible. Originating in Parmenides, Plato, and Aristotle, the core Transcendentals include the concepts of unity or oneness, truth, goodness, and often beauty. The question that Heidegger asks in his early dissertation then can be expressed in terms of the relation and convertibility of being (ens), truth (verum), and unity or oneness (unum/einum) - a question that he answers via "the atemporal validity of logical sense."  

Following this first attempt to think the unity of being in his dissertation, Heidegger suggests that the task of philosophy is to describe these fundamental relations further, and to show how they provide a logical division for the sciences.  

---

53 Van Buren, Rumor of a Hidden King: The Young Heidegger, 57.
54 Martin Heidegger, The Doctrine of Categories and Meaning in Duns Scotus, trans. Harold J. Robbins (Chicago, Illinois: Depaul University, 1978)/Die Kategorien - und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus, GA 1. Hereafter cited as: Habilitation/GA 1. Specifically, Heidegger contends that the goal is to unfold a more elaborate account of the categories of being concerning the conditions of knowing objects (e.g., substance, causality, etc.), as well as the
Heidegger turned to a more scholastic approach to the question. Specifically, he turned to Duns Scotus, whose *organon* represents one of the richest systems of categories developed in the medieval period. Significantly, Heidegger's interest in Scotus is not yet hermeneutic here, but exhibits the *problem-historical* approach of the neo-Kantian school, an approach that draws upon all historical frameworks alike in the a-historical pursuit of a transcendental logic. In his habilitation, Heidegger begins by following Scotus's observation that one must commence with the most universal category of all: *Ens*. Heidegger explains:

\[
E\text{ns means the total sense of the objective sphere } \textit{in general}, \text{ the permanent moment in the objective, the category of categories. } E\text{ns perdures in every object - no matter what it, in being constantly differentiated, retains as its fullness in content (salvatur).}^{55}
\]

Accompanying *ens*, Heidegger explains that the Transcendental make up the next most basic set of determinations here. He writes that, "the other transcendental such as *unum, verum, bonum*, etc., seem to function as quasi-properties of *ens*.\(^{56}\) The Transcendental can be described as quasi-properties of *ens*, however, because they are *convertible* with it, which is to say each of them helps to determine it without themselves being further reducible. Heidegger concludes then that a closer examination of the Transcendental offers both the first determinations of *ens*, as well as the entry point for the logical division of the sciences.

The majority of Heidegger's habilitation concerns a consideration of two of the Transcendental - unity (*unum*) and truth (*verum*) - in how they help divide being (*ens*) into the various regions of the psychical, physical, mathematical, logical, and metaphysical regions of existence. Regarding *unum*, for example, Heidegger argues that it contributes to the possibility of an object showing itself as a *discrete* object. This kind of predication of the more general

---

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 29-30/215.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 31/216.
given-ness of *ens*, however, requires at the same time that an object be given in antithesis to another, which it is not. Thus Heidegger concludes that the predication of the *unum* actually takes place in a simultaneous relation with multitude (*multum*) resulting in a *heterothesis*, or the idea that being is not a discrete entity, but something which is always co-constituted in relationship with otherness.\(^{57}\) Beginning with this first sense of *unum*, Heidegger proceeds to examine how its other Scotian senses help further demarcate the different sciences of mathematics (*unum* as numeric unity, quantity, measure), physics (*unum* as individual, *haecceity*), and metaphysics (*Deum Unum*, God as absolute unity of *ens* in existence and essence).

Heidegger proceeds in a similar fashion regarding truth (*verum*), which he argues concerns the way that *ens* enters into cognition in the act of judgment.\(^{58}\) Accompanying these extended discussions of the *unum* and *verum*, however, Heidegger offers the following claim regarding the rest of the Transcendents:

> Offhand, it may seem a considerably more consistent and appropriate procedure - at this point where the treatment of the first transcendental has been completed - to take up those that come next, *verum* and *bonum*, and thus to pass on to a special characterization of these singular domains of the real. However, the arrangement chosen here affords a clearer and more certain support of the conceptual ties between the individual transcendents and their different domains of reality [...].\(^{59}\)

Unfortunately, Heidegger does not return in the course of his investigation to take up these other Transcendents. A cursory analysis of Heidegger's student work suggests then, that beauty remains simply a forgotten Transcendental for him. As the more specific context of the dissertation and habilitation indicate, however, there seems to be a rather simple explanation for

\(^{57}\) Ibid., 33/218.
\(^{58}\) In connection with his discussion of truth (*verum*) here, Heidegger observes that he is also drawn to Scotus on account of Scotus's insight into phenomenological intentionality. Heidegger writes: "The *modus essendi* is the immediately given empirical reality *sub ratione existentiae*. There is something significant here which must be noted. Duns Scotus characterizes even this empirical reality as standing under a 'ratio,' a point of view, a form, an intentional nexus; this is nothing less than what is nowadays being said in the following terms: Even 'givenness' already manifests a categorial determination" (318/260).
\(^{59}\) Ibid., 48/232.
such a conclusion. That is, what drives Heidegger to focus on the relationship of *ens* with *unum* and *verum*, and to ignore *pulchritudum*, is just that his primary goal is to articulate a transcendental logic in line with the aims of neo-Kantianism. This suggestion finds additional support in the treatment of the good (*bonum*) in the habilitation.\textsuperscript{60} For although *bonum* is directly named amongst the Transcendentals to be considered, it also appears to virtually drop out of the project. As Van Buren notes, this "is no accident."\textsuperscript{61} It is just because Heidegger wants to overcome "all physiological, psychological, and economic-practical epistemologies" here, and because "his concerns were primarily logic and mathematics," he "left *bonum* out of consideration [...]."\textsuperscript{62} One might conclude then, that as with the practical interests of *bonum*, so goes the aesthetic interests of *pulchritudum*.

And yet, such an explanation is not entirely satisfactory. For considered more closely, the good (*bonum*) shows up in Heidegger's examination in a more significant manner. This observation grows out of a fuller recognition of the Christian teleology orienting Scotus's framework. This is emphasized elsewhere in the habilitation when Heidegger clarifies that while *ens* has the generic sense of the kind of object-hood discussed above, properly speaking God is *ens* in the only true sense of an absolute unity between existence and essence.\textsuperscript{63} Accordingly, all other expressions of *ens* are only possible through an analogous teleological participation in this ultimate sense of *ens*. Clarified in this way, one might better express the notion of *ens* through the broader complex: God/*ens*/being. In this teleological hierarchy, God is not only the highest expression of *ens*, however, but of *bonum* as well. This is seen, for example, when Heidegger

\textsuperscript{60} It is significant that Heidegger almost always lists the Transcendentals in ellipses, suggesting that there are more than he has explicitly named. Without a definitive list, however, one cannot say that Heidegger clearly does or does not consider beauty a Transcendental for Scotus.

\textsuperscript{61} Van Buren, *Rumor of a Hidden King: The Young Heidegger*, 74-75.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 71.

\textsuperscript{63} Heidegger, *Habilitation*, 77/GA 1, 260.
writes that for Scotus, "the character of the analogue comes into the domain of the actual through the value standpoint of degrees of reality. Every single object of natural reality has a determined valueness, a degree of being real."64 Elsewhere, Van Buren helps unpack this complex schema:

God, the absolute, is being and, as an “active creative principle,” God “imparts” or “communicates” being to created things. God is the montas that functions as the primal wellspring (Quelle, Ursprung) of the “multiplicity of objects according to their essential being.” “Unity” is the measure of the multiplicity that springs forth from it...The “number” of created realities arises “per sui communicabilitatem.” Thus there arises an analogical and hierarchal ordering for two reasons. First, “being” and the other transcendentals are attributed properly to God and only derivatively to created things. [...] Moreover, created things “have,” “participate in,” or actualize the valuative measure of God's being in different degrees. “Every individual object of natural actuality has determinative valubleness [...].”65

Upon closer inspection then, one finds that the good (bonum) turns out to operate everywhere in Heidegger's Scotian account, as precisely the gradation of determination belonging to the different beings studied by the various sciences. As with the case of the good here, however, I want to suggest that a closer examination of the beautiful shows its place in this reading in a more indirect fashion. This latter claim is supported, in particular, by Heidegger's attempt to elucidate how ens shows itself as a kind of primordial over-against-ness (gegenstand).

Heidegger writes:

Already in that a something (ens) known to me at all is given, in that I make something into an object of my consciousness, the concept of determination has come into play. It is already clear [klarheit] what an object is, if only as if in the dawn [dämmerhaften] in which merely something of the objectiveness of it in general can be made out. If there isn't this first moment of clearness [klarheitsmoment], I would not even be in some sort of absolute darkness [Finsternis]; for this would still imply that I can again be enlightened [Klarheit]. Rather it should be stated: I have no object at all; I live blindly [blind] in absolute darkness [Finsternis]; I cannot get myself mentally, intellectually in motion; thinking stands still. Through ens I gain the first determinateness [...].66

64 Ibid., 78/261.
65 Van Buren, Rumor of a Hidden King: The Young Heidegger, 117-118. See also, 114.
66 Heidegger, Habilitation, 39-40/GA 1, 224.
In this passage, one encounters a powerful image of the dynamic metaphysical system at work in Heidegger's reading of Scotus. Heidegger makes clear throughout his reading that *ens* is, in the first place, something undifferentiated. As this passage indicates, however, it first presents itself to us as an over-against-ness, in which it receives an initial determination in, as, and through a kind of primal lighting. The originality of this lighting is such that to characterize our epistemic condition before it as darkness does not even make sense, insofar as darkness first requires light as its opposite and source. As Heidegger proceeds to explain, this light, which simultaneously brings with it the clarity of something given and known, grows with the distinctive individuation that the other Transcendentals add to it. In this way, order increasingly comes to present itself, an order that corresponds with the hierarchy of *bonum*, and that is grasped in cognition through the judgment of *verum*.

While Heidegger does not name the beautiful directly here, this notion of light or radiance surrounding *ens* resonates with the traditional characterization of the beautiful in the Transcendentals, particularly in its neo-Platonic expression. The question of how this relation might fit more specifically within the Scotian framework is complicated, however. To begin with, Scotus's perspective on beauty is contested amongst scholars. The most significant problem seems to be that Scotus does not explicitly identify the beautiful among the Transcendentals when he enumerates them in his writings. At the same time, it is noted that Scotus tends to conclude his enumeration of the Transcendentals with an elliptical phrasing, which implies that other Transcendentals exist beyond those explicitly mentioned. In addition to this initial problem, however, there is the fact that Scotus discusses the beautiful in at least two

---

different ways in his work. First, he argues that beauty is not a property existing in a given object, but concerns the proportion of properly ordered relations making up a composite form. Second, he suggests a special relation between beauty and both ontological and moral goodness (*bonum*). Specifically, he claims that beauty signals goodness by producing delight or pleasure in the spectator. This last observation has led some scholars to argue that beauty should be counted as a Transcendental for Scotus through a relation of identity with the good.\(^6^8\)

While there is significant critical debate about how to reconcile these various aspects of the beautiful in Scotus, the more pressing question for Heidegger’s reading here concerns the element of light at the center of the guiding passage above. On one hand, it will be noted that Scotus does, on occasion, discuss beauty in terms of splendor or clarity of insight (*species*).\(^6^9\) On the other hand, one does not find the kind of explicit association of beauty with the emanation of light highlighted in this passage. Moreover, the characterization of light found in Heidegger's description operates at a level that does not simply signal or reflect order - as the Scotian interpretation of beauty seems to do for the good - but it helps make determination and order possible in the first place. Accordingly, while still convertible with the good, Heidegger's characterization of the beautiful here seems to indicate a different conclusion than the one drawn by those defending its Transcendental status through an identity with the good.

This kind of discrepancy in Heidegger’s interpretation has prompted a number of scholars to suggest that passages like the one above betray another powerful influence on Heidegger's thinking during this time.\(^7^0\) Specifically, these critics note the influence of Christian mysticism,

\(^6^8\) See, in particular, Kovach.
\(^6^9\) See, in particular, Kovach.
and the figure of Meister Eckhart in particular, on Heidegger. Following this line of interpretation, Van Buren writes that in a passage like the one cited above:

Heidegger was apparently appealing to Eckhart's novel notion that being is God (esse est deus) and that, in themselves, creatures would be a “pure nothing.” God is like the sun that emanates the homogenous medium of light in which things can participate and thus appear, or like the formal element of whiteness in which white things can appear as white. Beings are “in God,” in being, “in the light.” As Neo-Platonic “Godhead” that precedes the differentiation of the trinity and creation, “God is one,” simplicity, the “negation of negation,” the dark hidden “ground” that is an abyss (Abgrund), the divine “wasteland” that transcends all “names.”\(^71\)

While Scotus may or may not hold a transcendental connection between beauty (pulchritudum) and ens, it is clear that Eckhart does. More significantly, Eckhart's account of beauty fits much more closely with Heidegger’s description of the primal light surrounding the God/ens/being relation. Indeed, beauty for Eckhart is just the light of God's emanation itself as it makes possible object-hood, appearance, and all of creation. Creation here is imagined as something like the over-spill of God's being, where all that is known issues forth from this light.

Accordingly, Van Buren concludes that, for Heidegger, it is precisely through such a shining, beckoning light that "the relational sense of medieval 'inward Dasein' is stretched ecstatically, moodfully, and devotionally toward and into the mysterious depths of the divine telos."\(^72\)

On one hand, this Eckhartian light metaphysics appears to help contribute to the overall unity of the Christian teleological analogy that Heidegger traces in Scotus. On the other hand, this Eckhartian influence represents a perhaps more subversive quality for Heidegger's Scotian logic. For in Eckhart, the light of beauty has several important characteristics beyond disclosing or reflecting objects of knowledge. As Van Buren notes, this begins with the fact that while

---

\(^71\) Van Buren, *Rumor of a Hidden King: The Young Heidegger*, 114-115. Looking forward here, Van Buren notes that it is not unimportant that "Heidegger would later call this stretching-along 'care' and 'ecstatic' 'temporality.'"

\(^72\) Ibid.
beauty can be associated with a certain form of insight, in its primordial expression it belongs just as much to a lack of knowledge. That is, on Eckhart's interpretation, God and the being that emanates from Him remains concealed in mystery, in *abscondus*, as an *Abgrund*. Consequently, the beautiful radiance of God/ens/being must be thought simultaneously through the veil of darkness suggested in Heidegger's description above, a veil that Eckhart suggests is usually overlooked when he writes, "The true light shines in the darkness, but we are not aware of it."\(^73\)

The paradoxical character of this originary intertwining of darkness and light, mystery and insight, leads to a further tension between the Eckhartian thinking of beauty and the Scotian character of Heidegger's habilitation. For Eckhart also follows St. Augustine in suggesting that insofar as one focuses simply on the beauty of external objects, forms, and relations in the created world, they are led astray from the more primordial beauty of God's mystery.\(^74\) Thus one finds a two-fold conception of beauty in Eckhart: One manifest, and yet deceptive in creation; and one primordial, creative, and yet concealed in the dark *Abgrund* of God's mystery.

Accordingly, while Eckhart, like Scotus, characterizes God as the highest expression of beauty in which all of creation participates by analogy, the former also recognizes an insidious quality in this second-order beauty distracting us from its originary source. This claim is supported by Eckhart's thinking of the movement between *via positivia* and *via negativia* in which, he argues,

\(^73\) Meister Eckhart, *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defenses*, ed. and trans. Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1981), 243. Eckhart ties this element of light to beauty more explicitly in the following passage: "'Do not consider,' says the Book of Love, 'that I am brown, for I am beautiful and well-formed, but the sun has changed my color' (Sg. 1:4-5). The sun is the light of the world and signifies that the highest and the best that has been created and made covers and discolors in us the image of God. 'Take away,' Solomon says, 'the rust from silver, and there will gleam and shine out the most pure vessel' (Pr 25:4), the image, God's Son, in the soul" (243).

\(^74\) Eckhart writes: "Saint Augustine says: 'When all of man's soul mounts into eternity to God alone, the image of God appears and shines'; but if the soul is distracted toward external things, even to the outward exercise of virtues, then this image is wholly concealed" (243).
the mysterious light of God is ultimately glimpsed through a negation or nihilation of the dependent focus on the beauty of creation.

While these Eckhartian parallels may initially appear speculative in the body of Heidegger's habilitation, they are supported in a much more direct fashion by Heidegger's subsequently added conclusion. In this short appraisal of the body of the work after its completion, Heidegger is more explicit about the significance of the Eckhartian critique for the Scotian/neo-Kantian approach. This begins with an observation about his own theoretical approach to these questions. Heidegger writes:

> The theoretical attitude is only one kind of approach, and for this reason it is a fundamental and fatal error of philosophy as "worldview" if it contents itself with a spelling out of actuality and does not - and this is its most authentic vocation - aim beyond an always provisional synopsis that gathers up the whole of what is knowable and at a **breakthrough** to true actuality and actual truth.76

Heidegger's observation in this conclusion is rather shocking when one is familiar with what has come before. Afterall, the central pursuit of the habilitation, like the dissertation, is a theoretical-logical unfolding of the categories leading to the division of the sciences. This is an approach, however, which he now says is plagued by a "fatal error." But just as shocking is the alternative put forth by Heidegger to help ameliorate this error. For the proposal of a "**breakthrough** to true actuality and actual truth" is a well known Eckhartian phrase, which calls for the rejection of the reliance on theoretical and ordinary solutions alike, in favor of a radical turn inward into the self in its mysterious relation with God. This turning inward and giving oneself over to the mystery of God belongs to what Eckhart terms Abgeschiedenheit or the **detachment** from all other

---


concerns, and a dedication to the soul's mysterious union with God. With this new level of insight, it is suggested that all false problems of psychologism and theoretical abstraction collapse into a more originary recognition of intentional unity.77

For Heidegger, this Eckhartian perspective entails a three-fold re-conception of God/ens/being, the human, and the categories/Transcendentals discussed in the body of the habilitation.78 In the first case, Heidegger argues that God can no longer be imagined as the stable objective ground of a systematic hierarchy of knowledge. Rather, he imagines God as a "lebendige Geist" or "living spirit," which cannot be grasped in abstraction, but which unfolds in the historical concrete world itself.79 Such a conception echoes not only Eckhart's notion of God as deus in absconditas, or God as a mystery that remains concealed, but also a radically Hegelian formulation of Spirit as historical process. This re-conception of God/ens/being leads, in turn, to a parallel revision of the human being and its ability to partake in this knowledge of God/ens/being. Specifically, Heidegger emphasizes that human spirit can no longer seek to abstract itself in a logical deduction of the categories, but must seek this knowledge through an examination of its own finite existence, values, and commitments.80

Taken together, these first two claims lead to a radically different thinking of the categories/Transcendentals and the manner in which one must pursue them. Heidegger explains

77 Eckhart calls this relation the unio mystica, or the recognition that "I am He and He is I." Kisiel explains that: "The unio mystica spontaneously neutralizes the metaphysical hypostasis of the subject-object relation and directs attention to the dynamis of intentionality as a sheer 'directedness toward,' regarding it now as the veritable well-spring and 'giving' element of life, its elan vital" (Kisiel, The Genesis of “Being and Time,” 114).
78 Heidegger clarifies here that his aim in the conclusion to the habilitation is to show how mysticism and scholasticism ultimately belong together, and that it is in their singular expressions that they each have failed. Accordingly, he does not simply jettison the scholastic goal of providing an account of the categories for an adoption of mysticism; rather, he seeks to integrate the different approaches (Heidegger, Supplements, 68/GA 1, 410).
79 Ibid. 66/407-408.
80 Heidegger writes: "The epistemological subject does not signify the metaphysically most meaningful sense of spirit, to say nothing of its full content. And only if it is situated within this full content will the problems of categories attain its authentic depth dimension and enrichment" (66/407).
that the categories themselves are not to be isolated from the historical world in which they appear. Rather, he explains that, "history and its teleological interpretation in philosophy of culture must become a determining element for the meaning of the problem of categories if we want to think differently about working out the cosmos of categories in order to go beyond an impoverished schematic table of categories." In short, Heidegger contends that the categories/Transcendentals are to be unfolded from out of the historically situated life of human being as part of the historical unfolding of God/ens/being. As Theodore Kisiel observes, it is this line of thinking that helps explain why in Heidegger’s subsequent pursuit of this question, "the eventual descendants […] of the categories/Transcendentals] come to be called 'existentials.'"

Returning to the specific question of the beautiful, however, one can now appreciate the significance of Heidegger's implication of a light metaphysics in his early work. On one hand, the passage foregrounded above appears to help draw together Heidegger's interpretation of the Scotian system and its teleological transcendental logic. On the other hand, seen in the Eckhartian context of the later conclusion to the habilitation, this neo-Platonic light metaphysics ultimately poses a radical challenge to the Scotian theoretical model. For if beauty concerns the emanation of Ens Diem in its mystery, concealment, and unknowability, then this appeal to beauty ultimately subverts the epistemological function of beauty in Scotus as a reflection of the hierarchy of knowledge.

Theodore Kisiel observes that Heidegger seems to be moving towards a notion of "primary brightness" in his early work. By teasing out the implications of this brightness, however, I have indicated the implicit position of the beautiful in Heidegger's student work.

---

82 Ibid., 67/408.
84 Ibid., 99.
More specifically, while this section has attempted to establish the broad significance of the
Transcendentals for Heidegger's early thinking, the primary goal has been to uncover the
beginnings of an engagement with the beautiful in Heidegger characterized by the ambivalent
light-structure surrounding God/ens/being. There is good reason for this in looking ahead. As
will be seen in the following section, in the years following his habilitation, Heidegger develops
these inchoate characteristics of the beautiful more carefully through a rich interrogation of the
Greco-Christian tradition, and in his burgeoning notion of factical life.

III. The Double Being of the Beautiful in the Phenomenology of Religion

From the conclusion of Heidegger's student years up until his first lecture courses as a
docent in Freiburg (1919), he wrote and published little.85 His thinking re-emerged at this time,
however, with two significant characteristics. First, he developed a particularly strong
identification with phenomenology. Second, he was very interested in how Christian mysticism
could help re-think the dogmatic theoretical tendencies of the Western philosophical-religious
tradition. Drawing these threads together, Heidegger's lectures during this period develop the
incipient insights found at the conclusion of his habilitation concerning the treatment of the
categories into what he now called the hermeneutics of factical life.86

---

85 This period falls during the First World War in which Heidegger was briefly drafted. During this time Heidegger
was also married to his wife, Elfride, began working closely with Edmund Husserl, and underwent a significant
religious conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism. This last development is captured in an important letter
written to his friend and mentor, Father Engelbert Krebs in 1919. Heidegger writes: "certain epistemological
insights extending to a theory of historical knowledge have made the system of Catholicism problematic and
unacceptable to me, but not Christianity and metaphysics - these though, in a new sense" (Heidegger, "Letter to

86 In a representative passage from this period Heidegger writes: "We will see that, through the explication of
factical Dasein, the entire traditional system of categories will be blown up - so radically new will the categories of
factical Dasein be" (The Phenomenology of Religious Life, trans. Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei and Matthias
In the present section, we will see that Heidegger's factual re-conception of the categories/Transcendentals is shaped by his close reading of figures like St. Paul, St. Augustine, and Martin Luther. For Heidegger, these figures help challenge the dogmatic theoretical character of Western thought with a counter focus on the situated, mysterious, and restless nature of existence. At the heart of this reading, however, is also a more specific interrogation of the notion of beauty, one in which Heidegger develops the Scotian/Eckhartian tension of his student work into an explicitly doubled phenomenon. This latter reading departs, on one hand, from the observation that in figures like Eckhart and Augustine, beauty concerns the primal lighting of God/ens/being that calls Dasein into its disclosure while remaining in its essence mysterious. On the other hand, Heidegger observes that the Western tradition is marked by a pervasive tendency to reify this relation into an ocular aesthetics, focused on the objects and ideas that beauty helps make manifest. In the end, it will be seen that Heidegger does not reduce these two relations, but emphasizes that the complexity of the beautiful lies precisely in this tension.

As these initial observations suggest, in order to understand the development in Heidegger's thinking of the beautiful here, it is necessary to acknowledge the broader changes that took place between his student years and his emergence as a young docent lecturer. Examining Heidegger's earliest courses, one finds that his strong affiliation with phenomenology is apparent right away, while the significance of the mystical tradition for this thinking does not

---

87 Despite his changing interests, Heidegger remained entrenched in this religious foundation until at least after his habilitation and, in a more radical sense, up through his phenomenology of religion in the early 1920's. Even in Heidegger's letter to Krebbs it is clear that the break there concerns a rupture with the dogmatism of the tradition, not with the sources of that tradition. It is not until 1922 that Heidegger finally states that he is committed to a "philosophical atheism," (Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2001), 148/GA 61, 197). This is a claim, however, that many commentators, including Gadamer, have argued does not eradicate the spiritual, mystical, and religious element from his thinking. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Religious Dimension" in Heidegger's Ways, ed. Dennis Schmidt and trans. John Stanley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994).
become fully evident for several years. In a number of the early courses like *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (WS 1919-1920), Heidegger hints at the significance of the latter tradition by suggesting that the more originary conception of the self-world with which phenomenology deals, was first discovered and explored in Christianity. It is only in the Winter Semester of 1920, however, that Heidegger finally delivers back-to-back courses on the *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* (WS 1920-21) and *Augustine and Neo-Platonism* (SS 1921).

In these two courses, one not only finds the clearest expression of this mystical influence on Heidegger's phenomenology, but some of the earliest expressions of his new notions of *facticity* and *deconstruction*. For example, in the Methodological Introduction to the first of these courses, Heidegger asks, "What is called 'factual life experience'?" - a question that he argues is answered by a unique emphasis on both "the experience activity" and "that which is experienced through the activity." By highlighting this two-fold relation, Heidegger wishes to leave behind the theoretical abstractions between subject and object, relation and content, that haunted his student work. Instead, Heidegger concludes that the real task of philosophy, conceived of as phenomenology, is to uncover the ways in which the Western tradition has covered over this relational dimension in experience, and to recover the quality of "enactment" in

---

88 Heidegger's first recorded course, in the emergency war semester of 1919, can be heard as something of an announcement of his new affiliation with the phenomenological project. Entitled *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview*, the course offers a critique of philosophy in both its tendency to make cultural prescriptions and to pursue an abstract methodology. The course concludes with an apology for phenomenology as the originary ground of science (*urwissenschaft*). See Heidegger, *Towards the Definition of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002)/GA 56.


90 These are compiled in *The Phenomenology of Religious Life/GA 60*. In addition to these courses, there are fragments indicating that this religious influence extends further back to at least 1918. For a collection of some of these texts, see Theodore Kisiel, *Becoming Heidegger: On the Trail of His Early Occasional Writings (1910-1927)*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2007). For critical accounts of this development in Heidegger's thinking, see Scott Campbell, *The Early Heidegger's Philosophy of Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012); Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of "Being and Time;"* John Van Buren, *Rumor of a Hidden King: The Young Heidegger*.

how factical life exists in the historical world. Put otherwise, the task is to undertake a historical deconstruction that gets at the roots of facticity.

In the investigation that follows, Heidegger focuses his attention on the Christian tradition. Significantly, while at first glance religious experience may appear to constitute only one region of factical existence, Heidegger argues that Christianity is married in a foundational way to the basic developments of Western thinking and ancient Greek philosophy. Hence, Heidegger's interpretations of religious experience are not intended to simply distinguish a more authentic Christian experience from the inauthentic formalism of Church dogma, but to uncover a more genuine insight into the nature of factical life in Western history in general. To this end, he observes that the Apostle Paul is a particularly pivotal figure. Heidegger writes:

The Pauline passage of the Letter to the Romans, chapter 1:20, is fundamental for the whole of Patristic “philosophy,” for the orientation of the formation of Christian doctrine in Greek philosophy. The motif for the Greek underlying structure and re-structuring [Unter- und Neubau] of Christian dogmatism has been taken from this passage. However, this “pre-structure” [Vor-bau] was then structured into the basic patterns of the Christian thought of the dogmatism.

Heidegger proceeds to explain here that the reason this particular scripture has become so significant for Western tradition is because it is interpreted to suggest that God can be known from creation, from His works. Such a claim, Heidegger argues, ultimately ties the Christian experience directly to Greek metaphysics by giving "direction to the (Platonic) ascent from the sensible world to the supersensible world." That is, "it is (or is grasped as) the confirmation of Platonism, taken from Paul."
Heidegger argues that this long line of interpretation actually stems from a misinterpretation. For while Paul advocates "the turning-away from the *eidola* (idol)" of the world, the tradition noted above merely replaces such sensible idols with another kind of idolatry, a speculative idolatry "that determines the sense of the objecthood of God." Heidegger notes that Luther exposed this tendency in his Heidelberg Dissertation. Emphasizing Theses 19, 21, and 22, he cites Luther that, "The man who looks upon the invisible things of God as they are perceived in created things does not deserve to be called a theologian," because such a person participates in an idolatry that falsely "inflates us, blinds us," and misses the mysterious nature of God. Elsewhere, Heidegger helps define this speculative idolatry further as the systematic replacement of Dasein's factically uncertain search for God with a dogmatic axiologization. In this axiologization, "the character of calculation, leveling, and ordering posits itself," while "the authentic concern is disfigured and viewed as concealed calculation." For these reasons, Heidegger concludes that the Patristic interpretation of Paul underlying the Western tradition commits a form of the very idolatry that it is invoked to criticize.

Over against this dogmatic axiologization, Heidegger argues that figures like Paul, Augustine, and Luther thematize a more originary factical relation towards God/ens/ being. Significantly, while Heidegger continues to draw from his early engagement with Eckhart here, he is also critical of the tendency in mysticism itself to over-estimate this unity. Accordingly,

---

96 Ibid., 67/97.
97 Ibid., 212-213/282.
98 Ibid., 196-197/262.
99 Ibid., 67/97.
100 Heidegger writes, for example, that there "remains a deep opposition between the Mystics" who, "through manipulation" and an "enraptured" relation with God, are "removed from the life-complex," and the Christian, who "knows no such 'enthusiasm,'" but only says, "'let us be awake and sober' for the search" (88-89/124).
the real promise of thinkers like Paul, Augustine, and Luther is not simply in how they capture
the existence of the self-world, but in how they capture the difficulty and uncertainty of factual
existence. In the second of his courses on religion, Heidegger turns to Augustine's Confesssions
for a particularly insightful examination of these points. Heidegger argues that in contrast
with the timeless knowledge-claims associated with the speculative tradition, Augustine
emphasizes the historically situated experience of the Christian awaiting the Parousia. In an
early anticipation of his notion of the care structure, Heidegger notes that this shift in focus
concerns a shift in the conception of time, from eternal to finite, as well as in attunement, from
the "delightfully objective" attitude of the researcher/theologian to the "restless searching" of the
Christian individual. Heidegger observes:

[T]his curare, to care, to be concerned has a relational sense which changes in the
historical-factual complex of life. It is enacted as timere and desiderare, as fearing
(retreating from) and desiring (taking into oneself, giving oneself over to). The multum is
the manifold, the many significances in which I live. These significances are sometimes
prospera (supportive, conducive, appealing; that is, carrying over and supporting in the
direction of significance), at other times adversa (impeding, countering that for which I
strive). [...] The desiring which is also present indicates how the experience of adversa is
itself placed in its own factically concrete horizon of awaiting. It is enacted in a
determinate sense, historically.102

It is in the context of this move away from theoretical categories like identity, substance,
or causality, and towards an explication of the existential categories of Dasein's care structure -
such as fear, delight, anguish, and anticipation - that Heidegger ultimately reconsiders the

---

101 Heidegger notes, however, that elsewhere Augustine also falls into the trap of the Patristic tradition. Indeed,
Heidegger admits that even in his most factical text, the Confesssions, Augustine betrays a certain tendency to
systematize these experiences into a hierarchy of objects and relations, reifying God and the other Transcendentals
in the process.
102 Ibid., 153/206. Heidegger explicates this same factual temporality and attunement in his reading of Paul. He
writes: "The awaiting of the parousia of the Lord is decisive. [...] The experience is an absolute distress thlipis
which belongs to the life of the Christian himself. The acceptance dechesthai is an entering-oneself into anguish.
This distress is a fundamental characteristic, it is an absolute concern in the horizon of the parousia, of the second
coming at the end of time. With that we are introduced into the self-world of Paul" (67/97-98).
question of the beautiful. In an extended, but important passage on the Transcendentals, Heidegger writes:

*Deux lux* [God the light]: highest object and highest self-brightness – “knowledge.” *Deus dilectio* [God the love]: authentic existing. *Deus summum bonum* [God the highest good]: the highest good; object of valuing. *Deus incommutabilis substantia* [God the unchangeable substance]: cognizing search for subsistence! Subsisting in itself, derived sense of substance. *Deus summa pulchritudo* [God the highest beauty]: highest beauty of joyful contemplation. In every determination, a different point of departure, of access, of determining within the access. The “whence” of the means of determination, the How of forming-out. Here in the old conceptual framework, there frameworks used in novel ways and re-formed, now new points of departure. Since the basic tendency is still Greek - as is philosophy up to the present day - there is no destruction. Mere so-called critique of knowledge does not help here. Problem: U[nity] and M[ultiplicity] of the connections of the access enactment. Origin - their facticity authentically, meaningfully enacted.103

Such a passage highlights Heidegger’s critique of how the Transcendentals have been treated in the theoretical-religious tradition up until now, and his call for their factual re-consideration. Answering this task, he proceeds in these investigations to develop this counter-interpretation. Like his student works, one might begin by foregrounding his re-reading of the questions of unity (*unum*), oneness (*einum*), and multitude (*multum*). Heidegger follows Augustine here in noting that over against the formal approach to these notions, their factual sense follows from the way that "[...] 'in multa defluximus' (we are scattered into the many), we are dissolving into the manifold and are absorbed in the dispersion." In contrast with this tendency, however, Heidegger notes that God "demand[s] counter-movement against the dispersion, against the falling apart of life." Through this counter-movement, offered most explicitly in "continence," Dasein is "gathered together and brought into the One [...]".104

On Heidegger's Augustinian reading then, one sees how the *heterothesis* found in his student work - the equiprimordiality of the one and the other in the manifestation of being - is re-

---

103 Ibid., 193/257.
104 Ibid., 151-152/205.
appropriated as an account of the way that factual Dasein falls into the multitude of the everyday world. Over against this dispersion, however, Heidegger also provides a more originary explanation for how Dasein overcomes this tendency through a counter-veiling recovery of the "unum: the authentic [das Eigentliche]."\(^{105}\) One finds a similar re-conception of truth (verum) and the good here as well. As a number of scholars have noted, his seminal insight into truth as "unconcealment" (alētheia) is one that Heidegger does not make, or at least fully exhibit, until his Aristotle readings in 1922-1923.\(^{106}\) It is clear, however, that by the time of these lectures on religion, Heidegger has moved far away from a notion of truth as judgment, and toward a kinetic sense of truth associated with the living spirit of the historical individual. This shift emphasizes two features in the notion of truth. First, it focuses on a kind of illumination and revelation that stands simultaneously in mystery and concealment. Second, it involves a move away from truth's traditional association with a fixed content, and towards what Heidegger calls the "truth of life" or "existential truth."\(^{107}\) Taken together then, these two claims emphasize that a certain unknowing also belongs to Dasein's pursuit of the illumination of God/ens/being.

Just as Heidegger resituates the notion of truth within a more fundamental state of unknowing, he is also critical of the traditional hierarchy of values associated with the dogmatic interpretation of the good. Heidegger follows Luther, however, in suggesting that this problem not only lies in how the masses derive the good from the pleasures and delights of the

---

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 152-153/206. In the fuller passage, Heidegger emphasizes the "existential" quality of this re-conception. He writes: "The 'in multa defluere' [scattered, dissolution into the many] is an oriented being-pulled by and in delectatio; the life of the world and its manifold significance - multum - has to be understood in this way - appeals to us (Cf. above, p 144: 'cadunt' and the existential counter-movement. - Multum: the manifold, unum: the authentic [das Eigentliche]; cf. Aristotle: ousia-tode ti)."

\(^{106}\) Kisiel notes, for example, that "truth as 'unconcealment' is first thematized in Oct. 1922 in the translation of the Greek texts of Nicomachean Ethics 6." (Kisiel, The Genesis of "Being and Time," 34-35 and 506). See also Daniel Dahlstrom, Heidegger and the Question of Truth (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

\(^{107}\) Heidegger, The Phenomenology of Religious Life, 217 and 147fn91/GA 60, 287 and 200fn34.
surrounding world, but also in the theological tradition's attempt to model the ultimate good of God on objective ideas and characteristics (speculative idolatry). This is a trap in which even Augustine falls prey when he states that we must seek out the *sumnum bonum*, or highest good, in opposition with false goods. By contrast, Heidegger writes that what really needs to be captured is the *experience of searching* for God here, its vicissitudes and uncertainty. These observations lead Heidegger to a two-fold re-conception of the good. First, he sees Augustine's greatest insight as the recognition that "human life" is "a trial" in which good and bad belong together in experience. He cites Augustine, for example, that "the 'burden' lies in the 'strife' [*Widerstreit*] in which I live [...] *laetitia flendae - maerores laetandi* (regrettable joys - joyful sorrows). [...] 'Et ex qua parte stat victoria nescio' [And on which side is the victory, I do not know]. [...] *Vulnera non abscona* [I do not hide the wounds]: being torn apart." Second, and as a consequence of the first move, Heidegger replaces the emphasis on good objects and actions with a more fundamental notion of *authentic* (*Eigentliche*) comportment towards this uncertain trial. Thus, he writes: "Everything depends upon authentic hearing, upon the *How* of the questioning posture, of the wanting-to-hear," as opposed to "the orientation toward the

---

108 Heidegger cites Augustine here: "If anyone loves the world, the Father's love is not in him. For all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the secular ambition, is not the Father's, but is the world's" (156/211).
109 Heidegger writes, for example: "Every cosmic-metaphysical reification of the concept of God, even as irrational concept, must be warded off" (220/290).
110 Heidegger writes: "[S]uch ranking order is already present in Augustine. However, does this axiolization correspond to the explicated phenomena? The axiolization is more difficult to grasp than theorization, because it actually deals with what is in question. Chapters [...] of Book X of the *Confessions* show how Augustine indeed uses a ranking order as a basis, but it ultimately takes on an essentially different meaning. This ranking order dominates Augustine to a very large extent. However, it is not grasped in a manner as removed as it is today (for example, in Scheler); it is connected to his concrete metaphysics, and the conception of reality (*res*) is tailored to it" (209/276).
111 Heidegger writes: "As an experiential complex, this object cannot be God; it does not have the sense of Being of the *sumnum bonum* [greatest good]. Cf. *delectatio* [delight]" (149-150/203).
112 Ibid., 155/209.
113 Ibid., 187/249.
114 Ibid., 150/203.
axiologized *summum bonum* [highest good]" that "turns the whole conduct into a near-aestheticism [...] as *delectatio* [delight]."\(^{115}\)

As this last reference begins to indicate, Heidegger's reconsideration of these Transcendentals culminates in a critique of the beautiful via the aesthetic tendency of Western metaphysics. Following Augustine, Heidegger helps show how such a critique extends from the special relationship between beauty and vision in the Western tradition, a relationship in which the former is said to empower and beckon the latter. Thus Heidegger cites Augustine that, "the emphasis on the *voluptas istorum oculorum* is on the 'amant oculi' [what the eyes love], what they are looking for at the moment: 'pulchras formas et verias, nitidos et amoenos colores' [beautiful and varied forms, glowing and pleasant colors] - *lux* [light]."\(^{116}\) The fruit of this relationship is not simply the manifestation of the visible, however, but the knowledge that accompanies this visibility. Hence Heidegger notes that while the special association between vision and knowledge has long been emphasized in the Western tradition, this vision has a wider relation than the eyes alone, and includes the other senses as "the full sense-direction and sense-function of knowledge," that is, "*seeing*" in the broad sense of the term.\(^{117}\)

Heidegger takes these preliminary observations further, however, by noting the way that this primary vision is redoubled at the theoretical level, in an intellectual vision that shines even brighter and more clearly than sensuous vision. This second vision refers to the "*noeton kallos* in Greek," and belongs in the Platonic and Christian traditions to the invisible, rational ground of being.\(^{118}\) Accordingly, it is a vision that ultimately underlies sensible vision in a deeper way,

\(^{115}\) Ibid., 195/259-260.  
\(^{116}\) Ibid., 162-163/218-219.  
\(^{117}\) Ibid., 167-168/223-224.  
\(^{118}\) Ibid., 204-205. Elsewhere, Van Buren emphasizes the intimate connection between the sensual desire of beauty and the speculative ideal in Plato. He writes: "This desire is in fact described by Plato as 'eating' at the 'feast of
with a radiance that can only be seen by the soul or mind. Looking forward, one will note that this second claim concerns an important insight that is to eventually stand at the heart of Heidegger’s critical investigations of metaphysics more generally. Indeed, in his readings of Aristotle from the following year, one already encounters the claim that Greek metaphysics is founded on a privileging of the notions of form (morphē) and production (technē), which together are responsible for making all ideas (eidē) and objects present as visible entities for the Western tradition. Bound to the productive power of intellectual vision in this way, thinking comes to be defined as the activity of "seeing" the ideas (eidē) via beauty’s light.

In the context of his lectures on Augustine here, Heidegger focuses on the aesthetic pleasure that this lighting vision affords. Referencing Augustine directly, Heidegger explains:

Aesthetic basic meaning of frui; fruendum est trinitate, rei intelligibilis pulchritudo [?] (= noetone kallos in Greek) [?]; incommutabilis et ineffabilis pulchritudo = God [to be enjoyed is the trinity, the beauty of intelligible things (= noetone kallos Greek); unchangeable and ineffable beauty = God]. The frui is thus the basic characteristic of the Augustinian basic posture toward life itself. Its correlate is the pulchritudo; thus there is an aesthetic moment in it. Likewise in the summum bonum. - With this, a basic aspect of the medieval object of theology (and of the history of ideas in general) has been designated: it is the specifically Greek view.

As this passage indicates, the aesthetic interpretation of the beautiful hinges not only on the radiant light of vision and its manifestly delimited objects/ideas, but also on the frui (pleasure) and delectio (delight) accompanying this beautiful scene. This is an important clarification. For it is only through this insight into the ecstatic allure of radiance that one comes to understand how and why beautiful objects and ideas are capable of attracting Dasein in the first place. This

---

ecstatic quality of beauty is emphasized in a wealth of passages in Heidegger's reading of Augustine. One hears, for example, the following: "'Istis pulchris gressum innecto' [I entangle my steps in beautiful things] - everywhere and all the time, I entangle [verstricke] myself in these beautiful alluring [lockenden] things, as possible situations and possibilities of continuation, of enjoyment [...],"\(^{121}\) and, "'Ego capior miserabiliter' [I am miserably captured], I am being drawn into it [hineingerissen] miserably [elendiglich/erbärmlich]. 'Haereo in ubique sparsis insidiis' [I become stuck in the snares laid everywhere] and thus lose the genuine authentic orientation toward the lux vera, ill pulchritudo 'cui suspirat anima mea die ac nocte,' deus decus meum [true light, that beauty 'after which my soul sighs day and night,' my God and beauty],"\(^{122}\) and still elsewhere, "'Et in ista formosa quae fecisti, deformis irruebam' [and in my deformed state, I rushed into those beautiful things which You made], although I plunged headlong [stürzte] into the world and the things as formosa, beautifully formed, impressive and announcing something significant, so that they captured me [gefangennahm] [...]."\(^{123}\)

The set of descriptions highlighted here - terms like verstricken, hineingerissen, and gefangennahm - collectively indicate the power of the beautiful. As I have suggested, this is found in its erotic character of light, which not only helps make beings and their relations manifest, but draws Dasein toward this manifestation in a caring and concerned manner.

In the language of Being and Time, all vision and understanding is attuned (Befindlichkeit). Indeed, in looking forward, it is significant to note that one will find the same terms used to foreground this ecstatic quality of beauty here in the important descriptions of ecstasis, clearing,
and *alētheia* in *Being and Time*, and again in Heidegger's explicit engagement with beauty in the 1930's.

In the present context, Heidegger emphasizes that the concerned comportment surrounding the beautiful extends, in particular, from the *delight* and *pleasure* that such disclosure affords. Importantly, however, we learn that Dasein's inability to resist beauty's power also leads to its misery (*Erbämlichkeit*). This parallel attunement to delight is most clearly seen in the case of the individual who pursues beauty in the worldly sense. As Heidegger explains in another extended yet helpful passage, the pursuit of beauty's pleasure in the world leads to an inexhaustible chase after ever changing beings and ideas, a chase that sounds remarkably modern in its conception of the quest for the *new*. Focusing on Augustine again, Heidegger explains:

[T]he emphasis on the *voluptas istorum oculorum* is on the “*amant oculi*” (what the eyes love), what they are looking for at the moment: “*pulchras formas et verias, nitidos et amoenos colores*” (beautiful and varied forms, glowing and pleasant colors) - *lux* (light). The devotion is such that this possession becomes entirely familiar and is taken for granted. Form and color are there *totis diebus* (the whole day). *Lux, regina colorum*, “*multimodo allapsu blanditur*” (Light, the queen of colors, “gliding by in many forms, enticing me”). “*Insinuat autem se ita vehementur, ut si repente subtrahatur cum desiderio requiratur; et si diu absit, contristat animum*” (For it insinuates itself so forcibly, if it is withdrawn suddenly, it is sought with longing; and if long absent, it makes the soul sad). [...] Factual experience has fixed itself in *that* direction, such that it is concerned to add something, to increase significances - that is to multiply the manifold and the alteration of what is at its disposal, the “new.” (This increase and alteration shows how important this is taken to be, and how it can fill a life).\(^\text{124}\)

In Heidegger's Augustinian account here, the majority of people are described as "followers of external beauty," individuals who do not look to the source of God/ens/being, but take delight and find significance in the light of the multitude of the world.\(^\text{125}\) In this way, however, they are

\(^{\text{124}}\)Ibid., 162-163/219.  
\(^{\text{125}}\)Elsewhere here, Heidegger writes: "*Sectatores pulchritudinum exteriorum: fortitudinem suam non ad te custodian (...) eam spargant in deliciosas lassitudines* [The followers of external beauty: they do not guard their
 destined to always chase after whatever is the latest source of delight, as old objects and relations lose their luster and appeal.\textsuperscript{126} At the same time, Heidegger notes elsewhere that in the axiologization of intellectual beauty, factual Dasein becomes miserably captured in a different way, namely in the misery that stems from pursuing a false objectification of God, making one wretched in the bravado of their ignorance.\textsuperscript{127}

Drawing these threads together, one comes to more fully understand how the aesthetic interpretation of the beautiful represents the culmination of Heidegger's critique of the traditional approach to the Transcendentals. From this aesthetic perspective, the truth is just something that is enjoyed when it is convenient, but when difficult becomes ugly and to be avoided.\textsuperscript{128} One finds a similar treatment of the good, which Heidegger argues is taken either from the fleeting and alternating delights of the surrounding world, or reified and worshiped as the image of a \textit{summum bonum}. As Van Buren notes, however, in each case here Heidegger sees an unreflective metaphysics at work, ultimately defined by its "ocular,' 'aesthetic,' and 'quietive''

---

\textsuperscript{126} Heidegger observes that the notion of "culture" sublimates this relation in yet another way as a form of cultural achievement. According to Heidegger, however, this belongs to the same fundamental aesthetic delusion (164/220).

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 212-213/282.

\textsuperscript{128} Heidegger writes: "\textit{Amant eam lucentem, oderunt eam redarguentem.} [They love the truth when it enlightens them, but hate it when it comprehends them]. They love it, when it encounters them as glitzy, in order to enjoy it aesthetically, in all convenience, just as they enjoy every glamour that, in captivating, relaxes them. But they hate it when it presses them forcefully. When it concerns them themselves, and when it shakes them up and questions their own facticity and existence, then it is better to close one's eyes just in time, in order to be enthused by the choir's litanies which one has staged before oneself. Thus human beings do wish that the 'truth' reveals itself to them, that nothing is closed off to them (aesthetic), but they themselves close themselves off against it: '\textit{ab ea manifestari nolunt} [they do not want to be discovered by it]" (148/200).
commitments, and carried forward by "absolute curiosity,' 'idle talk,' 'comfort,' securitas, 'self-satisfaction,'" and an 'aestheticizing intoxication.'"\textsuperscript{129}

One must be careful not to conclude on this point, however. For as was seen above with the other Transcendentals, Heidegger draws another possibility for the beautiful in its factual consideration here, one more pursuant to the task of "[...] wanting to gain the authentic enactment as existential."\textsuperscript{130} Heidegger lays the groundwork for this factual understanding elsewhere with a pivotal observation about the nature of light. This observation surrounds the difference between the two terms traditionally used to express this notion, $Lux$ and $Lumen$. The first of these, Heidegger states, is "determined through the Neo-Platonic tradition and the Gospel of John, both of which go back to Greek philosophy."\textsuperscript{131} Heidegger argues that in this tradition, $Lux$ has an "objective sense, what is present as the object of seeing (regina colorum) [the queen of colors])," a conception that surrounds the notions of external beauty and the speculative $summum pulchritudum$ alike. Over against this sense, Heidegger positions the term $Lumen$. He states that, "$Lux$ and $lumen$ are to be distinguished," insofar as $Lumen$ is not an objective notion, but concerns "brightness," and "is always of the soul."\textsuperscript{132} Moreover, he observes that, "$Lumen$ has a very determinate, existential sense of enactment in self-worldly, factual experience and is not to be understood in a reifying-metaphysical way [dinglich-metaphysisch]."\textsuperscript{133}

Building on this distinction, Heidegger develops a thinking of $Lumen$ or originary brightness associated more closely with the authentic struggle of Christian factual life. This interpretation situates itself not only against the objectifying quality of $Lux$, however, but against

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{129} Van Buren, \textit{Rumor of a Hidden King: The Young Heidegger}, 189.
\textsuperscript{130} Heidegger, \textit{The Phenomenology of Religious Life}, 195/GA 60, 260.
\textsuperscript{131} Heidegger cites as evidence of this: "John 1:4: 
\end{flushleft}
the aesthetic attunement of pleasure/delight. Specifically, Heidegger suggests that this more serious, existential brightness defines the factical experience of those awaiting the Parousia. To this point, he cites the following scripture in Paul: "5:4: Humeis de, adelphoi, ouk este en skotei: "but you, brothers, are not in the darkness.' - (hina he hemera humas hos kleptes katalabe), 'so that the day surprises you like a thief." Heidegger notes here that "hemera has a double meaning: (1) opposite the darkness is the 'brightness' of knowledge of oneself [...]"; and "(2) hemera means 'day of the Lord,' that is, 'day of the parousia.'" As these claims show, in the anxious expectation of the Parousia something of a seachange occurs in the relations of lightness and darkness themselves. For what was previously taken as the light is now viewed as dark - the everyday and speculative illusions - while a more genuine brightness shows itself precisely from out of the concealed anticipation of the Parousia. In this way, factical Dasein is distinguished according to those who turn toward the primal mystery, and those who do not. Heidegger writes: "The event of the Parousia is thus directed, in its sense of happening, toward the people who bifurcate into the called and the rejected."

While these last observations emphasize the kind of Eckhartian negation that a more authentic brightness represents for other orientation(s) toward this light, it also reveals an important shift from a metaphorics of vision toward a metaphorics of voice and listening.

Heidegger observes:

1:11: kleseos [of his call]. Now at issue is to ask God that one will be dignified by the calling (klesis). Christians must be kletoi, those who are called as opposed to those who are cast away (2:13-14: peripoiesis doxes [obtain the glory]: the looking around for the doxa of the Lord-concern). Paul sets those who have understood him up against those.

---

134 Ibid., 72-73/104.
135 Ibid., 79/111-112.
who, in more imminent expectation of the *parousia*, no longer work and loiter idly (3:11: *meden ergazomenos alla periergazomenos* [mere busybodies not doing any work]).

In this notion of *calling*, which helps distinguish between an authentic and inauthentic being-towards God/ens/being, one encounters an early prefiguration of the important *call of conscience* in *Being and Time*. In this early work, however, Heidegger still leaves the notion of conscience largely undeveloped, touching on it only briefly in the following:

> How else can the just one be led out of such *confusio simulationis* [confusion of simulation], if not by God's testing him in the heart and gut [...]. For everyone strives in his concern and consideration for what is attainable by his own *delectatio*, but God himself speaks in our conscience [...].

While inchoate, the notion of conscience is nevertheless an interesting one here insofar as it reaffirms the distinction between the everyday orientation to the external world, and the counter possibility in Dasein of being ecstatic in a radically different way. Specifically, it suggests an immanent form of ecstasis, in which the motivating tendency emerges from out of Dasein itself. That is, God is not imagined as some external or objective source, but as the voice that emanates from the very recesses of Dasein.

A closer investigation of the original passage above, however, shows that it is the notion of *calling* which does the more interesting work in Heidegger's phenomenology of religion. One will notice how Heidegger stresses the overlap in the Greek terms for both the *call* and those who are called. In doing so, he juxtaposes this relation with the inauthentic visual metaphors surrounding the notion of *doxa*, which not only concerns an opinion or ordinary belief, but *glorifying* what merely lies around. In his later and more well-known lecture course,

---

136 Ibid., 76/107. Elsewhere here, Heidegger writes: "The *How* of the coming of the Lord itself determines the How of the entrance of the living and the dead, *en keleusmati - phone - salpiggi* [by command - call - trumpet]. *The day* is thus characterized, the sign of *this* day. Reawakening and ascension coincide with the *parousia*. *Keleusma* [command-order], orders to the rowers, call of the field marshal; in the hunt the dogs directed to the prey! God *calls* the dead to stand up. (*Keleusma* not call for battle against enemies!)" (108/153.).

137 Ibid., 203/270.
**Introduction to Metaphysics** (1935) Heidegger helps clarify the significance of this interpretation:

As what appears, what is gives itself an aspect, dokei. Doxa means aspect - namely, the respect in which one stands. If the aspect, corresponding to what emerges in it, is an eminent one, then doxa means brilliance and glory. In Hellenistic philosophy and in the New Testament, doxa theou, gloria Dei, is the majesty of God. To glorify, to bestow and demonstrate regard, is, in Greek, to place into the light and thereby to provide constancy.  

Going further, one will observe that there is a sophisticated etymological play at work in these passages. This begins with the observation that in the Greek, the term for calling (klesis) not only shares an etymological connection with the term for those called (kletoi) and that which calls (kaloun), but also with the Greek term for beauty (kalon). Moreover, while Heidegger opposes the notion of calling with glory in the sense of doxa here, there is another term for glory in the Greek, kleos, which also bears an etymological kinship with these terms. In the ancient world, for example, glorious deeds (kleos) were also beautiful (kalos), while their opposites were not only considered shameful (aischron), but also ugly (kakon). Again, Heidegger helps clarify this connection in the later course when he writes:

> [W]hat is experienced here mainly in terms of vision and the visage, the respect in which someone stands, is grasped more in terms of hearing and calling [rufen] by the other word for glory: kleos. Glory is the repute [Ruf] in which one stands. Heraclitus says (fragment 29): aireuntai gar hen anti hapanton oi aristoi, kleos aenaon thneton, oi de polloi kekopentai hokosper ktenea: “for the noblest choose one thing above all others: glory, which constantly persists, in contrast to what dies; but the many are sated like cattle.”

As his reference to Heraclitus helps show, Heidegger ultimately maintains a distinction between those who are called into glory in an authentic sense (kleos), and the many who, like cattle,

---


139 This is an association that James Risser has drawn attention to elsewhere in his study of Hans-Georg Gadamer's interpretations of the beautiful. Risser points out that in Plato's *Cratylus*, Socrates and Hermogenes suggest that beauty (Kalon) gets its name from its power to help give the name to other things. See James Risser, "The Flash of Beauty" in *The Life of Understanding* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012), 107.

glorify in the visible *doxa* of what merely lies around. More significantly, however, in each of these cases Heidegger continues to emphasize how these relations are fundamentally interrelated possibilities of being-towards the beauty of God/ens/being. That is, Heidegger gestures at the complexity of the phenomenon of beauty precisely through the overlap of these different terms in the Greek.

**IV. Conclusion**

Taken together, these last qualities of the beautiful – its genuine light, ecstatic call, and seriousness - adumbrate a more authentic relation in factual life, while remaining intimately related to its aesthetic possibility. Indeed, in the logic of these analyses it seems that the former is ultimately to be understood as a modification of the latter, one that changes the everyday ecstatic relationship with manifest objects and ideas into a serious harkening to the condition of the possibility of radiance itself, namely to God/ens/being. Heidegger describes this change in the following way:

> Being the singular one - being under the ownmost, strictest “observation.” The *molestia* - “radically forming” mine as *molestia* - determinate complex of enactment. To appropriate, in the manner of enactment, the *moles* [burden] as *what is pulling down* [*Abziehendes*], not letting it stand as a thing and as “nature,” but grasping the sense of facticity and enacting it existentially and understanding it thus historically in memory and expectation. Giving life *this* existential facticity and brightness, that is, increasing seriousness!\(^\text{141}\)

\(^\text{141}\) Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, 200/GA 60, 266. Heidegger will continue to emphasize both this seriousness and doubled nature of the beautiful in his more explicit readings in the1930's and beyond. In a letter written in 1939 to Theophil Rees on the occasion of his 50th birthday, Heidegger writes: "We wish [Theophile] that which simultaneously liberates us in its essence-ing, and in which we are captured. Plato, who the doctor also loves and reads, called this the *ekphanestaton erasmiotaton*, that which in its most radiant shining carries us into the essence of things. And what is this? *To kalon*, the beautiful, equally far and equally near to sheer good fortune and misfortune. The beautiful encounters us when we linger in the "letting-be" of the heart, as well as when we stand fast in the rigor of mindfulness. Out of both, in one, originates in us the power of recollection that attunes us with the voice of God" (*GA* 16, 352). My translation.
Over against the aesthetic interpretation of beauty associated with the pleasant desire for the radiant appearances of everyday beings, and over against the sublimation of that relation in speculative noesis, Heidegger has uncovered another sense of beauty associated with the paradoxically dark, and yet primally bright, calling of God/ens/being within the recesses of factical Dasein itself. The latter negates both the content-sense and enactment of the former, however, such that it turns light into darkness, and draws Dasein into a proper concern with its unified historical moment.

It is important to acknowledge the significance of the deconstructive strategy underlying Heidegger's reading of the beautiful in his early work here. In the course of his critique of the Western tradition, Heidegger does not simply reject the notion of beauty outright, nor does he simply replace one sense of beauty with another (i.e., the aesthetic with the authentic). Rather, as Kisiel observes elsewhere, "the notes of letting-be and receptive listening," associated with the brightness of an authentic calling, serve to "underscore further the attempts, halting and difficult, to get beyond the metaphors of traditional Lichtmetaphysik" without simply jettisoning them. Consistent then with Heidegger's broader deconstructive goal to reveal the prejudices of the traditional Western philosophy while uncovering other possibilities therein, he ultimately retrieves a more originary sense of beauty that functions in a fundamental tension with those modalities of beauty found in the aesthetic experience of fallenness and ruination.

In maintaining the essential connection between the authentic and inauthentic dimensions of beauty, Heidegger also emphasizes the instability of this relationship. That is, although the authentic light (and darkness) of the factical Christian is said to negate the false beauties of the mundane and speculative world, the uncertainty that surrounds this authentic relation indicates

that one can never be sure of where they stand in this ambiguous light. In another important passage from these early investigations where *alētheia* is already named but not thought in its deeper sense, Heidegger writes:

Paul sees these two types of people under the pressure of his calling as the proclaimer. The *dechēsthai agaren* love as enactment *alētheias* [truth] means a complex of enactment, which enables for the *dokimachein* of the divine. On the basis of this *dokimachein*, the knower first sees the great danger in store for the religious person: whoever does not accept the enactment cannot at all see the Antichrist who appears in the semblance of the divine (*antikeimenos epi panta legomenon theon*) [he opposes above every so-called god], and becomes enslaved without even noticing it. The danger becomes apparent only to the believers...The appearance of the Antichrist in godly robes facilitates the falling-tendency of life; in order not to fall to it, one must stand ever ready for it.  

Such a passage shows that the danger constantly threatening factical Dasein only becomes apparent to those that have heard or seek the beautiful call of God/ens/being. However, what is made apparent therein is only the fact of this danger itself, and not the certitude of God/ens/being. That is, even in the modality of authentic Dasein, there remains the danger that it may be deceived. In the end, this characterizes the ambivalence of Heidegger's double reading of the beautiful.

In turning towards Heidegger's thinking after this early work, I shall argue that this existential appropriation of beauty will continue to undergird his investigation of being and its disclosure. Indeed, I contend that despite beauty's absence by name in *Being and Time*, the basic unity of the existentialized Transcendentals of being, truth, and beauty are found in Heidegger's important notion of unconcealment (*alētheia*). Specifically, I argue that beauty helps name the erotic radiance in the disclosure of being, a radiance that is responsible for drawing Dasein both to the authentic call of conscience, and into the allure of worldly appearances.

---

Chapter 2
Chapter 2
The Implicit Structure of Beauty in Being and Time

I. Introduction

If Heidegger’s student work and early lectures offer a helpful insight into the development of a young thinker, the publication of Being and Time in 1926/1927 represents the culmination of this early period. However, in the years between Heidegger's lectures on the phenomenology of religion and the completion of his magnum opus, his thinking continues to undergo further revision. One finds, for example, that during this time Heidegger undertakes a close study of Aristotle – through whom he both further develops St. Augustine's care structure, and works out the notion of truth as unconcealment (alētheia) - as well as of Immanuel Kant – through whom he undertakes a further reflection on the nature of the categories, and the question of temporality.

While these different figures each have their individual significance for Heidegger's thinking, it may be the last figure named here who is most important. For in the spirit of Kantian critique, one also finds that Heidegger moves away from the overlap between religion and philosophy. Indeed, by 1922, Heidegger asserts that philosophy must ultimately be atheistic in its approach.144 This philosophical conversion is both important and subtle. On one hand, the notion of God drops out of the complex structure of God/ens/being at the center of his early writings, as does the focus on the Christian plight (Chapter 1). On the other hand, Heidegger does not abandon the mode of analysis commenced in his early work, but continues to examine

---

144 See Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations in Connection with Aristotle: An Indication of the Hermeneutic Situation" (1922) in Supplements, 121/GA 62, 363. While this development can be attributed to personal reasons, a number of scholars point out the increasing influence of Kant on Heidegger's work. See, in particular, Theodore Kisiel, The Genesis of "Being and Time."
the question of being precisely from the perspective of the kind of being who holds being as a question, namely the historically factual human being. Thus, while moving away from the religious framing of these questions, Heidegger continues to develop his radical existentialization of being and the Transcendentals commenced in the early work. This development culminates in Heidegger's comprehensive indication of the existentials (existentialen) of Dasein in *Being and Time* - those basic structures of existence that open-up the world in which being appears.

There is no official list of the existentials in *Being and Time*, which is befitting of Heidegger's hermeneutic-phenomenological belief that such structures can only be indicated from existence itself, and not deduced from a formal logic. There are many, however, some of the most important of which include the equiprimordial unity of understanding (Verstehen), interpretation (Auslegung), attunement (Befindlichkeit), and discourse (Rede); the temporal care structure of thrownness (Geworfenheit), fallenness (Verfallen), and projection (Entwurfen); and the tension between authenticity (eigentliche) and inauthenticity (uneigentliche). As these notions suggest, despite the removal of an explicitly religious paradigm, one finds a striking continuity here with Heidegger's previous analyses of facticity.

In the following chapter then, I argue that at the heart of his analysis of the existentials in *Being and Time*, one finds a further retrieval of the Transcendentals. While Heidegger's break with the metaphysical tradition causes him to no longer refer to these basic concepts as Transcendentals, their existential re-appropriation is exhibited in a number of ways, including the re-figuration of the good in the agonistic relationship between authenticity and inauthenticity, and the tension between the proper unity of Dasein and the multitude of the they (das Mann). More importantly, I contend that one finds a special unity in being, truth, and beauty here in Heidegger’s pivotal notion of unconcealment (alētheia). As I will show, this extends primarily
from three features: 1). The way that beauty helps characterize the quality of light, radiance, and shining in the clearing (Lichtung) of being; 2). The way that beauty's erotic nature helps explain the ecstatic possibility of Dasein's standing out towards a world of appearances, and inward towards the call of conscience; 3). The way that beauty's double nature helps support the irreducible tension between an insight into authentic unconcealment and an inauthentic absorption in appearances.

Focusing on each of these aspects of the beautiful, I conclude that beauty remains an important, if implicit, structure in Being and Time. Before commencing this specific analysis, however, I wish to begin here by addressing another way that it has sometimes been suggested a thinking of beauty belongs to Being and Time. Specifically, a number of critics have pointed to the powerful influence of Kant on Heidegger's development in the years immediately leading up to his major work. This influence has prompted such critics to suggest that a thinking of the Kantian imagination is at work in Being and Time, one that variously results in a notion of Kantian beauty or sublimity. This is a position, however, that I will show is misguided, and that occludes the more important genealogy of the beautiful that I have begun to trace above.

II. A Response to the Critical Appeal to Kantian Aesthetics in Being and Time

It has been suggested that Heidegger's work exhibits several important developments after his early engagement with the phenomenology of religion. In Heidegger scholarship, however, this observation has prompted a number of different conclusions concerning the question of a possible aesthetics in Being and Time. The first and most common perspective is represented by Brice Wachterhauser's claim that in Heidegger's turn away from his early
religious sympathies, there is a parallel move away from the Transcendents and the beautiful. A second approach, however, is exhibited by critics interested in the Kantian influence on Heidegger's work during this period. This has been expressed, on one hand, by someone like John Sallis, who argues for an implicit structure of beauty in *Being and Time* as part of a larger re-appropriation of the Kantian faculty of the imagination. On the other hand, there is another body of scholars who suggest that this Kantian influence results not so much in the structure of beauty, as in sublimity, associated, for example, with the nihilating tendency of anxiety (*Angst*) in Dasein's radical confrontation with death.

While these comparisons between *Being and Time* and Kant's aesthetics are provocative, I believe that such accounts are ultimately more speculative than textually grounded. The most fundamental evidence both for and against these claims can be found in several brief footnotes written by Heidegger in his 1929 book on *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. In these notes, Heidegger compares his finding of an ecstatic temporality in the Kantian structure of the imagination in the first *Critique* with the aesthetic treatment of the imagination in the third *Critique*. He writes:

---

146 See John Sallis, *Echoes* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990); *The Gathering of Reason* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005); *Spacings - of Reason and Imagination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997). In the first of these studies, in particular, Sallis suggests that the meaning of being in *Being and Time* is ultimately not time, but the beauty of the Imagination, which would have been revealed in the unwritten second half of the book. See especially pp. 76-117. However, as Frank Schalow observes, Sallis' suggestion here is an admittedly creative appropriation of Heidegger's reading of Kant, aimed at pushing the implications of that reading further, and not primarily at a textual exegesis. See Frank Schalow, *The Renewal of the Heidegger-Kant Dialogue* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 119.
Critique of Judgment - Aesthetics. Only considered far enough to be able to see that it is not contradicted. But now the highest corroboration of the interpretation; see 59, p. 258 [Bernard translation, p. 198-tr.]], likewise p. 238 [Bernard translation p. 186 - tr.]; the intelligible! whereupon taste (reflection - imagination) looks out (into itself).  

And elsewhere:

That applies certainly to those who admit that Kant went toward the transcendental power of imagination; for only then can there also be a back [ein Zurück. Refers to the root of “zurückgewichen,” translated as “shrank back” - tr.]. See Kritik d. U[rteilskraft], 59, pp. 258-59 [Critique of Judgment, tr. J.H. Bernard, p. 199] here as well the interpretation is fully upheld, and here again the shrinking back [Zurückweichen!] but in what sense.  

Such passages are suggestive, indicating that Heidegger indeed saw some connection between his discovery of ecstatic temporality in the productive nature of the imagination in the first Critique and the reflective aesthetic structure of imagination in the third Critique. However, these passages also reveal several challenges for importing this thinking into Being and Time. First, Heidegger makes clear that he has simply not considered these questions in the Critique of Judgment in any substantial degree. This is an observation that an overview of Heidegger’s lectures and writings from the period leading up to the publication of the Kant book supports, showing an almost singular focus on the first Critique with occasional turns into the second Critique. At the same time, Heidegger suggests here that Kant continues to shrink back from his insight into ecstatic temporality in the third Critique, and limits this connection to a single reference in section 59. While it might be said that Heidegger finds some confirmation of his initial insight then, it also seems more likely that - as his critique of aesthetics in the 1930's

---

150 Heidegger, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics 175-176/GA 3, 250.
151 Ibid., 112fna/160. Heidegger writes in the body of the text immediately surrounding this footnote: “We cannot discuss here the sense in which the pure power of imagination recurs in the Critique of Judgment and above all whether it still recurs in express relationship to the laying of the ground of metaphysics as such which was pointed out earlier” (113/161).
suggests - he believes these aesthetic analyses contribute to an obfuscation of the initial insight of the first *Critique*.

Elsewhere, Lacoue-Labarthe helps draw out a more general resistance in Heidegger to Kantian aesthetics, and a specific objection to the sublime. He observes:

The thought of the sublime, in fact, absolutely does not interest Heidegger. Even in Kant and Schiller. He maintains on this subject total silence which, as always in Heidegger, means that it is “inessential.” [...] The thought of the sublime, for example, is a belated thought, born in the womb of the Hellenistic schools, not truly or authentically Greek, but contaminated by Latinity [...]. Aside from this, it is a thought that comes from rhetoric: it does not attain to philosophy [...]. It actually forms a minor tradition. Even as a thought of excess, of unbordering, of beyond-beauty, etc., it attests to an exhaustion of the sense of the beautiful. It is not by chance, therefore, that aesthetics *strictu sensa* lays claim to it. Contrary to appearances, it wants to provide a weak thought, that is, a thought precisely *without* grandeur. [...] [I]nsofar as it defines itself negatively in relation to the beautiful, the sublime offers essentially nothing more (motif of excess) and, moreover, nothing less (motif of the nonpresentable) than the concept of the beautiful on which it does not cease to depend.

While Lacoue-Labarthe frames his comments in terms of an objection to the sublime, it is not hard to see that for Heidegger this would also hold true for the Kantian thinking of beauty situated over against sublimity. Indeed, as Heidegger has already indicated in his early religious

---

153 In Chapter 4, I will examine Heidegger's engagement with Kant in the context of Heidegger's more explicit writings on art and aesthetics beginning in the 1930's. This later reading seems to confirm our suspicions here, however. For while Heidegger will observe that there is indeed something in Kant's thinking of the beautiful that captures its more originary association with temporal ecstasy and attunement (see, for example, Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, 113/GA 6.1, 113), he also observes that Kant's thinking ultimately remains trapped in an aesthetics of the subject that fails to grasp the complexity of the beautiful (123/124). These reservations are further emphasized in "The Origin of the Work of Art," where Heidegger is critical of the notion of the faculty of imagination for the attempt to think art more originally (197/60). In both cases, Heidegger avoids any explicit discussion of the sublime. Perhaps most important for our current analysis here, however, is the fact that these are insights that Heidegger does not make, or at least commit to writing until 1935, indicating that he did not have a more considered view on Kantian aesthetics until this time.

154 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Sublime Truth," 84. Significantly, Lacoue-Labarthe proceeds in this same essay to attempt to locate a discourse of the sublime in Heidegger. In doing so, I believe he misses the real import of his initial insight. For the problem is not simply that there is not a certain aspect of what Kant identifies as the sublime in Heidegger's thinking in *Being and Time*, but rather, that, in its more originary sense, the beautiful already includes this dimension within it. Indeed, we have previously witnessed some of these features in the authentic Christian's relationship with beauty (Chapter 1), for example, its association with unpresentability, pain, and mystery. This will be indicated further in Heidegger's retrieval of the beautiful in the pre-Socratics and Tragedians (Chapter 3). Accordingly, it is just the false duality of aesthetic thinking, which tries to tease beauty and sublimity apart into different structures as part of the metaphysical attempt to separate and compartmentalize everything, that Heidegger is ultimately critical of here.
treatment of aesthetics, and as he will clarify further in the 1930's, a primary objection to the aesthetic approach in general is that, in its metaphysical compartmentalization and reification of phenomena, it overlooks the complexity of originary phenomenona. In this vein then, the various attempts to read a Kantian notion of beauty or sublimity into Being and Time fall into this same problem. Indeed, this is ultimately supported by the fact that while these positions are able to identify certain structural similarities between Heidegger’s thought and these Kantian constructs - for example, the way that the experience of anxiety leads to the extreme confrontation with the unpresentable nothing (sublime), or the resolute free play of possibilities (beauty) - they overlook how these structures also bleed into one another in Heidegger's thinking.

In the end, however, I do not believe that these reservations about a Kantian aesthetic in Heidegger's thinking lead to Wachterhauser's conclusion that Heidegger simply moves away from beauty in Being and Time. Indeed, one will note that Wachterhauser's attempt to dismiss the Transcendental in Heidegger's thinking is already largely undermined by the examination in Chapter 1, where it was seen that Heidegger's factical re-appropriation of the Transcendental in his early work allows him to develop his own notion of the existentials. Having indicated then the way in which I do not want to take up the question of the beautiful in Being and Time - namely, through a comparison with Kantian aesthetics - I now wish to elucidate the manner in which I believe a more significant notion of beauty is at stake here.

III. The Existential Retrieval of the Beautiful

In considering where the structure of the beautiful shows itself in Being and Time, one may find an indirect indication in an interesting comment Heidegger makes later in his life, concerning the shift in his discourse away from the term existential. Heidegger writes:
Nevertheless, the word, “existence,” in regard to the ecstatic character of Da-sein whose essence, in beautiful [\textit{schöner}] measuring-up [\textit{Anmessung}], it attempts to name, I have since the public recognition of existence-philosophy (K. Jaspers [...] ) removed from the lexicon surrounding the questioning of Being and time. I have used instead the apparent opposite, “Instandigkeit.”\textsuperscript{155}

Such a comment is an opaque one. On one hand, the reference to \textit{schöner} here could simply be used to help characterize how the important word \textit{existence} attempts to capture the \textit{ecstatic} nature of Dasein in a rhetorically felicitous way. That is, in line with the way that \textit{schöner} is often used in ordinary German, the passage could merely indicate an attempt at beautiful or fine rhetoric, one that failed in light of certain historical developments. On the other hand, one might also hear in these words a more substantial, though still indirect reference to the structure of beauty in \textit{Being and Time}, one that would be consistent with the ecstatic light structure in Heidegger’s early phenomenology of religion.

Pursuing this second suggestion, recall that in his phenomenology of religion Heidegger interprets beauty through its convertible relation with God/\textit{ens}/being, a relation that not only helps make beings and relations manifest, but that is responsible for drawing Dasein ecstatically toward such relations through the promise of delight. Simultaneously, this relation exhibits an inauthentic and authentic expression, the former of which focuses on how beauty both makes manifest and desirable beings in the mundane world and ideas of an eternal speculative realm. In the latter, the focus of Dasein shifts towards a recognition of the lighting-alluring relation itself in its mysterious disclosure of God/\textit{ens}/being, and is characterized less by visible objects or ideas, and more by an intangible \textit{calling} shrouded in darkness, seriousness, and finite anticipation. Looking to \textit{Being and Time}, one finds a remarkable overlap with this early discussion of beauty, beginning with an explicit emphasis on the light structure for the disclosure

\textsuperscript{155} Heidegger, \textit{Die Metaphysik des deutschen Idealismus}, in \textit{GA 49}, 54. My translation and my emphasis.
of being. Thus, while Heidegger commences his later study by emphasizing that his primary pursuit is the meaning of Being, in the important section 7, Heidegger notes the significance of light, brightness, and radiance for the phenomenological approach to this inquiry. He writes:

The Greek expression \( \text{phainomenon} \), from which the term “phenomenon” derives, comes from the verb \( \text{phainesthai} \), meaning “to show itself.” Thus \( \text{phainomenon} \) means: what shows itself, the self-showing, the manifest. \( \text{Phainesthai} \) itself is a middle voice construction of \( \text{phaino} \), to bring into daylight, to place into brightness. \( \text{Phaino} \) belongs to the root \( \text{pha} \), like \( \text{phos} \), light or brightness, that is, that within which something can become manifest, visible in itself. Thus the meaning of the expression \( \text{phenomenon} \) is established as what shows itself in itself, what is manifest. The \( \text{phainomena} \), “phenomena,” are thus the totality of what lies in the light of day or can be brought to light. Sometimes the Greeks simply identified this with \( \text{ta onta} \) (beings).

While such a passage begins to indicate the way in which Heidegger has carried over the light structure from his earlier work here, he clarifies that this lighting ultimately corresponds to two different notions of \( \text{phenomena} \). In the example of the Greeks, and indeed the Western tradition more generally, the notion of \( \text{phenomena} \) names the different objects and relations manifest in the world. In the post-Husserlian sense that Heidegger adopts, however, \( \text{phenomenology} \) indicates not simply the manifest beings and relations of the world, but the intentional structures of factical Dasein that make such beings and relations appear; that is, it indicates the existentials. Consequently, this consideration of the light structure of phenomenology turns out to concern not simply the radiance of beings and relations in a given world, but how the phenomenon of radiance itself helps make those derivative phenomena accessible.

This initial reference to a light structure in Being and Time becomes both more complex and significant in section 28, where Heidegger invokes the \( \text{lumen naturale} \). He writes:

When we talk in an ontically figurative way about the \( \text{lumen naturale} \) in human being, we mean nothing other than the existential-ontological structure of this being, the fact that it

---

156 Heidegger, Being and Time, 27/GA 2, 38.
is in such a way as to be its there [sein Da zu sein]. To say that it is “illuminated” means that it is cleared* in itself as being-in-the-world, not by another being, but in such a way that it is itself the clearing [Lichtung].** Only for a being thus cleared existentially do objectively present beings become accessible in the light or concealed in darkness. By its very nature, Dasein brings its there along with it. If it lacks its there, it is not only factically not, but is in no sense, the being [Seiende] which is essentially Dasein. Dasein is*** its disclosedness.157

Elsewhere, Richard Capobianco notes that Heidegger's incorporation of the lumen naturale here is surprising upon first glance. For considering Heidegger's critique of the metaphysical tradition and the common association of the lumen naturale with the rational subject, one would expect Heidegger to position himself over against this notion. Instead, he re-appropriates it directly into his ontological-existential thinking. Capobianco writes:

The decisive observation is that Heidegger does not reject this metaphor of light in elucidating Dasein's activity of disclosing beings and world; quite to the contrary, he takes it up as his own. His complaint is not that the older metaphysical figurative characterization of the human intellect as the lumen is inaccurate or inappropriate, but only that it is ontic. [...] Yet his point is that this is not a necessary connection, for it is possible to understand the metaphor in terms of the “existential-ontological structure” of Dasein - that is, in terms of the constitutive disclosing activity of Dasein as the ek-sistent, temporally ek-static “there.” Dasein primordially is this disclosing activity, he emphasizes, and not a “something” that has this faculty, power, or property of disclosedness.158

Capobianco's surprise might be mitigated here if he were to recall Heidegger's earlier discussion of the lumen naturale.159 For in his phenomenology of religion (Chapter 1), Heidegger already positions an existential recovery of lumen natural over against the notion of lux and an objective metaphysical sense of light. Still, Capobianco's observation is helpful, not only in drawing our attention to the fact of Heidegger's re-appropriation of this light-structure,

---

157 Ibid., 129/177. The footnotes that accompany this passage read as follows:
*Aleitheia - openness - clearing, light, shining.
**But not produced.
***Dasein exists, and it alone. Thus existence is standing out, into and enduring, the openness of the there: Ek-sistence.
158 Richard Capobianco, Engaging Heidegger (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 90-91.
159 Capobianco appears to miss this continuity insofar as he proceeds to conflate the notions of lumen and lux for Heidegger in the remainder of his interpretation. See especially pp. 91, 96, and 99.
but by indirectly clarifying the difference between Heidegger's invocation of *lumen* in his early work, where it belongs to the light of God, and its more immanent description here, as the lighting of/from Dasein itself. Moreover, Capobianco's comment reminds us that Heidegger distinguishes this self-lighting from the modern conception of the rational subject and its faculties (Kantian imagination). In both cases, the important point is that, in *Being and Time*, the *lumen naturale* extends from Dasein's temporal existential way of being-towards-death.

These general observations aside, Heidegger's claims in the foregoing passage are complex and dense, foregrounding what must be considered going forward. To begin with, as Heidegger's notes to the passage reveal, this thinking is intimately bound up with the notion of *alētheia* or *unconcealment*, which had not been fully worked out in the phenomenology of religion, but which stands at the center of *Being and Time*. At the same time, as the third of Heidegger's notes to this passage shows, one also begins to glimpse the *ecstatic* character of beauty here. In a complementary but more developed passage, found in section 69, one finds a clearer statement of these relations. Heidegger writes:

> The ecstatic unity of temporality - that is, the unity of the “outside-itself” in the raptures [*Entrückungen*] of the future, the having-been, and the present - is the condition of the possibility that there can be a being that exists as its “there.” There being that bears the name Dasein is “cleared” [“gelichtet”]. The light [*Licht*] that constitutes this clearedness [*Gelichtetheit*] of Dasein is not a power or source, objectively present ontically, for a radiant [*ausstrahlenden*] brightness [*Helligkeit*] sometimes occurring in this being. What essentially clears [*lichtet*] this being, that is, makes it “open” [“offen”] as well as “bright” [“hell”] for itself, was defined as care, before any “temporal” interpretation. The full disclosedness of the there is grounded in care. This clearedness [*Gelichtetheit*] first makes possible any illumination [*Erhellung*] or throwing light [*Erleuchtung*], any perceiving, “seeing,” or having of something. We understand the light [*Licht*] of clearedness [*Gelichtetheit*] only if we do not look for an innate, objectively present power, but rather question the whole constitution of being of Dasein, care, as to the unified ground of its existential possibility. *Ecstatic temporality clears [lichtet] the there primordially.*

---

In this passage Heidegger reiterates that the clearing-lighting of Dasein does not come from an external or innately objective source, but is an extension of the factical nature of Dasein itself. What is made more important, however, is how this factical nature is rooted in yet another structure that Heidegger has borrowed from his earlier work: *The care structure*. As a number of critics have observed, the major development in the care structure, from its early formulation to its articulation in *Being and Time*, is an increasing focus on temporality. Of course, as noted in Chapter 1, this temporality is not completely absent from its early expression. In the former, Heidegger notes how Augustine distinguishes Dasein's trial in the world according to its different temporal expressions, for example, between the mundane existence of the everyday, the speculative relation with eternal ideas, and the anticipatory historical moment of the Christian awaiting *Parousia*. Still, the deeper significance of these temporal distinctions remains largely undeveloped in this early thinking, overshadowed by the primary emphasis on a concerned and attuned dwelling in the *frui* and *uti*.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins his analysis by fundamentally repeating the early care structure's emphasis on Dasein's engaged relations with beings in the complex contexts of use. However, he also proceeds to repeat this analysis at a temporal level where it is shown that this first insight is only made possible by Dasein's temporality. As noted above, this temporality is comprised of the primary ecstasies of throwness (past-ness), fallenness (present-ness), and projectedness (futurity). Indeed, Heidegger observes that it is through these en-opening ecstasies that Dasein first *clears* or *dis-closes* its own radiant openness as a *there*. Interestingly, this suggests that the fundamental existential nature of Dasein begins with a kind of *ex-propriating* ecstasis, a throwing-forth of a clearing for Dasein to stand in, which, in turn, allows for an ecstatic *appropriation* of the beings opened-up in the world of that clearing.
These primordial ecstasies further implicate the structure of the beautiful from Heidegger's earlier work into *Being and Time* here. This is supported in a special way by the persistent usage of terminology emphasizing this ecstatic quality of the light structure - terms such as *drawing-in*, *absorption* (*Aufgehen*), and ultimately by the specific expression, *Entrückungen* (*raptures*) cited above. This last expression is exceptionally important because in the following chapters it will be seen that in his more explicit retrieval of beauty in the 1930's, Heidegger defines beauty precisely through this very term, emphasizing a dynamic play on the root word, *rücken*, and its derivations, *entrücken* and *berücken*. This is how he will translate, for example, the notion of *ekphanestaton erasmiōtaton* in Plato's account of beauty in the *Phaedrus*, which Heidegger suggests is responsible for both capturing Dasein's concerned attention, and for its *liberation* onto a view being.\(^{161}\) And these are the same terms he uses in his important Hölderlin readings, in which he suggests that beauty is the poet’s term for being.\(^{162}\)

Considered in the more immediate context of the passages above, however, one begins to see how this two-fold ecstatic movement helps explicate Heidegger's thinking of the disclosive being of Dasein in *Being and Time*. He distinguishes here between the clearing of Dasein that first gives Dasein its *there* as a result of its temporal ecstasies (throwness, fallenness, and projection), and the lighting of the world of beings and relations that become radiantly significant as a result of this. As Heidegger puts it: "This clearedness first makes possible any illumination or throwing light, any perceiving, 'seeing,' or having of something." Expressed in terms of the two-fold dynamic of beauty's ecstasis suggested above then, one can say that the first movement concerns the liberation, or freeing (*entrücken*) of the clearing for Dasein to

---


radiantly stand in (a view on being), while the second movement concerns the parallel drawing into, or capturing (berücken) of Dasein in the beings and relations of the world opened-up.

As the above passage also indicates, in the world of beings and relations radiantly opened-up by Dasein's clearing, Heidegger retrieves his Augustinian analysis of the broad sense of sight or vision, which in Being and Time becomes circumspection (Umsicht). Thus, in section 36, in yet another reference to the lumen naturale, as well as in a direct reference to Augustine, Heidegger writes:

In the analysis of understanding and the disclosedness of the there in general, we referred to the lumen naturale and called the disclosedness of being-in-the clearing [Lichtung] of Dasein in which something like sight first becomes possible. Sight was conceived with regard to the basic kind of disclosing characteristic of Dasein, namely, understanding, in the sense of the genuine appropriation of those beings to which Dasein can be related in accordance with its essential possibilities of being. The basic constitution of the being of sight shows itself in a peculiar tendency of being which belongs to everydayness - the tendency toward “seeing.” [...] Above all, it was Augustine who noted the remarkable priority of “seeing” in conjunction with his interpretation of concupiscencia. ad oculos enim videre propie pertinet, seeing properly belongs to the eyes. Utimur autem hoc verbo etiam in ceteris sensibus cum eos ad cognoscendum intendimus. But we use this word “to see” for the other senses, too, when we use them in order to know.163

In this passage and others like it, one hears that it is from out of the primordial temporal clearing of Dasein that the possibility of the radiance of sight/vision in the broad sense - through which Dasein encounters a world - is opened-up. In this world, which is first characterized by the Augustinian frui and uti, and Aristotlian technē and phronesis, beings are laid out in their relations of significance, context, and position such that they light up for Dasein. Indeed, in this

---

163 Heidegger, Being and Time, 165/GA 2, 226. Elsewhere, Heidegger observes in similar fashion: "The being of Dasein is care. This being exists entangled as thrown. Delivered over to the 'world' discovered with its factical there and dependent upon it in taking care, Dasein awaits its potentiality-of-being-in-the-world in such a way that it reckons with and on whatever is in eminent relevance for the sake of its potentiality-of-being. Everyday circumspect being-in-the-world needs the possibility of sight, that is, brightness [Helle], if it is to take care of things at hand within what is present" (392-393/545).
way, Heidegger also shows that originary temporality is ultimately the ground for originary spatiality, for de-distancing and drawing-near. Heidegger writes, for example, that:

The overview, which illuminates taking care, gets its “light” from the potentiality-of-being of Dasein for the sake of which taking care exists as care. The circumspection of taking care that has this “overview” brings things at hand nearer to Dasein in its actual using and handling in the mode of interpreting what it has seen.\(^{164}\)

At the same time, however, and yet still consistent with his earlier reading, Heidegger observes that it is from out of this initial opening-up of sight that the modification of the everyday attitude can take place. Thus one hears him observe here, like the early work, that the scientific or theoretical attitude - which seeks to remove objects from their contexts of use and to reify them into eternal ideas and objects to be merely looked at/contemplated (curiosity) - is a founded modification of the initial possibility of circumspect seeing.\(^{165}\)

IV. The (In)Authentic Call of Beauty in the Structure of Conscience

In the foregoing analyses, Heidegger's early reading of beauty shines through in the ecstatic light structure that makes the temporal clearing of Dasein and the circumspect world possible. Expressed in terms of Heidegger's later comment, one might say that it is just in these ways that Dasein inaugurates and enacts the "beautiful measuring-up" (schöner Anmessung) of its existential ecstatic being. Consistent with Heidegger's earlier expression of this relation, however, one can consider this measuring-up in another way here. This has already been hinted at above in Heidegger's distinction between phenomena in the derivative sense and

\(^{164}\) Ibid., 342/475.

\(^{165}\) Heidegger locates this shift in the phenomenon of curiosity (Neugier). He writes: "What is this tendency to just-perceive about? Which existential constitution of Dasein becomes intelligible in the phenomenon of curiosity? Being-in-the-world is initially absorbed in the world taken care of. Taking care is guided by circumspection which discovers things at hand and preserves them in their discoveredness. [...] Circumspection which has become free no longer has anything at hand which it has to bring near. Essentially de-distancing, it provides new possibilities of de-distancing for itself, that is, it tends to leave the thing nearest at hand for a distant and strange world. Care turns into taking care of possibilities, resting and staying to see the 'world' only in its outward appearance" (165-166/228).

76
phenomenology in its originary sense. For in this distinction, one encounters a similar
distinction as the one drawn in the early phenomenology of religion between the modality of
Dasein that is attracted to beings, objects, and ideas in the surrounding world, and the modality
of Dasein properly attuned to the condition of the possibility of that lighting itself, that is, to the
call of God/ens/being. The equiprimordial overlap of these relations is further indicated,
however, by Heidegger’s discussion of the phenomena's relation to semblance. Thus, in the
same important section 7, he writes:

Beings can show themselves from themselves in various ways, depending on the mode
of access to them. The possibility even exists that they can show themselves as they are
not in themselves. In this self-showing beings “look like...”. Such self-showing
[Sichzeignet] we call seeming [Scheinen]. And so the expression phainomenon,
phenomenon, means in Greek: what looks like something, what “seems” [‘Scheinbar’],
“semblance” [“Schein”]. Phainomenon agathon means a good that looks like - but “in
reality” is not what it gives itself to be. It is extremely important for a further
understanding of the concept of phenomenon to see how what is named in
both meanings of phainomenon (“phenomenon” as self-showing and “phenomenon” as semblance) are
structurally connected. Only because something claims to show itself in accordance with
its meaning at all, that is, claims to be a phenomenon, can it show itself as something it is
not, or can it “only look like...”166

As becomes clearer in the course of Being and Time, the essential possibility that
phenomena can simultaneously manifest themselves as they are and as they are not, is grounded
in the equiprimordial possibility that Dasein is first capable of clearing its very there in both
authentic and inauthentic ways. This analysis prompts us to consider in a still deeper way, the
foregoing interpretations of the implicit relation of beauty in this ecstatic light structure. This
begins with Heidegger’s observation that while Dasein first clears the radiant openness of its
there through the ecstasies of its temporal being (thrownness, fallenness, projection), this
temporal clearing is understood in a more precise manner as the factual relation that Dasein has
with its own finitude (death). As Heidegger explains, it is just through this most extreme

166 Ibid., 27/38-39.
possibility, which is also the impossibility of Dasein and the ground of all other possibilities, that something like care opens up. Put otherwise, only for the kind of being that is concerned for its own finite being, can a world of significant beings and relations become manifest.

Accordingly, the deeper possibility of ecstatic clearing corresponds with the relationship that Dasein has with its own finitude (death), which is ultimately expressed in a primordial calling: The call of conscience (Gewissen). In this last claim, Heidegger borrows yet another important aspect from the early analysis of the beautiful to help unpack Dasein's ecstatic being. Similar to his previous description of this calling, however, Heidegger stresses that it should not be thought according to the usual ontic metaphors. It is nothing verbal or content-laden. At the same time, and consistent with his shift from the religious paradigm to the immanent emphasis on Dasein, this calling is said to emanate simply from Dasein itself as the reminder of its ecstatic finite being.167 Expressed more precisely, Heidegger states that the call of conscience issues forth from each Dasein to itself, as the reminder of its being-towards-death, and in its primordial guilt as the null (nichtig) ground of a nullity (Nichtigkeit).168

In enacting its own ecstatic being through its response to the call of conscience, Heidegger argues that Dasein ultimately distinguishes itself in its authentic or inauthentic expression. The duality of this response grounds our claim that Dasein exhibits a fundamentally doubled or ambivalent relation to the ecstatic light structure of beauty in Being and Time. For Heidegger argues that largely and for the most part, Dasein flees (flüchtige) from the call of conscience and the radicality of its finite being by taking refuge in the allure of beings and ideas

167 On one hand, the manner in which this beautiful call functions as a reminder to Dasein of its very being seems to echo the Kantian notion of how beauty throws the subject back on itself. However, in addition to the fact that Dasein is irreducible to the notion of a subject, for Heidegger this same calling is responsible for Dasein's fleeing into the world of appearances and the they. As I have suggested, it is this complexly ambivalent phenomenon that shows that Heidegger has a notion of beauty in mind irreducible to the Kantian aesthetic.
in the world thrown open in its being-with (Mitsein) other Dasein, generically defined as the kind of being of the they (das Mann) of everyday (alltäglich) entangled (verfallen/verfängnis) existence. He writes:

Falling prey belongs to the constitution of being of Dasein. Initially and for the most part, Dasein is lost in its “world.” Understanding, as a project upon possibilities of being, has shifted itself into its world. Absorbing oneself in the they signifies that one is dominated by the public way of interpreting. What is discovered and disclosed stays in the mode in which it has been disguised and closed off by idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. Being toward being has not been extinguished, but uprooted. Beings are not completely concealed, rather they are what is discovered, and at the same time distorted. They show themselves, but in the mode of semblance [Schein]. Similarly what was previously discovered sinks back again into dissemblance and concealment. Because it essentially falls prey to the world, Dasein is in “untruth” in accordance with its constitution of being.\footnote{Ibid., 213/293-294.}

Such a passage helps clarify the fundamental connection between the phenomenon/semblance and authenticity/inauthenticity relations. It is not hard to see, however, how this analysis also follows Heidegger's earlier Augustinian critique of aesthetic metaphysics, in which the majority of people are described as lovers of beauty in both its worldly and speculative expressions. Over against this tendency, Heidegger describes the authentic response to the call of conscience, revealed through the extreme attunement of anxiety and bringing Dasein face to face with the nullity of death within its being. In this way, Dasein frees itself from its dependence on they-being, and brings itself back into its properly own-most unified (eigentlich) being. In this kind of response, Heidegger observes, "Dasein is authentically itself in the mode of the primordial individuation of reticent (verschwiegenen) resoluteness (entscholssenheit) that expects anxiety* of itself," a claim which he clarifies in a marginal note ultimately glimpses "the clearing of being [Seins] as being [Seins]."\footnote{Ibid., 308/427.}
It turns out then, that Heidegger's analysis in *Being and Time* follows, in many ways, the same analysis of the beautiful that he has developed in the earlier context of his Augustine reading. This is emphasized in this last point here according to the way that the authentic listening to the call of conscience attunes Dasein to the true source of its ecstatic light structure, and frees it from the entanglement of its inauthentic focus on the radiant beings and relations that this structure makes possible. As I have suggested, however, in *Being and Time* this is also expressed through a still more radical thinking of immanence than is found in the early lectures. For here the call of conscience originally attributed to the voice of God inside Dasein, becomes the relation of Dasein to its own originary voice. In its response to this call from itself, Dasein essentially *takes measure* of itself in the more radical fashion that I have suggested. This is a point that Heidegger emphasizes more strongly in his description of the resolute encounter that Dasein has with itself, in which it confronts what is ultimately *measureless*, that is, what is *beyond all measure*. Heidegger writes:

As possibility, death gives Dasein nothing to “be actualized” and nothing which it itself could be as something real. It is the possibility of the impossibility of every mode of behavior toward..., of every way of existing. In anticipating this possibility, it becomes “greater and greater”; that is, it reveals itself as something which knows no measure [*Mass*] at all, no more or less, but means the possibility of the measureless [*Masslosen*] impossibility of existence.\(^\text{171}\)

In the end then, the beautiful measuring-up of Dasein's ecstatic light structure in *Being and Time* leads to an insight concerning what is beyond any particular measure, that is into the possibility of measuring itself. No doubt, this is where critics are most tempted to implicate a structure of the sublime in Heidegger's thinking, as the aesthetic modality that exceeds all measure. However, this is also where it is most important to recognize that Heidegger is not operating from a Kantian opposition between sublimity and beauty, but from a conception of

\(^{171}\) Ibid., 251/348.
beauty delineated in his earlier work, one that includes the mysterious measureless ground of this radiant call within itself. At the same time, this also reaffirms the resistance to a Kantian notion of beauty here. For as has become explicit in the foregoing analysis, the ecstatic light structure of *Being and Time* not only leads to the free play of possibilities in resolute being (*entschossenheit*), but it leads just as well to the entanglement (*verfallen/verfängnis*) of everyday Dasein. Consequently, beauty not only grounds the aesthetic attunement of pleasure, delight, and indirect pleasure, but a whole range of emotions, including the serious anxiety of authentic Dasein. In each case, Heidegger follows the analysis of his early work much more closely than Kantian aesthetics.

V. Conclusion: Summary of the Beautiful in Heidegger's Early Work

It is, of course, significant that Heidegger never names beauty directly in *Being and Time*. On one hand, this likely stems from Heidegger's deliberate attempt to avoid a lexicon associated with the Western metaphysical tradition that he is attempting to deconstruct. In this regard, the absence of the term appears to parallel the absence of other terms like subject, consciousness, or goodness, and supports the common impression that Heidegger moves away from his early consideration of the Transcendental. On the other hand, this is a position that I have shown is already challenged by Heidegger’s existentialization of the Transcendental in his early work. Consistent with this observation, one finds a general re-inscription of a number of these existentialized Transcendental in *Being and Time*. This is clear, for example, in the case of truth (*verum*) considered as *alētheia*, which Heidegger had already begun to re-conceive in the earlier work as an existential concerning illumination and unknowing. One also sees this in how the distinction between authentic and inauthentic being continues to follow Heidegger's early
revision of the good (*bonum*), away from a hierarchy of moral values, and toward a kind of dedicated listening and responding (and its opposite). And as has been witnessed above, it is precisely the nature of this (in)authentic response that is ultimately responsible for the possibility of unity or oneness (*unum/einum/eigentliche*) in the proper return of Dasein to its resolute being, as well as its equiprimordial dispersion in the everyday *they*.

As with each of these other existentialized Transcendental, the persistence of the structure of the beautiful in *Being and Time*, more than the word itself, indicates that Heidegger continues to retrieve the factically reconsidered notion of the beautiful here. And like these other words, his avoidance of the more traditional term is attributable to the *deconstructive* strategy itself, which avoids a simple citation of philosophically loaded concepts in an effort to unearth their deeper ontological-existential significance - a strategy that motivates Heidegger to generate an unparalleled amount of neologisms as well. Roughly a decade later, in his first lectures on *Nietzsche*, Heidegger summarizes this position in the following way:

> Every time we try to achieve clarity with regard to such basic words as truth, beauty, Being, art, knowledge, history, and freedom, we must heed two things: First, that a clarification is necessary here has its grounds in the concealment of the essence of what is named in such words. Such clarification becomes indispensable from the moment we experience the fact that human Dasein, insofar as it is - insofar as it is itself - is steered directly toward whatever is named in such basic words and is inextricably caught up in relations with them. [...] Depending on what knowledge retains essential proximity to what is named in such basic words, or lapses into distance from it, the content of the name, the realm of the word, and the compelling force of the naming power vary. [...] Second, we must pay attention to the way that basic words vary in meaning. Here there are principal orbits or routes; but within them meanings may oscillate. Such oscillation is not mere laxity in linguistic usage. It is the breath of history. [...] The will to originality, rigor, and measure in words is therefore no mere aesthetic pleasantr; it is the work that goes on in the essential nucleus of our Dasein, which is historical existence.

The preceding examination, in Chapters 1 and 2, has attempted to address the question of this basic word of the beautiful in Heidegger's early work, from his student years up through the

---

publication of *Being and Time*. In particular, I have attempted to respond to the common view that beauty is an insignificant concept for Heidegger, a concept of which he is critical in his broader critique of aesthetic metaphysics and neglectful in his preferred focus on ontology. Over against this perspective, I have demonstrated that Heidegger develops a more complex reading of beauty in his early work, beginning with its significance for the question of the unity of being and the Transcendental. This was expressed in his student writings through the invocation of a light structure that both advances Heidegger's reading of Scotian metaphysics, and yet which introduces an Eckhartian critique into the very transcendental logic that Heidegger attempts to lay out.

Following Heidegger's development of the notions of factual life and hermeneutic phenomenology in the early 1920's, it was shown that Heidegger further develops this thinking of beauty in the context of his investigations of the phenomenology of religion. Specifically, building on his student work, Heidegger continues to think the beautiful as a convertible Transcendental/existential manifestation of God/ens/being, one that helps make beings and relations ecstatically manifest. Here, however, Heidegger observes that beauty is treated in two ways, the first of which is defined by an aesthetic focus on the delight afforded by beautiful objects and ideas. Over against this tendency, Heidegger notes that the authentic Christian, in awaiting the *Parousia*, focuses on the invisible calling power of beauty itself. This authentic possibility not only avoids conflating the call of beauty with particular beautiful objects, but it is marked by a counter attunement of serious dedication to the mystery of God/ens/being.

Finally, I have argued that despite the shift in his thinking away from a religious paradigm and toward a specifically non-metaphysical thinking of being, the structure of beauty outlined in the early work continues to permeate Heidegger's *magnum opus*. This was shown by
highlighting how the three most significant components of the earlier descriptions of the beautiful - its radiant light structure, its ecstatic power, and its calling - each show up here again. More specifically, this was figured in the primordial clearing of the there of Dasein, which takes place as a result of the ecstatic temporal being of Dasein itself, and opens-up the radiant world. In this more mature expression of Heidegger's early thinking, the call of God is replaced by the call of conscience in the radical immanence of Dasein. And yet, following his earlier characterization once again, it was seen that Dasein responds to this calling-lighting of beauty in a two-fold way: By focusing on the radiant objects, ideas, and world surrounding it in inauthenticity, and by turning its attention to the radiant calling itself.

Despite Heidegger's clear engagement with the notion of beauty in his phenomenology of religion, his general treatment of the beautiful in Being and Time may best be described as an implicit one. However, this is an engagement that will once again become explicit in the 1930's with his return to the early foundations of Western history, and his investigations into the questions of art and technology. In shifting our attention to this turn in Heidegger's work, however, I will argue that this early characterization of the beautiful continues to shape Heidegger's thinking of this basic word. Indeed, I contend that one continues to find a double reading of the beautiful in Heidegger that allows him to both criticize the aesthetic tendency of Western metaphysics, while suggesting that beauty belongs to the shining of truth and being in the originary artwork. At the same time, Heidegger's reading of the early Greeks, especially the pre-Socratics and tragedians, will allow him to nuance and modify this early thinking of the beautiful in several important ways.
Chapter 3
Chapter 3
The Retrieval of the Beautiful in the Greeks at the Turn

I. Introduction

In section 8 of Being and Time, Heidegger lays out the ambitious plan for his magnum opus. As is well known, Heidegger was unable to complete this plan in the course of the book. As Dennis Schmidt has described it, the text remains only a torso of the body that it imagined, ultimately comprised of the first two sections of the projected first part. In the years immediately following the publication of Being and Time, with texts like Basic Problems of Phenomenology and Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, Heidegger fulfilled to some extent the proposed second part concerning the destruktion of the history of metaphysics. According to his later reflections, however, the more provocative third section of the first part, in which the focus was to be on the question of time and being itself, was unable to be completed because Being and Time lacked the appropriate discourse and way into the question.

The attempt to find a new path into the question of being led Heidegger in the early 1930's to a re-focused confrontation with the question of the history of being (Seinsgeschichte). During this time, he moved away from the analytic of Dasein and began to consider being from the wider purview of its historical expression. In later comments on his work, Heidegger clarifies that this turn (Kehre) in his thought was not so much a reversal of the fundamental ontology expressed in Being and Time, as an elaboration of the implied, but still undeveloped

174 Dennis Schmidt, Introduction to Being and Time, xvi.
claim that Dasein's unconcealment of being is always grounded in the self-concealing historicity (Geschichtlichkeit) of being.  

The upshot of this development in Heidegger's philosophical focus is two-fold. First, he attempts to think more incisively the implications of the founding interpretation(s) of being commenced in ancient Greece. At the same time, however, Heidegger also seeks to understand how these initial interpretations of being shape its understanding in the various historical epochs thereafter (i.e., the medieval, modern, and present technological ages). On one hand, Heidegger argues that one finds different metaphysical expressions of being in each of these epochs - for example, the cosmological unity of nous, idea, and psyche in the Greeks, the deistic order of the Medieval period, the subject-centered world of modernity, and the techno-scientific nihilism of the contemporary age. On the other hand, Heidegger believes that by tracing how this history grows out of the initial interpretations of being in the Greeks, one glimpses the underlying unity of this history of metaphysics, or what he calls its ontotheological character.

Significantly, in his attempt to re-think the contemporary status of being from the vantage of these historical decisions, Heidegger retrieves the thesis from his early phenomenology of...

---


177 It is important to note here that the evidence Heidegger will find for another thinking of being before metaphysics - a thinking associated with physis and alētheia - should not be conflated with his own thinking of being as beyng, and its event-character (Ereignis). He is clear that the early Greeks did not think the historical-temporal quality of being beyond presence, nor did they fully thematize the significance of concealment in their thinking of unconcealment (alētheia). Accordingly, Heidegger's reading of the early Greeks serves as an indication of another way of thinking being before metaphysics, one which itself is not exhausted, and that remains to be thought further.

178 Heidegger has in mind both the original Greek sense of the term, and the phenomenological sense. In both senses, epoch relates to epoché, the bracketing or reduction that holds something back. Accordingly, Heidegger suggests that each epoch of metaphysics serves as a particular expression and restraint of the initial metaphysical interpretation of being made possible by the genuine excess of being. See, for example, "Time and Being," in On Time and Being, ed. and trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 9/GA 14, 13.

179 Heidegger's notion of ontotheology is actually a two-fold notion. First, it refers to the ontological decision to understand being according to the model of beings. Second, it concerns the theological decision about what constitutes the highest paradigmatic order of being. Iain Thomson points out that this theological quality does not require that all expressions of metaphysics appeal to god. For example, Plato's ideas (eidē) represent an ontological doctrine that is also a theological doctrine. See Iain Thomson, Heidegger on Ontotheology (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
religion that metaphysics is bound in a special way to aesthetics (Chapter 1). With this claim, however, Heidegger also retrieves the question of the beautiful in a still more explicit fashion in his later work. This begins as early as 1931 with his elucidations of beauty in Plato,\footnote{Heidegger, The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Analogy and Theaetetus, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002)/GA 34; Plato's Phaedrus (1932) in GA 83.} and in 1931-1932 with his first attempts to think an ontological conception of the artwork irreducible to aesthetics.\footnote{While the earliest versions of "The Origin of the Work of Art" essay date to 1934, Herman Heidegger and F.W. von Herman indicate that Heidegger began working on the first draft of this essay as early as 1931-1932. See "Zur Überwindung der Aesthetik. Zu 'Ursprung des Kunstwerkes,'" Heidegger Studies 6 (1990): 5fn.} While Heidegger continues to develop a more extensive thinking of beauty across a host of works in the mid-thirties, by the end of the decade he goes so far as to argue that the present age of technology is the culmination of a metaphysics of beauty. He writes:

> In the epoch of the completion of modernity what is hitherto metaphysically ownmost to art becomes complete [vollendet]. The sign of this is the disappearance of the work of art but not of art itself. Art becomes a manner in which machination completes itself in a thorough construction of beings unto the conditioned, secure disposability of the organized. [...] “Nature” transforms itself according to these “installations,” plants itself entirely into them and comes to light only in them and is held in their purview. With and through these installations and according to their style, nature becomes “beautiful.” According to the metaphysical character of art which is totally fulfilled in the completion, beauty even now remains the basic determination. Beauty is what pleases and must please the being of the power of man, the predator. [...] Indeed in the gestalt of modern technicity and “history” art becomes technē again - not by simply relapsing unto technē but by completing itself.\footnote{Heidegger, Mindfulness, trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London: Continuum, 2008), 23/GA 66, 30.}

While it has commonly been observed that Heidegger associates beauty with the aesthetic interpretation of art, the claim made about beauty in the preceding passage suggests a far more significant status for the beautiful in Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics. Indeed, it places beauty at the very center of technology's overwhelming essence today, as the expression of a human desire that has become predatory. At the same time, it is clear that Heidegger connects this claim back to the very origins of metaphysics, to those decisions that were first made about
technē, art, nature, knowledge, and being. Indeed, for Heidegger the interpretation of our relation to being at present is destined or sent (geschickt) from out of the basic Greek concepts that were inaugurated two and half millennia ago, a fact that is largely forgotten today.

Following these observations, the present chapter focuses on Heidegger's retrieval of this ancient Greek thinking of the beautiful, and shows how it leads to the aesthetic character of metaphysics. Significantly, I argue here that Heidegger once again identifies a double reading of the beautiful, a reading that both repeats and nuances his early interpretation of the Christian tradition. Drawing upon the pre-Socratics and tragedians, and in particular Heraclitus and Sophocles, Heidegger argues that beauty is associated, on one hand, with the in-apparent gathering/strife of unconcealment (alētheia), and on the other hand, with the erotic radiance of the resulting appearance. However, he also observes that it is precisely the erotic character of the resulting appearance that draws Dasein into its doxa or aspect (Ansehen), causing Dasein to forget the place of beauty in the wider scope of appearing and understanding. Consequently, Heidegger shows that a fundamental element of semblance surrounds this double character of the beautiful, a semblance that leads Sophocles to state that beauty (kalon) also draws human being into the risk (tolma) of non-beings (me kalon).

Also similar to his early readings, Heidegger juxtaposes this complex interpretation of beauty with its aesthetic transformation. While this inauthentic aesthetic modality is already prepared for in the way that beauty conceals itself in the erotic allure of appearance, Heidegger contends that this semblance is grounded philosophically with the emergence of Platonic thought. Specifically, Heidegger argues that, in Plato, beauty is separated from its originary interrelation with truth and being in alētheia, and re-thought in association with the sensuous (aisthēsis) world as a special kind of appearance that helps produce the reminder of the ideas.
(eidē). In this way, Heidegger concludes that while Plato does not tie the beautiful directly to the notion of art, its association with technē interpreted as production, prepares the way for its subsequent association with fine art (Schöne Kunst) in the modern period.

By clarifying Heidegger's interpretation of this foundational thinking of the beautiful in the ancient Greeks, I conclude that we will be in a better position to understand his subsequent readings of how these decisions influence the important tension between technology and art today (Chapter 4). In particular, by demonstrating that Heidegger recognizes another, more originary account of the beautiful in the Christian and early Greek traditions, we will be able to better elucidate Heidegger's critique of the completion of metaphysics in modern technology, and the saving power that a more fundamental thinking of art signifies.

II. The Thinking of the Beautiful in the Anfang of the Early Greeks

Heidegger began working out the basic analyses of his latter thinking of the history of being, and the connection between aesthetics and metaphysics, in his lecture courses on Plato at the turn of the decade. However, they do not find their more mature expression until the mid-thirties with texts like Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art (1935-36), Introduction to Metaphysics (1935), and "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1936). Like his early work, tracing the specific question of the beautiful in these texts can be challenging. The most immediate foothold, and the one that critics have emphasized most often, is the strong correlation here between beauty and the aesthetic inauguration of metaphysics. Thus, for example, in the first volume of the Nietzsche lectures, Heidegger observes that, "the name 'aesthetics,' [...] is recent

183 Heidegger draws an important distinction between Anfang (inception) and Beginn (beginning). The latter dates when something starts in chronological time, and is eclipsed by that which follows it. In contrast, the former names an originary opening-up that does not go away over time, but continues to influence the unfolding of history, and which therefore must continue to be thought. Heidegger juxtaposes the Anfang of the early Greek pre-Socratics and tragedians with the Beginn of Metaphysics in Plato, Aristotle, and thinkers thereafter. See Heidegger, GA 39, 3-4.
Aesthetics begins with the Greeks only at that moment when their great art and also the
great philosophy that flourished along with it comes to an end. At that time, during the
age of Plato and Aristotle, in connection with the organization of philosophy as a whole,
those basic concepts are formed which mark off the boundaries for all future inquiry into
art.\textsuperscript{185}

The concepts that Heidegger proceeds to identify with the founding of aesthetics here include
\textit{morphē} and \textit{eidos} (form/look), \textit{hylē} (matter), \textit{technē} (knowledge/production), and \textit{kalos} (the
beautiful). Such an observation seems to clearly indicate then that Heidegger views the beautiful
as one of the leading concepts responsible for the aesthetic interpretation of being at the
beginning of metaphysics.

Upon closer examination, however, one finds that Heidegger also suggests that this
founding of aesthetics does not exhaust the notion of the Western \textit{beginning}. Indeed, he states
that aesthetics commences only "at the moment when their [the Greeks'] great art and also great
philosophy that flourished with it comes to an end."\textsuperscript{186} Such a claim prompts one to ask what the
nature of this earlier relation to art and philosophy may have looked like, and along with this
question, whether beauty has a place therein or remains only a marker of aesthetic thought?

In an accompanying passage, Heidegger elaborates on this earlier beginning of art and
philosophy, stating that it is not something simply murky, lived, and devoid of concepts, but on
the contrary, it exhibits a "mature and luminous knowledge" that has no need of aesthetics.\textsuperscript{187}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{184} Heidegger, \textit{Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art}, 79/GA 6.1, 76-77.
\bibitem{185} Ibid., 80/78.
\bibitem{186} Ibid.
\bibitem{187} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
lectures. Elsewhere, however, he provides a number of important insights into how he understands this early beginning. Perhaps one of the most intriguing of these clues is provided in an early draft of "The Origin of the Work of Art" from 1934. In a long, but important passage, Heidegger writes:

"Aesthetic" Truth and Beauty: Where does it begin? Somewhere there, where the beautiful is determined as essential for art? No! Because the question is still how the beautiful and beauty becomes grasped [bewerfen]. So long as beauty as the form [Gestalt] of truth in the original sense (alétheia), that is so long as beauty [relates to truth] still more originally than in the sense of statements and calculation and the propositions of logical thought (following Schiller, as well as Kant), so long as beauty remains essential to being and its "unveiling" ["Enthüllung"], it is related to the Greek grounding. But here is the position of the unconquered, together with the unconquerability of truth as alétheia. As soon as truth collapsed, beauty could no longer be grasped. That is, Plato took the beautiful as liberating-rapture [Entrückend-Berückende]. However, in taking it this way, and not grounding it in alétheia, the beautiful became only the rapturous, which in simultaneously belonging to the sensuous could only indicate proper being (idea). Following: technē - triton apo tes alétheias - as being qua idea! Only once the beautiful takes its relation from this standing, and should advance this as such ("experience" ["Erlebnis"]), and less from alétheia - collapsed in all its consequences - and from technē - likewise not from the outbreak [Aufbruch] of alétheia - there began the "aesthetic" long before the concept and the word prevailed.188

Such a passage is dense and elliptical. However, it provides a strong indication that beauty belongs to the thinking that comes before the advent of aesthetics and metaphysics, that is the thinking of alétheia. Indeed, the claim appears to be that alétheia originally includes both truth

and beauty as part of the event of being's unveiling (Enthüllung), a complex structure that is subsequently teased apart and hypostasized into separate concepts in the founding of aesthetics.

Heidegger offers perhaps his earliest, clearest, and most wide-sweeping examination of these matters in his 1935 course, Introduction to Metaphysics. In this text, Heidegger argues that the eventual transformation of alētheia emerges with the restriction of being via three other basic notions: becoming, appearing/seeming (Schein), and thinking. Heidegger suggests that initially these domains were not rigorously separated, but "what is held apart by them belongs together originally and tends to come together." This is seen most clearly in the early Greek interpretation of being as physis, which must not be conflated with its Latinization into the physical beings that make up the derivative notion of nature. According to Heidegger, physis is primarily associated with appearing, or more properly, coming-to-appearance. He writes that physis initially means "what emerges from itself (for example, the emergence, the blossoming, of a rose), the unfolding that opens itself up, the coming-into-appearance in such unfolding, and holding itself and persisting in appearance - in short, the emerging-abiding sway." This interpretation of being also helps explain why truth is first experienced by the Greeks as alētheia (unconcealment). Echoing his comments from the early draft of "The Origin of the Work of Art" essay, Heidegger writes:

---


189 Gregory Fried and Richard Polt translate Scheinen as seeming here. This translation is misleading, however. Heidegger emphasizes that for the Greeks, being (physis) is thought of as shining or appearing (Scheinen). In turn, seeming (Anscheinen) is essentially related to this first claim insofar as being always appears in a given appearance or aspect (Ansehen/doxa). As with Heidegger's description of the relationship between phenomenon and appearance in section 7 of Being and Time, it is necessary to recognize that the priority in his interpretation is first and foremost on the relationship between being and appearing, from which seeming and all modes of semblance are made possible.  

190 Heidegger writes, for example: "We needed to show that and how, for the Greeks, appearing belongs to Being, or, more sharply stated: that and how Being has its essence together with appearing" (108/110).  

192 Ibid., 15/16.
This sway is the overwhelming coming-to-presence that has not yet been surmounted in thinking, and within which *that which* comes to presence essentially unfolds as beings. But this sway first steps forth from concealment - that is, in Greek, *alētheia* (unconcealment) happens - insofar as the sway struggles itself forth as a world.  

As the emphasis on this active emerging from concealment shows, the interpretation of being as *physis*, and the thinking that accompanies it, initially "includes both 'becoming'" and appearing in it. This is because the appearance and constancy of beings must first be wrested from concealment. Only in this way is there a (be)coming into being. And yet, because this always takes place from out of concealment, the appearance of beings also always remains in danger of slipping back into concealment, that is of appearing as they are not, or not appearing at all.

According to Heidegger, Dasein's counter-relation to the emerging of *physis* is found in the notion of *technē*. He notes that originally *technē* does not mean craftwork or production as it comes to signify in the Western tradition. Rather, *technē* first names Dasein's standing-out-towards *physis* in a seeking and knowing way (*Sichauskennen*). Heidegger distinguishes *physis* and *technē* respectively as that which shows-itself-from-itself, and as that which brings-forth or is brought-forth not-by-itself. On one hand, Heidegger wishes to emphasize the difference between these two notions, noting that for Heraclitus, *physis* can never be brought forth by a god or human, but precedes both. On the other hand, Heidegger also wishes to emphasize their interrelation. He turns to Parmenides to help indicate this connection. For in

---

193 Ibid., 64-65.
194 Ibid., 16/17.
195 Ibid., 169-170/168. Heidegger writes: "With this word we are thinking something essential that announces itself to us in the Greek word *technē*. *Technē* means neither art nor skill, and it means nothing like technology in the modern sense. We translate *technē* as 'knowing.' But this requires explication. Knowing here does not mean the result of mere observations about something present at hand that was formerly unfamiliar. Such items of information are always just accessory, even if they are indispensable to knowing. Knowing, in the genuine sense of *technē*, means initially and constantly looking out beyond what, in each case, is directly present at hand. In different ways and on different routes and in different domains, this Being-out-beyond sets to work in advance that which first gives to what is already present at hand its relative justification, its possible determinateness, and thus its limit. Knowing is the ability to set Being into work as something that in each case is in such and such a way. [...] To put to work here means to bring into the work - a work within which as what appears, the emerging that holds sway, *physis*, comes to appear." Translation slightly modified.
Parmenides, the coming-to-presence of *physis* and the knowing-seeking of *techne* go together precisely because apprehension ultimately belongs to the completion of *physis* itself.\textsuperscript{196} Indeed, the work of *noeisis* and *logos*, surrounding the human pursuit of *techne*, can be understood as a response to both the *poeisis* (self-production) and *pathein* (ability to be affected) of *physis* in a way that belongs to the latter's essence.\textsuperscript{197}

Heidegger stresses that the coming-to-appearance described here is not one of mere observation, of *theory* in the derivative sense of an objective gazing. Rather, it is the result of strife (*polemos*), of a struggle to come to appearance. Citing Heraclitus' fragment 53, in which war is said to be the father of everything, Heidegger observes:

The *polemos* named here is a strife that holds sway before everything divine and human, not war in the human sense. As Heraclitus thinks it, struggle first and foremost allows what essentially unfolds to step apart in opposition, first allows position and status and rank to establish themselves in coming to presence. In such a stepping apart, clefts, intervals, distances, and joints open themselves up. In con-frontation, world comes to be. (Confrontation does not divide unity, much less destroy it. It builds unity; it is the gathering [*logos*. *Polemos* and *logos* are the same [1953 addition]].)\textsuperscript{198}

196 More precisely, Heidegger observes: "Being means: standing in the light, appearing, stepping into unconcealment. Where this happens, that is, where Being holds sway, apprehension holds sway too and happens too, as belonging to Being. Apprehension is the receptive bringing-to-a-stand of the constant that shows itself in itself. Parmenides expresses the same statement still more sharply in fragment 8, verse 34: *tauton d'esti, noein te kai houneken esti noema*: apprehension and that for the sake of which apprehension happens are the same. Apprehension happens for the sake of Being. Being essentially unfolds as appearing, as stepping into unconcealment, only if unconcealment happens, only if a self-opening happens. In its two versions, Parmenides' statement gives us a still more originary insight into the essence of *physis*. Apprehension belongs to *physis*; the sway of *physis* shares its sway with apprehension" (147-148/147-148).

197 Heidegger scholars differ on how exactly to interpret Heidegger's reading of the *physis/techne* relation. Walter Brogan has summarized this special relationship rather nicely, however, when he observes that while *physis* and *techne* are distinct and irreducible concepts on Heidegger's reading, "there can be no revealing of *physis* without *techne*" and vice versa (44). Brogan argues that the intimate connection between the two hinges on the inherent *pathein*, or ability to be affected in *physis*, which, in turn, is open to the *poiein* of *techne* to affect it. Thus Brogan contends that *techne*'s unveiling of *physis* draws out the inherent *steresis* of *physis*, "the capacity to be deprived of being that belongs to the being" (52). At the same time, however, *techne*, as the general knowing that brings together *nous*, *logos*, and *aisthēsis* first needs *physis* in order to know, do, or affect anything. Ultimately, Brogan concludes that "what Heidegger calls for is not the turn away from *techne*, back to *physis*, but a return to the mutual favoring that inclines one to the other" (Walter Brogan, "The Intractable Interrelationship of *Physis* and *Techne*" in *Heidegger and the Greeks*, ed. Drew Hyland and John Manoussakis [Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006], 52).

In *Heidegger's Polemos*, Gregory Fried explains that there are largely two competing scholarly theses about how to interpret Heraclitus's claim that "war is the father of everything." These theses suggest that it is either primarily intended as a social observation about the existence and development of human group relations, or as a commentary concerning the transformation from the Olympic-centered religious world to a human-centered world. However, Fried observes that in the context of Heidegger's passage above, *polemos* is not taken first and foremost in a social, cultural, or human sense, but as a fundamental ontological interpretation concerning the condition of the possibility for the coming-to-appearance of being (and therefore, also for the possibility of the human, social, religious, etc.). More precisely, one might say that in the notion of *polemos*, Heidegger configures *technē*'s originary struggle with the emerging sway of *physis*, an interaction that results in the possibility of the coming-forth of appearance.

These claims constitute a general overview of Heidegger's reading of the early ancient Greeks and their *luminous knowledge* before metaphysics and aesthetics. While this reading is well known by Heidegger scholars, the status of the beautiful (*kalos*) in these same interpretations has been less recognized. Such an oversight is problematic, however, if, as has

200 Jacques Taminiaux highlights Heidegger's elision of these other social and religious dimensions in Heraclitus' fragments and Greek Tragedy. On Taminiaux's reading, Heidegger's ontologically narrow focus leads to an ironic Platonization of Greek Tragedy similar to the absurd ontologization of the *polis* in the *Republic*, a gesture that he suggests is pervasive in the German tradition (e.g. Hegel, Schelling, Nietzsche). See Jacques Taminiaux, "Plato's legacy in Heidegger's Two Readings of *Antigone*" in *Heidegger and Plato: Toward Dialogue*, ed. Catalin Partenie and Tom Rockmore (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005).
201 This is the case at least insofar as he expresses it here in the mid-thirties. As is well known, Heidegger's interpretation of the Greeks develops and varies across his career. While these readings share much in common, Heidegger often departs from different leading concepts, resulting in different interpretations of the same key passages and fragments.
202 For example, in the important critical companion to Heidegger's and Fink's 1966/67 Heraclitus seminar, the editors offer an appendix of all the fragments that Heidegger engages and translates in his work available up to that time. Yet, the citation and partial translation of the fragments offered here virtually excludes the complex array of references to beauty (*Schönheit, kalos*) contained in, and surrounding Heidegger's interpretations of them. Such an appendix contributes to the impression then, that Heidegger does not engage a thinking of beauty in Heraclitus. See,
been indicated above, Heidegger believes beauty belongs in its more originary sense to the unveiling of being in *alētheia*. This claim is reiterated in several of Heidegger’s other texts on the early Greeks as well. Consider, for example, a passage found in Heidegger's reading of Pindar in his 1946 Anaximander seminar. In the context of a careful exegesis of Pindar's 5th *Isthmian Ode*, Heidegger points our attention to the poem's repeated invocation of *lighting* and *shining* found in images of the sun, the moon, and gold, which he draws together here in a reflection on *to kalon*, the beautiful. Heidegger writes:

Pure shining as the presence of the essential itself is *to kalon*, “the beautiful” [“Schönheit”], which in German originally means "bright" [“Helle”] and “shining” [“Glänzende”]. Before all else, there belongs to the beautiful, in a two-fold sense, the opening of the essence of the human in its proper presence, and the letting appear therein. If the particular fate of the beautiful, *Moira touton kalon*, obtains its allocation with the essence of the human, *ephikoito*, then the human arrives in its presence (that is, its being), where all “having” [“Haben”] has its sole base. If the human, destined by fate, hearkens the gathering in nobility (*Edle*), *panta er Alles*, he has everything. The “having” is the self-letting belonging of fate. All *Echein* determines itself out of *hexis*. As the human, in its being, that is as he stands in his presence towards presencing in respect of the mother of light [*Lichten*] - holds itself and is held - so he belongs to the presencing of the whole. “The having,” that means: To the extent that beings are as such, that which belongs to their essence can never go away. “The having” is not that which the human ostensibly possesses and carries around with itself at its whim. The “having” is being (*ousia*), presencing as such - the claim of which the human takes into its care, and to which he belongs and hearkens from beings, and therefore is also himself.²⁰³

According to Heidegger then, Pindar's poem helps show that for the early Greeks the beautiful is responsible in a double sense for giving Dasein its presence and for letting appear what shows up within that presence. Such a claim echoes our analysis in Chapter 2 regarding the implicit place of beauty in *Being and Time*. It was seen there that beauty characterizes the two-fold sense of the clearing of the *there* of Dasein, which, in turn, allows for the disclosure of a

---

²⁰³ Heidegger, *GA* 78, 93. In an accompanying appendix note to this passage, Heidegger emphasizes that beauty is related here to *hervorkommen* (bringing-forth), *unverborgenheit* (unconcealment), and *An-kunft* (arrival/advent), in addition to appearance (*Scheinen*) (325n42).
world within it. At the same time, Heidegger is careful in his reading of Pindar to emphasize that
the special power of presencing that beauty brings to stand in Dasein, is not one of subjective or
aesthetic capriciousness. Rather, Heidegger states that it concerns being itself, *ousia*, which
comes to presence in the "having" (*Haben*) of Dasein's belonging-to-it, and hearkening-of-it.

Heidegger develops this reflection on the originary status of the beautiful still more
closely in his reading of the pre-Socratics in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Focusing on
Heraclitus, in particular, he observes:

Heraclitus says (fragment 8): “What stands in opposition carries itself over here and over
there, the one to the other, it gathers itself from itself.” That which contends is gathering
gatheredness, *logos*. The Being of all beings is what is most shining [*das Scheinendste*] –
that is, what is most beautiful [*Schönste*], what is most constant in itself. What the Greeks
meant by “beauty” is discipline [*Bändigung*]. The gathering together of the highest
contending is *polemos*, struggle in the sense of the confrontation, the setting-apart-from-
each-other [*Aus-einander-setzung*]... 204

This passage, like the draft fragment from "The Origin of the Work of Art" and the Pindar
exegesis, indicates that beauty constitutes an essential quality in the early Greek interpretation of
*physis* and unconcealment (*alētheia*). It remains, however, to be determined more precisely just
how beauty belongs to this structure. While a passage like the one above may appear on first
glance to run these terms together, Heidegger often points out that the overlap in these basic
words is not a conceptual shortcoming, but an indication of their original belonging together.
This interrelation is indicated further here by Heidegger's observation that what is *most beautiful*
(*Schönste*) - namely the being of all beings - is what is *most shining* (*das Scheinendste*). This is a
claim that has also been suggested in the Pindar passage, and one that Heidegger echoes several

lines later when he says, "On and kalon (‘in being’ and ‘beautiful’) say the same thing for the Greeks (coming to presence is pure appearing/shining).”

Heidegger's interpretation of the beautiful for the early Greeks begins then, by retaining the core association from his early work between beauty and the shining of appearance. To use the language of his early work, one might say that Heidegger reiterates the fundamental convertibility of this radiant appearing and being. Daniel Dahlstrom, one of the few Heidegger scholars to note the relevance of the beautiful in these readings, observes that Heidegger attributes this relation of beauty to being (Sein), and not to beings (Seiende). More specifically, in noting Heidegger's association of being with images of radiance, fire (pur), the sun (helios), and shining adornment (Schmücken and Zieren), Dahlstrom stresses that these images do not concern "any decoration or ornamentation of some thing already on hand or even entities as a whole." Rather, beauty is shown to be a matter of the ontological difference itself.

Thus Dahlstrom writes:

It is noteworthy that the ontological difference that Heidegger recognizes in some fragments is a matter of beauty. Thus, however riveting and beguiling any foreground appearance of entities, indeed, even if it is the most beautiful adornment (Gezierde) it is no comparison with the “sole, original adorning” or, as Heraclitus puts it, ho kallistos kosmos (Fragment 124; GA 55; 165: VS 20 f./FS 8).

Heidegger himself clarifies that kosmos is not to be thought of as a thing, as a world or a cosmology. Rather, he says it names the originary radiating possibility of opposites coming into

---

205 Ibid.
206 Daniel Dahlstrom, "Heidegger's Heraclitus Reading" in Interpreting Heidegger: Critical Essays ed. Daniel Dahlstrom (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Dahlstrom derives his interpretation largely from Heidegger's 1943/1944 lecture courses on Heraclitus (GA 55). These courses offer a much more extensive interrogation of Heraclitus than the earlier Introduction to Metaphysics. However, they focus on many of the same key fragments found in the earlier text, and offer a similar line of thought regarding the beautiful.
207 Ibid., 145.
208 Ibid., 146fn34.
the simplicity of a unity: *Hen panta.* Accordingly, the radiance of the *kosmos* (what is most beautiful) is nothing itself visible, but the disciplined *polemos* of opposites and contraries, the *logos* of collection and division, and the condition of the possibility for all apparent radiance. In tying the highest essence of beauty to this originary, yet in-apparent source of the apparent, Heidegger repeats the earlier distinction made in his phenomenology of religion between the various concrete appearances of beautiful objects, and beauty's position in the invisible creation of appearance. As Dahlstrom points out, however, in this later context it becomes clearer that such a complex description of beauty is associated with Heidegger's important notion of the ontological difference itself, that is, with how being (*Sein*) is disclosed within the horizon of beings (*Seiende*).

This characterization of beauty, and more specifically, the beautiful *kosmos*, is one that Heidegger defends against Eugen Fink some thirty years later. In their 1966/67 *Heraclitus Seminar*, Fink advances a cosmological interpretation of Heraclitus, suggesting that the polemic activity of fire (*pur*) constitutes the ultimate dynamic of *physis* responsible for the gathering, separating, and bringing-into-appearance of beings. Fink argues that the originary activity of fire is what remains concealed and invisible to most people, and yet is what is most significant and

---

209 In his interpretations of the early Greeks inspired by his encounters with Heidegger, Jean Beaufret offers a similar description of the beautiful *kosmos*. He writes: "Nothing distances us farther from his words [Heraclitus's] than the common translation of *kosmos* by 'world.' Heraclitus would thus say to us that the Great Whole of the earth is anterior to the gods and to men, who would themselves be only details in the Great Whole. But the translation of *kosmos* by 'world,' or by 'universe,' carries us to the antipodes of Heraclitus's words. *Kosmos*, rather, evokes an arrangement, a disposition of the things of which we speak. But not just any disposition. It is a question of their brilliance. This is why, in Homer, the word signifies a *jewel*, the property of a *jewel* being not only to shine by itself, but above all to valorize the one who wears it. The jewel shines less for itself than for something else. [...] Yet far from adding itself from the outside to what it allows to appear in the height of its brilliance, the *kosmos* of Heraclitus is essential to the latter, to the point that nothing would appear without it. But what is this primordial jewel that sparkles in everything and from out of which everything sparkles? It is the secret identity of what the weak in spirit attempt to separate and to oppose to the incompatible: 'Day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, abundance-penury' (fragment 67). The jewel of the trinket, the *kosmos* is the antagonistic ordering of all things, thanks to which they secretly resemble the bow, which only *propels* the arrow by the *withdrawal* of the string, or the lyre which resonates only in vibrating" (Jean Beaufret, *Dialogue with Heidegger*, trans. Mark Sinclair [Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2006], 7).
radiant in status. Fink appeals here to fragment 124 in order to juxtapose this invisible radiance with the derivative visibility of the beautiful *kosmos*, interpreting the fragment as follows: "Compared with the fire that brings forth to appearance, the most beautiful *kosmos* seems like a heap of scattered things."\(^{210}\) Heidegger offers a different interpretation of Heraclitus in these lectures, however, one that begins with the priority of the *logos*, and that argues for an equiprimordial relationship between the essential terms in Heraclitus' thinking. In response to Fink's reading of fragment 124 then, Heidegger states, "it is difficult for me to comprehend that the most beautiful *kosmos* stands in need of yet another determination" (that is, of the fire that Fink argues is more originary).\(^{211}\) This same hesitation is found again near the end of the lecture course, concerning fragment 8 and the notion of the beautiful harmony (*harmonia*). In response to Fink's exploration there of how contraries are brought together into an apparent harmony, Heidegger asks, "But where does the 'most beautiful harmony' belong? Is it the visible or the invisible harmony?"\(^{212}\)

On their own, these rejoinders to Fink's reading of Heraclitus do not clearly determine Heidegger's position. They only indicate that he holds open the question of whether beauty belongs strictly to the apparent world or to the dynamic that makes such appearance possible (*physis, logos, kosmos*). There are several other pieces of evidence, however, that help indicate Heidegger's position. Dahlstrom notes that in Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus, "the image of *physis* as *kosmos* is meant to convey what 'provides the splendor of the fit' of one being for another, a fit that also enables them to be."\(^{213}\) Dahlstrom's observation calls our attention back to

\(^{211}\) Ibid.
\(^{212}\) Ibid., 159/257.
\(^{213}\) Dahlstrom, "Heidegger's Heraclitus Reading," 146.
Heidegger’s claim above that being is what is most beautiful. Returning to the passage in which this claim appears, one finds that it says more than that beauty is the radiant appearing of being. It also states that beauty for the Greeks is discipline, and still more precisely, a discipline that is essentially related to the strife (Streit) of polemos. Heard in this way, the essence of beauty’s shining is explained in more detail. For in opposition to the unshining of all random collections and hodge-podges, it is beauty’s disciplined gathering and separating (logos and polemos) activity that allows for the radiant coming-into-appearance of being. Indeed, this is what Heidegger seems to mean when he observes that being comes into appearing only when a fundamental tension, harmony, or enjointure (Fügue) is born out of strife.

One finds further confirmation for this reading in the interpretation of fragment 124 that Heidegger provides in the Introduction to Metaphysics. Heidegger writes:

> It is with a view to this inner superiority and concealment of Being that Heraclitus speaks that strange saying which, precisely because it seems to be so un-Greek, testifies to the essence of the Greek experience of the Being of beings: alla hosper sarma eike kechumenon ho kallistos kosmos, “the most beautiful world is like a dungheap, cast down in shambles” (fragment 124). Sarma is the opposing concept to logos, what is merely cast down as opposed to what stands in itself, the heap as opposed to collectedness, un-Being as opposed to Being. The ordinary version of the philosophy of Heraclitus likes to sum it up in saying panta rhei, “everything flows.” If this saying stems from Heraclitus at all, then it does not mean that everything is mere change that runs on and runs astray, pure inconstancy, but instead it means: the whole of beings in its Being is

---

214 Elsewhere here, Heidegger writes: "Heraclitus says (fragment 53): Polemos panton men pater esti, panton de basileus, kai tous men theous edeixe tous de anthropous, tous men doulous epiosei tous de eleutherous. Confrontation is indeed for all (that comes to presence) the sire (who lets emerge), but (also) for all the preserver that holds sway. For it lets some appear as gods, others as human beings, some it produces (sets forth) as slaves, but others as the free. The polemos named here is a strife that holds sway before everything divine and human, not war in the human sense. As Heraclitus thinks it, struggle first and foremost allows what essentially unfolds to step apart in opposition, first allows position and status and rank to establish themselves in coming to presence. In such a stepping apart, clefts, intervals, distances, and joints open themselves up. In con-frontation, world comes to be. (Confrontation does not divide unity, much less destroy it. It builds unity; it is the gathering (logos). Polemos and logos are the same [1953 addition]). The struggle meant here is originary struggle, for it allows those that struggle to originate as such in the first place; it is not a mere assault on the present-at-hand. Struggle first projects and develops the un-heard, the hitherto un-said and un-thought" (Introduction to Metaphysics, 64-65/GA 40, 66).

215 Ibid., 142/142.
always thrown from one opposite to the other, thrown over here and over there – Being is the gatheredness of this conflicting unrest.\textsuperscript{216}

In this passage, Heidegger argues that, for Heraclitus, the most beautiful \textit{kosmos} is "like a dungheap, cast down in shambles." He does not interpret the fragment as a contrastive with a more originary position (e.g. the fire of \textit{polemos}) like Fink does. Rather, Heidegger notes that the notion of \textit{sarma}, or dispersion, at the root of this dungheap is tied to concealment and un-being. At the same time, recall Heidegger's previous citation of Heraclitus that being is what is most beautiful and most shining. On the surface then, to say that being and \textit{sarma} are both what is \textit{most beautiful} looks like a contradiction. Heidegger clarifies, however, that \textit{sarma} is not a contradictory concept to \textit{logos} and being, but its complement. Indeed, if we follow Heidegger's argument, the claim is that the disciplined \textit{polemic} activity of the beautiful \textit{kosmos} is one in which \textit{logos} (gathering) and \textit{sarma} (dispersion), being and un-being, are fundamentally united in struggle. In the midst of the struggle described here, and over against the originary vastness of concealment, \textit{Dasein} sometimes approaches \textit{physis} in a knowing way (\textit{technē, logos, nous}), which is to say, it sometimes achieves the discipline and harmony necessary to allow being to come to appearance in a meaningful world of beings and relations. When this happens, there is the en-jointure (\textit{Fügung}) of a limit (\textit{Gestalt}), and the fittingness of being (\textit{Fug/Dikē}) which allows something like a world to come to appearance.\textsuperscript{217}

When explicated in this way, it becomes increasingly clear why beauty can neither be thought of as the derivative quality of appearance found in an already apparent world (Fink), nor

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 170-171/169.
as something like the special feeling of a subject found in the modern aesthetic interpretation.\textsuperscript{218}

On Heidegger's reading of the early Greeks, beauty names the in-apparent radiance in the disciplined gathering and separating of being and un-being that allows for the coming-into-appearance of being.\textsuperscript{219} Indeed, beauty ultimately helps name the \textit{generativity of appearance} in the unconcealment of being.\textsuperscript{220}

It is only by recognizing beauty's fundamental position here at the interstices of being and un-being, appearance (\textit{Schein}) and concealment, that one can proceed to make sense of Heidegger's association of beauty and semblance (\textit{Anschein}) as well. This insight is tied to Heidegger's claim above that, for Heraclitus, the coming-into-appearance (beauty) of being is equiprimordially associated with the un-being of the dungheap. The originary interrelation of being and un-being does not fully disappear, however, with the emergence of an appearance. As Heidegger notes, appearance always manifest itself in such and such a way. That is, appearance always appears \textit{as} or \textit{in} a certain \textit{aspect} (\textit{Ansehen}), an aspect that is the result of an effective

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Heidegger characterizes the modern aesthetic understanding of the beautiful here as follows: "In contrast [with the Greeks], for us today, the beautiful is the relaxing, what is restful and thus intended for enjoyment. Art then belongs to the domain of the pastry chef" (140/140).
\item In his 1931 lectures on Plato, Heidegger states that: "The beautiful is the emergence of differentiation (\textit{ta men - ta de})" (The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Analogy and Theaetetus: 235n17/GA 34, 330n17). According to Heidegger, it is for this reason that Socrates calls Theaetetus beautiful. That is, it is just because Theaetetus is capable of making these beautiful distinctions in speech (\textit{logos}) that he is also beautiful in his soul. Elsewhere in the same lectures, Heidegger also notes that \textit{Helle or brightness} has an older origin that "comes from 'reverberates' or 'echo' [\textit{hallen}] and is originally a character of tone or \textit{sound}, that is, the opposite of 'dull.' Brightness therefore, is not at all originally a character of the visible, but was transferred over in language \textit{to} the visible, to the field where light plays a role" (40/53-54). Heidegger explains that this older sense of brightness concerns the possibility of \textit{durchlassen}, or the letting-through of an emerging world, without being reduced to a metaphorsics of visibility. That is, it includes the possibility of laying out a world in both light and dark, sound and space, unconcealment and concealment. This conception of originary brightness echoes Heidegger's earlier thinking of the invisible beauty that emanates from the darkness of God/\textit{ens}/being in Meister Eckhart (Chapter 1).
\item Elsewhere, this is a point that Heidegger reiterates in his 1943 lectures on Heraclitus, where he writes: "\textit{In Wahrheit wird jedoch die Sammlung von der vorauf erblickten Einheit her bestimmt. 'Sammeln' heist: die schon von sich aus wesende Einheit zum Vorschein bringen: 'Sich sammeln' heist ja auch: sich auf eine bestimmende, nicht selbst gemachte, sondern uns zuvor ansprechende Einheit zusammenbringen. Wir beachten auch nicht, dass in den Worten suniemi, sumphero, ich bringe, trage zusammen und lege, ich sammle, weil sie griechische Wort sind, der Bezug auf die phusis, das Aufgehende, Schöne, schon, mitschwingt, so dass das 'Sammeln' und 'Zusammenbringen' griechisch gedacht den Grundzug hat, den wir das Erscheinenlassen aus der Einheit her nennen können}" (GA 55, 148).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
gathering and dispersing, tension and harmony. Accordingly, the generation of any appearance also carries with it the concealed background of this dynamic.\textsuperscript{221}

In the \textit{Introduction to Metaphysics}, Heidegger argues that this complex interrelation of presence and absence surrounding the notion of appearance is originally signaled in the Greek terms, \textit{doxa} and \textit{kleos}. \textit{Doxa}, he contends, originally names the \textit{glory} that something comes to stand in when it appears. This glory helps signal both the radiance of something that shines for Dasein and its ecstatic ability to draw Dasein to it. Thus Heidegger notes that another name for this glorification, \textit{kleos}, directly emphasizes how such appearances \textit{call} Dasein.\textsuperscript{222} He explains that something stands in glory when it comes to have a certain repute or reputation. In light of this reputation, it attracts or calls Dasein to it. As was indicated in Chapter 1, the play of these terms also helps indicate the important instability between visual and aural metaphorics before the rise of speculative metaphysics beginning in Plato. In the present context, however, Heidegger explains that because an appearance always shows itself as an alluring aspect that simultaneously conceals the conditions of the possibility of its emergence, appearances can either be eminently connected to what they show or mere semblances. Indeed, insofar as appearance always carries with it a background of concealment, one could say that all appearance is, in some sense, semblance.\textsuperscript{223}

As indicated in Heidegger's phenomenology of religion, and again here in his reading of the early Greeks, beauty belongs to each of these modalities of appearance. That is, beauty is

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{221} In tracing the Greek interpretation of being back to its fundamental association with appearance, one finds in the early Greeks here an incipient and unthematized insight into the \textit{as structure} detailed in \textit{Being and Time}.


\textsuperscript{223} Heidegger delineates the complex meaning of \textit{doxa} here as follows: "The term \textit{doxa} names various things: 1) aspect, or respect, as glory; 2) aspect as the sheer view that something offers; 3) aspect as merely looking-so, 'seeming' as mere semblance; 4) a view that a person constructs for himself, opinion. This multiple meaning of the word is not looseness of language but a play with deep foundations in the mature wisdom of a great language, a multiplicity that preserves the essential traits of Being in the word" (110/112).
\end{footnotesize}
responsible for the coming-to-appearance, appearance, and entanglement of Dasein in semblance. However, this is explained at a still more profound level. For on Heidegger's reading, beauty not only motivates both appearance and semblance, but it is also responsible for covering-over the deeper essence of the _polemic_ activity that makes appearance possible. This insight is developed in a host of passages found in Heidegger's 1943 Heraclitus lectures. In these lectures, Heidegger continues his exploration from the _Introduction to Metaphysics_ concerning the early Greek interpretation of being as _physis_. In the latter course, however, Heidegger emphasizes the special tension between the counter-movement of _physis_, as the coming-forth-from-out-of-itself (_Von-sich-aus-Aufgehen_) and turning-back-into-self (_Untergehen_). Within this dynamic, Heidegger stresses how the activity of coming-to-appearance is simultaneously covered-over by the concretion of that appearance itself. He writes:

_Komos_ is defined in a special sense in the self-same adornment [Zier] here, that is in the lighting en-jointure essencing in all adorning [Gezierde]. Hence, what is being distinguished is the one sole originary adornment of all adorning. With this adorning we mean that respective to which the en-jointure is brought to appearance, _harmonia phanere_ [visible harmony] in distinction from _harmonia aphanes_ [invisible harmony], that which in appearance [Vorschein] and semblance [Anschein] imposes its establishment in distinction to the un-appearing en-jointure. In contrast with this is every appearing, dissembling and presencing en-jointure of beings as a whole, each of which is only superficial, and in which the pure enjointure is covered-over and so, in a certain way, is deformed by the solidified [form of appearances].

What Heidegger wants to stress here is the manner in which the concrete visible realm has a tendency to cover-over the in-apparent originary work of coming-into-appearance. This finding implements semblance in a still more foundational way. For in mistaking the concrete appearances found in a given en-jointure for the being of _physis_ itself, Dasein is no longer aware that such an en-jointure is only an emergent aspect from the more originary _polemos_ of _physis_. In this regard, Dasein takes the aspect for _physis_, for being. This instability hinges in a special

---

way on the essence of beauty, however. For, as we have seen, it belongs to the essence of beauty to cut across both the in-apparent *polemos* of coming-into-appearance, and the concrete visibility of appearance. More precisely, as the radiant call of appearances themselves, beauty is responsible for drawing Dasein's attention erotically into such appearances. As Heidegger puts it, this is because the beautiful is "*sehr berücken und entzücken,*" "very captivating and rapturous." Thus, drawn into the radiance of shining appearances, the beautiful causes Dasein to forget the originary ground of unconcealment and the origin of all such appearance. In the end, Heidegger summarizes this tension by stating that in the shining harmony of beauty, the enjoinment of appearance shows itself undisturbed (*unversehrt*), and yet at the same time, the purer en-joining work of *physis* conceals itself just as un-disturbedly (*unversehrte*).

While the focus of our examination has primarily been directed at Heidegger's reading of the pre-Socratics, it is important to note that he also sees this thinking reflected in the kind of *art* that comes before aesthetics, namely, Greek tragedy. Heidegger suggests that in "the thinking of the early Greek thinkers, the unity and antagonism of Being and seeming were powerful in an originary way. However this was all portrayed at its highest and purest in Greek tragic poetry." At the same time, Heidegger stresses the importance of recognizing that the Greeks do not have a concept of *art* corresponding to the narrow definition of the artwork in the modernity. As he puts it in the *Nietzsche* lectures, "the magnificent art of Greece remains without corresponding cognitive-conceptual meditation on it, such meditation not having to be

---

225 Ibid., 165.
226 Heidegger writes: "*Die 'harmonia': die Fügung, ist dort im reinen Scheinen ihres Wesens und lichtet sich dort unversehrt, d.h. sie west dort als die Schönste, wo auch unversehrte das Aufgehen in das Sichverbergen sich birgt und dieses zumal im Aufgehen die reine Gewähr seiner selbst findet*" (*GA 55*, 144-145).
identical to aesthetics." This is not because art for the Greeks was something that was "only 'lived,'" but because for them artworks:

Accomplish a decisive task: they make manifest, in the way appropriate to works, what beings as a whole are, preserving such manifestation in the work. [...] What makes art great is not only and not in the first place the high quality of what is created. Rather, art is great because it is an "absolute need."  

According to Heidegger then, art belongs absolutely and essentially to the Greeks as part of the universal recognition of the truth of beings in their world. As such, it cannot be understood according to the modern conception of the artwork, as something distinct and separate from the human subject and the real world that it ostensibly represents. Art, for the Greeks, concerns technē in the highest sense of knowing standing-out towards physis.

I will address Heidegger's discussion of Greek art more closely in my examination of art and technology in Chapter 4. I only wish to indicate here how the treatment of the beautiful in Greek tragedy supports and mirrors Heidegger's discussion of the topic in the pre-Socratics. The central text for this purpose, and the text that Heidegger features in his reading of tragedy in both the Introduction to Metaphysics and Hölderlin's Hymn, "The Ister" is the second choral ode from Sophocles' Antigone. In this ode, which Heidegger suggests offers one of the most incisive descriptions of Dasein in Western history, human being is described as anthropou denoteran, which he translates as the most uncanny (unheimlichste). Of course, in Being and Time the uncanny being of Dasein is indicated by the fundamental attunement of anxiety (Angst), which in detaching Dasein from the immediacy of the world helps show the equiprimordial relationship between the nothing and being, as well as Dasein's essence as the being who thinks the question.

---

228 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 80/GA 6.1, 77-78.
229 Ibid., 84/82.
of being. That is, it is just because Dasein's true being lies in its founding of a world or home as the result of its finite care for its own death, that Dasein is said to be both at home in the world and the un-homely founder of such a world.231

Heidegger traces a similar, albeit different thinking of the uncanny in Sophocles' choral ode. Specifically, Heidegger stresses how historical Dasein's standing towards physis through technē constitutes a primordial violence (Gewalt/polemos) responsible for breaking beings free from concealment and into appearance.232 In this violent struggle of polemos, however, Heidegger emphasizes Sophocles' claim that Dasein is characterized by an essential daring or risk (tolma). In the Introduction to Metaphysics, Heidegger suggests that this is shown in the last strophe of the choral ode, where:

The one who is violence-doing [Gewalttätige], the creative one [der Schaffende], who sets out into the un-said, who breaks into the un-thought, who compels what has never happened and makes appear what is unseen, this violence-doing one [Gewalt-tätige] stands at all times in daring (tolma, verse 371). Insofar as he dares the surmounting of Being, he must risk the assault of un-beings, the me kalon, disintegration, un-constancy [Unständigkeit], un-structure [Ungefüge], and unfittingness [Unfug].233

Consistent with the reading that has been developed above, one finds that Heidegger uses being and beauty as synonyms here. More precisely, he uses un-being (Unseiende) and un-beauty (me kalon) as synonymous for whatever does not come into the unified shining of

231 See, Heidegger, Being and Time, 178-184/GA 2, 244-254.
232 Heidegger writes: "Thus technē characterizes the deimon, the violence-doing [Gewalttätige], in its decisive basic trait; for to do violence [Gewalttätigkeit] is to need to use violence [Gewalt-brauchen] against the over-whelming: the knowing struggle to set Being which was formerly closed off, into what appears as beings" (Introduction to Metaphysics, 170-171/GA 40, 169). Significantly, a number of scholars have pointed out that Heidegger's thinking of this violence changes from its articulation in his texts leading up to 1935 and in later texts like Hölderlin's Hymn, "The Ister." Gregory Fried argues, for instance, that this development is at least two-fold. On one hand, Heidegger's earlier references to terminology like Streit, Gewalt, and Polemos continue to betray a resolute emphasis on the priority of Dasein. However, increasingly after Being and Time, but especially beginning in the second half of the thirties, Heidegger shifts this emphasis towards the struggle and violence of being itself. With this change, Fried notes that this ontological violence is increasingly met with a parallel thinking of Gelassenheit or letting-be in the comportment of Dasein, a shift that indicates a move away from what some scholars have identified as the volunteerism of Heidegger's early thinking, and the bellicose rhetoric surrounding his involvement with national socialism in the early thirties. See Gregory Fried, Heidegger's Polemos.
appearance, for "disintegration, un-constancy, un-structure, and unfittingness." This convertibility of being and beauty is stressed even further, however, in Heidegger's translation of the same strophe in his later interpretation in Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister." For there, Heidegger simply translates *me kalon* as *Unseiende*, and explains as follows:

What we here in translation term "nonbeings" is called *to me kalon* by Sophocles. If we translate “literally,” we have to say “the un-beautiful.” Genuine translation according to the letter, however, in no way amounts to substituting the “same” words in different languages but in finding a translation into the corresponding word.\(^{234}\)

One could argue that in translating *me kalon* (un-beautiful) as *Unseiende* (un-being), Heidegger is simply helping to emphasize the essential connection between being and appearance, and un-being and un-appearance for the Greeks. However, there is something more here, something that hinges on the significance of the specific notion of *me kalon* and its connection to *Unseiende* in the daring essence of Dasein. This is expressed in the specific negation that is used in the Greek. As Heidegger notes, "the Greeks have the word *me* for this prohibitive, restrictive, and delimiting No or Not, which means something distinct from *ouk*. *Ouk on* names that which merely is not; *me on* names something that 'is,' yet is not in truth..."\(^{235}\)

Accordingly, Heidegger explains that Dasein's violent foray into unconcealment is risky not simply because it is in danger of falling into nothingness, into non-being and non-appearance,

\(^{234}\) Heidegger, *Holderlin's Hymn "The Ister,*" 87/GA 53, 108. Heidegger proceeds to juxtapose this early pre-Platonic notion of beauty with its aesthetic transformation as follows: "What is meant by the Greek *kalon*? Here again we are too misled by the modern interpretation of the beautiful, that is, by the aesthetic conception of the beautiful that relates the beautiful to consciousness and to 'enjoyment,' for us to immediately grasp the realm that is intended by the so-called 'beautiful' in the sense of the Greek *kalon*. Even Plato equates *to kalon* with *to agathon*, which we call the 'good,' and he names both in the meaning of *alethes*, which we translate as 'the true.' Yet when we speak of the 'true,' the 'good,' and the 'beautiful,' we move, whether knowingly or not, within the realm of modern, enlightenment, Masonic thought, a 'realm' that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have then elaborated as the 'realm' of 'values.' This is all very far removed from the Greek world, yet it is merely removed from it, which is to say that it is in turn related to it insofar as what is also prepared, among other things, in Plato's thinking is the fact that within modernity the essence of the beautiful comes to be determined in terms of consciousness of the beautiful, that is, in terms of the sensation of the beautiful, in terms of *aisthēsis*, that is, aesthetically" (87-88/109).

\(^{235}\) Ibid., 24/27.
but because the nature of coming-to-appearance, of *kalon* and *on*, always carries with it the threat of the aspect that shows something as it is not, of the unstable semblance of *doxa*.

He writes:

In the pre-Platonic sense, *to me kalon* therefore means non-beings [*das Un-seiende*], those beings that are not altogether nothing - but rather, as beings, are “opposed” to beings in a counternumbing way - that is, something that confuses the senses and entangles us in that which is without subsistence and is thus unable to let anything come to constant presenting, except the possibility of not being, a sheer threat to being, the absencing and annihilating of beings. To the extent that human beings are “together” with non-beings, so that they take non-beings as beings, they have entrusted beings to the danger of annihilation, put them at stake. Such comportment toward beings is *tolma*, risk.

On the one hand then, because of its special convertibility with being as the generative and erotic element of coming-into-appearance, beauty stands at the center of the early Greek notion of unconcealment (*alētheia*). On the other hand, because beauty always carries with it the *me kalon* of *doxa* - of the glory of appearance irreducibly intertwined with semblance - it also comes to stand at the center of Greek tragedy, where the essence of Dasein is presented in its fateful daring into uncanniness. Consequently, the explication of the beautiful serves here as an important reminder that being for the early Greeks is not *only*, at least initially, defined by its constancy and presence, but also stands in an essential relation to becoming, appearing, and

---

236 Heidegger offers a similar interpretation of this strophe and the notion of *me kalon* in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. He writes there: "The basic trait of the *deinotaton* lies in the reciprocal relation of the two senses of *deinon*. The knower fares into the midst of fittingness, draws Being into beings [in the 'Ris' -1953 addition], and yet can never surmount the overwhelming. Thus the knower is thrown this way and that between fittingness and unfittingness, between the wretched and the noble. Every violent taming of the violent is either victory or defeat. Both throw one out of the homely, each in a different way, and they first unfold, each in a different way, the dangerousness of the Being that has been won or lost. Both, each differently, are menaced by perdition. The one who is *violence-doing*, the creative one, who sets out into the un-said, who breaks into the un-thought, who compels what has never happened and makes appear what is unseen, this violence-doing one stands at all times in daring (*tolma*, verse 371): Insofar as he dares the surmounting of Being, he must risk the assault of un-beings, the *mē kalon*, disintegration, un-constancy, un-structure, and unfittingness. The higher the peak of historical Dasein rises, the more gaping is the abyss for the sudden plunge into the unhistorical, which then only flails around in a confusion that has no way out and at the same time has no site" (*Introduction to Metaphysics*, 171-172/GA 40,170).


238 Heidegger makes a similar point in his 1931 lectures when he writes: "Since the Greeks did not at all 'enjoy' works of art as we do, *kalos* is a determination which does not primarily relate to works of art, but concerns the Dasein of man. To this Dasein there also belongs the *uncanniness* of which Sophocles speaks in the *Antigone* (line 332 f.): 'There are many uncanny things, but nothing is more so than man himself’" (*The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Analogy and Theaetetus*, 143/GA 34, 198).
seeming. Indeed, it is only once being is separated and isolated from these other essential relations that it is capable of being thought of as something fixed, eternal, and distinct. As Heidegger will show, however, such an ontological transformation also entails a transformation in the essence of the beautiful.

To summarize what has been found in this section, Heidegger argues that beauty for the early Greeks concerns the shining appearing of being that both allows being to come to appearance and calls Dasein to it. However, because being for the early Greeks remains tied to coming-into-being (becoming) from out of concealment, beauty not only names appearance but coming-into-appearance. This coming-into-appearance is the result of the counter-turning forces of *physis* and *technē*, being and non-being, gathering (*logos*) and dispersion (*sarma*). When these are enjoined in the disciplined (*Beständigung*) work of harmony (*hamonia*), world comes to appearance, that is, into being in the glory of an aspect (*doxa*). However, because beauty is also responsible for erotically drawing Dasein into such appearances, it also effaces its own place in the in-apparent generation of such appearances and the insight that such appearances are only aspects of a wider ontological dynamic. Accordingly, Dasein's foray into the beauty of being - into the founding appearance of world - is one that is always characterized by the risk (*tolma*) of an appearance that is both not being and yet not nothing (*me kalon*). According to Heidegger, this belongs to the highest insight of Greek tragedy as found in the concluding strophe of Sophocles' second choral ode:

> Between the ordinance of the earth and the order ordained by the gods he ventures:
> Towering high above the site, forfeiting the site is he for whom non-beings [*Unseidente/me kalon*] always are for the sake of risk.\(^{239}\)

Accordingly, Heidegger's reading of the early Greeks helps elucidate his provocative claims about the existence of a great non-philosophy and non-art that came before the advent of philosophy and aesthetics proper. More importantly, it has shown that Heidegger identifies a pre-aesthetic conception of beauty inextricably bound up with the complex notion of *alētheia*. However, it is precisely this complex unity of being, truth, and beauty at the heart of *alētheia* that Heidegger argues is transformed with the advent of metaphysics and aesthetics in Plato.

III. The Metaphysical-Aesthetical Transformation in Plato

Heidegger's reading of Plato's position in the inauguration of metaphysics is more complex and ambiguous than has often been admitted. Indeed, Heidegger's reading is commonly viewed as uncharitable and monolithic in its conception of Plato as the founder of Western thinking. As Francisco Gonzalez observes, however, Heidegger's reading actually exhibits a certain amount of fluidity, change, and even at times self-contradiction.²⁴⁰ On one hand, this can be attributed to Heidegger's belief that Platonic philosophy does not consist of a "'system' in the sense of a unified structure," but is made up of "particular conversations."²⁴¹ To this end, Heidegger is often careful to note those elements in Plato that retain a thinking resistant to metaphysical and aesthetic conceptuality. On the other hand, this variation also extends from the fact that Heidegger read and re-read Plato over the course of a lifetime, often from different angles and with different insights.

Despite this variation, an observation from the first volume of the *Nietzsche* lectures captures the general nature of Heidegger's reading. He observes that "a certain basic way of


proceeding prevails in Plato's thought," in which "[e]verything is gathered into the guiding question of philosophy - the question as to what beings are." It is from the vantage of this central question about "what beings are" that Heidegger argues the history of metaphysics commences. More specifically, it concerns the interpretation of the question of being as a question about the presence of beings.

As part of his interpretation of the ontological transformation that takes place in Plato here, Heidegger also sees a fundamental transformation in the notion of alētheia, one that separates the initially unified relations of being, truth, and beauty into distinct regions of the ideas (eidē), correctness (orthotes/homoiosis) and sensuous attestation (aisthēsis/kalos). In this way, Heidegger observes that the metaphysical interpretation of beauty as a special phenomenon belonging to the sensuous realm of aisthēsis, or aesthetics, is prepared for in a preeminent manner. Moreover, Heidegger argues that while the discussion of beauty and rhetoric in a dialogue like the Phaedrus still concerns the broader notion of technē to some extent, the newfound emphasis on the production of the look of the ideas (eidē) here also prepares the way for the more narrow association of beauty with the productive notion of craft knowledge, and ultimately for the modern notion of fine art (schöne Kunst).

In order to begin to understand the transformation that Heidegger locates in Plato, it is helpful to recall that in the previous section Heidegger was cited as saying, "aesthetics begins with the Greeks only at that moment when their great art and also the great philosophy that flourished along with it comes to an end." Subsequently, it was shown that on Heidegger's

242 Ibid.
243 Elsewhere, Heidegger writes: "Ever since being got interpreted as idea, a thinking about the being of beings has been metaphysical..." ("Plato's Doctrine of Truth," in Pathmarks, trans. William McNeill [Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 181/GA 9, 235).
244 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 80/GA 6.1, 78.
reading, this great philosophy and art belonged to the pre-Socratic and tragic interpretation of being as *physis*, or the emerging abiding sway of coming-into-appearance that simultaneously maintains its relationship with becoming, appearing, and seeming. Over against this early thinking then, Heidegger "now ask[s]: how does *logos* secede and take precedence over Being? How does the decisive development of the division between Being and thinking come about? [...] How does the relation between *physis* and *logos* look at the end of Greek philosophy..."\(^{245}\)

In the first volume of the *Nietzsche* lectures, Heidegger begins to offer a response to this question by highlighting the key concepts responsible for the transformation. He writes:

> [D]uring the age of Plato and Aristotle, in connection with the organization of philosophy as a whole, those basic concepts are formed which mark off the boundaries for all future inquiry into it. One of those basic notions is the conceptual pair *hylē-morphē*, *materia-forma*, matter form. The distinction has its origin in the conception of beings founded by Plato, the conception of beings with regard to their outer appearance, the demarcation and arrangement of beings in terms of outer and inner limits enters on the scene. But what limits is form, what is limited is matter. Whatever comes into view as soon as the work of art is experienced as a self-showing according to its *eidos*, as *phainesthai*, is now subsumed under these definitions. The *ekphanestaton*, what properly shows itself and is most radiant of all, is the beautiful. By way of the *idea*, the work of art comes to appear in the designation of the beautiful as *ekphanestaton*.\(^{246}\)

These are the central concepts that guide Heidegger's examination. Following them in order of precedence, it is clear that this transformation begins with the *hylē-morphē* relation that emerges in the interpretation of being according to the *eidos* or *idea*. In the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger observes that, "at the end [of Greek philosophy], the word *idea*, *eidos*, 'idea' comes to the fore as the definitive and prevailing word for Being (*physis*). Since then, the interpretation of Being as idea rules over all Western thinking, throughout the history of its changes up to today."\(^{247}\) Heidegger notes, however, that Plato can only think the notion of idea insofar as it


\(^{246}\) Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, 80/GA 6.1, 78.

also gathers together and transforms the thinking of *physis* - of being as appearing - that comes before him. Examining this point more closely, Heidegger observes:

The word *idea* means what is seen in the visible, the view that something offers. What is offered is the current look or *eidos* of whatever we encounter. The look of a thing is that within which, as we say, it presents itself to us, re-presents itself and as such stands before us; the look is that within which and as which the thing comes-to-presence - that is, in the Greek sense, *is*. This standing is the constancy of what has come forth of itself, the constancy of *physis*.248

On one hand then, Heidegger observes that Plato's notion of *idea* or *eidos* retains the general Greek association of appearance and being. That is, idea is not primarily interpreted as an abstract concept, as it is later in the Western tradition. Rather, for Plato the idea is the original look that undergirds appearance and therefore makes it possible. On the other hand, Heidegger observes an important difference between Plato's understanding of this look and the understanding of the *aspect* of appearance preceding it. This begins with the fact that for Plato, "the *idea* constitutes the Being of beings."249 Put otherwise, the idea determines the ontological *whatness* of a being.250 This means that contrary to the early interpretations of *physis*:

Plato does not regard this “visible form” [*idea/eidos*] as a mere “aspect.” For him the “visible form” has in addition something of a “stepping forth” whereby a thing “presents” itself. Standing in its “visible form” the being itself shows itself. [...] According to Plato, if people did not have these “ideas” in view, that is to say, the respective “appearance” of things - living beings, humans, numbers, gods - they would never be able to perceive this or that as a house, as a tree, as a god.251

This line of analysis shows how the structure of coming-to-appearance, initially encountered as a variable process that includes becoming and semblance within it, now becomes fixed and delimited in the Platonic idea, a momentous move that treats the idea as the invariable progenitor

---

248 Ibid., 192-193/189.
249 Ibid., 193/189.
250 Heidegger observes that this is also the origin of the existence/essence distinction that becomes so significant for medieval philosophy thereafter.
and paradigm for all appearance. Whereas in the previous interpretation of being, appearance was understood as an *aspect* in the double sense of what comes to light in the glory and semblance (*doxa*) of unconcealment (*alētheia*), appearance is now grounded and guaranteed by a paradigmatic set of ideas, the being of which determines what something is and should be.\(^{252}\)

A number of significant consequences follow from this development. According to Heidegger, the first is that the verbal interpretation of presencing (being as *physis*) is reified in an emphasis on the *whatness* of the ideas. In this way, being (*Sein*) is interpreted according to the model of beings (*Seiende*) - the ideas (*eidê*). Next, the original interrelation between being, becoming, appearance, and semblance is replaced by the full presence of the ideas. Over against this presence, each of those other properties is viewed as a privation of true being. In this way, the originary concealment that accompanied the *aspect* of appearance now becomes *pseudos*, *mere semblance* or *error*.

These observations become increasingly significant, however, when one considers Plato’s *hylē-morphē* interpretation of how the *ideas* show up in the material world and embodied human soul. Heidegger observes:

> [A]s soon as the essence of Being comes to consist in whatness (*idea*), then whatness, as *the* Being of beings, is also what is most in being about beings. On the other hand, whatness is now what *really is*, *ontōs on*. Being as *idea* is now promoted to the status of what really is, and beings themselves, which previously held sway, sink to the level of what Plato calls *mē on* - that which really should not be and really *is* not either - because

---

\(^{252}\) Heidegger writes: "Seeming, *doxa*, is not something external to Being and unconcealment but instead belongs to unconcealment. But *doxa* is also ambiguous in itself. On the one hand, it means the view in which something proffers itself, and on the other hand it means the view that human beings have. Dasein settles into such views. They are asserted and passed on. Thus *doxa* is a type of *logos*. The dominant views now obstruct our own view of beings. Beings are deprived of the possibility of turning themselves toward apprehension, appearing on their own right. The view granted by beings, which usually turns itself toward us, is distorted into a view upon beings. The dominance of views thus distorts and twists them. 'To twist a thing' is called *pseudesthai* by the Greeks. The struggle for the unconcealment of beings, *alētheia*, thus becomes the struggle against the *pseudos*, against twisting and distortion. [...] With this, the originary experience of truth as unconcealment is endangered" (*Introduction to Metaphysics*, 205/GA 40, 201).
beings always deform the idea, the pure look, by actualizing it, insofar as they incorporate it into matter.\footnote{Ibid., 196/193. Heidegger's reading may be juxtaposed with Hans-Georg Gadamer's more sensitive reading of Plato, which argues that the \textit{methexis} of the ideas with sensible particulars is actually the concretion and culmination of the essence of the ideas for Plato. See Gadamer, \textit{The Platonic-Aristotelian Idea of the Good}, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1986).} 

In this way, Heidegger argues that the famous \textit{chôrismos} of Platonic philosophy is torn asunder precisely in the difference between what things really and eternally are (paradigmatic ideas), and how they show up in the material world (material appearances).\footnote{Heidegger elaborates: "Only by undergoing the struggle between Being and seeming did they [the early Greeks] wrest Being forth from beings, did they bring beings into constancy and unconcealment: the gods and the state, the temples and the tragedies, athletic competition and philosophy - all this in the midst of seeming, besieged by it, but also taking it seriously, knowing its power. Only with the sophists and Plato was seeming explained as, and thus reduced to, mere seeming. At the same time, Being as \textit{idea} was elevated to a supersensory realm. The chasm, \textit{chôrismos}, was torn open between the merely apparent beings here below and the real Being somewhere up there" \textit{(Introduction to Metaphysics, 111/GA 40, 113).}} This also means that the human no longer follows being (\textit{Sein}) from the appearance (\textit{phainomenon}) of beings (\textit{Seiende}) themselves, but is tasked (\textit{telos}) with looking (\textit{idein}) beyond the appearance of beings to the methodological projection of the ideas (true beings). The original interrelation of being and appearance, \textit{on} and \textit{phainomenon}, is effectively disjoined.\footnote{Ibid., 197/193.}

This new interpretation of being focused on the \textit{whatness} of specific beings (ideas), and determining the paradigmatic ideality of what everything else should be, constitutes the beginning of what Heidegger calls the \textit{ontotheology} of metaphysics. That is, metaphysics is inaugurated by a two-fold decision here, first about the ontological status of being (interpreted as a being), and second, in the theological decision about the highest kind of beings (the ideas, and ultimately the good). As suggested at the outset, however, along with this ontotheological transformation Heidegger argues that the relation between truth and beauty is also transformed. For while \textit{alêtheia} originally brings beauty, truth, and being together in the unconcealment of a radiantly appearing aspect, truth is now defined by Plato as the \textit{orthotes homoiosis}, or the \textit{orthos} (true) and \textit{homoios} (similar).
corresponding correctness of one's apprehension with the true thing itself - with the idea.\textsuperscript{256}

Indeed, in perhaps Heidegger's most well known text on Plato, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," he argues that it is just this transformation that constitutes the unsaid doctrine underlying Plato's thought, a doctrine that is laid out in the famous allegory of the cave from the Republic.

Heidegger summarizes this claim as follows:

> Already within the cave, when those who have been liberated turn away from the shadows and turn toward the things, they direct their gaze to that which, in comparison with the mere shadows, “is more in being”: \textit{pros mallon onta terammenos orthoteron blepoi} (515 d3/4), “and thus turned to what is more in being, they should certainly see more correctly.” [...] Everything depends on the \textit{orthotes}, the correctness of the gaze. Through this correctness, seeing or knowing becomes something correct so that in the end it looks directly at the highest idea and fixes itself in this “direct alignment.” In so directing itself, apprehending conforms itself to what is to be seen: the “visible form” of the being. What results from this conforming of apprehension, as an \textit{idein}, to the \textit{idea} is a \textit{homoiosis}, an agreement of the act of knowing with the thing itself. Thus, the priority of \textit{idea} and \textit{idein} over \textit{alētheia} results in a transformation in the essence of truth.\textsuperscript{257}

The allegory of the cave also demonstrates, however, that the pursuit of the true knowledge of the \textit{eidē} is not an easy achievement. In particular, this pursuit is complicated by the \textit{hylē-morphism} of the human condition. For while the soul on Plato's view is both immortal and essentially related to the \textit{eidē}, its incorporation into the body causes a forgetfulness of the \textit{eidē}, and an over-reliance on material perception. Indeed, this is said to be the condition of the prisoners of the cave who are figuratively described as being dependent on the wrong kind of vision. In order to understand this difficulty more precisely, however, one must reflect on the nature of the \textit{visibility} that the ideas make possible.\textsuperscript{258} This begins with Heidegger's observation that the \textit{eidē} themselves are defined by a certain luminosity in their look. Heidegger writes:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{256} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{257} Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," 176-177/GA 9, 230.
  \item \textsuperscript{258} Heidegger only briefly touches on the notion of beauty in "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," and in a somewhat confusing fashion. For having established that the ideas are what shine as the look of something in its essence, and that the good is the true source of both the ideas and their illumination as what is most shining (\textit{phanaton}),
\end{itemize}
Everywhere depends on the shining forth of whatever appears and on making its visibility possible. [...] The “idea” is the visible form that offers a view of what is present. The idea is pure shining in the sense of the phrase “the sun shines.” The “idea” does not first let something else (behind it) “shine in its appearance” [“erscheinen”]; it itself is what shines, it is concerned only with the shining of itself. [...] The essence of the idea consists in its ability to shine and be seen [Schein - und Sichtsamkeit]. This is what brings about presenting, specifically the coming to presence of what a being is in any given instance.

Despite this special radiance surrounding the ideas, Heidegger points out that the *eidē* are ultimately dependent on a higher idea, the good (*tou agathou*). According to Plato, this follows because the good concerns not simply a moral distinction, but an ontological one. It is described as the idea of the ideas, the highest idea. At the same time, it is also described as *beyond being* (*epekeina tēs ouσias*). This is because as the ultimate source (*arche*) and progenitor of all the other ideas, it cannot be a being itself but rather the source of being. In this way, the good is also considered the true source of the shining of the forms. As the famous sun analogy in Book V of the *Republic* explains, the good is to the intellectual realm as the sun is to the visible world, namely both the source of all being (the ideas) and the light enabling the *noetic* vision of such being. Heidegger explains that in a still higher sense then, "The *agathon* is also *tou ontos to phanotaton* (518 c9 [Republic]), 'that which most shines (the most able to shine) of beings.'

---

Heidegger proceeds to observe that: "The essence of the beautiful lies in being *ekphaneσtatōn* (cf. *Phaedrus*), that which, as most of all and most purely shining of and from itself, shows the visible form and thus is unknown" (178/231-232). Accordingly, the exact nature of how the good, the beautiful, and the ideas stand in relation to illumination and brightness remains somewhat conflated and underdeveloped in this essay.

260 Heidegger explains: "According to Plato, the idea of ideas, the highest idea, is the *idea tou agathou*, the idea of the good. The 'good' here does not mean what is orderly in the moral sense, but the valiant, which achieves and can achieve what is proper to it. The *agathon* is the standard as such, what first grants the potency to unfold essentially as *idea*, as prototype. What grants such potency is the primally potent. But now, insofar as the ideas constitute Being as *ousia*, the *idea tou agathou*, the highest idea, stands *epekeina tēs ouσias*, beyond Being. Thus Being itself, not in general but as *idea*, comes into opposition to something else which it itself, Being, remains assigned. The highest idea is the archetype of the prototypes" (*Introduction to Metaphysics*, 210-211/GA 40, 205).
261 Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," 175/GA 9, 228. Heidegger adds: "In Greek thought *agathon* means that which is capable of something and enables another to be capable of something. Every *idea*, the visible form of something, provides a look at what is in each case. Thus in Greek thinking the 'ideas' enable something to appear in its whatness and thus to be present in its constancy. The ideas are what is in everything that is. Therefore, what
At the heart of this interpretation is a complex conception of visibility that reveals the need for a different kind of radiance found in the beautiful. On the one hand, the *eidos* or *idea* is first and foremost regarded as the essential look undergirding all appearances. At the same time, this look and the looking proper to it, is rigorously distinguished from the ordinary power of sight surrounding the material appearances of the earthly world. For the kind of visibility appealed to in the discussion of the ideas concerns an intellectual visibility; it concerns *noesis*. Such a distinction explains then just why the ideas, which are described as the most visible and luminous entities in being, are also the most difficult to apprehend in the material world of sensuous vision. To emphasize this point, Heidegger cites Plato’s *Phaedrus* (250b):

\[
\textit{dikaiosynēs men oun kai sōphrosynēs kai hosa alla timia psychais ouk enesti phengos ouden en tois téide homoiōmasin.} \text{’In justice and in temperance, and in whatever men ultimately must respect above all else, there dwells no radiance whenever men encounter them as fleeting appearances.’}
\]

This is because while the luminosity of these looks (and ultimately of the good) is the condition for the possibility of all material appearance and visibility, within the *experience* of the latter this luminosity is also what is least manifest.  

It is this explanation that ultimately brings us to the special position of the beautiful. For Heidegger notes that, on one hand, the essence of the human soul is to comport itself towards being "as his most intrinsic possession." On the other hand, however, precisely because the
soul is incorporated into the body, the human stands for the most part in oblivion of being. Accordingly, Heidegger concludes that for Plato there turns out to be the deepest "need for whatever makes possible such recovery, perpetual renewal, and preservation of the view upon Being." And yet, in order for this recovery to be possible "particular conditions must be fulfilled" in how "Being gives itself..." These conditions require that this showing "can only be something which in the immediate, fleeting appearances of things encountered also brings Being, which is utterly remote, to the fore most readily." But this "according to Plato, is the beautiful."

Heidegger observes that the special status of the beautiful for Plato is supported by the fact that it "is discussed neither in the context of the question of art nor in explicit connection with the question of truth. Rather, the beautiful is discussed with the range of the original question of man's relation to beings as such." This is seen nowhere more clearly than in the Phaedrus dialogue, which Heidegger argues is Plato's "most accomplished one in all essential respects." It is here, in the context of a discussion about the relation between logos kalos and rhetorike - beautiful speech and rhetoric - that Plato states, "'Nun de kallos monton tautēn esche moiran, hōst ekphanestaton einai kai erasmiōtaton (250d). 'But to beauty alone has the role been allotted [i.e., in the essential order of Being's illumination] to be the most radiant, but also the

illusion that there is no such thing as Being. We translate the Greek word lēthē as 'forgetting,' although in such a way that 'to forget' is thought in a metaphysical, not psychological manner. The majority of men sink into oblivion, although - or precisely because - they constantly have to do solely with the things that are in their vicinity. [...] But those who lapse into oblivion of Being do not even know of the appearance as an appearance. For otherwise they would at the same time have to know of Being, which comes to the fore even in fleeting appearances, although 'just barely.' They would then emerge from oblivion. Instead of being slaves to oblivion, they would preserve mnēmē in recollective thought on Being" (194/199).

265 Ibid., 195/199.
266 Ibid., 194/198.
267 Ibid., 194-195/199.
268 Ibid., 192/197.
269 Ibid., 191/196.
most enchanting." At first glance, the superlative radiance assigned to beauty here appears to contradict the claims cited above regarding the shining of the *eidē* and the good. However, this tension is quickly averted when one recognizes that the unique quality of the beautiful is found in the way that its radiance cuts across both the sensory and supersensory orders, the world of appearances and the *eidē*. As Heidegger observes, "the beautiful is called that which is most radiant, that which shines in the realm of immediate, sensuous, fleeting appearances," and yet it also "reaches as far as the highest and farthest remoteness of Being."

On Heidegger's reading of Plato then, the beautiful once again exhibits a double nature. Showing up variously in the body of a beloved, a custom, or a law, the radiance of the beautiful captures the attention of human being and draws it to its appearance. In this erotic power, the human experiences its own ecstatic essence by being drawn out beyond itself and into a concern for these beings. As Heidegger puts it, the human "is cast beyond himself, so that he is stretched as it were, between himself and Being and is outside himself. Such elevation beyond oneself and such being drawing toward Being itself is erōs." At the same time, however, the human being does not necessarily remain in the appearance of the material world here. For the experience of the beautiful also offers a potentially liberating recollection of the true being of the *eidē*.

In a footnote to his translation of the *Nietzsche* Lectures, David Farrell Krell observes that Heidegger plays on the terms *entrücken* and *berücken* to help indicate this disparate movement at the heart of beauty's *ekphanestaton kai erasmiōtaton*. In this play, the beautiful is depicted as effectively drawing together the two orders of being for Plato via the two orders of

---

271 Ibid., 196/200.
272 Ibid., 194/198.
273 Ibid., 195-196/199.
274 Ibid., 196fn. Translator's note.
visibility, *aisthēsis* and *noesis*, resulting in a powerfully chiasmic experience. As Heidegger emphasizes, however, this is only possible because beauty beckons from the interstices of visibility, from the site of the "*mē on* (*eidōlon)*," which one will recall is both the site of non-being and the not yet nothing.\(^{275}\) It is also important to recognize that these are the same terms (*entrücken* and *berücken*) that Heidegger uses to describe the beautiful in his early work, and that he will continue to appeal to in his subsequent investigations into art and technology. Indeed, despite its metaphysical-aesthetical context, Heidegger notes that to the extent that Plato still thinks being (*on*) in connection with beauty (*kalos*) as *to ekphanestation kai erasmiōtaton*, "he also still thinks *to kalon* non-aesthetically."\(^{276}\)

Based on these observations, Heidegger concludes that "the essence of the beautiful [for Plato] has become clear. It is what makes possible the recovery and preservation of the view upon Being, which devolves from the most immediate fleeting appearances and which can vanish in oblivion."\(^{277}\) It is ultimately the structural solution to the *chōrismos* that divides the order of the ideas and material appearances. With this finding, however, one can also see how the thinking of the beautiful is transformed into a metaphysical and aesthetic framework. This begins with the recognition that beauty no longer constitutes the essential structure of coming-into-appearance for *alētheia*. Rather, in Plato, the thinking of *alētheia* understood as the dynamic unconcealment of *physis* is transformed into an eternally fixed set of *eidē* undergirding all material appearance. As a result, truth is reconceived as correctness, while the beautiful becomes an intermediate structure that serves as a reminder of true being from within the material realm of appearance (*aisthēsis*). Thus Heidegger concludes:

\(^{275}\) Ibid., 198/202.
Truth and beauty are in essence related to the selfsame, to Being; they belong together in one, the one thing that is decisive: to open Being and to keep it open. Yet in that very medium where they belong together, they must diverge for man, they must separate from one another. For the openedness of Being, truth, can only be nonsensuous illumination, since for Plato Being is nonsensuous. Because Being opens itself only to the view upon Being, and because the latter must always be snatchèd from oblivion of Being, and because for that reason it needs the most direct radiance of fleeting appearances, the opening of Being must occur at that site where, estimated in terms of truth, the mé on (eidōlon), i.e. nonbeing, occurs. But that is the site of beauty.278

Looking backwards, one might suggest that this special position of the beautiful found at the interstices of being and non-being, serves not only as a reminder of the Platonic ideas, but also as a strange reminder of that older thinking of being that included appearance, becoming, and semblance. Looking forward, however, this transformation of the beautiful prepares the way for the ensuing aesthetic tradition. Separated from truth, beauty becomes the special mode of apprehension belonging to the sensuous, a claim that serves as the very definition of modern aesthetics. At the same time, beauty is characterized here not so much by a cognitive experience as by an immediate and overwhelming intensity, an outpouring of erotic emotion that transports the human soul onto a glimpse of the eidē. Such a description is a clear pre-figuration of both the modern account of beauty as a special feeling, and the Idealist-Romanticist view of art as an experience of communion with the Absolute. Finally, all of this takes place within a spectacle of visibility, in which the older aural and spatial metaphors of beauty are replaced with an emphasis on the theoretical view that will become central for the subject-object relation of modern aesthetics.279

278 Ibid. 198/201.
279 Heidegger writes: "That Plato's question concerning art marks the beginning of 'aesthetics' does not have its grounds in the fact that it is generally theoretical, which is to say, that it springs from an interpretation of Being; it results from the fact that the 'theoretical,' as a grasp of the Being of beings, is based on a particular interpretation of Being. The idea, the envisioned outward appearance, characterizes Being precisely for the kind of vision which recognizes in the visible as such pure presence. 'Being' stands in essential relation to, and in a certain way means as much as, self-showing and appearing, the phainesthai of what is ekphanes. One's grasp of the Ideas, with regard to the possible accomplishment of that grasp, though not to its established goal, is grounded upon erōs [...]. What is
IV. Conclusion: Art and Beauty?

On Heidegger's reading, the aesthetic transformation of the beautiful described above is both prepared for and not yet fully realized in Plato. It is important to ask then to what extent this development remains incipient or inchoate here. In order to answer this question, and to prepare for a transition into the consideration of Heidegger's examination of art, aesthetics, and technology in the modern age, I wish to conclude this chapter with a reflection on beauty's ambiguous relationship with art in Plato's treatment of technē.

It has been observed that Heidegger does not believe the Greeks have a distinct notion of art in the way that the concept has been thought since the modern period. This is not to say that the Greeks did not engage in the creation of those entities that we traditionally call artworks. Clearly, they were surrounded by a rich culture of poetry, drama, sculpture, architecture, and painting. It is even commonly suggested that Aristotle's Poetics represents the first critical attempt at an explication of the artwork. According to Heidegger, however, the difference is that the early Greeks did not view art as a separate domain from the rest of life; that is, they did not view it as a specialized field of production and study. Rather, as Heidegger's readings of Greek tragedy attempt to illustrate, a work like Sophocles’ Antigone was intimately bound up with who the Greeks were as a people, with the very being of anthropou deinon and the polis.

Amidst the basic concepts highlighted by Heidegger above (hylē, morphē, idea, eidos, kalos), however, he notes how one of these concepts, in particular, undergoes a transformation.
that prepares the way for the modern concept of the art-object: \textit{teknē}. Throughout his readings, Heidegger reiterates that \textit{teknē} for the Greeks does not begin as a concept narrowly identified with a produced object, with an art-object, but that it belongs to the knowing comportment of human Dasein's standing-out toward \textit{physis} in general.\textsuperscript{282} In the Nietzsche lectures, he writes:

\begin{quote}
We customarily appeal to the word \textit{teknē} as the Greek designation of what we call “art.” What \textit{teknē} means we suggested earlier [...]. If by “art” we mean primarily an ability in the sense of being well versed in something, of thoroughgoing and therefore masterful know-how, then this for the Greeks is \textit{teknē}.
\end{quote}

Heidegger notes, however, that "with the emergence of the distinction between matter and form, the essence of \textit{teknē} undergoes an interpretation in a particular direction; it loses the force of its original, broad significance."\textsuperscript{284} Of course, Heidegger is careful to observe that Plato also often uses \textit{teknē} in its broader sense of the standing-towards being in a knowing and seeking way. In this regard, it overlaps with other basic words for knowledge in Plato's dialogues like \textit{epistemē}. However, Heidegger also observes that the notion of \textit{teknē} undergoes an interpretation in a specific direction as part of Plato's metaphysics.

According to Heidegger, Plato’s interpretation of \textit{teknē} and \textit{art} as a specifically productive kind of being is an unstable one. This can be seen by comparing Plato's different discussions of art in the \textit{Republic} and the \textit{Phaedrus}. As is well known, in the former Plato asks about the ability of artists to produce knowledge in comparison with two other kinds of creators: Gods and craftworkers. Importantly, Heidegger emphasizes that the question of \textit{production} at

\textsuperscript{282} Heidegger writes: "With the distinction of \textit{hylē-morphē}, which pertains to beings as such, a second concept is coupled which comes to guide all inquiry into art: art is \textit{teknē}. [...] In order to catch hold of its true significance, it is advisable to establish the concept that properly counters it. The latter is named in the word \textit{physis}. We translate it with 'nature,' and think little enough about it. For the Greeks, \textit{physis} is the first and the essential name for beings themselves and as a whole. For them the being is what flourishes on its own, in no way compelled, what rises and comes forward, and what goes back into itself and passes away. It is the rule that rises and resides in itself" (Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 80-82/GA 6.1, 78-79).

\textsuperscript{283} Ibid., 164-165/166-167.

\textsuperscript{284} Ibid., 82/80.
stake here does not concern the ability to build or make some material object, but the ability to pro-duce or bring-forth (Her-vorstellen) the look of the eidos underlying all things.\textsuperscript{285} It is for this reason, Plato argues, that the material the craftsperson and artist use in their creations darkens and occludes the non-material luster of the idea. However, it is also for this reason that the craftsperson is said to be superior to the artist, insofar as the former still keeps an eye towards (idein) the idea (idea) in the construction of their creation. Because of this fact, the artifact created by the craftsperson maintains a certain connection with the idea, which, in turn, helps it to point back to the idea for its user. The artist, by contrast, does not look to the idea, but only to the material creation of the craftsperson. In this way, the artist neither works from the idea, nor is capable of producing it in the object that he creates.\textsuperscript{286} Hence, Plato says that the artist is not a démiurgos, but a mimētes. Heidegger explains this distinction as follows:

The distance from Being and its pure visibility is definitive for the definition of the essence of mimētes. What is decisive for the Greek-Platonic concept of mimēsis or imitation is not reproduction or portraiture, not the fact that the painter provides us with the same thing once again; what is decisive is that this is precisely what he cannot do, that he is even less capable than the craftsman of duplicating the same thing.\textsuperscript{287}

Two important points must be added to these reflections. The first is that art is not overtly discussed in terms of beauty in the Republic. It is first and foremost discussed in regards to its ability to produce the look of the eidos, that is, in terms of its relation to technē, truth, and

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{285} Heidegger writes: "Something produced 'is' because the idea lets it be seen as such, lets it come to presence in its outward appearance, lets it 'be.' Only to that extent can what is itself produced be said 'to be.' Making and manufacturing therefore mean to bring the outward appearance to show itself in something else, namely, in what is manufactured, to 'pro-duce' the outward appearance, not in the sense of manufacturing it but of letting it radiantly appear. What is manufactured 'is' only to the extent that in it the outward appearance, Being, radiates" (\textit{Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art}, 176/GA 6.1, 178).
  \item \textsuperscript{286} Heidegger writes: "May he [the artist/painter] therefore be called a démiourgos? Does he work for the démos, participating in the public uses of things in communal life? No! For neither does he have disposition over the pure essence, as the god does (he rather darkens it in the stuff of colors and surfaces), nor does he have disposition over and use of what he brings about with respect to what it is. The painter is not démiourgos, but mimētes hou ekeinoi démiourgoi, 'a copier of things of which those others are the producers for the public'" (\textit{Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art}, 184-185/GA 6.1, 187).
  \item \textsuperscript{287} Ibid. 184/187.
\end{itemize}
being. And yet, precisely because mimetic art is a type of sensuous appearance incapable of bringing the *eidos* into shining recognition, mimetic art is ultimately unbeautiful for Plato. The second point is that amidst Plato's discussion of the three types of creators - gods, craftspersons, and artists - there is a fourth figure that must not be forgotten: The philosopher. Indeed, implicit in this discussion, and explicit throughout the *Republic*, is a larger investigation concerning just where the philosopher stands in her ability to produce the look of the *eidē* in her own soul and in the soul of others.

All of these points are drawn together more intimately in the dialogue that Heidegger calls the most significant for Plato: The *Phaedrus*. For it is in the *Phaedrus* that the question of the relation between the art of speech (rhetoric), beauty, and *technē* is most closely examined. At the heart of this dialogue is a discussion between Socrates and Phaedrus regarding *kalos legein* and *rhetorike*, beautiful speech and rhetoric. As Heidegger points out, however, the dialogue also touches on almost everything essential in Platonic philosophy. Heidegger writes:

> All those things - the beautiful, the soul, and love - are discussed, and not merely incidentally. But the dialogue speaks also of *technē*, art, in great detail; also of *logos*, speech and language, with great penetration; of *alētheia*, truth, in a quite essential way; of *mania* - madness, rapture, ecstasy - in a most compelling manner; and finally, as always, of the *ideai* and of Being.288

In the *Nietzsche* lectures, Heidegger touches on these different relations briefly, noting that "the essential directive in the procedure [of the Platonic method] is granted by language, through which man comports himself toward beings in general."289 However, he offers a more penetrating investigation of the dialogue in relation to the foregoing connections in his 1932 lecture course on the *Phaedrus*.290 Here, Heidegger begins with the important observation that in

---

288 Ibid., 191/194
289 Ibid., 172/174.
290 *Platons Phaidros* (1932) in *GA 83*. 
this dialogue “beautiful speech [kalos legein] is grasped as the entechnon.”²⁹¹ Pursuing this observation further, however, Heidegger states that, "Entechnon indicates thereby the manner of constitution determinative of a good discourse."²⁹² He clarifies that "what is not asked about here is the determination of beautiful speech as discourse, that is insofar as discourse is discourse, but rather its τρόπος, that is, the general character of the constituting-being of something like discourse."²⁹³ At this more fundamental level then, Heidegger argues that the dialogue shows that beauty "belongs in the horizon of the how-constituting-being of beings" and its "production."²⁹⁴

On one hand, all of this should not be surprising when one considers Heidegger's exegesis of the beautiful discussed in the previous section. What is interesting, however, is how Heidegger explains beauty's relationship with technē in the specific context of the art of rhetoric here. For he observes that the way in which beauty belongs to the constitution of beings is not as a material property of a given set of objects or actions, but rather as part of the disclosure that takes place when an appearance effectively produces (technē) the look of the eidē. It is for this reason that Heidegger says "a certain leeway [Spielraum] is given to the manner of the beautiful" in the Phaedrus, a leeway that explains why some rhetoric is recognized as good discourse, and others as bad.²⁹⁵ It is precisely in this leeway of the beautiful then, that Heidegger believes an answer is won about the status of rhetoric in the Phaedrus. That is, it is found here that rhetoric is not in and of itself technē, but that it can become technē. The manner in which rhetoric becomes technē, however, is through knowledge of the soul and its movement in speech. For

²⁹¹ Ibid., 320. My translation.
²⁹² Ibid. My translation.
²⁹³ Ibid. My translation.
²⁹⁴ Ibid., 323. My translation.
²⁹⁵ Ibid., 323-324. My translation.
only in this way, Heidegger argues, can the trōpos of rhetoric align with the trōpos of technē as: *psychagogia tis dia logon*, a turning of the soul towards the ideas via beautiful speech.\textsuperscript{296}

Together, these reflections on the nature of beauty, technē, and rhetoric help reveal both a greater complexity and uncertainty surrounding Plato's *decision* about art. On the one hand, it has been shown that technē for Plato concerns not just any knowledge, but specifically a knowledge that keeps an eye towards the *eidē*. However, because beauty is the special mode of appearance in the sensuous world that serves as the reminder of the *eidē*, technē is ultimately tied to the beautiful. In the *Phaedrus*, it is found that the art of rhetoric is not necessarily technē, but only has the possibility of becoming technē. The way that it becomes technē is if and when it is informed by what the philosopher studies, namely the nature of the soul and the proper movement of the soul through beautiful speech.\textsuperscript{297} The conclusion is a radical one then. For Heidegger's reading of Plato ultimately suggests that the ancient quarrel between philosophy and art is to be settled either by the admission of art's inferiority to philosophy, or by a gesture in which art ultimately joins the pursuit of philosophy such that the difference between the two threatens to collapse.

\textsuperscript{296} Ibid., 331. Elsewhere in his reading of the *Theaetetus*, Heidegger makes a similar observation when he writes: "In estimating the beauty of a person, everything depends on his *legein*. That he 'speaks beautifully' does not mean that he uses brilliant words in the manner of an orator. *Legein* means to gather, to present and reveal something as gathered, and in this way to show it to others. Whoever shows something as beautifully gathered is himself beautiful and capable. Only someone who is inwardly gathered and connected is capable of such a thing, i.e. someone who possesses that illuminative power of essence which alone makes him fit (*agathos*) for human existence. [...] Since the Greeks did not at all 'enjoy' works of art as we do, *kalos* is a determination which does not primarily relate to works of art, but concerns the Dasein of man. [...] The *kalos legein* is the genuine beauty of human existence, precisely because man in his essence is *Zoon logon echon*, the 'living being possessed of speech', i.e. to whose innermost essence there belongs speech. In so far as man speaks out about the beings to which he comports, and thus also about himself, he deconceals beings and makes them manifest, thereby letting *truth* occur" (*The Essence of Truth: On Plato's Cave Analogy and Theaetetus*, 143/GA 43, 198).

\textsuperscript{297} Heidegger writes: "Behind these questions, how the speaker can lead the listener to the true matter, stands the question: how can we approach *alēthes* in general more deeply; the question of *technē rhetorike* is that of the method of the philosopher, about what is found in their *diasiresis* and *sunagoge*, (GA 83, 338). My translation.
In the end, these reflections explain how and why Heidegger believes that the metaphysical inauguration of aesthetics both begins with Plato and yet remains incipient. As we have seen, the beautiful still plays an essential role in Plato's thinking, one that is essentially connected to truth and being. However, in the transformation of being and truth that takes place in Plato's thinking, beauty also assumes a marginally intermediate position in the realm of the sensuous as an attestation of a higher supersensuous being. The knowledge that accompanies this ontological shift characterizes the notion of technē, which is now limited to the specific kind of knowledge that corresponds with the successful production of the look of the eidos. Indeed, it is the inability to achieve such a production that ultimately informs Plato's own critique of mimetic art in the Republic, while it is the open possibility of this achievement that characterizes the ambivalent structure of rhetoric in the Phaedrus.

According to Heidegger, the transformation of the thinking of this beautiful production in a specifically material way does not become explicit until modernity, even as the possibility for this transformation has been prepared for here. In an important passage from the epilogue to "The Origin of the Work of Art," he writes:

The beautiful does lie in form, but only because the forma once took its light from Being as the beingness of beings. Being at that time was appropriated as eidos. The idea fits itself into the morphē. The synolon, the unitary whole of morphē and hylē, namely the ergon, is in the manner of energeia. This mode of presence becomes the actualitas of the ens actu. The actualitas becomes reality. Actuality becomes objectivity. Objectivity becomes lived experience. In the way in which, for the world determined by the West, beings are as the actual, there is concealed a peculiar confluence of beauty with truth.²⁹⁸

In this highly condensed passage, Heidegger adumbrates the entire development of Western metaphysics from Plato to modernity, while indicating the persistent unity of this thinking at the same time. Looking forward to the next chapter, in the modern period, especially

with figures like Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche, Heidegger sees this aesthetic
inauguration come to its consummation in the narrow identification of the beautiful with the
sensuous production of the work of art and modern technology. As we shall see, however, the
fundamental decisions and distinctions that have been drawn in Heidegger's reading of the
ancient Greeks here informs his interpretation of this development of modern aesthetics in a
preeminent way. At the same time, it will also be shown that Heidegger's reading of the pre-
Socratic and tragic tradition allows him to think the question of art and beauty in a different way
today, one that challenges the dominant history of aesthetics and points to the possibility of a
different relationship with the beautiful.
Chapter 4
Chapter 4
From Aesthetics to Technology: Beauty in the Modern Age

I. Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was seen that Heidegger's re-reading of the Greeks in the 1930's belongs to his investigation of the history of being (Seinsgeschichte) after Being and Time. In his later work, however, this auseinandersetzung with history is also concerned with a question more immediately about our own time, namely with how the interpretation of being as en-framing (Ge-stell) has been sent (geschickt) to the modern technological epoch from the early metaphysical interpretation of being as form (eidos). In his reading of the Greeks, Heidegger shows how this destiny was prepared in Plato's re-interpretation of the initially playful thinking of physis, found for example in Heraclitus and Sophocles, into a thinking of the pure presence of the eidē. At the center of this transformation, however, is Heidegger's thesis that, in a certain sense, metaphysics begins as aesthetics - a claim that Heidegger associates with Plato's reinterpretation of beauty as the erotic attestation and production (technē) of the look of the eidē in the sensuous world of appearances.299

Building on this reading of the Greeks, Heidegger argues that the aesthetic quality of metaphysics does not find its true dominance until the modern period. This culmination is characterized by two stages, the first of which is marked by the emergence of a distinct concept of the artwork and its special predication of the beautiful, as heard in the phrase Schöne Kunst or

299 Heidegger writes, for example: "The name 'aesthetics,' meaning meditation on art and the beautiful, is recent. It arises in the eighteenth century. But the matter which the word so aptly names, the manner of inquiry into art and the beautiful on the basis of the state of feeling in enjoyers and producers, is old, as old as meditation on art and the beautiful in Western thought. Philosophical meditation on the essence of art and the beautiful even begins as aesthetics" (Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 79/GA 6.1, 76-77).
fine art. As the special domain of beauty, the work of art is set over against those other domains of life and their predicates, such as the natural science study of factual truth or the investigation of normative judgment in human action. In this first stage then, beauty is further removed from the broad relation that it initially enjoyed with truth and being in the early Greek thinking of alēthea, and becomes reserved for a special kind of experience recognized as aesthetic experience (ästhetischen erlebnis).

In the second stage, occurring over the course of the last two centuries, both the unique relationship between beauty and the work of art, and the priority of the work of art for aesthetic experience itself, are replaced by modern technology in what Heidegger describes as a culmination of the metaphysics of beauty. In this transformation, however, one finds both a sublimation of the subjective pleasure surrounding beauty, as it is universalized in mass culture, and a transformation of subjectivity itself into a site of aesthetic material. In an important passage from Mindfulness, Heidegger summarizes these developments:

In the epoch of the completion [vollendet] of modernity what is hitherto metaphysically ownmost to art becomes complete. The sign of this is the disappearance of the work of art but not of art itself. Art becomes a manner in which machination completes itself in a thorough construction of beings unto the conditioned, secure disposability of the organized. [...] “Nature” transforms itself according to these “installations,” plants itself entirely into them and comes to light only in them and is held in their purview. With and through these installations and according to their style, nature becomes “beautiful.” According to the metaphysical character of art which is totally fulfilled in the completion, beauty even now remains the basic determination [Schönheit bleibt auch jetzt noch - gemäss dem in der Vollendung sich vollends erfüllenden metaphysischen Charakter der Kunst - die Grundbestimmung]. Beauty is what pleases and must please the being of the power of man, the predator. [...] Indeed in the gestalt of modern technicity and “history” art becomes technē again - not by simply relapsing unto technē but by completing itself.300

Given Heidegger's strong claim here that beauty constitutes "the basic determination" of this metaphysical culmination, a more precise elucidation of this conception of beauty becomes

an important task. At the same time however, in his later work, Heidegger attempts to uncover a more profound thinking of the artwork than has been thus far determined by aesthetics, a thinking that locates art's origin not in the artist or spectator, but in the work that the artwork itself performs. Indeed, in this ontological reconsideration of the artwork, Heidegger believes one may uncover a site of resistance to the dominance of aesthetic technology today by identifying a mode of disclosure of being that is no longer subordinated to a production-oriented interpretation of technē. Accordingly, the explication of the basic determination of beauty in modern aesthetics and technology also serves as an important propaedeutic for understanding Heidegger's account of a more originary thinking of the artwork (Chapter 5).

Following these basic observations, in this chapter, I will examine what Heidegger calls the dominant [Herrschaft] aesthetics of the modern period, a development that he believes further occludes the initially complex character of the beautiful found in the early Greek and Christian traditions. While Heidegger associates a wide range of thinkers and artists with this development, the most significant for this examination are Descartes, Kant, and Nietzsche. Beginning with Descartes, Heidegger believes that in the priority of the transcendental subject and its experience for modern thinking, the general aesthetic character of modernity is revealed. However, in Kant's description of beauty as the disinterested pleasure derived from the inability to cognize the form of an object, Heidegger suggests one finds a more specific continuity between the proto aesthetics of Plato and modern aesthetics. Finally, Heidegger contends that this is a continuity that Nietzsche draws together in his own thinking of beauty and

---

301 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 84/GA 6.1, 82.
302 See Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
303 See Kant, Critique of Judgment.
form in *the will to power*, a development that ultimately helps explain the power of aesthetic technology today.  

Pursuing this last claim more closely, I proceed to examine Heidegger's argument that in the will to power of technology, a more insidious metaphysical will to new appearances, forms, and values is exposed beneath the will of the subject - a dynamic that remains rooted in the captivating power of the beautiful. Specifically, Heidegger contends that in the late age of metaphysics, all disclosure is dominated by the leveling character of technology, one that pursues the endless production of beautiful forms for the sake of production itself. At the same time, in its subordination to this metaphysical will, the subject itself becomes only one more resource for the generation of this pleasing appearance.

Tracing the transformation of early and modern aesthetics into this culmination of technology, I conclude by highlighting Heidegger's suggestion that this development can only be challenged from within, specifically through a re-interrogation of what art and technology originally share in their common root of *technē*. This suggestion prepares the way then, for a discussion of Heidegger's reconsideration of an ontological conception of the artwork, a reading that promises a different relationship with the beautiful (Chapter 5).

### II. From Proto Aesthetics to Dominant Aesthetics

Up to this point, it has been shown that Heidegger believes aesthetics begins with Plato's interpretation of being according to the *eidē* (Chapter 3). More precisely, Heidegger contends that this aesthetic tendency grows out of Plato's thinking of the production (*technē*) of the look of the super-sensuous *eidē*, an experience that depends on the intermediate power of the beautiful to draw (*eros*) the human soul both towards and beyond its appearance in the sensuous world.

---

Consequently, while beauty still serves as an indicator of truth and being for Plato, Heidegger believes that beauty loses its original place in *alētheia* (found especially in Heraclitus and Sophocles), and becomes associated uniquely with the realm of the sensuous and the special feeling of the spectator.

According to Heidegger, however, this incipient beginning of aesthetics finds a more extreme expression in modernity with the rise of the *subject*. He offers his most concentrated examination of these questions in the first volume of the *Nietzsche* lectures, entitled *The Will to Power as Art*. In a section entitled "Six Basic Developments in the History of Aesthetics," Heidegger observes that while aesthetics begins with the Greeks, one encounters "the formation of a dominant aesthetics and of the aesthetic relation to art in modern times..." This observation prompts one to ask just how this happens, and what exactly defines this *dominant aesthetics*? Referring indirectly to Descartes, Heidegger begins his response with the observation that modern metaphysics:

[B]ecomes manifest in the way in which certitude of all Beings and all truth is grounded in the self-consciousness of the individual ego: *ego cogito ergo sum*. Such finding ourselves before ourselves in our own state and condition, the *cogito me cogitare*, also provides the first “object” which is secured in its Being. I myself, and my states, are the primary and genuine beings. Everything else that may be said to be is measured against the standard of this quite certain being. My having various states - the ways I find myself to be with something - participates essentially in defining how I find the things themselves and everything I encounter to be.\(^{306}\)

As Heidegger makes clear in this passage, the privilege of the subject in modern philosophy ultimately belongs to the radical attempt to ground being and knowledge with a new kind of

\(^{305}\) Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, 84/GA 6.1, 82.

\(^{306}\) Ibid., 83/81.
certainty and security, one that Descartes argues extends only from what is firstly and truly self-evident; namely, a self-thinking and self-experiencing subject.\textsuperscript{307}

With the emergence of the modern subject, however, the world is divided and measured differently than it was for the Greeks and Medieval Christians. The measure of the world is taken neither from beings themselves (\textit{physis/phainesthai}), nor from a theological ground (\textit{eidē/theoi}); rather, it stems from the different ways that the subject \textit{experiences} such a world.\textsuperscript{308} That is, the world is no longer defined by the mysterious unfolding of beings, or the unknowable omniscience of god; it is determined according to how "man fall[s] back upon the state and condition of man," and therefore, "the way man freely takes a position toward things, the way he finds and feels them to be..."\textsuperscript{309} As Heidegger carefully explains in texts like "The Question Concerning Technology" and "The Age of the World Picture," it is through a rigorous division of the different kinds of experience that the human has of this world that something like a \textit{worldview (Weltbildes)} - the picture of the world, and the world conceived of as a picture - is made possible in modernity.\textsuperscript{310} This is because, in its essence, the notion of \textit{worldview} does not concern the various cultural historical perspectives found in different epochs. The notion of

\textsuperscript{307} Despite this transformation in modern philosophy, Heidegger is clear that this development grows out of the incipient aesthetic metaphysics commenced with Plato in ancient Greece. He writes: "The metaphysical foundation of Descartes' position is taken over historically from Platonic-Aristotelian metaphysics. Despite its new beginning it attends to the very same question: what is the being. That this question is not explicitly posed in Descartes' \textit{Meditations} only goes to prove how essentially the fundamental position determines a transformation in the answer to it. It is Descartes' interpretation of beings and of truth which first creates the preconditions for the possibility of a theory or metaphysics of knowledge. Through Descartes, realism is for the first time put in the position of having to prove the reality of the external world, of having to rescue being as such" ("The Age of the World Picture," in \textit{Off the Beaten Track}, trans. Kenneth Haynes and Julian Young [Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 74-75/GA 5, 98-99).


\textsuperscript{309} Heidegger, \textit{Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art}, 83/GA 6.1, 81.

\textsuperscript{310} See, for example, Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 67/GA 5, 89. Beginning in the late 1930's, Heidegger develops this analysis in a variety of texts. In particular, this mode of analysis sits at the center of the two later major works, \textit{Mindfulness} and \textit{Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)}, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000).
worldview concerns how, in modernity, the world comes to be thought for the first time as an object of representation for a self-presenting subject.

Broadly speaking, it is just insofar as the experience of the subject becomes the "court of judicature over beings" that aesthetics is instituted as the dominant character of modern thinking in general. For as was made clear in Heidegger's reading of Plato, what distinguishes the basic character of the aesthetic is how the production (technē) of the look of beings (eidos) comes to be correlated directly with the knowledge and experience of a spectator or subject. Hence, in modernity, aesthetics is implemented in a still deeper way precisely because the subject is no longer dependent on the eidê or a god for the production of this look; the subject is dependent only on its own transcendental being.

However, aesthetics also takes on a more precise meaning in the modern period, one with which we are historically more familiar. As Heidegger observes, this follows from how in the modern division of experience, the notion of the beautiful comes to be associated with the special feeling of sensuous experience surrounding certain encounters with nature and art. As a result, in the modern paradigm, aesthetic knowledge is compared with and contrasted to other kinds of knowledge such as the ethical knowledge of human actions, the logical knowledge of right thinking, or the scientific knowledge of nature. Heidegger summarizes this taxonomy here:

What determines thinking, hence logic, and what thinking comports itself toward, is the true. What determines the character and behavior of man, hence ethics, and what human character and behavior comport themselves toward, is the good. What determines man's feeling, hence aesthetics, and what feeling comports itself toward, is the beautiful. The true, the good, and the beautiful are the objects of logic, ethics, and aesthetics.

In the classification of these various domains of study, the division of the complex unity of being, truth, and beauty in alētheia is implemented in a more rigorous and institutional fashion.

---

311 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 83/GA 6.1, 81.
312 Ibid., 79/75.
Indeed, Dasein's encounter with the world is no longer defined by its general standing-out towards the unconcealment (*alētheia*) of *physis*; instead, the world, and along with it - being, truth, goodness, and beauty - is divided into distinct spheres of experience, which the different fields of research study, and which the ordinary human has in different ways.

Within this paradigm, Heidegger observes the field that comes to study the beautiful is called aesthetics. Recall that in the context of Heidegger's examination of the Greeks (Chapter 3), it was seen that although the Greeks certainly had works that we would classify as *great art* today (for example, Pindar's poems, Sophocles' tragedies, and Phidias' sculptures), they did not have a distinct concept of the beautiful or of the artwork. This claim was supported on one hand, by the fact that beauty - along with truth and being - belonged to the unified structure of *alētheia*. On the other hand, rather than any one specific term for art, Heidegger suggests that the early Greeks had several words and meanings concerning the activity of the knowing, bringing-forth (*hervorbringen*) of appearance more generally (for example, *technē* and *poieisis*), a phenomenon indicating that art belonged to the Greeks in the sense of what Hegel calls an *absolute need*.313

With the progressive privileging of subjective experience for the determination of being in modernity, however, Heidegger argues that the artwork emerges as one more *object* (*Gegenstand*) in the range of possible objects set over against the self-positing transcendental subject. At the same time, he notes that this particular object also turns out to be a problematic one for the catalogue of experience. For on one hand, it clearly belongs to the realm of sensuous, physical objects. That is, it is not a mathematical or logical entity. And yet, on the other hand, it does not appear to fit easily into the categories of natural objects with physical laws, or

---

313 Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, Volume 1, 30. This, of course, is how Heidegger defines *great art* in "The Origin of the Work of Art," a definition that will be examined more closely in Chapter 5.
technically produced artifacts with the ends-means logic of production. For this reason, the art-object comes to be regarded as a special kind of sensuous object, one that in its inability to be conceived under either the laws of reason or nature, is experienced (erlebnis) by the subject in an overflow of emotion allowing it to confront its own transcendental being in a preeminent way, an insightful feeling that the moderns call beauty. Thus Heidegger writes:

Now since in the aesthetic consideration of art the artwork is defined as the beautiful which has been brought forth in art, the work is represented as the bearer and provoker of the beautiful with relation to our state of feeling. The artwork is posited as the “object” for a “subject;” definitive for aesthetic consideration is the subject-object relation, indeed as a relation of feeling. The work becomes an object in terms of that surface which is accessible to “lived experience.”

One immediately recognizes here the indirect reference to Kant's account of aesthetic judgment and the special feeling of the beautiful from the Critique of Judgment. At the same time, the reference to lived experience (erlebnis) connects this account with that wider tradition of romanticist and idealist aesthetics developed as both a continuation and critical response to Kant. Drawing these conceptual tendencies together then, Heidegger intends to indicate a general unity in the thinking of modern aesthetics, one that surrounds the subject's special encounter with nature, and especially art, and leading to an experience that is at once less than

---

314 While Heidegger does not cite him directly here, Heidegger's references to an aesthetike epistemē, or logic of the beautiful, indirectly refers to Alexander Baumgarten, who is often recognized as one of the founders of modern aesthetics. Baumgarten associates the beautiful with a logic of the sensuous, defined as the attempt to cognize perception not at the level of clear and distinct concepts, but directly within the rich multiplicity of sense impressions. Accordingly, Baumgarten illustrates nicely the difficulty in modern philosophy to think the cognitive experience of beauty in relation with other logical and natural relations. See Baumgarten, Aesthetica (Charleston, South Carolina: Nabu Press, 2012); Metaphysics: A Critical Translation with Kant's Elucidations, trans. Courtney D. Fougate and John Hymers (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013).

315 In “The Age of the World Picture,” Heidegger writes: "This means: the being counts as in being only to the degree and extent that it is taken into, and referred back to, this life [of the human], i.e., is lived out [er-lebt], and becomes life-experience [Er-lebnis]" (71/94). For an extended analysis of the concept of erlebnis or lived experience in modern aesthetics, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, trans. Donald Marshall and Joel Weinsheimer (London: Continuum, 2006), 56-61.

316 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 78/GA 6.1, 76.

317 See, for example, Schiller, On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters; Schelling, The Philosophy of Art.
cognition (the feeling of beauty) and more than cognition (the aesthetic reflection or absolute communion provided by the beautiful).

The forgoing observations adumbrate Heidegger's general overview of modern aesthetics. At the heart of this reading, however, is a stronger claim, one that wishes to show the unity of aesthetics in a more pervasive fashion. For Heidegger contends that there exists an essential continuity in the aesthetic character of metaphysics extending from Plato and the Greeks up through the current epoch of technology, one that is indicated more clearly in the enduring relationship between beauty, form, and production. While thus far, I have only pointed to this unity in a general way, by showing how Plato's theoretical spectator is transformed into the aesthetic subject of the modern period, Heidegger offers a more precise examination of this claim in his powerful reading of Nietzsche's aesthetics. Specifically, Heidegger argues that contrary to the common view, Nietzsche's aesthetics does not replace modern aesthetics with an avant-garde anti-aesthetics; rather, he suggests that in Nietzsche's philosophy of art, the aesthetic tradition is both gathered together and exposed in a special way, one which presages our present technological epoch and the integral significance of the beautiful therein.

III. Kant, Nietzsche, and "The Beginning of the Terrible"

As indicated by the subtitle of the first volume of his Nietzsche lectures - *The Will to Power as Art* - Heidegger contends that Nietzsche's thinking positions itself in a direct confrontation with the aesthetic tradition. Specifically, Heidegger notes that Nietzsche views his philosophy as both an overturning of the Platonic-Christian metaphysics that devalues the sensuous world, and a confrontation with the feminine aesthetics of the spectator characteristic of
the modern period. Over against this tradition, Nietzsche characterizes his own thought as a masculine aesthetics of the artist. Heidegger explains:

This is precisely what is decisive in Nietzsche's conception of art, that he sees it in its essential entirety in terms of the artist; this he does consciously and in explicit opposition to that conception of art which represents it in terms of those who “enjoy” and “experience” it. That is a guiding principle of Nietzsche's teaching on art: art must be grasped in terms of creators and producers, not recipients. Nietzsche expresses it unequivocally in the following words (WM, 811): "Our aesthetics heretofore has been a woman's aesthetics, inasmuch as only the recipients of art have formulated their experiences of ‘what is beautiful.’ In all philosophy to date the artist is missing...." Philosophy of art means “aesthetics” for Nietzsche too - but masculine aesthetics, not feminine aesthetics. The question of the artist as the productive, creative one; his experience of what is beautiful must provide the standard.318

Heidegger points out here that despite Nietzsche's challenge to Western thought, his own thinking remains rooted in aesthetic metaphysics. He proceeds to show that this is the case in several ways. First, he notes Nietzsche's continued reliance on a thinking of subjectivity, one, however, that is escalated into the constant imperative for the self-overcoming of the subject via the command and mastery of objects in the will to power. Next, Heidegger stresses that what motivates this self-overcoming for Nietzsche is the special attunement of Rausch or rapture, which he describes as an over-whelming emotional experience of aesthetic self-reflection that drives the subject out beyond itself.319 Finally, and perhaps most provocatively, Heidegger observes that the special attunement of Rausch is ultimately a response to none other than that aesthetic predicate par excellence, the beautiful.320 Thus, while Nietzsche is often viewed as an

---

318 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 70/GA 6.1, 67.
319 Heidegger writes, for example: "To the question of the general essence of rapture, Nietzsche provides a succinct answer (Twilight of the Idols; VIII, 123): 'What is essential in rapture [Rausch] is the feeling of enhancement of force and plenitude'" (98/99). Heidegger emphasizes the subtle differences between the notions of feeling, affect, passion, and emotion in Nietzsche's thinking. In the end, he argues that Rausch is irreducible to any of these, and that it is more properly thought of as an attunement (Befindlichkeit). For in Rausch, the subject is not simply intoxicated or impassioned, but encounters its essence in an act of self-resoluteness. Such a reading is consistent then with Heidegger's discussion of attunement elsewhere in Being and Time, 130-136/GA 2, 178-186.
320 Heidegger writes: "According to the explanations by Nietzsche that we have cited, the beautiful is what determines us, our behavior and our capability, to the extent that we are claimed supremely in our essence, which is
opponent of the modern aesthetics of beauty, and a precursor of the twentieth century avant-garde, Heidegger argues that, in fact, Nietzsche's aesthetics only thinks the modern essence of the beautiful in a deeper way.321

In an attempt to better elucidate the position of the beautiful in Nietzsche's thinking of the will to power, Heidegger appeals to a comparison with Kantian aesthetics, a comparison that further helps indicate the unity of aesthetics in the modern period. Heidegger observes that "when we ask, what does Nietzsche say about the beautiful and about beauty," we find that he "provides us with only isolated statements - proclamations, as it were, - and references. Nowhere do we find a structured and grounded presentation."322 As Heidegger proceeds to explain, however, Nietzsche expresses his position on the beautiful more clearly by way of a contradistinction with another aesthetic thinker, Kant.323 Interestingly, Heidegger argues that Nietzsche's self-differentiation from Kant on this point is actually born from a misunderstanding, one that he inherits from Schopenhauer. The thesis that Heidegger believes Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, misunderstands in Kant is the latter's famous claim that beauty is the special feeling of disinterested pleasure in the subject. For Heidegger observes that it is only a superficial grasp of this claim that allows Nietzsche to object that "since Kant, all talk of art, beauty, knowledge, and wisdom has been smudged and besmirched by the concept of 'devoid of

to say, to the extent that we ascend beyond ourselves. Such ascent beyond ourselves, to the full of our essential capability, occurs according to Nietzsche in rapture [Rausch]. Thus the beautiful is disclosed in rapture. The beautiful itself is what transports us into the feeling of rapture" (Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 113/GA 6.1, 113).


322 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will To Power as Art, 107/GA 6.1, 106-107. Consequently, Heidegger notes that this leads to the fact that "Nietzsche never achieved conceptual clarity here and was never able to ground these matters successfully" (123/123).

323 It is significant to note that Heidegger lectured on Kant's Critique of Judgment in 1936. This course has not yet been published.
interest.” Indeed, over against this Kantian tradition, Heidegger notes that Nietzsche states that "such 'getting rid of interest and the ego' is nonsense and imprecise observation," and "in my view what is beautiful (observed historically) is what is visible in the most honored men of an era, an expression of what is *most worthy* of honor." Heidegger rightly observes that if Nietzsche had understood Kant better, he would have seen that with the notion of *interest* he is actually much closer to Kant's aesthetics than he realizes. Heidegger explains:

Certainly such “getting rid of interest” in the sense of Schopenhauer's interpretation is nonsense. But what Nietzsche describes as the thrill that comes of being in our world is what Kant means by the “pleasure of reflection.” Here also, as with the concept of “interest,” the basic Kantian concepts of “pleasure” and “reflection” are to be discussed in terms of the Kantian philosophical effort and its transcendental procedure, not flattened out with the help of everyday notions. Kant analyzes the essence of the “pleasure of reflection” as the basic comportment toward the beautiful, in *The Critique of Judgment*, sections 37 and 39.

Over against Nietzsche's Schopenhauerian caricature of Kant then, Heidegger reminds one that Kant's notion of *disinterestedness* never means that it is an un-interested experience for the subject. On the contrary, Kant's separation of the aesthetic experience of the beautiful from other kinds of interest (for example, hunger, thirst, or sexual desire) is just what allows the beautiful to indicate the higher interests of the subject. For as Kant explains in the sections cited by Heidegger, it is the inability to subordinate the form of the beautiful object to the pre-determined inclinations and categories of the subject that allows, in turn, for the free play of the subject with its own transcendental faculties. As Heidegger puts it, the experience of the beautiful in Kant

---

325 Ibid., 112/111.
326 Ibid., 111/110.
327 Heidegger writes: "Had Nietzsche inquired of Kant himself, instead of trusting Schopenhauer's guidance, then he would have had to recognize that Kant alone grasped the essence of what Nietzsche in his own way wanted to comprehend concerning the decisive aspects of the beautiful" (111/110).
328 Ibid., 112/112.
ultimately concerns "[...] the supreme effort of our essential nature, the liberation of our selves for the release of what has proper worth in itself, only in order that we may have it purely."  

Despite Heidegger's favorable elucidation of Kant here, it is important to recognize that he also states "even Kant, who because of his transcendental method possessed a larger number of more highly refined possibilities for interpreting aesthetics, remained trapped within the limits of the modern concept of the subject."  

At the same time, Heidegger stresses that in clarifying Nietzsche's misunderstanding of Kant, one must be careful not to collapse their different positions. Indeed, Heidegger argues that Nietzsche does not simply repeat the Kantian aesthetic view, but rather he helps gather together and expose something of the problematic essence of that position. Accordingly, it must be stated still more precisely just how Nietzsche's will to power as art is both a culmination and exposure of the thinking of Western aesthetics.

This task begins with a clarification about what makes the beautiful "worthy of honor" for Nietzsche. It has already been indicated that the answer extends, in part, from the way that beauty contributes to the interestedness of the subject. Specifically, it was noted that beauty is responsible for stimulating the overwhelming attunement of rapture [Rausch], an experience in which the subject is drawn out of its ordinary state of being and prepared for a higher discharge of will to power. As Heidegger observes:

According to the explanations by Nietzsche that we have cited, the beautiful is what determines us, our behavior and our capability, to the extent that we are claimed supremely in our essence, which is to say, to the extent that we ascend beyond ourselves. Such ascent beyond ourselves, to the full of our essential capability, occurs according to Nietzsche in rapture [Rausch]. Thus the beautiful is disclosed in rapture [Rausch]. The beautiful itself is what transports [versetzt] us into the feeling of rapture [Rausch].

329 Ibid., 109/109.
330 Ibid., 123/123-124.
331 Ibid., 113/113.
In Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche then, the beautiful is the determination and inducement of rapture. More precisely, in Nietzsche's aesthetics of the will to power, the beautiful is a necessary component for bringing the subject into an encounter with itself, with its essence, such that it is stimulated to move out beyond itself into an encounter with and command over other beings. This manner in which the beautiful stimulates and throws the subject back onto itself is the first sense in which the beautiful is "worthy of honor." 332

One can already begin to glimpse how Nietzsche moves beyond Kant here. For in Nietzsche, this insight into the higher interest of the subject is only one step on the way to a still higher expression of the will, one that turns out to be beyond the control of the subject. On the side of the subject then, Heidegger observes that for Nietzsche, "[...] the essence of rapture and of beauty" is "ascent beyond oneself. By such ascent we come face to face with that which corresponds to what we take ourselves to be." 333 Coming face-to-face with its essence, however, the subject gives way to a deeper essence, to that basic principle of life in Nietzsche's philosophy, the will to power. Heidegger unpacks Nietzsche's insight into this will in meticulous detail:

Will strives for what it wills not just as for something that it does not yet have. Will already has what it wills. For will wills its willing. Its will is what it has willed. Will wills itself. It exceeds itself. In this way will as will wills above and beyond itself, and therefore at the same time it must bring itself beneath and behind itself. This is why Nietzsche can say (The Will to Power, no 675, from 1887/8): “To will at all amounts to the will to become stronger, the will to grow...” Here “stronger” indicates “more power,” and that means: only power. For the essence of power is to be master over the level of power attained at a particular time. Power is only power when and only for as long as it is an increase in power and commands for itself “more power.” To halt the increase of power only for a moment, merely to stand still at one level of power, is already the beginning of the decline of power. 334

332 Heidegger writes: "In terms of its concept, the beautiful [for Nietzsche] is what is estimable and worthy as such" (113-114/113).
333 Ibid., 116/115.
334 Heidegger, "Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead,'" in Off the Beaten Track, 175/GA 5, 234.
At the heart of Heidegger’s careful exegesis here is a powerful point. Namely, by taking up the modern will of the subject and showing how it belongs to a more fundamental metaphysical will, one that functions through and yet beyond the subject, Nietzsche effectively gathers together the structure of aesthetic subjectivity in modern philosophy, and subverts it. That is, in detailing the necessary ascent beyond itself in the imperative of power, the unified transcendental ego of modern philosophy is thrown over.\(^{335}\) By virtue of its pivotal position in the rapture \([\textit{Rausch}]\) of this will then, the special experience of the beautiful in Nietzsche does not reinforce the subject's transcendental centrality in the world, but exposes what underlies this modern metaphysics of the subject more deeply: The metaphysical will to power. For this reason, Heidegger highlights Nietzsche’s observation elsewhere that if one were to truly "pick up the scent" of the beautiful, it "would nearly finish us off,"\(^{336}\) a claim that he suggests is echoed in Rilke's' \textit{First Elegy}:

\[
\text{...For the beautiful is nothing}
\text{but the beginning of the terrible, a beginning we but barely endure;}
\text{and it amazes us so, since calmly it disdains}
\text{to destroy us...}^{337}
\]

It is striking that in all of this Heidegger once again avoids any mention of the sublime. Indeed, the explicit context of thinkers like Kant, Nietzsche, and Rilke, along with the thematic emphasis on an aesthetic experience that no longer reinforces the place of the subject in the world but challenges it, seems to offer a natural entry point into a discussion of the sublime. As I have previously pointed out, however, this can be explained by the fact that Heidegger's goal is not to locate an alternative aesthetic possibility here, one that would challenge the predominance of the beautiful in modern aesthetics. His focus is more properly aimed at showing the essential

---

\(^{335}\) In "Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead,'" Heidegger observes: "With the subjectivity of the subject, will comes to light as the essence of this subjectivity. Modern metaphysics, as the metaphysics of subjectivity, thinks the being of beings in the sense of the will" (182/243-244).


\(^{337}\) Ibid., 116-117/116.
unity of the aesthetic tradition, a unity that he believes surrounds a complex thinking of the beautiful and that already encompasses valences of what thinkers like Kant attempt to separately identify as the sublime.

In any case, in order to better understand both this complex essence of the beautiful and how it gathers aesthetics together in a far-reaching sense, it is necessary to consider how the will also functions in regard to the relative positing of the object. Indeed, Heidegger observes that it is here that one finds the second and fuller sense in which Nietzsche believes beauty to be "worthy of honor." On one hand, Heidegger notes that because "Kant grasps more keenly the essence of interest and therefore excludes it from aesthetic behavior," he also "makes it possible for such comportment toward the beautiful object to be all the purer and more intimate" than Nietzsche does.\(^ {338}\) As indicated above, this follows from the way that the aesthetic object ceases to be subordinated to the inclinations and conceptualizations that objects ordinarily undergo by the subject. On the other hand, Heidegger believes that, in Nietzsche, this aesthetic transformation of the object is taken to its further consequence. Like Kant, Nietzsche argues that the aesthetic experience begins with a freeing of the object from its accrued meanings and values, a process that Nietzsche suggests involves the necessary moment of the ugly and its nihilating no within the larger aesthetic yes.\(^ {339}\) Unlike Kant, however, Nietzsche shows that this freeing does not remain in a state of open appearance, but is the condition and stimulation for a subsequent re-valuation of the object.

\(^{338}\) Ibid., 113/112-113.

\(^{339}\) Heidegger writes: "What is decisive [for will to power] is not production in the sense of manufacturing but taking up and transforming, making something other than..., other in an essential way. For that reason the need to destroy belongs essentially to creation. In destruction, the contrary, the ugly, and the evil are posited; they are of necessity proper to creation, i.e., will to power, and thus to Being itself. To the essence of Being nullity belongs, not as sheer vacuous nothingness, but as the empowering 'no,'" (61/58).
It is at this point that Heidegger believes Nietzsche's thinking reveals the broader unity of aesthetics, one that ultimately repeats Plato's thinking of beauty in the production of the look of the forms (eidiē). Recall that the notion of eros for Plato functions in a similar capacity as the modern will here, in the drawing of Dasein out beyond itself toward the form of the object (Chapter 3). Also recall that for Plato, it is the beautiful that awakens the ecstatic impulse of eros. With these points in mind, Heidegger argues that despite Nietzsche's attempt to overcome Platonism, he defines the beautiful in the very way that Plato defines it, namely, as the erotic production of form in the realm of the sensuous. As Heidegger observes, this begins with Nietzsche's claim that "for the artist 'beauty' is something outside all hierachal order, since in it opposites are joined," an experience that "fascinates the will to power of the artist (WM, 803)." Ultimately, however, Heidegger observes that what the artist finds in this experience is the possibility for the creation of form. Heidegger explains:

The artist - out of whom, back to whom and within whom Nietzsche always casts his glance, even when he speaks of form and of the work - has his fundamental character in this: he “ascribes to no thing a value unless it knows how to become form” (WM, 817). Nietzsche explains such becoming-form here in an aside as “giving itself up,” “making itself public.” Although at first blush these words seem quite strange, they define the essence of form. [...] [F]orm, forma, corresponds to the Greek morphē. It is the enclosing limit and boundary, what brings and stations a being into that which it is, so that it stands in itself: its configuration. Whatever stands in this way is what the particular being shows itself to be, its outward appearance, eidos, through which and in which it emerges, stations itself there as publicly present, scintillates, and achieves pure radiance.

It is just in relation to this persistent production of form(s) that one finally understands then, what Nietzsche means when he says that the beautiful is what is most worthy and estimable in a man of dignity. For this esteem turns out to be essentially connected to beauty's ability to make "estimates of aesthetic value" (ästhetischen Wertschätzungen), in which the will is able to secure

---

340 Ibid., 117/117.
341 Ibid., 118/118.
and enhance its power.\textsuperscript{342} That is, on Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, the beautiful is esteemed precisely for its power to \textit{estimate}.

In this notion of \textit{power}, Nietzsche believes that he has overcome Platonism precisely by showing how the beautiful production of forms belongs to the very realm of the sensuous that Plato marginalized in favor of the super-sensuous. However, Heidegger observes that with this claim Nietzsche shows himself to remain entangled in the Platonic tradition.\textsuperscript{343} Indeed, as his continued reliance on the central aesthetic concepts of form and beauty show, Nietzsche merely reverses the hierarchy of this tradition without escaping its fundamental logic.\textsuperscript{344} Elsewhere, Heidegger makes this point more explicit by highlighting how Nietzsche's substitution of being with becoming also persists in the metaphysics of the former. As Heidegger explains:

With his doctrine of eternal return Nietzsche in his way thinks nothing else than the thought that pervades the whole of Western philosophy, a thought that remains concealed but is its genuine driving force. Nietzsche thinks the thought in such a way that in his metaphysics he reverts to the beginnings of Western philosophy. [...] When he thinks “the most difficult thought” at the “peak of the meditation,” Nietzsche thinks and meditates on Being, that is, on will to power as eternal recurrence. What does that mean, taken quite broadly and essentially? Eternity, not as a static “now,” nor as a sequence of “nows”

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 121/121. Heidegger elaborates: "Nietzsche suggest that lawfulness of form must be traced back to logical definition, in a way that corresponds to his explanation of thinking and Being. By such tracing back of formal lawfulness, however, Nietzsche does not mean that art is nothing but logic and mathematics. 'Estimates of aesthetic value' - which is to say, our finding something to be beautiful - have as their 'ground floor' those feelings that relate to logical, arithmetical, and geometrical lawfulness (XIV, 133). The basic logical feelings are those of delight 'in the ordered, the surveyable, the bounded, and in repetition.' The expression 'logical feelings' is deceptive. It does not mean that the feelings themselves are logical, that they proceed according to the laws of thought. The expression 'logical feelings' means having a feeling for, letting one's mood be determined by, order, boundary, the overview. Because estimates of aesthetic value are grounded on the logical feelings, they are also 'more fundamental than moral estimates.' Nietzsche's decisive valuations have as their standard enhancement and securement of 'life.' [...] The result, to put it quite roughly, is the following articulated structure of pleasurable feelings: underlying all, the biological feelings of pleasure that arise when life asserts itself and survives; above these, but at the same time in service to them, the logical, mathematical feelings; these in turn serve as the basis for aesthetic feelings. Hence we can trace the aesthetic pleasure derived from form back to certain conditions of life-process as such."

\textsuperscript{343} In the same text, Heidegger writes: "Because of its necessary involvement in the movement of Western history, and on account of the unavoidable critique of prior valuations, the new valuation is necessarily a revaluation of all values. Hence the subtitle, which in the final phase of Nietzsche's philosophy becomes the main title, designates the general countermovement to nihilism within nihilism" (27/24).

\textsuperscript{344} Heidegger writes: "Nietzsche takes this reversal as the overcoming of metaphysics. However, every reversal of this kind will only be a self-blinding entanglement in what is the same though become unrecognizable" ("Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead,'" 173/GA 5, 232).
rolling off into the infinite, but as the “now” that bends back into itself: what is that if not the concealed essence of Time? Thinking Being, will to power, as eternal return, thinking the most difficult thought of philosophy, means thinking Being as Time. Nietzsche thinks that thought but does not think it as the question of Being and Time. Plato and Aristotle also think that thought when they conceive Being as ousia (presence), but just as little as Nietzsche do they think it as a question.345

According to Heidegger then, Nietzsche both gathers together Western history in his understanding of will to power, and yet remains within its metaphysics of presence and aesthetics of beautiful production. At the same time, Heidegger contends that Nietzsche helps expose the illusion behind modernity's privileging of the willing subject, revealing the underlying metaphysical-aesthetical will to power that continues to shape this history. These insights take on an added significance, however, when one realizes that they not only look backward, but also forward, to the present age of modern technology. For as we shall see in the following section, Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's philosophy of art actually serves as the touchstone for his assessment of the dominance of technology in the present epoch, an epoch in which the aesthetic character of the beautiful takes on a still greater significance.346

IV. The Shining of Technology

Heidegger develops his reading of modern technology in key works like Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning), Mindfulness, "The Age of the World Picture," and "The Question Concerning Technology." In these texts, Heidegger defines the technological epoch as the culmination of the production-oriented interpretation of technē commenced in Plato, accelerated by the rampant priority of the subject in modernity. As noted above, the modern world exhibits its general aesthetic character by virtue of the way that it makes the experience of the subject the

345 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 19-20/GA 6.1, 16-17.
346 In this regard, I follow Iain Thomson's argument that Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche is more significant for his interpretation of modern technology than has been recognized. See Iain Thomson, Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity, 18.
ground of all being. In this move, the spectacle of being inaugurated in Plato's thinking of the look of the *eidē* is re-territorialized into the subject's ecstatic re-presentation of the world of objects standing over against it.

As has also been shown, however, the modern period not only witnesses a shift in the thinking of the beautiful, but in the thinking of truth. Specifically, truth is no longer conceived of as *unconcealment* (*alētheia*), or even as correspondence (*adequatio*), but it is understood as the coherence between the subject and its representation, a coherence that is both the true ground of the subject's certainty and its security. Heidegger observes that this modern conception of truth continues to play a role even for Nietzsche. Indeed, while it is tempting to see Nietzsche's vigorous critique of truth as an indication of his dismissal of it altogether, Heidegger points out that the value of truth for Nietzsche, like all values, serves an important role in his *re-valuation of values*. Heidegger explains that, for Nietzsche:

To preserve the levels of power which the will has attained at particular times requires that the will surround itself with that which it can reliably and at any time fall back on from which its security is to be guaranteed. These surroundings enclose the enduring existence [*Bestand*], at the immediate disposal of the will, of that which presences (*ousia* in the ordinary meaning of the word among the Greeks). This enduringness [*Beständig] is however turned into a permanence [*Ständige*], i.e., into that which is [*steht*] constantly [*stehts*] at one's disposal, only by its being brought to stand [*Stand*] by having set it in place. This placing [*Stellen*] has the nature of a production [*Herstellens*] that re-presents [*vor-stellenden*]. That which continues to endure [*Beständige*] in such a mode is that

---

347 Heidegger elaborates: "The metaphysics of modernity begins with and has its essence in the fact that modern metaphysics seeks the absolutely undoubtable, what is certain, certainty. According to Descartes' words *firmum et mansurum quid stabilire*, it is essential to bring something firm and lasting to a stand [*zum Stehen*]. As object [*Gegenstand*], this standing [*das Ständige*] satisfies the essence of beings that has prevailed since antiquity: beings are that which are enduringly [*beständig*] present, which are everywhere already available (*hupokeimenon. subjectum*)" ("Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead,'" 178/ GA 5, 238).

348 Heidegger clarifies that for Nietzsche the object world is not some buzzing chaos of perspectivism. Indeed, despite his virulent critique of truth, Nietzsche incorporates a certain qualified notion of truth into his own thinking as the relatively stable meaning of an object in a given value projection. However, while for Nietzsche, "truth is the necessary value" "for securing the level of power attained at a given time," "taken in itself," the value of truth "is powerless to give what the will needs before all else in order to go above and beyond itself." What is required is a still higher value than truth, one which can help detect "possibilities" for the transformation of these objects into new values. As has been shown, however, this higher value is that of the artist in his aesthetic impulse ("Nietzsche's Word: 'God is Dead,'" 179-180/GA 5, 239-240).
which remains. [...] When Nietzsche gives just the simple name “being” or “beings” or “truth” to what is fixed in the will to power for the preservation of that will, he remains in the unbroken line of the traditions of metaphysics, despite all its reversals and revaluations.\(^{349}\)

On Heidegger's reading here, Nietzsche helps clarify the instrumentalism of the modern theory of truth and the fundamental relationship between will and *Bestand* underlying the ubiquitous framework of science, research, and technology. On one hand, in this late age of nihilism, Heidegger notes that the ground of the super-sensuous has been largely replaced by the sensuous scientific explanation of the world. This scientific account works hand in hand, however, with research and methodologism to provide a systematically reproducible *picture* of the world-as-object standing before a representing subject. In this way, Heidegger argues that the notion of *Bestand*, of *what is durable* or *standing reserve*, characterizes the modern scientific attempt to *en-frame* (*Ge-Stell*) being into its usable pictures or forms.

On the other hand, Heidegger contends that Nietzsche shows how the security and certainty this conception of modern truth is supposed to provide ultimately gives way to a still higher value. For according to Nietzsche, the value of truth is necessary only as a propaedeutic on the way to the will's deeper goal to reproduce itself in further acts of willing, an activity that can only be achieved by transforming the *durable objects* of truth into new objects and new values. This is why, for Nietzsche, "truth is not to be taken as the highest value." Instead, "the creation of the possibilities for the will, possibilities that enable the will to power to free itself in the first place, is for Nietzsche the essence of art."\(^{350}\)

As has been seen, Nietzsche believes that art is not modeled on the artwork, but on the artist, and more specifically, on the will to power that takes place in the artist's production of new

\(^{349}\) Ibid.  
\(^{350}\) Ibid.
values and forms. And yet, it is precisely at this point that Heidegger believes Nietzsche's philosophy "explodes its own position." Despite its insight into the universal metaphysical structure of the will to power underlying modernity's representationalism, Nietzsche remains trapped in a certain thinking of subjectivity that tries to control this insight via a particular subject, the artist. According to Heidegger, however, this last residue of subjectivity is exposed in the present epoch. For in modern technology, the universal imperative of will to power cannot be limited to any single artist or subject, but achieves its fullest effect in the universal institutional objectification of Bestand in the scientific worldview, and in the constant transformation of this Bestand in the passing values of the day. As Heidegger observes:

The advantage this system is required to promote is no contrived and rigid unification of the contents of the object domains. Rather, it is the greatest possible free, though regulated, flexibility in the changing around and initiation of research with respect to whatever are the principle tasks of the moment.

With the present culmination of metaphysics in technology, Heidegger observes that the essence of technē - once thought in regard to knowing generally, and subsequently as the mode of production related to the spectator, artwork, or artist - is now transformed into the production of Bestand, durables/standing reserve, for the ever changing values of mass culture. Both consistent and ultimately beyond Nietzsche then, Heidegger concludes that with this development, the subject also becomes an aestheticized object in the framework of Bestand, one which is viewed in relation to its potential contribution to the prevailing values of the day. In this way, the spectator of Platonic philosophy and the subject of modern philosophy are taken to their very limits.

---

351 Heidegger, Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art, 131/GA 6.1, 132.
353 While Heidegger offers perhaps his most mature articulation of this claim in this essay, it is important to note that he already recognizes this transformation of the subject in the technological epoch in earlier texts. See, for example, Mindfulness, 12-13/GA 66, 16/17.
According to Heidegger, however, the beautiful remains a central part of this aesthetic transformation of the technological epoch. He highlights this claim in a number of texts, but perhaps nowhere more poignantly than in *Mindfulness*. Beginning with an observation about the transformation of the essence of art - *technē* - in technology, he writes:

In the epoch of the completion [*vollendet*] of modernity what is hitherto metaphysically ownmost to art becomes complete. The sign of this is the disappearance of the *work* of art but not art itself. Art becomes a manner in which machination completes itself in a thorough construction of beings unto the unconditioned, secure disposability of the organized. As the form of the fundamental effectiveness of their machination, the created beings (highways, aircraft hangars at airports, giant ski-jumps, power stations and reservoirs, manufacturing plants and fortifications) are, in a different way than up to now, fully eased into what is not their component, that is, into "what is," into "nature" and into the public "world."\(^{354}\)

As this remark shows, Heidegger believes that art (*technē*) has not simply changed from one medium to another - say for example, from the age of sculpture to the age of painting - but much more radically, from the free *poieisis* of a seeking, standing-out in general, to an uncontrolled calculation and production of the world. In this way, art is re-defined almost universally by the *artfulness* of technology and its achievements. As Heidegger goes on to state at the end of this passage, "in the *gestalt* of modern technicity and 'history' art becomes *technē* again - not simply by relapsing unto *technē* but by completing itself."\(^{355}\)

It is here, however, that Heidegger also reveals the centrality of the beautiful in this transformation. For he proceeds to observe that, "with and through these installations and according to their style, nature becomes 'beautiful.'" According to the metaphysical character of art which is totally fulfilled in the completion [of modernity], beauty even now remains the basic determination."\(^{356}\) With the term "beautiful" marked in quotations here, it must be asked in what

---


\(^{355}\) Ibid.

\(^{356}\) Ibid.
sense beauty is understood as this determination? Heidegger responds, however, that "beauty is what pleases and must please the being of the power of man, the predator." A preliminary interpretation of the beautiful in the age of technology would seem to suggest then, that it functions in line with the modern aesthetic definition. That is, beauty appears to be understood here as a special feeling of pleasure accompanying the encounter with technological artifacts. And yet, in a short dialogue from the 1950's, Kunst and Tecknik, Heidegger complicates these reflections. This begins with an observation made by one of his interlocutors, that modern architecture often appears quite ugly, and that perhaps modern technē is not defined by beautiful pleasure at all. Heidegger responds by remarking that it remains "an old question if the beautiful is what pleases." In the course of this discussion, however, Heidegger moves towards a more significant insight. He asks whether "a factory or a bridge is beautiful insofar as its essence is completely fulfilled?" This is a question that he answers loosely by suggesting that when one talks about beauty today, what they really seem to mean is the degree of success that is achieved in bringing about the completion of the technical object in accord with what the techno-scientific picture indicates it should be. Thus, he writes elliptically, but significantly, "architecture - construction. The successful [gelückteke] work of technology - the beautiful."

As we know from above, the success of a work of technology relies on the world-picture that science and research provides in conjunction with the values of the day. Together, this framework dictates what objects can and should be. Together, however, this provides us with a clearer understanding of what Heidegger believe the notion of beauty means today. Beauty

---

357 Ibid.
358 Heidegger, "Kunst und Technik" in GA 76. The dialogue was held after Heidegger delivered a public address of his essay, "Poetically, Man Dwells."
359 Ibid., 388. My translation.
360 Ibid., 386. My translation.
361 Ibid., 387. My translation.
names the erotic drive to the successful production of beings in accordance with their
determination as value-objects, an endless process that both pleases the predator in human being
and overwhelms it. For as Heidegger notes in his reading of Nietzsche, and as his interlocutor
observes above, this thinking of beauty is not restricted to a simple feeling of pleasure; it also
includes a sense of the ugly, as when the object threatens to nihilate one's previous values. This
nihilation within the beautiful has a deeper sense, however, when one considers that this
experience for the human predator is one that only appears to be for it. As Heidegger writes:

To the extent that in the epoch of machination that is empowered to its unbounded
coercive force man also grasps himself as animal (living-being), the only thing that still
remains for man himself (equally for “we” and for “I”) is the lived-experience as that
arrangement of his comportment and attitude which in the sphere of machination confers
upon him the appearance of self-assertion vis-à-vis beings.362

This appearance of the human's self-assertion has been exposed, however, by Heidegger's
reading of the will to power in modern technology. In this culmination of aesthetics and
metaphysics, the will to power of technology ultimately consolidates itself in the universal
spectacle that takes place above and beyond the control of the experiencing subject. Indeed, it is
precisely here that the subject is revealed to be only another aesthetic object drawn into the
endless spell of beautiful production, an insight of which if one were to "pick up the scent,"
"would nearly finish us off."363

In this way, Heidegger concludes that beauty and the poetic essence of art
(poiesis/technē) have completed their transformation into their aesthetic essence, at least so far as
can be seen up to this point. Indeed, Heidegger argues that even what we think of as more
traditional artworks today - fine art - no longer seem to have as their main task the "creation of

362 Heidegger, Mindfulness, 13/GA 66, 17.
beautiful objects," but rather the representation of what technology has already determined. Accordingly, he suggests that in the culmination of the aesthetic interpretation of beauty as the erotic drive to the successful re-production of beings in accord with the values of the day, beauty both reaches its fullest determination and almost disappears completely. That is, Heidegger observes that beauty, in the sense of an originally in-apparent and creative unconcealment of beings, has been all but forgotten here, a fact that causes him to state that beauty is no longer thought in accordance with kalos and pulchritude. Put another way, one could say that the originally complex nature of beauty, as both the unconcealing generation of appearance and the resulting aspect of appearance, has entered into its greatest semblance yet.

V. Conclusion

It is important to recognize that Heidegger offers these interpretations of art, technology, and beauty not as answers, but by way of an extended inquiry into Hegel's claim that at this late stage in history, art and its mode of revelation - ideal beauty - is something past. Heidegger contends that by thinking this question more carefully and, in particular, the proximity of the artwork to technology in their shared essence (technē), one may find both greater insight into the aesthetic character of technology, and perhaps a means of challenging this thinking. According to Heidegger, this is because "the decisive confrontation" here "must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it." Thus in Mindfulness, Heidegger suggests that, "already hidden behind the basic determination [of this metaphysics of beauty] is that which within the 'crossing' is ownmost to

---

365 Ibid., 321. My translation.
366 Hegel, Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, V.1, 11. This is the same passage that Heidegger cites in his Epilogue to "The Origin of the Work of Art," which will be discussed more carefully in the following chapter.
this determination insofar as with the disappearance of the work of art in favor of sheer
machination, being's complete abandonment of beings consolidates itself."\textsuperscript{368} Pondering this
relationship between technology and art then, Heidegger asks, "might there not perhaps be a
more primordially granted revealing that could bring the saving power into its first shining-forth
in the midst of the danger that in the technological age rather conceals than shows itself?"\textsuperscript{369}

The other mode of revealing that Heidegger has in mind here is the one initially
associated with \textit{alētheia} in the early Greeks, and that elsewhere he suggests may still be thought
in the unique appearance of the work of art. For Heidegger reminds us that:

There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name \textit{technē}. Once, the
revealing that brought forth truth into the splendor of radiant appearance was also called
\textit{technē}. There was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called
\textit{technē}. The \textit{poïēsis} of the fine arts was also called \textit{technē}. [...] Could it be that the fine
arts are called to poetic revealing? Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most
primordially, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving
power, may awaken and found anew our vision of, and trust in, that which grants?\textsuperscript{370}

It was seen, in Chapter 3, how Heidegger glimpses this more originary conception of the
beautiful in the pre-Socratics and tragedians. However, his comments here suggest that one must
investigate this possibility once again today in a reconsideration of the nature of the artwork.

This passage also suggests, however, that this turning back towards the more originary essence
of \textit{technē} and its manifestation in art involves a re-interrogation of the specific place of the
beautiful in \textit{alētheia}, that is, of how art allows the "bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful"
to occur. The question that I wish to take in up in the next chapter then, is whether and how art
is capable today of this more originary notion of \textit{alētheia}.

\textsuperscript{368} Heidegger. \textit{Mindfulness}, 23/GA 66, 30.
\textsuperscript{370} Ibid., 339-340/36. Translation slightly amended.
Chapter 5
I. Introduction

In the foregoing investigation, it has been shown that for Heidegger the aesthetic character of the metaphysical tradition culminates in the will to power of modern technology. While this development includes a number of important facets, it signals, in particular, a transformation in the notion of art away from the modern privilege of fine art (Schöne Kunst), and toward the technological installations (Anlagen) of the contemporary world. Heidegger asks, however, if this is the only possibility for art today? For as has also been seen, there is an older essence of art (technē/poiesis) that does not concern the material production of forms and objects, but belongs to the general standing-out towards physis in a seeking and knowing way. Re-thinking this older interpretation of technē alongside his interpretation of modern technology then, Heidegger considers the possibility of another origin of art today, one that may have the power to help clarify and resist the leveling effect of technology.

The reconsideration of the artwork found in Heidegger's 1936 essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art," is well known today, representing one of his most widely read texts. In this essay, Heidegger argues that, contrary to the aesthetic tradition, art should not be understood on the basis of a spectator or an artist, but from out of the work (Werk) that the artwork (Kunstwerk) itself performs, an activity that he equates with the onto-historical disclosure of a world. Put more precisely, Heidegger attempts to show that the artwork, understood more originally, cannot be defined by the traditional metaphysical definitions of object-hood or thing-ness, but is actually responsible for helping found the relevant relations of what counts as a being in a given historical
epoch. As he explains in his famous example of the Greek Temple at Paestum, such a work for the Greek community was responsible for first laying out the sea's relation to the land, the mortal's relation to the Gods, and the sky's relation to the earth.371

Significantly, while the importance of the artwork in Heidegger's later philosophy is commonly recognized, there are several aspects of this thinking that are less well known. The first is just the extent to which Heidegger continued to revise and re-think the question of art across his corpus. For as someone like Julian Young has pointed out, "The Origin of the Work of Art" really represents only the beginning of Heidegger's investigation into art's significance, one that focuses on the model of great art in the early Greeks, but does not yet grasp how aesthetics and modern technology pose a radically new challenge for the artwork.372 These latter considerations are ones that Heidegger increasingly works out in his subsequent engagement with figures like Friedrich Hölderlin, Paul Cézanne, and Paul Klee.

The other commonly overlooked element surrounding Heidegger's thinking of art here is the significance of the beautiful for this consideration, an oversight that I have emphasized belongs more generally to Heidegger's investigation of being. Concerning the specific question of art, however, most commentators take Heidegger's critique of the central place of beauty in the aesthetic tradition to indicate a self-conscious distancing of his own ontological re-conception of art from the concept of beauty. I contend, however, that a closer examination shows that this view misses the important way that Heidegger retrieves the beautiful in his thinking of the artwork, precisely as part of his retrieval of the ancient unity of being, truth, and beauty in alētheia.

372 Julian Young, Heidegger's Philosophy of Art, 1.
In addressing these two oversights together here, I intend to show that Heidegger continues to develop his thinking of the beautiful in conjunction with his ongoing reconsiderations of the artwork. While this begins with his claim in "The Origin of the Work of Art" that in contrast with the aesthetic tradition beauty concerns the shining of truth's unconcealment, the fuller import of this observation is not made clear until his later work on Hölderlin. In particular, Heidegger contends that in Hölderlin, beauty is another word for being, a claim that resonates with Heidegger's recovery of the unity of being, truth, and beauty in alētheia. More specifically, Heidegger defines beauty for Hölderlin in a Heraclitian fashion, as the in-apparent work of the enjoining of opposites resulting in the unified structure of appearance. At the same time, however, Heidegger argues that Hölderlin's modern vantage helps show in a way that the Greeks could not, how the metaphysical-aesthetical focus on the presence of appearance remains blind to the self-concealing, in-apparent ground of such appearance.

While Heidegger's Hölderlin reading represents, in many ways, a high point in his optimism concerning the possibility of the artwork's ability to bring about a new relation with being today, Heidegger's later work undergoes yet another important development. This is evidenced both by a certain pessimism regarding the artwork's ability to speak to us today, and by a more intimate engagement with the visual arts, in particular with the paintings of Paul Cézanne and Paul Klee. Significantly, Heidegger maintains his emphasis on the relevance of the beautiful in these later encounters, suggesting that the event of appearance in Klee's paintings is even defined by beauty.373 I conclude my examination then, by arguing that what Heidegger finds in this later work is a certain culmination to his thinking of the beautiful's special

relationship with being and appearance. Namely, I suggest that for the first time, Heidegger finds in Cézanne and Klee a pure manifestation of beauty's *double essence* in the way that their work shows the in-apparent dynamic of appearance coming to appearance. In this powerful observation, however, Heidegger glimpses both the successful collapse of his own notion of the ontological difference, as well as the shortcomings of his attempts to indicate this mystery of appearance in philosophy's *logocentric* discourse.

II. The Origin of the Work of Art

In Chapter 4, it was seen that Heidegger works out some of his most detailed analyses of the history of aesthetics in his *Nietzsche* lectures. In the first volume of these lectures, however, Heidegger provides a helpful hint about what a thinking of art that proceeds non-aesthetically might look like. He writes:

> The view that the observation of works somehow follows in the wake of creation is so little true that not even the relation of the *artist* to the work as something created is one that would be appropriate to the creator. But that could be demonstrated only by way of an inquiry into art that would begin altogether differently, proceeding from the work itself.\(^{374}\)

While Heidegger only touches on this alternative consideration of the artwork in the *Nietzsche* lectures here, elsewhere he had already begun to work out an analysis of the topic. Indeed, it is reported that Heidegger began working on these issues as early as 1931-1932, and as was seen in Chapter 3, we have sketches as early as 1934 of what was to become his seminal essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art."\(^{375}\) In 1935, Heidegger presented a draft of the essay for the first time in Freiburg,\(^{376}\) before presenting longer versions in early 1936 in Zurich, and in late 1936 in

\(^{374}\) Heidegger, *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, 118/GA 6.1, 118.

\(^{375}\) See, for example, F.W. von Hermann, *Heidegger Studies* 6 (1990), 5fn.

In the early 1934 sketch, Heidegger begins by contrasting the originary Greek position of beauty in *alētheia* with its subsequent aesthetic delimitation as the special feeling of pleasure. He writes:

“Aesthetic” Truth and Beauty: Where does it begin? Somewhere there, where the beautiful is determined as essential for art? No! Because the question is still how the beautiful and beauty becomes grasped [begriffen werden]. So long as beauty as the form [Gestalt] of truth in the original sense (alētheia), that is so long as beauty [relates to truth] still more originally than in the sense of statements and calculation and the propositions of logical thought (following Schiller, as well as Kant), so long as beauty remains essential to being and its “unveiling” [“Enthüllung”], it is related to the Greek grounding. But here is the position of the unconquered, together with the unconquerability of truth as alētheia. As soon as truth collapsed, beauty could no longer be grasped. That is, Plato took the beautiful as liberating-rapture [Entrückend-Berückende]. However, in taking it this way, and not grounding it in alētheia, the beautiful became only the rapturous, which in simultaneously belonging to the sensuous could only indicate proper being (idea). Following: technē - tritton apo tes alētheias - as being qua idea! Only once the beautiful takes its relation from this standing, and should advance this as such (“experience” [“Erlebnis”]), and less from alētheia - collapsed in all its consequences - and from technē - likewise not from the outbreak [Aufbruch] of alētheia - there began the “aesthetic” long before the concept and the word prevailed.

The contrast drawn here between the early Greek relation of beauty in alētheia and an aesthetically narrowed conception is consistent with Heidegger's distinction between the two found elsewhere in his readings of the Greeks (Chapter 3) and the Christian tradition (Chapter 1). Significantly, both the 1935 and early 1936 versions of "The Origin of the Work of Art" do not include a discussion of the beautiful. In the final version, however, Heidegger addresses the beautiful in three pivotal moments, which seem to follow the wider movement of the essay. While these observations indicate that Heidegger may have been initially undecided about the status of beauty for his ontological reconception of art, his ultimate inclusion of the beautiful in

---


the final draft appears deliberate, and it is a decision that he maintains thereafter. Accordingly, I wish to begin here by examining these three references to the beautiful in the broader context of the final version of "The Origin of the Work of Art." It will be seen that despite Heidegger's clear retrieval of a more originary thinking of beauty for his conception of the artwork, this notion, like his broader understanding of art at this time, remains underdeveloped. In this way, "The Origin of the Work of Art" essay will be more helpful for raising the question of the place of the beautiful in the ontological conception of the artwork than for providing an answer.

In the final version of this essay, the text is divided into six sections: An untitled introduction, a first section on "Thing and Work," a middle section on "The Work and Truth," a final section on "Truth and Art," and the subsequently appended Epilogue (1936-1950) and Addendum (1956). In the first section, Heidegger retrieves his basic critique of the history of aesthetics discussed in Chapter 4. Specifically, he highlights the way the artwork has been traditionally characterized according to the different metaphysical ways of defining beings, including: The matter/form (hylē-morphē) complex, the subject/predicate (hypokeimenon/symbebēkos) relation, and as the unity of sensuous impressions (aisthēton).379 At the same time, Heidegger reiterates the fundamental difficulty here in locating the artwork under the basic categories of natural entities or artifacts (equipment [Zeug]), insofar as the telos of the artwork does not seem to follow the structure of either of these. On one hand, the artwork seems akin to the artifact in that it does not come from nature, but from human production. On the other hand, the artwork seems to resemble the movement of physis in that it does not partake in a clearly defined human end or purpose.

In Chapter 4, we saw that it is on account of this difficulty in classifying the artwork that modern philosophy defines it in relation to the feeling and experience of the subject rather than the laws of nature, reason, or artificial production. Indeed, it is just in this way that fine art (Schöne Kunst) is set over against other domains of experience and their predicates, such as the truth content of logic or the normative value of ethics. Following this overview of the aesthetic metaphysical treatment of the artwork, however, Heidegger arrives at his first reference to the beautiful. He observes:

But until now art presumably has had to do with the beautiful and beauty, and not with truth. The arts that produce such works are called the fine arts [Schöne Kunst], in contrast with the applied or industrial arts that manufacture equipment. In fine art the art itself is not beautiful, but called so because it produces the beautiful. Truth, in contrast, belongs to logic. Beauty, however, is reserved for aesthetics. Accordingly, Heidegger's first reference to beauty in the "The Origin of the Work of Art" is a repetition of the standard aesthetic definition. However, Heidegger's investigation into the origin of art and beauty does not stop here. In departing from the conundrum that the categorization of the artwork presents, Heidegger proceeds to ask a different kind of question: What if instead of asking how one creates or reacts to artworks according to preexisting categories (for example, nature, artifact, subject), one asks how artworks help define what counts as these categories in the first place?

It is here, in the shift from an aesthetical-metaphysical question to one that departs from an ontological consideration of the artwork, that Heidegger makes his appeal to the three key artworks discussed in the essay: Van Gogh's painting of a pair of work boots, C.F. Meyer's poem "Roman Fountain," and the ancient Greek temple at Paestum. Beginning with the first example, Heidegger observes that in their ordinary context, work boots are worn for the purposes of work.

---

380 Ibid., 162/21.
In this way, however, they are also worn without any explicit reflection on this purpose, and thus into their essence as a piece of equipment intended for work. Heidegger observes that in a painting like Van Gogh's, however, the work boots are taken out of this ordinary context and presented as work boots, as equipment, as a reliable part of the worker's work-world, in such a way that the essence of those boots and the world in which they make sense becomes apparent for the first time. Indeed, Heidegger suggests that, "perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes."381

The question that such a finding raises, of course, is how this is possible if artworks are understood under the traditional definition of mimesis or representation. That is, if the artwork first shows us the essence of the work boots, which is said to be unknown until this point, how can it make sense to also say that it re-presents or re-produces the form/idea of such a being? It is this question that Heidegger suggests is both attested to and complicated by Meyer's poetic depiction of the multi-tiered fountain. For in this poetic description, one hears of a source (the water jet) that continues to give of itself at the same time that it overspills and veils itself. This is seen in the way that each transition from one basin to the next is both related to the original source and yet necessarily different, a difference that nevertheless continues to belong to the essence of the source itself.

The point that Heidegger is moving towards with these examples is that the artwork cannot be judged on the basis of pre-existing ontological categories, and thus cannot be judged under the conception of truth as correspondence or adequatio either. This is because it is the artwork itself that is responsible for disclosing what such beings are in the first place. Accordingly, Heidegger states that he wishes to recall the early Greek notion of alētheia.

381 Ibid., 160/19.
(unconcealment) in order to help describe the unique mode of disclosure that takes place in the artwork here. To this end, he asks:

What happens here? What is at work in the work? Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure [Eröffnung] of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, is in truth. This being emerges into the unconcealment [Unverborgenheit] of its Being. The Greeks called the unconcealment [Unverborgenheit] of beings alētheia. We say “truth” and think little enough in using this word. If there occurs in the work a disclosure [Eröffnung] of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening [Geschehen] of truth at work. In the work of art the truth of beings has set [gesetzt] itself to work. “To set” [“Setzen”] means here “to bring to stand” [“Zum Stehen Bringen”]. Some particular being, a pair of peasant shoes, comes in the work to stand in the light [das Lichte] of its Being. The Being [Sein] of beings [Seienden] comes into the steadiness [Ständige] of its shining [Scheinens].

According to Heidegger then, the kind of truth that belongs to the work of art is not representational, but originally presentational, not static, but verbal. As he puts it, truth is set into work or motion in the artwork as the process of opening-up the being of beings. At the same time, this passage also reminds us that the notion of alētheia involves not just a conception of truth, but of being as well, of ontological disclosure. Indeed, Heidegger states that what is disclosed here is not simply a being, but the very being [Sein] of beings [Seiende].

These are all points that Heidegger develops more clearly in his third example of the ancient Greek Temple. Indeed, it is here that one most vividly encounters the radicality of his historical understanding of being. Heidegger asks the reader to imagine a temple standing in the Greek landscape, perched high upon a cliff overlooking the ocean. He notes that inside the temple is housed the concealed idol of a God. He then asks whether one ought to say that the ocean, the countryside, the Greek community exists separately and distinctly before the existence of the temple, or whether the temple does not first provide the place, time, look, and relation of this historical community, this world. With this suggestion, however, Heidegger believes that

---

382 Ibid., 161-162/21.
the phenomenological description of these artworks has effectively exposed the error of the metaphysical-aesthetical tradition and its persistent belief that there exists a predetermined schema of beings that artworks merely imitate. Against this metaphysical view, he contends that the event of alētheia that takes place in the origin of the artwork actually helps found (Stiftung) and bring-forth (Her-vorbringen) a world into its historical appearance.

With Heidegger's ontological elucidation of these examples of art, he aims to subvert the entire metaphysical logic of production, and to retrieve the older sense of technē associated with the poeisis or free standing-toward/bringing-forth of appearance. He even goes so far as to suggest that the essence (Wesen) of all great artworks is defined by this wider sense of poeisis, which is not the same thing as the narrow notion of poetry or poesy. In the technical vocabulary of the essay, Heidegger concludes that the artwork is a site where the free giving, yet ever-concealing earth (physis) enters into a fundamental strife (Streit) with Dasein's historical tendency to set up a world. The result is that "in setting up (aufstelt) a world, the work sets forth (stellt) the earth." What this means is that in great artworks the historical world of a particular community comes into being. And yet, like an artwork that loses its relevance over time, such a historical community can also go out of being. This is because, like the water jet in Meyer's poem, being is a source that is capable of both giving and veiling itself in historically different ways. Accordingly, Heidegger concludes that the origin of the work of art offers not only a powerful challenge to aesthetics and metaphysics, but it is a testimony to his more fundamental thesis about the irreducible historicity of being.

Of course, Heidegger's argument is more subtle and extensive than I can do justice to in this context. My goal is to elucidate Heidegger's thinking of the beautiful within this broader re-

---

383 Ibid., 172/32.
conception of the artwork. To this more specific point, however, one finds Heidegger's second reference to beauty located in the midst of his discussion of these three artworks and his elucidation of the more originary understanding of art that follows them. He writes:

Thus in the work it is truth, not merely something true, that is at work. The picture that shows the peasant shoes, the poem that says the Roman Fountain, do not simply make manifest what these isolated beings as such are - if indeed they manifest anything at all; rather, they make unconcealment [Unverborgenheit] as such happen in regard to beings as a whole. The more simply and essentially the shoes are engrossed in their essence, the more directly and engagingly do all beings attain a greater degree of being along with them. That is how self-concealing [sichverbergende] Being is cleared [gelichtet]. Light [Licht] of this kind joins [fügt] its shining [Scheiden] to and into the work. This shining [Scheiden], joined [geführt] in the work, is the beautiful [das Schöne].

And in the next line, he concludes:

*Beauty [Schönheit] is one way in which truth essentially occurs [west] as unconcealment [Unverborgenheit].*  

A number of points are immediately significant here. First, this passage clearly indicates that beauty is not to be understood in relation to the spectator or the artist; rather it is to be understood in regard to the unconcealment of the artwork itself. Second, and connected to this first point, Heidegger shows that he does not understand the beautiful as a special feeling, but as the shining of truth's disclosure of being. Third, Heidegger retains the intertwined association from his early work between beauty, *alētheia*, and clearing (*Lichtung*). As he emphasizes, the significance of this is that light of this kind is not first and foremost the material light of vision, but the clearing of the ontological space for the possibility of the appearance of beings. Finally, what is cleared with the shining of the beautiful is not simply one being, for example a pair of shoes, but the being of a whole world within which a given being counts as significant.

---

384 Ibid., 181/43.
385 Ibid. Italics in the original.
Heidegger's second reference to beauty stands in clear contrast then to the aesthetic conception of the beautiful that he calls into critique in the first part of the essay, and is ultimately tied to his important retrieval of the ancient Greek notion of *alētheia*. Unfortunately, Heidegger does not go into more detail in the present passage about this relationship. As was noted at the outset of this examination, Heidegger's lack of a discussion about the beautiful in the two drafts between the earliest draft and this final draft suggests that he may not have decided on the relevance of beauty for his ontological conception of art until later in 1936, and this may also help explain his brevity here. One finds further evidence for this developmental thesis, however, with Heidegger's third and final reference to beauty in the Epilogue, which was added sometime between 1936 and 1950.\(^{386}\) In this Epilogue, Heidegger returns to his brief discussion of beauty in the body of the text and attempts to establish the significance of this fundamental interrelation more clearly. He writes:

> Truth is the unconcealment [*Unverborgenheit*] of beings [*Seienden*] as beings [*Seienden*]. Truth is the truth of Being [*Seins*]. Beauty [*Die Schönheit*] does not occur [*kommt nicht*] apart from this truth. When truth sets itself [*sich setzt*] into the work, it appears [*erscheint*]. Appearance [*Das Erscheinen*] - as this being of truth in the work and as work - is beauty [*die Schönheit*]. Thus the beautiful [*das Schöne*] belongs [*gehört*] to truth's propriative event [*Sichereignen*]. It does not exist merely relative to pleasure [*Gefallen*] and purely as its object [*Gegenstand*].\(^{387}\)

In this passage, Heidegger once again provides a strong juxtaposition between the aesthetic definition of beauty associated with the feeling of pleasure, and the originary ontological conception associated with *alētheia*. At the same time, he also begins to clarify that what beauty concerns, in particular, is the element of coming-to-appearance that occurs in the unconcealment of being in the artwork. He goes on to explain here that this mode of appearance is thought in terms of the *Gestalt* of a historical world. *Gestalt* is the word Heidegger uses

---


throughout "The Origin of the Work of Art" to refer to what he calls in *Being and Time*, the totality of relations and reference constituting a given historical world. Unlike *Being and Time*, however, this later essay introduces the notion of the self-concealing earth (*physis*) and its underdetermined rift-design (*Riss*) to indicate the equiprimordial source from out of which the *Gestalt* of the historical world founds itself. The notion of *Gestalt* must be carefully separated then from the metaphysical-aesthetical notion of *form*. The notions of *Gestalt* and *world* stand in relation to the early Greek notion of being as *physis* and what he calls here *earth*, as part of the mysterious act of coming into presence. *Form*, on the other hand, arises with Plato's predetermined interpretation of being as the pure presence of the *eidē*. Thus Heidegger emphasizes that it must be remembered that beauty's subsequent association with form first grows out of the more originary relationship of being and *alētheia*. He writes:

The beautiful does lie in form, but only because the *forma* once took its light [*sich lichtet*] from Being [*Sein*] as the beingness [*Seiendheit*] of beings [*Seiendes*]. Being [*Sein*] at that time was appropriated as *eidos*. The idea fits itself into the *morphē*. The *synolon*, the unitary whole of *morphē* and *hylē*, namely the *ergon*, is in the manner of *energeia*. This mode of presence becomes the *actualitas* of the *ens actu*. The *actualitas* becomes reality. Reality becomes objectivity. Objectivity becomes lived experience [*Erlebnis*]. In the way in which, for the world determined by the West, beings are as the actual, there is concealed a peculiar confluence of beauty with truth.388

In his study of the "The Origin of the Work of Art," Karsten Harries notes that Heidegger appears to retrieve the medieval notion of the Transcendentals here when he thinks being, truth, and beauty together in *alētheia*. However, as Harries also notes, it is clear that Heidegger does so in a way completely distinct from the theological or metaphysical tradition. Harries observes:

When Heidegger says “the beautiful belongs to the advent of truth,” a medieval thinker might have said: “beauty is a transcendental,” constitutive of every being just so far as it is. Heidegger could have agreed with this, but once again he would have wanted to free such an understanding from what was its theological foundation.389

388 Ibid.
What Harries sees in Heidegger's retrieval of the unity of these basic Transcendentals here is something that I have consistently highlighted across Heidegger's thinking, from his early years up through his re-reading of the Greeks and the Seinsgeschichtefrage. Indeed, I have argued that in its deeper essence, beauty for Heidegger belongs to the basic event of being's unconcealment in alētheia. But as Harries also rightly goes on to state, "the question is of course: [in] what sort of way?" Harries suggests that according to Heidegger, "we experience something as beautiful when we experience it as illuminated by 'the light of its work-being.'" But this is ultimately an empty answer when what we are truly after is just what exactly is experienced here, and how it is experienced in the artwork.

As I have suggested, Heidegger does not clarify this in "The Origin of the Work of Art." Indeed, one might say that he only complicates it further with his comment, "Beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs as unconcealment." This comment belongs with his observation elsewhere in the essay that unconcealment (alētheia) "is historical in multiple ways." He proceeds to identify these ways as: 1). The founding act of a political state; 2). The nearness of that which is not simply a being, but most in being; 3). Essential sacrifice; and 4). The thinker's thinking of Being. It is unclear if this is intended to serve as an exhaustive list, or whether he imagines others are possible too. At the same time, it seems unclear how we are to interpret the reference to beauty's unconcealment in relation to these different ways of unconcealing. Several possible interpretations present themselves. One might say, for example, that in art, but not in the political or philosophical arena, alētheia occurs as the beautiful. This would imply that alētheia occurs differently in those other domains, in ways that do not include

390 Ibid.
392 Ibid., 186/49.
beauty. Such an interpretation is problematic, however, for several reasons. First, it has already been seen, in Chapter 4, that Heidegger believes beauty is an essential feature in other occurrences of *alētheia*, such as the one found in modern technology. Second, Heidegger continues to refer here to the radiance of *alētheia* in these other discourses, for example, in the line, "still another way in which truth comes to *shine forth* is the nearness of that which is not simply a being, but the being that is most in being." And it has been shown rather clearly that Heidegger understands such notions of *shining*, *radiance*, and *brightness* through a preeminent relationship with beauty (Chapters 1-3). Accordingly, one might hear Heidegger's claim about beauty in a different way then, one that I believe helps mediate these tensions, but cannot be fully supported by the present context alone. Specifically, I believe that we can interpret Heidegger as simply saying that in the *alētheic* event of art beauty functions in a distinctly explicit fashion, different from its implicit relation in other happenings of *alētheia*.394

As I have suggested, Heidegger does not resolve this question here. In 1936, Heidegger is still developing both his notion of originary art and his understanding of the place of beauty in such art. Indeed, the question of how Heidegger's notion of art in "The Origin of the Work of Art" ultimately compares with his understanding of art in his subsequent work is one that stands

393 My emphasis.
394 One might object here that Heidegger identifies beauty with the occurrence of *alētheia* in both art and technology because they are two manifestations of the shared essence of *techne*. This would mean that he could still hold that beauty is not significant for non-*techne* related occurrences of *alētheia*, such as in the political (*phronesis/dike/politike*) or in the philosophical (*sophia*) arena. There are several problems with this objection however. First, as David Farrell Krell notes in his Introduction to "The Question Concerning Technology," the distinction between these different occurrences of *alētheia* is one that Heidegger appears to collapse in his subsequent work (309-310). For example, in Heidegger's "Postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?" he states that *thinking and poetry* are the ultimate expression of *sacrifice* (236-237/GA 9, 310-312), and in his lectures course, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Der Ister,"* he observes that the artwork is itself the original founding of the *polis* (146/GA 53, 182). The reason for this collapse, however, follows from the primordiality of *techne* in its original sense. As has been observed, *techne* concerns the original standing-towards being in a seeking and knowing way. Accordingly, both the political and the philosophical can ultimately be considered *techne* in this wider sense. At the same time, however, this question belongs to Heidegger's persistent inquiry into the unity and difference of thinking (philosophy) and poetry (art). This is a question that I will address more directly in my conclusion to this chapter.
at the heart of much Heidegger scholarship today. In the present context, Heidegger states that he only has in mind great art. The emphasis that Heidegger seems to place on the Greek temple example, along with his claim that great art is historically founding (Stiftung), has led many commentators to suggest that this definition of the artwork only selects the kinds of objects associated with ancient and Medieval art (e.g. churches, temples, or sculptures). Two proponents of this view, Hubert Dreyfus and Julian Young, call this the Promethean model. On the other hand, someone like Iain Thomson points out that Heidegger's discussion of the artwork in "The Origin of the Work of Art" is not limited to this quality of founding, but also examines art in terms of preservation (Bewahrung). Indeed, according to Thomson:

Heidegger suggests [...] that art can accomplish its world-disclosing work on at least three different orders of magnitude: (1) micro-paradigms he will later call “things,” which help us become aware of what matters most deeply for us; (2) paradigmatic artworks like Van Gogh's painting and Hölderlin's poetry, which disclose how art itself works; and (3) macro-paradigmatic “great” works of art like the Greek temple and tragic drama (works Heidegger sometimes calls “gods”), which succeed in fundamentally transforming an historical community's “understanding of being” [...].

I do not wish to attempt to adjudicate this debate here, but I do want to point out its significance for how we will consider the artwork's relation to beauty going forward. While in the present context Heidegger appears to at least touch on the various aspects that Thomson indicates above, it also seems clear that he does not work out the differences between them, or the historical grounds for these differences. In the subsequently appended Epilogue, however, he begins to address this historical transformation in the artwork more clearly by referring to

---

396 See Hubert Dreyfus, "Heidegger's Ontology of Art" in A Companion to Heidegger, ed. Hubert Dreyfus (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2007); Julian Young, Heidegger's Philosophy of Art. This is not only a reference to the figure of Prometheus, who is said to have given mortals fire and the arts to help found their historical civilization, but also to Heidegger's important invocation of Prometheus in his 1933 Rectoral Address. See Heidegger, "Rectoral Address: The Self Assertion of the German University" in The Heidegger Reader, 110/GA 16, 109.
397 Iain Thomson, Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity, 44-45.
Hegel's *Aesthetic Lectures*. As is well known, in these lectures, Hegel argues that the place of the artwork has changed in the modern period. It no longer offers a self-evident sensuous presentation of Dasein’s place in the world, or what Hegel calls, the idea presented as the beautiful ideal. In Hegel's teleological conception of history, this task has been taken over at a higher level by religion and philosophy. However, as Hegel also notes, this does not mean that the artwork simply disappears. Rather, Hegel believes that it increasingly exhibits forms that are more introspective, and thus befitting of the way spirit encounters itself in other domains (i.e. philosophy). For while an ancient Greek sculpture of the human body represents the pinnacle of art's ability to present the idea beautifully, precisely because it harmonizes the inner spirit of its subject with the reflection of that spirit in its appropriate external form (a living human body), modern painting and poetry upset this balance by shifting the spectator's attention inward. With this shift, Hegel believes that art no longer functions self-evidently. Rather, it prompts one to ask: What is the artwork, what does it do, and is it still beautiful? These are the kinds of questions that characterize the emergence of aesthetic inquiry.

Heidegger concludes "The Origin of the Work of Art" by acknowledging this Hegelian transformation of art's being, and by asking the reader to ponder its status today. With this acknowledgment, however, one is left to wonder how Heidegger's own emphasis on the classical model of great art in the body of the essay is possible today in the age of aesthetics. More specifically, the question seems to be: If art and beauty functioned for the Greeks in a self-evident manner that has become explicitly thematized and sublated in modernity, how can we understand the retrieval of an originary relation to the beautiful artwork today? Indeed, it does not seem possible that such a recovery can involve a simple return to the Greek model of great art. For one cannot deny the historical development that has ensued between the Greek world
and the present, and the reality that our relationship to art and beauty has become an explicit question for us in a way that it was not for the Greeks. That is, it must be asked further whether it is possible to recover a more originary relationship to art and beauty after aesthetics.

III. Hölderlin's Word for Being

At the end of "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger identifies the artist who will help him think these questions further in the years immediately following this first major attempt. He asks:

Do we know, which means do we give heed to, the essence of the origin? Or, in our relation to art, do we still merely make appeal to a cultivated acquaintance with the past? For this either-or and its decision there is an infallible sign. Hölderlin, the poet - whose work still confronts the Germans as a test to be stood - named it in saying:

_Schwer verlässt_
_was nahe dem Ursprung wohnet, den Ort._
Reluctantly
that which dwells near its origin abandons the site.398

Friedrich Hölderlin was by no means a new figure to Heidegger. Heidegger, like many Germans, read the poet's work endearingly throughout his life. There are a number of reasons, however, why Heidegger became increasingly drawn to Hölderlin at this particular moment. As is well known, the period in Germany leading up to the second world war was one marked by an increasing national fervor, a development that Heidegger's role as the Rector of the university in Freiburg drew him very much into the center. As a poet focused on themes of German identity, Hölderlin was a natural touchstone for the reconsideration of German culture at the time.

Philosophically speaking, however, Heidegger's turn to the historical investigation of being, and

---

the role of art within that question also led him to Hölderlin. For Hölderlin was not only interested in the question of the historical German community, but also in the poet's ability to help unify this community. In this way, Heidegger hears in Hölderlin a voice that has taken Hegel's reflection on the historical transformation of art to heart, one in which the relation of a specific historical people to being is not only thematized, but the relevance of art for this relationship is poetically raised.

A brief glance at Heidegger's collected works shows that Hölderlin occupied Heidegger's philosophical attention during the time of the composition of "The Origin of the Work of Art." In 1934 and 1935, he lectured on Hölderlin's Hymn's "Germania" and "The Rhine," and in 1936, he delivered one of his earliest essays on poetry entitled, "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry." It is a reference from the first volume of the Nietzsche lectures, however, that best begins to show Hölderlin's influence on the questions extending from "The Origin of the Work of Art."

399 It is important to acknowledge that the two aspects noted here, Heidegger's biographical affiliation with German politics and his philosophical development, are not fully separable. While the present project focuses on the development of the latter, these reflections must be supplemented by the important work of scholars like Phillippe-Lacoue-Labarthe, Jacques Derrida, and Victor Farias, all of whom indicate the more abhorrent influence of National Socialism on Heidegger's thinking. See Jacques Derrida, Of Spirit, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Victor Farias, Heidegger and Nazism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989); Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Heidegger, Art, Politics: The Fiction of the Political, trans. Chris Turner (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1990); Hugo Ott, Martin Heidegger: A Political Life. At the same time, this is an influence that Heidegger comes to critique in his many allusions to and condemnations of National Socialism in his work after the mid thirties. Thus I do not accept the more inflammatory thesis suggested by someone like Emmanuel Faye that Heidegger's philosophy of art is reducible to National Socialism. See Emmanuel Faye, Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933-1935, trans. Michael Smith (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University, 2009). Closer to the readings of Lacoue-Labarthe and Derrida, I will suggest in my Conclusion one way in which Heidegger's thinking of beauty belongs to his terrible myopia regarding National Socialism.

400 Many commentators have pointed out the strong nationalistic tone of these first encounters with Hölderlin. See, for example, Julian Young, Heidegger's Philosophy of Art; Jacques Taminiaux, "The Origin of 'The Origin of the Work of Art.'" Taminiaux's essay is particularly helpful in tracing the shift in Heidegger's rhetoric across the different drafts of "The Origin of the Work of Art," and he suggests that by the final 1936 version, Heidegger has already recognized the mistake in his nationalistic appropriation of these themes. As a result, Taminiaux suggests Heidegger increasingly moves away from the bellicose discourse of strife and war, and towards the discourse of letting-be (Gelassenheit).


Art." In discussing Nietzsche's famous distinction between the intoxicating element of the Dionysian and the rational form of the Apollonian, Heidegger notes that Hölderlin "conceived of the opposition in an even more profound and lofty manner." As Heidegger explains, this insight is found in a letter to Hölderlin's friend and confidant, Casimir Ulrich Böhlendorf, in which Hölderlin historicizes Nietzsche's dualism into what he describes as the "holy pathos" of the early Greeks (whom he also refers to as "the Oriental"), and the "Occidental Junonian sobriety of representational skill" in the modern Germans. According to Heidegger, with this description, Hölderlin wishes to indicate the way that the Greeks were primordially related to their world by what he calls the "fire of heaven," a connection, however, that they learned to cover-over through the Appollonian expressions of their art, philosophy, and religion. By contrast, Heidegger suggests that Hölderlin wants to indicate what is natural to the Germans in the modern age is just the sobriety of this rational reflection (the Apollonian), while it is the intimate connectedness of the holy pathos (the Dionysian) that must be retrieved. On Heidegger's reading, however, the upshot of Hölderlin's observation here is not to suggest that the modern age simply needs to recover what was initially Greek in order to bring about a classical re-birth. Rather, as Hölderlin proceeds to clarify in his letter, the real challenge is to bring about "the free employment of what is one's own..." That is, for Hölderlin, the task of a reflection on the Greeks is necessary insofar as one wishes to ultimately gain a more profound insight into one's own age.

---

404 Ibid. Heidegger emphasizes Hölderlin's letter to Böhlendorf in a number of other texts as well, including his 1943 essay, "Remembrance." He quotes Hölderlin's letter in the latter as follows: "We shall learn nothing more difficult than to freely use our national character. And as I believe, it is precisely the clarity of presentation which is as natural to us as the fire of heaven was to the Greeks. But what is proper to us must be learned as well as what is foreign. That is why the Greeks are indispensable to us. Only we will not match them precisely in what is proper to us, our national character, because, as I said, the free use of what is proper to one is the most difficult" (Heidegger, "Remembrance," in *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 112/GA 4, 82).
Following this line of inquiry, Heidegger's dialogue with Hölderlin helps tease out the distinction, still unclear in "The Origin of the Work of Art," between the great art of the ancient world and the possibility of an originary non-aesthetic art in the modern age. In doing so, however, Heidegger also helps thematize more carefully his understanding of the place of beauty in such art. A particularly lucid examination of these points is found in the collection, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, especially in the essay dealing with Hölderlin's poem, "As When on a Holiday...." Consistent with the description of Hölderlin's poetry given thus far, this poem addresses the way that "divinely beautiful nature" speaks to the poet in the modern age. More precisely, comparing the inspiration of the poet here with the appearance of the countryside on a holiday morning, when the workweek has been interrupted and the sun breaks through the stormy night, Hölderlin writes:

```
So in favorable weather they stand  
Whom no master alone, whom she, wonderfully  
All-present, educates in a light embrace,  
The powerful, divinely beautiful nature.
```

Heidegger contends that this notion of "divinely beautiful nature" is no mere ornament of language for Hölderlin. Rather, he suggests that the "inner movement of these three lines strives toward the final word, 'nature,'" and what "Hölderlin still calls 'nature' here resounds throughout the entire poem up to its last word." Everything depends then on understanding just what Hölderlin means by *nature*. Heidegger explains that it cannot mean "a particular realm of being," as when one talks about *real objects* or *the real world*. Instead, with this term, Hölderlin

---

406 Ibid. 75-76/53.
407 Ibid.
408 Ibid., 75/52.
intends to retrieve the early Greek notion of *physis* (Chapter 3). In very similar terms to how we previously heard this concept described in Heidegger's reading of the early Greeks, he writes:

*Physis*, is an emerging [*Hervorgehen*] and an arising [*Aufgehen*], a self-opening [*Sichöffnen*], which, while arising [*aufgehend*], at the same time turns back [*zurückgeht*] into what has emerged [*Hervorgang*], and so shrouds [*verschliesst*] within itself that which on each occasion gives presence [*Anwesenden*] to what is present [*die Anwesung*]. Thought as a fundamental word [*Grundwort*], *physis* signifies rising [*Aufgehen*] into the open [*das Offene*]: the lighting [*das Lichten*] of that clearing [*Lichtung*] into which anything may enter appearing [*erscheinen*], present itself in its outline [*Umriss*], show itself in its “appearance” [*“Aussehen”*] (*Eidos, idea*) and be present as this or that. *Physis* is that rising-up [*aufgehende*] which goes-back-into-itself [*In-sich-zurück-Gehen*]; it names the coming to presence [*Anwesung*] of that which dwells in the rising-up [*Aufgang*] and thus comes to presence as open [*Offenen*]. The very clearing [*Lichtung*] of the open [*Offenen*], however, becomes most purely discernible as the transparency [*Durchsichtigkeit*] of brightness [*Helle*] that lets the “light” [*“Licht”*] pass through the hearth and the place of light. The illumination [*Leuchten*] of “light” [*“Lichtes”*] belongs to the fire [*Feuer*]; it is the fire [*Feuer*]. Fire [*Feuer*] is above all brightness [*Helle*] and blaze [*Glut*]. Brightness [*Die Helle*] lightens [*lichtet*] and first affords the open [*Offene*] for all appearing [*Erscheinen*], and first gives clarity [*Vernehmlichkeit*] to all that happens. The blaze [*Glut*] illuminates [*leuchtet*], it sets afire [*befeuert*] in its glowing [*Erglühen*] all that emerges [*Hervorgehende*] into its appearing [*Erscheinen*]. Thus the fire [*das Feuer*], as the illuminating-blazing “light” [*erhellend-glühendes “Licht”*], is the open [*Offene*], that which has already come to presence in everything [*allem*] that emerges [*hervor*] and goes away [*weggeht*] within the open [*Offenen*].

According to Heidegger then, the "wonderfully all-present" and "divinely beautiful nature" say the same thing in Hölderlin's poem. As this passage helps makes clear, however, what they say is not simply presence, as when one talks about the present state of real beings, but the generative activity of coming-into-presence, of appearance. This is also what the poem expresses in the analogous description of the landscape that breaks forth from out of the concealment of the dark regularity of work existence, and in the inspiration that suddenly dawns over the poet. At the same time, as the repeated references to fire, light, and illumination all suggest, Heidegger associates Hölderlin's thinking not simply with the early Greek notion of

---

409 Ibid., 79/56-57.
physis, but with Heraclitus's thinking of the beautiful kosmos in particular. This is an association that he makes more explicit in his 1966/67 Heraclitus Seminar when he writes:

The one that in itself distinguishes itself. Hölderlin understands it as the essence of beauty. At that time, however, beauty is for him the word for being. Hegel's interpretation of the Greeks in the Lectures on the History of Philosophy goes in the same direction: being as beauty. With recourse to Heraclitus' word, Hölderlin names no formalistic-dialectic structure; rather, he makes a fundamental declaration.  

According to Heidegger, both nature (physis) and beauty are words for being in Hölderlin's poems, words that name the coming-into-appearance that the poem itself helps bring about. 

Returning to Heidegger's reading of this specific poem, however, he offers a more careful explication of Hölderlin's Heraclitean notion of beauty. Interestingly, this begins with the observation that "divinely beautiful nature" is a misleading phrase. It cannot mean, for example, that nature gets its power or beauty from a god. For nature (physis) in Hölderlin and Heraclitus, is in everything, and thus cannot stem from a higher power. Heidegger explains, "nature is prior to all actuality and all action, even prior to the gods." 

"For she, 'who is older than the ages,' is also 'higher than the gods of Occident and Orient.'" According to Heidegger then, the image of the god is fitting only in that it comes closest to capturing the special beauty that belongs to nature. At the same time, insofar as a god is only one being within the wider conception of

---

410 Heidegger and Eugene Fink, 1966/1967 Heraclitus Seminar, 113/GA 15, 183. Heidegger later makes a self-correction that this relationship is found in Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History Vol. III, not the course he first cites.

411 Heidegger reiterates this point in his reading of the poem, "Remembrance," when he reflects on the significance of beauty in Hölderlin's Hyperion. He writes: "Here beauty in no way means many kinds of alluring and charming natures. The beauty of the earth is the earth in its beauty. With these words, however, the poet of Hyperion names Being (Seyn)" ("Remembrance," 155/GA 4, 134). Heidegger's spelling of being in its antiquated form as Seyn, attests further to the more originary conception of the beautiful that he has in mind here.

412 Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...,"81/GA 4, 59.

413 Ibid.
nature, a god's beauty is also a semblance (Schein) of nature's beauty, a mere aspect of the larger scope of appearing.\footnote{Ibid. 77/54. Heidegger's discussion of the god as an aspect of the wider scope of physis/kosmos is an important parallel to his important notion of the four-fold elsewhere. Specifically, Heidegger argues that being presents itself from out of the unity of the fundamental oppositions of earth and sky, divinities and mortals, within which a given historical community locates the significance of its world and beings. Heidegger names the fourfold more directly in his essay, "Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven," where he writes: "There are four voice which ring out: heaven, earth, man, and god. Destiny gathers the whole infinite relation in these four voices. Yet none of the four stays and goes one-sidedly by itself. In this sense, none is finite. None is without the others. In-finite, they hold themselves to each other, they are what they are from the in-finite relation, they are this whole relation itself. Consequently, earth and heaven and their connection belong in the richer relation of the four" ("Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven" in *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 194-195/GA 4, 163).}

Over against this semblance of the god's partial beauty, Heidegger argues that Hölderlin understands the true beauty of physis according to Heraclitus's in-apparent joining of opposites (the most beautiful kosmos). Heidegger observes:

Nature is called “beautiful” [“die Schöne”] because she is “wonderfully all-present” [“wunderbahr allgegenwärtig”]. That she is present in all does not mean a complete, quantitative comprehension of all that is real [Wirklichen], but rather the manner of permeating the real things [Wirklichen] that, according to their kind, seem to mutually exclude each other. This omnipresence holds in opposition to each other the extreme opposites, the highest heaven and the deepest abyss. But thereby the opposites that are held out to one another remain separated from one another through a kind of stubborn unruliness. Only thus can their opposition come forth into the extreme sharpness of difference. And this is what appears “extremely” [“äussert” Erscheinende], this is what most appears [das Erscheinendste].\footnote{Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...,” 76/GA 4, 53.}

Heidegger's interpretation of the beautiful in this context is almost identical to his reading of Heraclitus (Chapter 3). Specifically, he stresses that the coming-into-appearance of being as beauty cannot be thought in terms of the metaphysical notion of real beings or object-hood, but is comprised of the polemic activity of bringing appearance forth, out of the concealed opposition and tension of these relations.\footnote{This association between beauty and the joining together of opposites in the artwork, such as land and sea, sky and earth, is one that Julian Young also emphasizes in his explication of Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin. Specifically, Young writes: "[I]t is the unity of 'well-distinguished opposites', a unity which constitutes the essence of 'beauty' (GA 4 pp. 53-4). Beauty is, then, sharply distinguished 'opposites' resting in the 'connectedness' (ibid) of harmonious unity" (Heidegger's Philosophy of Art, 110). While Young is right to observe the element of...} Only through this in-apparent and dynamic work...
can opposites be brought to appearance in the shared unity of a single radiant aspect or look. In keeping with the continuity of his reading of Heraclitus and Hölderlin, however, it is important to note that Heidegger also repeats the claim from his reading of the Greeks and early Christians that beauty is responsible for how appearances call Dasein into an ecstatic and concerned engagement. He writes:

What appears in this way captivates [das Berückende]. But at the same time the opposites are carried away [entrückt] by the all present into the unity of the belonging together. This unity does not allow its stubbornness to be extinguished in a weak compromise, but rather takes it back into that peace that lights up as a quiet brilliance from the fire of combat [dem Feuer des Streites] in which the one pushes the other into appearing. This unity of the all-present is what enraptures, carries away [das Entrückende]. All-present nature captivates [berückt] and enraptures [entrückt]. This coincidence of captivation [Berückung] and rapture [Entrückung] is, however, the essence of the beautiful [Schönen]. Beauty lets one opposite come to presence in its opposite; it lets their togetherness come to presence in unity, and thus it lets everything come to presence in everything, precisely where their differences are most genuine.417

The fundamental repetition here in Heidegger's lexicon of the beautiful is significant, and extends all the way back to his early phenomenology of religion, in which he first discusses beauty's captivating and liberating tendencies (Chapter 1). Elsewhere, in her study, Heidegger and the Poets, Veronique Foti points out how Heidegger's discussion of the beautiful in Hölderlin relates to his thinking of beauty in "The Origin of the Work of Art." Specifically, Foti observes that in Heidegger's description of the "counterplay between 'ravishment' (Berückung) and 'transport' (Entrückung)," and in "the intimate 'contrariety' or strife" of the beautiful, one finds an important connection with the strife of the earth and world discussed in the "The Origin

---

oppositional harmony in Heidegger's thinking of the beautiful here, he completely misses the deeper character of semblance surrounding the manifestation of this harmony, and therefore how Heidegger's account of beauty is much different than the traditional aesthetic notion of harmony. Indeed, several lines later, Young concludes: 'For Hölderlin, then, and for Heidegger qua Hölderlinian thinker, cosmic 'thankfulness' is the right stance towards the world as a whole because that world is a beautiful place in which to find oneself. Being is holy because nature is beautiful. Here, I think we find ourselves on familiar territory: what Hölderlin-Heidegger offer with respect to the howness of creation is an aesthetic analogue of the 'argument from design'” (111).

417 Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...." 76/GA 4, 53.
Indeed, while the earlier essay emphasizes this *strife* in the way that the artwork founds a historical world from out of the self-concealing possibility of the earth, by supplementing that analysis with texts like the *Introduction to Metaphysics* and the *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, one begins to see that beauty is the name Heidegger gives to this in-apparent work of joining opposites (*polemos*/strife) - a discovery that points to a more significant position for the beautiful in "The Origin of the Work of Art" than previously recognized.

At the same time, Foti nuances this claim by suggesting a potential difference between the early essay on art and Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin here. Foti observes:

> While this intimate “contrariety” or strife that defines the beautiful recalls the strife between Earth and World in Heidegger's analysis of the revelatory character of the work of art, it does not have the same epochal-historical focus but is more Anaximandrian, as well as topological, in inspiration.⁴¹⁹

This last claim of Foti's appears to be supported by a number of facets. First, it may follow from Heidegger's explanation that the transport (*Entrückung*) that takes place in beauty concerns the bringing together of opposites constitutive of the possibility for appearance. Such a description seems to emphasize both a certain character of movement and spatiality. At the same time though, Foti's argument is also likely influenced by the way that Hölderlin's poem emphasizes the specific appearance of a landscape scene. Indeed, like Heidegger's consideration of the beautiful elsewhere in Eduard Mörike's poem, "Auf Eine Lampe," the present poem seems to focus on the possible appearance of a world or object in space, and less on a historical event.⁴²⁰

---

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.
⁴²⁰ While I do not have the space to discuss it more carefully here, it should be noted that Heidegger's interpretation of Mörike's poem, found in his dialogue with Emile Staiger and Leo Spitzer, constitutes another important site in Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe* where Heidegger discusses the beautiful directly. See Emil Staiger and Leo Spitzer, "A 1951 Dialogue Interpretation: Emil Staiger, Martin Heidegger, Leo Spitzer," trans. Berel Lang and Christine Ebel, *PLMA* 105, no. 3 (May, 1990): 409-435/GA 13.
Foti's interpretation here looks forward in an important way to Heidegger's later reflections on art regarding figures like Paul Klee, Paul Cézanne, and Eduardo Chillida, in which he suggests that art is more properly concerned with showing how the invisible unconceals the visible than it is with the historical founding discussed in "The Origin of the Work of Art."

However, I believe that to interpret Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin from the vantage of these later claims risks missing how his confrontation with Hölderlin and the beautiful remains historical in a deeply significant way. For as I have already begun to show, it is precisely in his reading of Hölderlin that Heidegger works out the historical difference between beauty and art for the early Greeks and the modern period. In order show this more precisely, however, we must proceed to examine not only how Hölderlin returns to the Greeks, but how he ultimately differs from them. That is, we must indicate how Hölderlin makes the free use of the Greek insight his own. It is to this point, however, that Heidegger observes that despite Hölderlin's retrieval of the ancient Greek notion of physis:

Hölderlin never knew the force of the primordial word, physis, whose force has still today been scarcely measured. Likewise, with what he names “nature,” Hölderlin does not only want to let the experience of the ancient times be brought to life again. With the word, “nature,” Hölderlin puts into his poem something else that, to be sure, stands in a concealed relation to that which was once called physis.⁴²¹

If it is this something else that makes Hölderlin a modern poet, then we must elucidate just what this something else is. Importantly, Heidegger proceeds to explain that what Hölderlin poeticizes here is nothing less than the historical essence of the unconcealing movement of physis, along with its counter self-concealing tendency. More specifically, Heidegger believes that Hölderlin’s poetry shows physis' capacity to "turn back into self" and conceal its complex nature, a tendency that allows it to be both covered-over in ways that it is not, and to continue to

⁴²¹ Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...," 79-80/GA 4, 57.
present itself in a variety historical manifestations. Heidegger suggests that in "As When on a Holiday...," this relationship is intimated by the image of nature's sleep or resting, an occurrence that elicits a parallel response of mourning from the poets who heed her. As has been noted previously (Chapter 3), the essential relationship between self-concealment and unconcealment, untruth and truth, are central to Heidegger's thinking after Being and Time. However, it is just this radical self-concealment that Heidegger believes "stands concealed in relation to that which was once called physis [by the early Greeks]," but which "Hölderlin [now] puts into that poem." For according to Heidegger, even though the originary relationship between being, non-being, and semblance is held open in early figures like Heraclitus, the Greeks remained focused on the notion of presence in their thinking of unconcealment, leaving physis' self-concealing tendency largely unthematized.

Heidegger suggests that the concealed relationship of concealment in the early Greek thinking of physis is illustrated in their relationship to art and beauty. Hölderlin expresses this in his suggestion that the Greek's cover-over their intimate unity with the Dionysian holy fire through the acquired rationalism of the Apollonian mask. In this way, while art serves as a self-presentation of being for the Greeks, it simultaneously veils the more disturbing in-apparent work of being. In "Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven," Heidegger suggests that this relationship is attested to in Hölderlin's poem, "What is God?," in which the blindness of the Greek poets is recalled. Heidegger observes:

---

422 Heidegger writes: "'At times of the year' the all-present seems to be sleeping. Here 'the year' means, at one and the same time, the 'season' and 'the years of the peoples,' the ages of the world. Nature seems to be sleeping, yet she is not sleeping. She is awake, but awake in the manner of mourning. Mourning withdraws from everything into the memory of one thing only. The remembrance of mourning remains near to what has been taken from it and seems to be distant" ("As When on a Holiday...," 77/GA 4, 54).

423 Ibid, 80/57.
The [Greek] singer is blind. The god comes to presence only by concealing himself. For this reason, the manner in which the blind singer speaks of the god in his song must be that of an art which covers the eyelids. The thought formed by the singer's *poiesis* belongs to the holy image, to the sight of the holy which conceals the god.\(^\text{424}\)

This requirement that the poet be blind to sing his song is one that permeates ancient Greek art in general. For the Greeks, the singer *must* be blind, as the chorus *must* be masked, as the god *must* be hidden inside the temple. In Heidegger's Hölderlinian analysis, this is just because the Greeks, like all mortals, cannot stand the pure fire of heaven, that is, they cannot stand the direct encounter with being (and its nothingness). Instead, this fire is mediated through an Apollonian appearance, an occurrence made possible by the beautiful's double nature as the in-apparent ground of appearance and the resulting appearance itself. For this same reason, Heidegger highlights Hölderlin's observation that the early poets were essentially *painters*, forced to present being in terms of visible beauty. He explains:

> Beauty is the original unifying One [*ursprüngliche einegende Eine*]. This One can appear only if it is brought together in its Oneness as the unifying One. According to Plato, the *hen* is only visible in the *sunagoge*, i.e., in the bringing together. But the poets *bring together like painters*. They let Being (idea) appear in the aspect of the visible.\(^\text{425}\)

What is suggested here can be better understood by recalling Heidegger's reading of the early Greeks (Chapter 3), in which it was shown that the beautiful names both the in-apparent discipline of unifying opposites into appearance, and the resulting radiant appearance of this work. It was also seen, however, that it is just the erotic singularity of the resulting appearance that causes one to forget, to be blind to the in-apparent work of beauty in *alētheia*. Heidegger traces this same interpretation in Hölderlin, in the suggestion that the ancient poets represent beauty like painters, a claim echoed elsewhere in his observation that, "beauty is called into the

---


work in order to release and to conceal everything in its own undamageable element.\textsuperscript{426} It can do this, however, because:

Beauty is the pure shining of the unconcealment of the whole infinite relation, together with its center. But the center, as the centering, that is, as the mediating, is what joints \textsuperscript{fügende} and what orders \textsuperscript{Verfügende}. The center is the joint \textsuperscript{Fuge} of the relation of the four, which spares \textsuperscript{sparende} its appearing.\textsuperscript{427}

In addition to beauty's central position in this thinking of the \textsuperscript{Füge}, the key claim here is that beauty \textit{spares its appearing} at the same time that it makes concrete appearance possible. This is precisely the description of the beautiful found in Heidegger's reading of Heraclitus' beautiful kosmos, which he argues is covered-over by Plato's association of the beautiful with the pure presence of the \textit{eidē} (Chapter 3). As we have seen, Heidegger contends that this Platonic development shapes the history of aesthetic metaphysics up to the present age of technology, where one finds the pure subordination of appearance to \textit{the will to power}. Drawing on Hölderlin's poetic expression again, Heidegger characterizes this development as follows:

Formerly, the greeting of the holy was “smiling,” all-present, tireless, friendly, quite untroubled if the men “scarcely felt” what was then happening. In their hurry toward the tangible, men took what was granted by nature, divinely beautiful, only for their own use and service, and reduced the all-present to the form of a servant.\textsuperscript{428}

In contrast with this historical fixation on the present appearance of the beautiful, Heidegger believes that Hölderlin poeticaizes the unexplored essence of "divinely beautiful nature" by singing a song not only about presence, but about concealment. As has been suggested, in the poem, "As When on a Holiday…," this concealment is delineated at the

\textsuperscript{426} Heidegger, "Hölderlin's Earth and Heaven," 203/\textit{GA 4}, 179-180.
\textsuperscript{427} Ibid., 203/179. Heidegger repeats this claim in his reading of Hölderlin's poem, "Greece," when he writes: "The song however, lingers in a continual wandering and traveling that constantly measures its steps in the meter of the verse's feet, in the measure of the poetic saying. The ways of such travelers are even more beautiful than the journeys undertaken for other purposes. The poetic ways are more beautiful because the land that they traverse, and so first render passable, is the realm of beauty in which the infinite relation comes to shining appearance" ("Höldelin's Earth and Heaven," 189/\textit{GA 4}, 164).
\textsuperscript{428} Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...," 87/\textit{GA 4}, 65.
historical level by the persistent claim that nature has been sleeping for ages, that the gods have flown, and that the people have forgotten how to hear the mysterious voice of the rivers, mountains, and land. Such forgetfulness, like the history of aesthetic metaphysics, extends essentially from the self-concealing nature of physis itself. But Hölderlin's poetry does not stop with this observation. Hölderlin also suggests that in the emerging recognition of what Heidegger elsewhere calls the historical abandonment of being (Seinsverlassenheit), something else is prepared, namely a remembrance of physis’ originary power and complex essence. With this potential remembrance, however, the possibility for a new historical founding is prepared, one that Heidegger says is indicated in "As When on a Holiday..." by the adverb now, which "names Hölderlin's age and no other." 

Hölderlin's radical interpretation of physis is also indicated by another important word in his poem, however: The Holy. Heidegger argues that in Hölderlin's invocation of this other word for being, the tacit, but unthematized quality of physis’ self-concealing historical essence is brought forward in a way that can only be glimpsed by virtue of the modern distance from the Greek beginning. The holy, which is also how Hölderlin refers to the Dionysian insight that the Greek's learn to mask with the Apollonian, refers to the priority of the concealment from out of which the appearance of physis emerges. For this reason, Heidegger states that Hölderlin also associates the holy with chaos, explaining that "thought in terms of nature (physis)[,] chaos

---

429 Elsewhere in his reading here, Heidegger points out that this forgetting extends from the self-concealing nature of being itself. He writes: "Forgetting is sometimes a losing, sometimes a dismissing, and sometimes even both. If in forgetting we keep something away from ourselves, then we easily flee into something else that captivates us [gefangen nimmt], so that we thereby 'forget ourselves.' In all these ways, forgetting remains a behavior in which we engage. But there is still another kind of forgetting, where it is not we who forget something, but rather something forgets us, so that we are the ones forgotten - to destiny; no longer accorded a destiny, we wander about among events, cowards running away from our own essential origin" ("Remembrance," 117/GA 4, 93). The reference to what "captivates" us here seems to also figure the relationship of the beautiful directly within this forgetting.

430 Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...,” 97/GA 4, 75-76. It must be remembered that for Heidegger, Hölderlin's age is also our age, insofar as we still stand in the epoch of reflection on the first beginning, and in the anticipation of a new beginning.
remains that gaping out of which the open opens itself, so that it may grant its bounded presence
to all differentiations.\textsuperscript{431}

Accordingly, in the distant modern remembrance of what was only hinted at in \textit{physis} at
the beginning of Western history, Hölderlin's thinking of \textit{divinely beautiful nature} as the holy
sings a song of potential \textit{awakening}, namely an awakening to these deeper insights into the
historical essence of being itself. Such an awakening, Heidegger argues, calls a new community
together and presages a new epoch.\textsuperscript{432} Thus Heidegger explains that, in Hölderlin:

While the poet still thinks of the distant mariners and on the [Greek] manner [like
painters] in which they must think of their journey, his own \textit{remembrance}, which has
meanwhile reflected on his return, his homecoming, is elevated into the clarity of his
being.\textsuperscript{433}

It is in this way that Heidegger's reading of art and beauty in Hölderlin must ultimately be
understood as historical. For according to Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, the present
age "specifies the 'age,' in which it is 'time' for history to confront its essential decisions,"\textsuperscript{434} and
"these words declare that now poetry must be different from the presentation that brings beauty
together \textit{like painters}."\textsuperscript{435} What Heidegger means with these claims is that art can no longer be
expected to found a historical community in the simple self-evidence of its world, as it once did
for the Greeks. The rational reflection on the nature of art that has emerged with the historical
development of the West has made this kind of founding historically impossible for Hölderlin's
age. At the same time, one finds that this new relation to art is made possible precisely by the
same thing that has made aesthetics possible, namely the loss of a self-evident relationship to
being and art characteristic of the ancient Greeks, and the rise of a rational reflection on the

\textsuperscript{431} Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...," 85/\textit{GA} 4, 65.
\textsuperscript{432} Heidegger writes: "In awakening, nature unveils her own essence as the holy" (81/59).
\textsuperscript{433} Heidegger, "Remembrance," 162-163/\textit{GA} 4, 141.
\textsuperscript{434} Heidegger, "As When on a Holiday...," 97/\textit{GA} 4, 76.
\textsuperscript{435} Heidegger, "Remembrance," 159/\textit{GA} 4, 137-138.
nature and possibility of art. And yet, by returning to the source of the holy fire in the ancient
greeks once again, and by poeticizing this return in song, Heidegger believes that Hölderlin also
breaks with the pure Junonian sobriety of modern aesthetics - thereby allowing us to recover the
ground of these insights in a new way.

In Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin, then, it becomes clear that the questions surrounding
beauty in the "The Origin of the Work of Art" receive a special clarification. For it has been
seen that beauty's ambiguous relationship with truth and being in the earlier essay is defined
more precisely in Hölderlin, according to the in-apparent strife of earth and world that first
allows historical appearance to come forth - a reading that I have noted is echoed in Heidegger's
Greek interpretations in texts like Introduction to Metaphysics (Chapter 3). At the same time,
the important difference between the status of beauty in art and in other domains, as well as the
difference between great art and modern art, has also been indicated here. For while it turns out
that beauty is tied to the appearance of truth and being as such, it exhibits a preeminent status in
the artwork's essential work of opening-up appearance. In the Greeks, however, art manifests
this dynamic in a self-evident emphasis on the presence of appearance, a kind of showing that
effaces the more terrifying work of how such appearance first comes to be. In contrast,
Heidegger argues that by virtue of the historical vantage afforded to it, Hölderlin's poetry re-
interrogates the Greek interpretation of physis and alētheia, and thematizes the in-apparent self-
concealing element that belongs to it as well. In this way, however, Heidegger concludes that
the modern artwork also shows beauty in a radically different way, no longer simply as the erotic
and captivating (berückung) appearance of a historical world, but in its in-apparent unity with
being and truth.
Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin represents a certain high point in his engagement with the question of art (technē/poiesis) understood in its historical confrontation with aesthetic metaphysics. As we have seen, it is through these investigations that Heidegger is able to both work out more carefully art's originary ontological possibility and its historical challenge to the aesthetic determination of beauty in modern technology. In the following conclusion, however, it will be seen that Heidegger becomes less optimistic over time about the possibility of art to constitute a mobilizing challenge to the leveling of technology. Despite this significant change in tone, Heidegger's engagement with art and beauty does not disappear, but is redirected in a newfound interest in the visual arts - a development that challenges his previous thinking of art, and offers a more subtle insight into the nature of appearance and beauty.

IV. Conclusion: Heidegger, Cézanne, and Klee on the Appearing of Appearance

Beginning in the 1950's, Heidegger's thinking of art undergoes another important development. This is seen, for example, in an address given to the Athens Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1967, in which Heidegger raises the question of whether art is historically significant anymore. The question appears, in many ways, to be the same as the one he raises in the Epilogue to the "The Origin of the Work of Art," but the tone has changed. There is no longer an accompanying elucidation of art's originary power, but rather the enjoinder to think more carefully the all-consuming force of modern technology. In this way, however, the thinking of technology seems to take precedence over the possibility of art. Indeed, one hears this hesitation even more sharply in the famous Der Spiegel interview, in which he observes, "I do not see how

modern art shows the way, especially since we are left in the dark as to how modern art perceives, or at least seeks, what is most proper to art."437

Despite this growing hesitancy in Heidegger's thinking about art, it is not right to say that he abandons the question, or that he becomes simply apathetic about it. Indeed, Heidegger simultaneously appears to develop a more personal relationship with the visual arts in these later years, one that is expressed, in particular, by his intimate engagement with the paintings of Paul Klee and Paul Cézanne, as well as in a broad encounter with Eastern art. Regarding the former, Heinrich Petzet reports that Heidegger regularly took day trips to Switzerland during this period, in order to view for hours at a time the large Klee collection owned by the Beyeler family.438 And yet, this does not mean that Heidegger's engagement with art succumbed to a personal aestheticism. For in these encounters, Heidegger claims to have found something new, something that had not come to expression in his thinking or in art until then. In the fragmentary notes that we have from these encounters with Klee's work, Heidegger offers two clues about what this insight entails. He writes:

\[\text{Art does not give back the visible, but makes the visible. (Klee) What? The invisible - [and] from where and how [is] this determined?}^439\]

\[[The Origin of the Work of Art] thinks historically - the works that have been. [The art to come is] no longer [tasked with the putting up of world and the making of earth, as thematized in the artwork-essay, but with], the bringing about the relation out of the Ereignis of the fugue.\]440

---


439 Heidegger, "Klee Notizen," 12. These notes are very fragmentary and Seubold has often helped fill out their context. His editor's insertions are indicated by square brackets.

440 Ibid., 10. Elsewhere, Petzet reports that based on these later reflections, Heidegger "thought about writing a second part to 'The Origin of the Work of Art' - and that what would have given rise to it was the works of Paul Klee" (Petzet, Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger, 146).
This newfound emphasis on the theme of *the visible*, along with the self-critique of the historical framework of "The Origin of the Work of Art," has led to a general observation today that Heidegger's later work replaces his earlier historical interpretation with a spatial thinking. This is a position that seems to be supported by Heidegger's later essay on, "Art and Space," in which he discusses sculpture's role in the "freeing making [of] space."  

However, while such observations are largely accurate, it is misleading to suggest that Heidegger simply replaces his historical approach to the work of art with a spatial consideration. Indeed, it is important to recognize how the transformation of this later work belongs within the broader continuum of Heidegger's inquiry into the questions of art and beauty.

Günter Figal provides a helpful insight into what may have brought about this shift in Heidegger's later thinking. He observes that while the special overlap and tension between philosophy and art is one that Heidegger persistently pursues in his work, it is Plato who first draws attention to this *ancient quarrel*, one that strangely does not seem to exist until the advent of aesthetics itself. Accordingly, Figal suggests that in his own emphatic pursuit of this philosophical characterization of art, Heidegger remains within the very Platonic rationalization of the artwork that he wishes to critique. Elsewhere, Jay Bernstein has expressed this point differently, suggesting that in Heidegger's attempt to philosophically elucidate *the origin* of the artwork, he unwittingly perpetuates the German Romanticist belief that criticism is necessary for the completion of the artwork. In both cases, the suggestion is that Heidegger’s philosophical

---

442 Figal, "Introduction" to *The Heidegger Reader*.  
account of the artwork seems to stumble upon the very aesthetic block that it seeks to overcome, while the artwork remains dominated by a discourse which is not its own. 

It is a certain self-recognition of this aesthetic tendency within his work that helps explain Heidegger's later encounter with art, one where Heidegger finds himself thrown back, as it were, on the artwork itself. However, this recognition is also a deeply challenging one. In his book, Between Word and Image: Heidegger, Klee, and Gadamer on Gesture and Genesis, Dennis Schmidt helps articulate this challenge, which fundamentally revolves around the notion of articulation itself. Indeed, as the title of Schmidt's book neatly suggests, the aporia that Heidegger encounters in his later thinking is one precisely between word and image. This is because, on the one hand, the work of art has historically lost its self-evident ability to speak to us today, a phenomenon that Heidegger traces back to Plato's philosophical aestheticization of the beautiful and the artwork in the first place. On the other hand, Heidegger's own attempts to recover the artwork's power to speak in the "The Origin of the Work of Art" and Hölderlin readings turn out to remain an unfit medium or language for the task. Indeed, the question becomes: How can the artwork speak to us today in its own language, from its unique relationship with appearance, in such a way as to say something about the very nature of being and appearance? This is a question that Heidegger touches on in his Klee notes when he observes

---

445 Figal writes: "Heidegger now thinks less often about an 'other beginning,' and more about what lies behind, and is distorted by, technical-scientific definitions. His attention to things [...] but also his increasingly intense involvement with art, belongs to this theme. Heidegger discovers the peculiar essence of art, instead of understanding it (as he still did in 'The Origin of the Work of Art') from poetry, and thus from Hölderlin, and therefore from the connection to a historical-philosophical project" (The Heidegger Reader, 30). As Figal notes here, this turn towards appearance as such is also signaled in Heidegger's later considerations of the thing understood in the intractable over-against-ness of the thing itself, and which must be understood differently than Heidegger's earlier opposition between Zuhandenheit (ready-to-hand) and Vorhandenheit (present-to-hand). Importantly, Figal's own work on art is deeply indebted to this phenomenological investigation of the appearance of the thing itself, which he both highlights in the later Heidegger and criticizes for not going far enough towards. See, in particular, Figal, Objectivity: The Hermeneutical and Philosophy, trans. Theodore George (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 2010); Erscheinungsdinge (Germany: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010).

that what is sought is "the voice of silence," and "exactly from where and how [is] this [saying]?"\textsuperscript{447}

It is in the context of this more nuanced consideration of the questions facing Heidegger's later encounter with art that his engagement with Cézanne, Klee, and Eastern art becomes telling. It is helpful, however, to position these sources over against Heidegger's simultaneous critique of modern art at this time. An example of this critique is broached in a roundtable discussion from 1952, in which Heidegger discusses the topic of "Art and Technology."\textsuperscript{448} In the course of this discussion, he asks:

Is it not the task of art to bring to awareness the new experiences given in technology? A new feeling of space is already present through automobiles and flying, etc. [Max] Beckmann has depicted the rushing of space around us in this area. In this way, there is grasped the third dimension and the forth, time, is touched upon. These problems are taken up by Picasso and in Abstraction. Indeed, the development of modern art can be understood as a running commentary on the development of the technological world. However, I would not want to use the word "art" ["Kunst"] for this claim.\textsuperscript{449}

Heidegger's answer to his question of whether art today concerns the unique character and experience of our technological world is a resounding no.\textsuperscript{450} In one sense, an explanation for this can be traced back to "The Origin of the Work of Art," in which Heidegger makes clear that the more originary task of art is not the representation or imitation of a world, but the primordial opening-up of the world. Elsewhere, however, Heidegger offers a further critique of modern abstraction. For he notes that in its obliterating negation of form, abstraction actually remains

\textsuperscript{447} Heidegger, "Klee Notizen," 12.
\textsuperscript{448} Heidegger, "Kunst und Technik," in GA 76.
\textsuperscript{449} Ibid., 394. My translation.
\textsuperscript{450} Elsewhere, Heidegger is quoted as saying: "Picasso and 'artistic genius' - that is true, without a doubt. But I still do not see whether this artistic genius is capable of making manifest for art even its essential place in the future" (Petzet, Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger, 145).
bound to the metaphysics of form by means of a simple reversal.\(^{451}\) However, as Heidegger's Hölderlin interpretation has clearly indicated above, what the modern artwork must achieve differently from the great art of the past, is not simply the opening-up of a specific world, nor the inverse obliteration of that world, but a showing of how the in-apparent work of \textit{alētheia} (being, truth, beauty) sets up a world as such. Drawing these critiques together, then, Heidegger's estimation of Cubism and the other major expressions of abstraction at the time is that they remain concerned primarily with the representation of an already existing cultural-historical experience, and thus fail to show the more fundamental ontological event of how the invisible makes the visible.\(^{452}\)

Over against this tendency in modern art, Heidegger glimpses another possibility in the work of Paul Cézanne. Petzet reports that Heidegger came to believe during this period that "in Cézanne, [...] a turning in 'the work' is being prepared - a turning that then became apparent for the thinker in Paul Klee."\(^{453}\) Elsewhere, Figal helps provide a helpful insight into just what this "turning in 'the work'" of Cézanne and Klee involves. He does this, however, with reference to a prose poem that Heidegger writes about Cézanne shortly before his death in 1976. Figal writes:

He [Heidegger] had published a series of writings - on Paul Cézanne's art [...]. [Here] Heidegger takes back the distinction between Being and beings that had shaped his thinking since 1922, and what since 1926 was called the “ontological difference.” When Cézanne, with regard to his art, speaks of “realization,” this means “the appearance of the present in the clearing of the coming-to-presence” – “such that the duality of both is bound up in the simplicity of the pure shining of its images.” [...] If this creates for thinking “the question of twisting-free of the ontological difference between Being and beings” [...], this can only mean that thought should subordinate itself to the “pure

\(^{451}\) See, for example, Heidegger, "Die Kunst und das Denken: Protokoll eines Colloquiums am 18. Mai 1958" in \textit{GA} 16. This text records a dialogue that Heidegger had with Hoseki Shin'ichi Hisamatsu in 1958 about the relationship between Western and Eastern art. We will examine this dialogue in more detail below.

\(^{452}\) For this reason, Petzet writes that: "Heidegger once noted, all of today's art - whether surrealist, abstract, or objective - is essentially metaphysical" (Petzet, \textit{Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger}, 146).

\(^{453}\) Ibid. Petzet further observes that this turning in the artwork follows Heidegger's turning in his own work. He writes: "In his old age, Heidegger frequently said that Cézanne's path was his own path - a statement whose full significance has not yet been grasped" (132).
shining” that the images are. In this notion of Heidegger's, a fundamental theme of thinking returns: All reflections on discovery, truth as unconcealment, physis, and Being were part of the attempt to trace the mystery of phenomena that lies in their self-showing. Now, at the age of eighty-five, Heidegger has found the clear and yet mysterious answer in the “pure shining” of images.454

Fidal's sweeping description of what Heidegger finds in Cézanne here helps draw together not only Heidegger's later thinking, but the whole of Heidegger's engagement with the question of being. Indeed, what Fidal believes Heidegger finds in Cézanne is not a historical representation of the particular epoch in which we live, but an appearance of how appearing becomes possible. That is, what is shown in a painting like Mont Sainte-Victoire is being in the process of unconcealing itself, and yet, also in this way, concealing itself - a presentation that is both beyond and before representationalism and abstraction.455

Elsewhere, Petzet notes how Heidegger sees this unique interweaving of the visible and invisible in Cézanne's use of color. Heidegger observes that, in Cézanne, color is indistinguishable from the appearance of the colored object itself. He borrows here upon a description that Rilke gives of Cézanne regarding a "work that no longer had any preferences or

454 Fidal, *The Heidegger Reader*, 31-32. The relevant excerpt from Heidegger's poem reads as follows: "What Cézanne calls la réalisation is the appearance of the present in the clearing of coming-to-presence - such that the duality of both is bound up in the simplicity of the pure shining of its images. For thought, this is the question of twisting free of the ontological difference between Being and beings. But the twisting free only becomes possible if the ontological difference is first experienced and pondered as such, which in turn can only occur on the basis of the 'question of Being' posed in *Being and Time*. Its unfolding demands the experience of the sending of Being. The insight into the first prepares the venturing into the region of paths, a journey that finds its way into the simple saying, in the mode of naming what is withheld, a naming to which thinking remains deferred" (*The Heidegger Reader*, 310-311/GA 13, 223).
fastidious overindulgences, the smallest component of which was tested on the scale of a continually moving conscience and which gathered up beings in their color-content so integrally that a new existence without earlier memories sprang up on the other side of color.'\textsuperscript{456} As Figal points out, however, what this unique appearance of appearing ultimately indicates for Heidegger is nothing less than an overcoming of his core philosophical insight: The ontological difference.

For in the paintings of Cézanne, the interweaving of unconcealing and concealing, found for example in use of color described above, is brought to the fore precisely in the unique language of appearance itself. This means, however, that on at least this one occasion, Being (Sein) becomes capable of showing itself simultaneously in a being (Seiende).

As has been noted, this is something that Heidegger also finds in the work of Paul Klee, indeed perhaps even more so.\textsuperscript{457} In the context of the latter figure, however, Heidegger brings this observation back to a specific reflection on the beautiful. Seubold observes that in his later Klee notes, Heidegger states that this thinking of appearance "stand[s] before all else in the context of the basic word, Ereignis," and he cites Heidegger directly: "'Ereignis': 'The beautiful' [\textit{Das Schöne}] - Ereignis and the sighting.\textsuperscript{458} Unfortunately, due to their fragmentary nature, Heidegger does not go into a fuller explication of what he means by this reference. A helpful clue is found, however, in Heidegger's parallel engagement with Eastern art at this time, specifically in his encounter with Hoseki Shin'ichi Hisamatsu in 1958.\textsuperscript{459} In this important dialogue, Heidegger observes that Western art is traditionally concerned with the \textit{eidos}, or the

\textsuperscript{456} Petzet, \textit{Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger}, 142. Petzet cites this passage in Rilke as one which Heidegger was particularly fond of quoting.

\textsuperscript{457} Petzet reports that Heidegger said: "In Klee something has happened that none of us grasps as yet" (150).

\textsuperscript{458} Heidegger, "\textit{Klee Notizen}," 12.

task of (re)presentation (Darstellung) of something visible.\textsuperscript{460} And yet, Heidegger observes, it is precisely this image-character, this focus on the resulting visible appearance, which becomes "a hindrance" (Hindernis) in the pursuit of vision.\textsuperscript{461}

Heidegger's critique is a familiar one by now, one that I have shown elsewhere belongs to the way in which the beautiful captures Dasein in the singularity of appearances. What is more interesting is the counter description that Hisamatsu proceeds to give of Zen art here. For Hisamatsu explains that unlike European art, Zen Art is not concerned with an image, but a movement (Bewegung) or a way (Weg).\textsuperscript{462} He notes that this way has two senses (bedeutet zweierlei). On one hand, the Zen artwork brings one back to the origin (Ursprung) of all actuality (Wirklichkeit). On the other hand, the artwork then brings one back to actuality from out of this origin. Indeed, according to Hisamatsu, "the proper essence of Zen-Art stands in this switchback [Rückkehre]."\textsuperscript{463} It is just through this dynamic movement beyond the limit of a given appearance or object, to the source of such appearing, and in the return back to the actual reality of such appearances that Zen art exceeds the limits of traditional Western painting and abstraction. Most importantly, however, Hisamatsu ties this insight directly to the beautiful. For he observes that what is called beauty (Die Schönheit) in Zen art is just this ability to capture the formlessness of an image presentation, a task that means "beauty in Zen art is always to be thought in connection with the freedom of its origin."\textsuperscript{464} He writes:

The beauty of the Zen-artwork, in its essence, stands in the free movement [Bewegung] of the originating itself. If this movement comes to appearance in the cohesion of form [Formhaftien], this is an artwork.\textsuperscript{465}

\textsuperscript{460} Ibid., 554.
\textsuperscript{461} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{463} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{464} Ibid., 555.
\textsuperscript{465} Ibid.
Given Heidegger's deep interest in the Eastern tradition during this period of his life, he would have paid close attention to Hisamatsu's account of the beautiful here. Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of Heidegger's Klee notes also prevent us from being able to date them precisely. It is generally accepted that many of them were written sometime after 1956, which means it is possible that Heidegger could have referenced the beautiful in Klee above with Hisamatsu's description in mind. However, it is ultimately not important whether there is a direct influence here or not. For what Hisamatsu's description of the Zen artwork and the character of the beautiful really contributes, is a certain repetition of and clarity into Heidegger's thinking of beauty and the limitations of the Western aesthetic tradition. As we have seen, from Heidegger's earliest investigations into Christian mysticism (Chapter 1) to his reading of the ancient Greeks (Chapter 3), one finds a complexly doubled notion of the beautiful. On one hand, in someone like Eckhart, Heidegger notes that beauty belongs to the invisible originary call of God itself. On the other hand, Heidegger recognizes that it is this same invisible force that makes the apparent world and all that appears as beautiful in that world possible - a fact that he suggests divides the lovers of beautiful things from those who heed the call of beauty itself.

Similarly, in the early Greeks, Heidegger explicates the beautiful in again in this way. Specifically, he suggests that for figures like Heraclitus and Sophocles, beauty names both the in-apparent work of the joining of the fugue of appearance, and the erotic radiance of the appearance that results from this work.

466 Julian Young argues for a similar point in *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 148.
467 One finds an explicit reference to Zen art in Heidegger's Klee notes. Seubold observes, for example, that Heidegger references "Zen" and the originary "Nicht [Not/nothing]" in relation to how Klee's paintings specifically do not concern themselves with the "presentation [Darstellung]" of objects, but with leading humankind back to the originary source of the opening of the nothing ("Klee Notizen," 11).
Beginning with Plato, however, we have seen that Heidegger believes the history of aesthetics reduces beauty to its visible concretion, losing its originally complex relationship with the in-apparent. While Heidegger's Hölderlin reading suggests that this lost insight is one that can only be poeticized today by virtue of our aesthetic distance from the Greeks, Heidegger also comes to recognize that his own philosophical elucidation of Hölderlin contributes to the obfuscation of what must be heard in the simplicity of being's relationship with appearance itself. Thus, when Hisamatsu suggests that Zen art is defined by the beautiful movement from actuality to the origin of actuality in the nothing, and back again to the actual, we might say that Hisamatsu states more simply Heidegger's own historical description of the beautiful as belonging to both the in-apparent and apparent work of appearing - an association that Heidegger ultimately finds manifest in Cézanne and Klee.

As has been suggested, Heidegger finds in the work of these last two figures a mode of presentation in which the in-apparent work of appearing is itself brought into the appearance, what he refers to in Klee as the beautiful event (Ereignis) of the fugue. Indeed, in Cézanne's and Klee's paintings, the complex essence of the beautiful - glimpsed by thinkers like Heraclitus, Eckhart, and Hölderlin - is finally able to come to expression without the restriction of the aesthetic focus, and without the translation of the philosophical logos, in the fitting medium of its own mode and in ""the freedom of movement of never-ending 'Genesis.'""468

Fical suggests that one finds a fitting unity to Heidegger's work as a whole in these later reflections on art and beauty. Indeed, while Heidegger's philosophical search began with an investigation into the analogy of being and the unity of the Transcendentals, his late encounter with art concludes by discovering how being both unconceals and conceals itself in the

simultaneity of appearance precisely through the double essence of the beautiful. In this way, Heidegger appears to retrieve his beginning in his end. At the same time, however, such a discovery indicates a substantially weaker conclusion for a thinker that has called for the revolutionary leap into a new historical beginning. Indeed, while one might say that in the simplicity of the artwork's appearing-appearance, the lie is given to modern technology's captivated numbness in the experience of the beautiful (Chapter 4), this same simplicity in Cézanne's and Klee's paintings no longer speaks with the loud mobilization of a new a historical epoch.\footnote{Petzet reports that Heidegger was especially interested in Klee's works that dealt with the "juggernaut of technology," such as "Ein Tor" (Petzet, Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger, 148). At the same time, as I have suggested here, all of Klee's and Cézanne's works represent a broader confrontation with technology precisely by virtue of their subversion of appearance.} Rather, as Heidegger came to learn in the hours he spent at the Beyeler collection, the challenge to the ubiquitous spell of technology stirs in the quiet encounter of standing before the beautiful artwork and finding one's world, perhaps one's philosophy, miraculously undone.
Conclusion
Conclusion
Mindfulness and Letting-Be

The preceding examination has answered several important questions, and raised others. The most important answer provided here has been about the status of the beautiful in Heidegger's philosophy. Specifically, I have shown that contrary to the common belief that Heidegger is not a thinker of the beautiful, a powerful and pervasive consideration of this basic word (Grundwort) is found throughout his work, extending from his early engagement with the medieval Christian tradition and phenomenology of religion, and up through his confrontation with art and technology. Indeed, across the complex development of this philosopher, a certain unity is found in his engagement with the beautiful. This starts with his inquiry into the analogy of being and its relationship with the Transcendentals in the ancient Greek and Christian tradition, and comes to a head in his retrieval of the special unity of being, truth, and beauty in alētheia. Indeed, for Heidegger, beauty turns out to be the erotically radiant quality of appearance in the clearing of being's unconcealment, a radiance that helps draw Dasein into a concerned engagement with the world.

At the same time, however, Heidegger also reveals a double notion of the beautiful here, one that not only nuances his thinking of alētheia, but helps us to understand beauty’s treatment in the history of Western aesthetics, and ultimately, its problematic status today. By appealing to both the Christian mystical tradition and the early Greeks, Heidegger suggests that, on one hand, the beautiful belongs to the in-apparent creation of appearance - what Meister Eckhart associates with the invisible beauty of God's creative power, and what Heraclitus calls the in-apparent joining of opposites in the most beautiful kosmos. On the other hand, Heidegger observes that
beauty characterizes the resulting appearance of this generative work, an appearance that in its erotic singularity also constitutes a powerful semblance by covering over the very dynamic of appearing.

While the complexity of the beautiful resides in just this double nature, Heidegger shows how beginning with Plato, the Western aesthetic tradition focuses almost strictly on the side of its appearance, associating it with the erotic appeal of the sensuous world. In the modern period, this interpretation of the beautiful becomes associated primarily with the feeling of pleasure experienced in the subject's encounter with art and nature, an understanding that is further marginalized with the twentieth century critique of beautiful art. It is here, however, in the midst of the present subjectivism and denigration surrounding the beautiful today, that Heidegger believes beauty obtains its fullest semblance. For he argues that despite its critical and common reputation, beauty quietly remains the basic determination in the will to power of mass culture, a fact that is defined by the uncontrollable production of new appearances and new values without a corresponding self-reflection into how or why we are drawn to them.

As has been seen, it is through a persistent inquiry into the essence of our technological world, into technē, and its shared root with a different relationship to appearance found in the artwork, that Heidegger believes a possible challenge to this aesthetic culmination of the beautiful might be possible. As has also been witnessed, this is a thinking and a challenge that Heidegger continues to re-think across his later years, from his Promethean account of great art in "The Origin of the Work of Art," to his more historically sensitive investigations of Hölderlin, to his late encounter with the simple appearance of Cézanne's and Klee's paintings. It is in these last artists, however, that Heidegger discovers for the first time, a genuine showing of the more complex character of the beautiful as the appearing of appearance, a showing which not only
quietly challenges the tyranny of aesthetic appearance in Western mass culture, but collapses Heidegger's own notion of the ontological difference.

With this elucidation of the history of the beautiful, Heidegger turns out to be one of the few thinkers in the twentieth century to offer a genuine engagement with the historical significance of beauty. Indeed, in the legacy of thinkers following Heidegger, figures like Foucault, Lyotard, and Derrida, there is a striking absence of the topic in favor of an examination of alternative aesthetic possibilities.\(^\text{470}\) Two notable exceptions to this trend, however, are found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Beauty is not a term that Merleau-Ponty commonly uses in his philosophical lexicon. However, as Gaylen Johnson's excellent study, *The Retrieval of the Beautiful: Thinking Through Merleau-Ponty's Aesthetics* has helped show, Merleau-Ponty's understanding of the nature of appearance in the artwork is one that also engages the more profound sense in which Heidegger has explored the beautiful here.\(^\text{471}\) Specifically, Heidegger's late reflections on Cézanne and Klee can be seen as an important prefiguration of Merleau-Ponty's investigations of how the artwork helps show the concealed interweaving of *The Visible and the Invisible*.\(^\text{472}\) Differently, Gadamer is one of the only thinkers in this lineage to recover the beautiful explicitly by name. In his long essay "The Relevance of the Beautiful," and in the conclusion to *Truth and Method*, Gadamer offers a radical re-reading of Plato's notion of the beautiful to suggest, in similar fashion as Heidegger,


\(^{472}\) This is the title of Merleau-Ponty's posthumously published last book, in which he explores more closely the notion of how the visible is brought forward from out of the invisible work of being. There is a particularly striking overlap in his notion of *the fold* or *hinge* between the invisible and visible, and Heidegger's double notion of the beautiful. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1969); *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, ed. and trans. Galen Johnson and Michael Smith (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993).
that beauty belongs to the "self-presentation of being" in the generative event of understanding.\textsuperscript{473}

Interestingly, one finds perhaps a still closer intellectual connection on this topic between Heidegger and a group of thinkers that have often worked hard to distinguish themselves from him, namely the critical theory tradition. In particular, there exists an interesting parallel between Heidegger's exposure of the dangerous side of beauty in aesthetics and modern technology, and the work of Theodore Adorno and Walter Benjamin. In his \textit{tour de force}, \textit{Aesthetic Theory}, Adorno points to both the historical constructivism, and the dialectical interrelation of the beautiful and the ugly, in the cultural exploitation of nature - an occurrence that the artwork and critic are charged with exposing.\textsuperscript{474} Meanwhile, Benjamin places the artwork in relation to two other fundamental concepts, beauty and play. While the former has historically been the dominant aesthetic concept, Benjamin argues that in the age of the mechanical reproducibility of the artwork, the beautiful aura of the artwork must be interrupted by a new emphasis on play in order to bring about a potential change of consciousness in our technological society.\textsuperscript{475}

It also must be noted that after a century and a half of critique, there has been something of a critical revival in the discussion of the beautiful in the last two decades. As I have pointed out in my Introduction, however, the character of this revival has too often involved an uncritical retrieval of a naive aesthetic appreciation of the beautiful, an occurrence that threatens to simply reverse and repeat the one-sided error of the avant-garde critique of beauty. It is just these critical shortcomings, and the persistence of beauty's ambiguous position in mass culture at

\textsuperscript{473} Hans-Georg Gadamer, \textit{Truth and Method}, 490.
\textsuperscript{474} Theodore Adorno, \textit{Aesthetic Theory}.
present that makes Heidegger's account of the beautiful as relevant today as it was fifty years ago. Indeed, the real force of Heidegger's interpretation of the beautiful extends from the deep ambivalence in his description of this phenomenon. By the term *ambivalence* here, I not only intend to capture the double quality of beauty in Heidegger's discussion of its in-apparent and apparent complexity, but I also mean to highlight his austere refusal to associate beauty with anything like a notion of the good. It is this fact that reinforces the deeply tragic character of Heidegger's thinking in general.

As we have seen, this ambivalence at the heart of the beautiful is indicated in a variety of places and contexts in Heidegger's writings. In his later reflections on Klee and Cézanne, he explains that ultimately all preference for what is merely aesthetically beautiful or ideal must give way to a more resolute "concern with appearance [...]" one that "sees even in what is horrible and apparently repugnant only what is - the being 'that, in the midst of all else, prevails.'"476 Such a passage is disturbing, and indicates ultimately just how far away Heidegger is from Kant, who maintained that while something ugly might be represented elsewhere as beautiful, certainly nothing horrible or disgusting could.477 One finds this echoed again in the two passages with which I opened this dissertation, in Kant's claim that beauty shows us the place of humankind in the world, and in Rilke's powerful observation that:

...For the beautiful is nothing but the beginning of the terrible, a beginning we but barely endure; and it amazes us so, since calmly it disdains to destroy us...478

---

476 Heinrich Petzet, *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger*, 142. Petzet explains that Heidegger uses Rilke's reflection on Baudelaire's poem "Charogne" (Carcass) to help make this point.
While the significance of Heidegger's insight into the beautiful begins, then, with his reminder of beauty's persistent position in how we disclose the world (*alētheia*), it culminates in his exposure of how both the aesthetic celebration and rejection of beauty today effaces the more dangerous side of beauty's allure into semblance. In this regard, however, such a description of the beautiful may also speak to Heidegger's own biographical involvement with National Socialism. For on one hand, it might be said that it was just Heidegger's willingness to ignore all that was "horrible and apparently repugnant" in the allure of National Socialism and its promise for a new relation to being, that made Heidegger blind to its obscene reality. At the same time, in committing his thinking to a political movement dedicated to the totalitarian negation of the possibility for other appearances of being, Heidegger appears to fall prey to the very semblance of aestheticism that he has otherwise criticized here.

Interestingly, this tragic character of the beautiful is also witnessed in another more personal engagement that Heidegger has with the word, one that indicates a more concerted awareness of its dangers. This is found in a series of dedications that Heidegger makes, beginning in the mid-thirties, to family, friends, and colleagues on the occasions of birthdays,

---

479 A similar characterization of the beautiful is found in Heidegger's lecture course, *What is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper and Row, 1968)/GA 8. Heidegger writes: "This truth is called beauty. Beauty is a fateful gift of the essence of truth, and here truth means the disclosure of what keeps itself concealed [*alētheia*]. The beautiful is not what pleases, but what falls within that fateful gift of truth which comes to be when that which is eternally non-apparent and therefore invisible attains its most radiantly apparent appearance. We are compelled to let the poetic word stand in its truth, in beauty" (19/21); And several pages later: "What is most thought-provoking, then, could be something lofty, perhaps even the highest there is for man, provided man still is the being who is insofar as he thinks, thinks in that thought appeals to him because his essential nature consists in memory, the gathering of thought. And what is most thought-provoking - especially when it is man's highest concern - may well be also what is most dangerous. Or do we imagine that a man could even in small ways encounter the essence of truth, the essence of beauty, the essence of grace - without danger?" (31/32).

480 While it is not the focus of my study, Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism cannot be ignored or downplayed, which is why I draw attention to it here in the significant moment of my closing. It also seems evident that Heidegger came to recognize, at least to some extent, his failure in this association, as seen in his various critiques of National Socialism after his Rectorship. See, for example, the critique added to the revised 1953 edition of *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 213/GA 40, 208. However, as important new documents are being prepared for publication, especially the *Schwarze Hefte* (*Black Notebooks*), this is a question that remains important, but critically under-determined.
memorials, and other special events.\textsuperscript{481} In these moments, where the rhetorical use of the beautiful almost certainly seems more fitting, Heidegger chooses to use the occasion as an opportunity to remind his companions, and perhaps himself, of the deep significance that the beautiful plays in our lives and deaths.\textsuperscript{482} One particularly good example of these texts is found in a 1939 dedication to the doctor, Theophil Rees, on his fiftieth birthday. Heidegger writes:

We wish [Dr. Rees] that which simultaneously liberates [entrückt] us in its essence-ing, and in which we are captured [berückt]. Plato, who the doctor also loves and reads, called this the ekphanestaton erasmītaton, that which in its most radiant shining [am leuchtensten] carries us [hinaus trägt] into the essence of things. And what is this? To kalon, the beautiful, equally far and equally near to sheer good fortune [blossen Glück] and misfortune [Unglück]. The beautiful encounters us when we linger in the letting-be of the heart [der Gelassenheit des Herzens], as well as when we stand fast in the rigor of mindfulness [der Strenge der Besinnung]. Out of both, in one, originates in us the power of recollection [Kraft der Erinnerung] that attunes us with the voice of God.\textsuperscript{483}

Setting aside the morbid strangeness of such a dedication, as well as Heidegger's provocative reference to God long after he claimed to have adopted a position of philosophical atheism, this passage remains a suggestive one. Specifically, Heidegger reinforces the interpretation that I have drawn in the preceding discussion here, that beauty is a complexly ambivalent phenomenon, responsible for leading us equally into the fortunes of the world and the misfortunes of illusion. At the same time, Heidegger offers a double enjoinder for how we must respond to this tragic structure of existence. On one hand, he suggests that we must linger in the letting-be of the heart, and on the other, that we must stand in the rigor of mindfulness. This double comportment towards the double nature of the beautiful is provocative, and suggests, in

\textsuperscript{481}See, for example, \textit{GA} 16, 3-4; 67; 344; 596.
\textsuperscript{482}It bears noting that elsewhere in his personal correspondence and ordinary discourse, Heidegger often uses the term in its more common and ornamental sense. See, for example: Heidegger, \textit{Letters to His Wife}, trans. Gertrud Heidegger (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2010).
\textsuperscript{483}\textit{GA} 16, 352. My translation.
some sense, a way in which we might hear at end of this discussion an important refuguration of that lost Transcendental in his work, the good.

Of course, Heidegger is clear in texts like the "Letter on Humanism" that his thinking is not to be associated with an ethics or a theory of the good, insofar as it still remains to be seen just who we are before we can say what we ought to do. This is a position that seems to be supported by Heidegger's normatively neutral description of the beautiful in its relationship with disclosure and semblance as well. And yet, in his dedication here, he also suggests that by way of a genuine reflection on the beautiful and its complex character, one might bring about a different attunement towards the claim that beauty makes upon us, an attunement that would challenge the captivity (berücken) of appearance with an inverse action of letting-be. Of course, we are well aware that quietism can often be just as dangerous as volunteerism. The powerful context of National Socialism surrounding Heidegger’s thought here serves as strong evidence of this. And yet, I believe this is why Heidegger’s enjoinder to heed the beautiful remains a complex and important one. For, as he puts it, the cultivation of this letting-be in the heart must be held together with the persistent rigor of mindfulness. It is precisely this tension in the being of the beautiful that continues to be the question behind the small answers we have found here.

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Ball, Allan and Sam Mendes. American Beauty: Dreamworks, 1999.


——. Gesamtausgabe Bande 1-90. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann.


———. *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus*. Translated by Harold North Fowler. Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library Harvard University Press, 1926.


CURRICULUM VITA

Education
• PhD Philosophy, The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), 2014
• BA Honors Philosophy, Seattle University, 2008
• MA English, California State University, Northridge (CSUN), 2005
• BA English, Pepperdine University, 2001

Areas of Specialization
• 19th/20th Century Continental Philosophy (esp. Phenomenology and Hermeneutics)
• Philosophy of Art - Aesthetics

Areas of Competency
• Ancient Greek Philosophy
• Ethics (Theoretical and Applied)
• American Pragmatism

Major Awards
• Sparks Fellowship (PSU) (2013-2014)
• Rock Ethics Institute Fellowship (PSU) (Fall 2012)
• Baden Württemberg Stipendium for Dissertation Research at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany (Summer 2012)

Publications