

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Off the Beaten Track

EDITED AND
TRANSLATED BY

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We have translated "*Sein*" as "being," preferring a lower-case "b" to a capital. This choice has not been made in order to take a stand in the controversy over the possible religious or quasi-religious implications of Heidegger's vocabulary. In fact, both translators agree with Julian Young's description of a fundamental ambiguity in Heidegger's use of the word *Sein*, which refers sometimes to presence, the ground of beings, the fundamental horizon of disclosure; and sometimes to this disclosure along with what is not disclosed or made intelligible (*Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, chapter 1). That is, like the word "day," which may refer either to the period of daylight or to the period of both daylight and night, Heidegger's use of *Sein* must be read in context. However, it would have been unduly intrusive to translate sometimes with a capital "B" and sometimes without. Since some passages require the lower-case "b," we have translated *Sein* in this way throughout.

We have not generally attempted to reproduce Heidegger's word-play, since such attempts usually require very unidiomatic writing, which would give a false impression of the way Heidegger writes, in addition to obscuring his sense. However, rather than lose the word-play, we have often included the key German words in square brackets. The German has been included at other instances, when it seemed important to alert the reader to recurrences of crucial German words, when the German was particularly rich in meaning, or on the few occasions when we required some latitude in the English translation. The glossary has been kept short since the German has often been included in the main body of the translation; it is mainly concerned with words translated in several ways.

The Origin of the Work of Art^a

Origin^b means here that from where and through which a thing is what it is and how it is. That which something is, as it is, we call its nature [*Wesen*]. The origin of something is the source of its nature. The question of the origin of the artwork asks about the source of its nature. According to the usual view, the work arises out of and through the activity of the artist. But through and from what is the artist that^c which he is? Through the work; for the German proverb "the work praises the master" means that the work first lets the artist emerge as a master of art. The artist is the origin of the work. The work is the origin of the artist. Neither is without the other. Nonetheless neither is the sole support of the other. Artist and work *are* each, in themselves and in their reciprocal relation, on account of a third thing, which is prior to both; on account, that is, of that from which both artist and artwork take their names, on account of art.

As the artist is the origin of the work in a necessarily different way from the way the work is the origin of the artist, so it is in yet another way, quite certainly, that art is the origin of both artist and work. But can, then, art really be an origin? Where and how does art exist? Art – that is just a word

^a Reclam edition, 1960. The project [*Versuch*] (1935–37) inadequate on account of the inappropriate use of the name "truth" for the still-withheld clearing and the cleared. See "Hegel and the Greeks" in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 332ff.; "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking" in *Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 70 (footnote). – *Art* the use of the bringing-forth of the clearing of the self-concealing in the *Ereignis* – the hidden given form.

Bringing-forth and forming; see "*Sprache und Heimat*" in *Denkerfabrungen 1910–1976* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), pp. 87–112.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. Capable of being misunderstood this talk of "origin."

^c Reclam edition, 1960: he who he is.

to which nothing real any longer corresponds. It may serve as a collective notion under which we bring what alone of art is real: works and artists. Even if the word art is to signify more than a collective notion, what is meant by the word could only be based on the reality of works and artists. Or are matters the other way round? Do work and artist exist only insofar^a as art exists, exists, indeed, as their origin?

Whatever we decide, the question of the origin of the artwork turns into the question of the nature of art. But since it must remain open whether and how there is art at all, we will attempt to discover the nature of art where there is no doubt that art genuinely prevails. Art presences in the art-work [*Kunst-werk*]. But what and how is a work of art?

What art is we should be able to gather from the work. What the work is we can only find out from the nature of art. It is easy to see that we are moving in a circle. The usual understanding demands that this circle be avoided as an offense against logic. It is said that what art is may be gathered from a comparative study of available artworks. But how can we be certain that such a study is really based on artworks unless we know beforehand what art is? Yet the nature of art can as little be derived from higher concepts as from a collection of characteristics of existing artworks. For such a derivation, too, already has in view just those determinations which are sufficient to ensure that what we are offering as works of art are what we already take to be such. The collecting of characteristics from what exists, however, and the derivation from fundamental principles are impossible in exactly the same way and, where practiced, are a self-delusion.

So we must move in a circle. This is neither *ad hoc* nor deficient. To enter upon this path is the strength, and to remain on it the feast of thought – assuming that thinking is a craft. Not only is the main step from work to art, like the step from art to work, a circle, but every individual step that we attempt circles within this circle.

In order to discover the nature of art that really holds sway in the work let us approach the actual work and ask it what and how it is.

Everyone is familiar with artworks. One finds works of architecture and sculpture erected in public places, in churches, and in private homes. Artworks from the most diverse ages and peoples are housed in collections and exhibitions. If we regard works in their pristine reality and do not deceive ourselves, the following becomes evident: works are as naturally present as things. The picture hangs on the wall like a hunting weapon or

^a Reclam edition, 1960. *It gives art [Es die Kunst gibt].*

a hat. A painting – for example van Gogh's portrayal of a pair of peasant shoes – travels from one exhibition to another. Works are shipped like coal from the Ruhr or logs from the Black Forest. During the war Hölderlin's hymns were packed in the soldier's knapsack along with cleaning equipment. Beethoven's quartets lie in the publisher's storeroom like potatoes in a cellar.

Every work has this thingly character. What would they be without it? But perhaps we find this very crude and external approach to the work offensive. It may be the conception of the artwork with which the freight-handler or the museum charlady operates, but we are required to take the works as they are encountered by those who experience and enjoy them. Yet even this much-vaunted "aesthetic experience" cannot evade the thingliness of the artwork. The stony is in the work of architecture, the wooden in the woodcarving, the colored in the painting, the vocal in the linguistic work, the sounding in the work of music. The thingly is so salient in the artwork that we ought rather to say the opposite: the architectural work is in the stone, the woodcarving in the wood, the painting in the color, the linguistic work in the sound, the work of music in the note. "Obviously," it will be replied. What, however, is this obvious thingliness in the artwork?

Given that the artwork is something over and above its thingliness, this inquiry will probably be found unnecessary and disconcerting. This something else in the work constitutes its artistic nature. The artwork is indeed a thing that is made, but it says something other than the mere thing itself is, ἄλλο ἄγορεύει. The work makes publicly known something other than itself, it manifests something other: it is an allegory. In the artwork something other is brought into conjunction with the thing that is made. The Greek for "to bring into conjunction with" is συμβάλλειν. The work is a symbol.

Allegory and symbol provide the conceptual framework from within whose perspective the artwork has long been characterized. Yet this one element that makes another manifest is the thingly element in the artwork. It seems almost as though the thingliness in the artwork is the substructure into and upon which the other, authentic, element is built. And is it not this thingly element which is actually produced by the artist's craft?

We wish to hit upon the immediate and complete reality of the artwork, for only then will we discover the real art within it. So what we must do, first of all, is to bring the thingliness of the work into view. For this we need to know, with sufficient clarity, what a thing is. Only then will we be

able to say whether or not an artwork is a thing – albeit a thing to which something else adheres. Only then will we be able to decide whether the work is something fundamentally different and not a thing at all.

THE THING AND THE WORK

What, in truth, is a thing insofar as it is a thing? When we ask this question we wish to know the thing-being (the thingliness) of the thing. The point is to learn the thingliness of the thing. To this end we must become acquainted with the sphere within which are to be found all those beings which we have long called things.

The stone on the path is a thing, as is the clod of earth in the field. The jug is a thing, and the well beside the path. But what should we say about the milk in the jug and the water in the well? These, too, are things, if the cloud in the sky and the thistle in the field, if the leaf on the autumn wind and the hawk over the wood are properly called things. All these must indeed be called things, even though we also apply the term to that which, unlike the above, fails to show itself, fails to appear. One such thing which does not, itself, appear – a “thing in itself” in other words – is, according to Kant, the world as a totality. Another such example is God himself. Things in themselves and things that appear, every being that in any way exists, count, in the language of philosophy, as “things.”

These days, airplanes and radios belong among the things that are closest to us. When, however, we refer to “last things,” we think of something quite different. Death and judgment, these are the last things. In general, “thing” applies to anything that is not simply nothing. In this signification, the artwork counts as a thing, assuming it to be some kind of a being. Yet this conception of the thing, in the first instance at least, does not help us in our project of distinguishing between beings which have the being of things and beings which have the being of works. And besides, we hesitate to repeat the designation of God as a “thing.” We are similarly reluctant to take the farmer in the field, the stoker before the boiler, the teacher in the school to be a “thing.” A human being is not a thing. True, we say of a young girl who has a task to perform that is beyond her that she is “too young a thing.” But this is only because, in a certain sense, we find human being to be missing here and think we have to do, rather, with what constitutes the thingliness of the thing. We are reluctant to call even the deer in the forest clearing, the beetle in the grass, or the blade of grass “things.” Rather, the hammer, the shoe, the ax, and the clock are things. Even they, however, are not mere

things. Only the stone, the clod of earth, or a piece of wood count as that: what is lifeless in nature and in human usage. It is the things of nature and usage that are normally called things.

We thus see ourselves returned from the broadest domain in which everything is a thing (thing = *res* = *ens* = a being) – including even the “first and last things” – to the narrow region of the mere thing. “Mere,” here, means, first of all, the pure thing which is simply a thing and nothing more. But then it also means “nothing but a thing,” in an almost disparaging sense. It is the mere thing – a category which excludes even the things that we use – which counts as the actual thing. In what, now, does the thingliness of things such as this consist? It is in reference to these that it must be possible to determine the thingliness of the thing. Such a determination puts us in a position to characterize thingliness as such. Thus equipped, we will be able to indicate that almost tangible reality of the work in which something other inheres.

Now it is a well-known fact that, since antiquity, as soon as the question was raised as to what beings as such are, it was the thing in its thingness which thrust itself forward as the paradigmatic being. It follows that we are bound to encounter the delineation of the thingness of the thing already present in the traditional interpretation of the being. Thus all we need to do, in order to be relieved of the tedious effort of making our own inquiry into the thingliness of the thing, is to grasp explicitly this traditional knowledge of the thing. So commonplace, in a way, are the answers to the question of what a thing is that one can no longer sense anything worthy of questioning lying behind them.

The interpretations of the thingness of the thing which predominate in the history of Western thought have long been self-evident and are now in everyday use. They may be reduced to three.

A mere thing is, to take an example, this block of granite. It is hard, heavy, extended, massive, unformed, rough, colored, partly dull, partly shiny. We can notice all these features in the stone. We take note of its characteristics. Yet such characteristics represent something proper to the stone. They are its properties. The thing has them. The thing? What are we thinking of if we now call the thing to mind? Obviously the thing is not merely a collection of characteristics, and neither is it the aggregate of those properties through which the collection arises. The thing, as everyone thinks he knows, is that around which the properties have gathered. One speaks, then, of the core of the thing. The Greeks, we are told, called it τὸ ὑποκείμενον. This core of the thing was its ground and was always there. But the characteristics are

called τὰ συμβεβηκότα: that which always appears and comes forth along with the core.

These designations are by no means arbitrary. Within them speaks something which lies beyond the scope of this essay: the Greeks' fundamental experience of the being of beings in the sense of presence. It is through these determinations, however, that the interpretation of the thingness of the thing is grounded that will henceforth become standard and the Western interpretation of the being of beings established. The process begins with the appropriation of the Greek words by Roman-Latin thought; ὑποκείμενον becomes *subiectum*, ὑπόστασις *substantia*, and συμβεβηκός *accidens*. This translation of Greek names into Latin is by no means without consequences – as, even now, it is still held to be. Rather, what is concealed within the apparently literal, and hence faithful, translation is a *translation* [*Übersetzen*] of Greek experience into a different mode of thinking. *Roman thinking takes over the Greek words without the corresponding and equiprimal experience of what they say, without the Greek word.* The rootlessness of Western thinking begins with this translation.

It is generally held that the definition of the thingness of the thing in terms of substance and accidents appears to capture our natural view of things. No wonder, then, that the way we comport ourselves to things – the way we address ourselves to, and talk about, them – has accommodated itself to this commonplace outlook on things. The simple declarative sentence consists of a subject – the Latin translation, and that means transformation, of ὑποκείμενον – and predicate, which expresses the thing's characteristics. Who would dare to threaten this simple and fundamental relationship between thing and sentence, between the structure of the sentence and the structure of the thing? Nonetheless, we must ask: is the structure of the simple declarative sentence (the nexus of subject and predicate) the mirror image of the structure of the thing (the union of substance and accidents)? Or is it merely that, so represented, the structure of the thing is a projection of the structure of the sentence?

What could be more obvious than that man transposes the way he comprehends things in statements into the structure of the thing itself? Yet this view, apparently critical but in reality overly hasty, has first to explain how the transposition of the sentence structure into the thing could be possible without the thing first becoming visible. The issue as to what comes first and provides the standard, the structure of the sentence or that of the thing, remains, to this day, undecided. It may even be doubted whether, in this form, it is capable of a decision.

In fact, it is the case neither that sentential structure provides the standard for projecting the structure of the thing nor that the latter is simply mirrored in the former. The structure of both sentence and thing derive, in their natures and the possibility of their mutual relatedness, from a common and more primordial source. In any case, this first of our interpretations of the thingness of the thing – thing as bearer of characteristics – is, in spite of its currency, not as natural as it seems. What presents itself to us as natural, one may suspect, is merely the familiarity of a long-established habit which has forgotten the unfamiliarity from which it arose. And yet this unfamiliar source once struck man as strange and caused him to think and wonder.

The reliance on the customary interpretation of the thing is only apparently well founded. Moreover, this conception of the thing (the bearer of characteristics) is applied not only to the mere, the actual, thing but to any being whatever. It can never help us, therefore, to distinguish beings which are things from those which are not. But prior to all reflection, to be attentively present in the domain of things tells us that this concept of the thing is inadequate to its thingliness, its self-sustaining and self-containing nature. From time to time one has the feeling that violence has long been done to the thingliness of the thing and that thinking has had something to do with it. Instead of taking the trouble to make thinking more thoughtful, this has led to the rejection of thinking. But when it comes to a definition of the thing, what is the use of a feeling, no matter how certain, if the word belongs to thought alone? Yet perhaps what, here and in similar cases, we call feeling or mood is more rational – more perceptive, that is – than we think; more rational, because more open to being than that “reason” which, having meanwhile become *ratio*, is misdescribed as rational. The furtive craving for the ir-rational – that abortive offspring of a rationality that has not been thought through – renders a strange service. To be sure, the familiar concept of the thing fits every thing. But it does not comprehend the essence of the thing; rather, it attacks it.

Can such an assault be avoided? How? Only if we grant to the thing, so to speak, a free field in which to display its thingness quite directly. Everything that, by way of conception and statement, might interpose itself between us and the thing must, first of all, be set aside. Only then do we allow ourselves the undistorted presence of the thing. But this allowing ourselves an immediate encounter with the thing is something we do not need either to demand or to arrange. It happens slowly. In what the senses of sight, hearing, and touch bring to us, in the sensations of color, sound, roughness, and hardness, things move us bodily, in a quite literal sense. The thing is the

αἰσθητόν, that which, in the senses belonging to sensibility, is perceptible by means of sensations. Hence, the concept later became commonplace according to which the thing is nothing but the unity of a sensory manifold. Whether this unity is conceived as sum, totality, or as form changes nothing with respect to the standard-setting character of this concept of the thing.

Now this interpretation of the thingness of the thing is every bit as correct and verifiable as its predecessor. This is already sufficient to cast doubt on its truth. If we think through that for which we are searching, the thingness of the thing, then this concept of the thing again leaves us at a loss. In immediate perception, we never really perceive a throng of sensations, e.g. tones and noises. Rather, we hear the storm whistling in the chimney, the three-motored plane, the Mercedes which is immediately different from the Adler.¹ Much closer to us than any sensation are the things themselves. In the house we hear the door slam – never acoustic sensations or mere noises. To hear a bare sound we must listen away from the things, direct our ears from them, listen abstractly.

The concept of the thing under consideration represents, not so much an assault on the thing as an extravagant attempt to bring the thing to us in the greatest possible immediacy. But this can never be achieved as long as we take what is received by the senses to constitute its thingness. Whereas the first interpretation of the thing holds it, as it were, too far away from the body, the second brings it too close. In both interpretations the thing disappears. We must, therefore, avoid the exaggerations of both. The thing must be allowed to remain unmolested in its resting-within-itself itself. It must be accepted in its own steadfastness. This seems to be what the third interpretation does, an interpretation which is just as old as the first two.

That which gives to things their constancy and pith but is also, at the same time, the source of their mode of sensory pressure – color, sound, hardness, massiveness – is the materiality of the thing. In this definition of the thing as matter (ὕλη), form (μορφή) is posited at the same time. The permanence of a thing, its constancy, consists in matter remaining together with form. The thing is formed matter. This interpretation of the thing invokes the immediate sight with which the thing concerns us through its appearance (εἶδος). With this synthesis of matter and form we have finally found the concept of the thing which equally well fits the things of nature and the things of use.

This concept of the thing puts us in a position to answer the question of the thingly in the artwork. What is thingly in the work is obviously the matter of which it consists. The matter is the substructure and the field

for artistic formation. But we could have proposed this plausible and well-known conclusion at the very beginning. Why did we make the detour through the other concepts of the thing? Because we also mistrust this concept of the thing, the representation of the thing as formed matter.

But is it not precisely this pair of concepts, matter and form, that are generally employed in the domain in which we are supposed to be moving? Of course. The distinction between matter and form is *the conceptual scheme deployed in the greatest variety of ways by all art theory and aesthetics*. This indisputable fact, however, proves neither that the matter–form distinction is adequately grounded, nor that it belongs, originally, to the sphere of art and the artwork. Moreover, the range of application of this conceptual pairing has long extended far beyond the field of aesthetics. Form and content are the commonplace concepts under which anything and everything can be subsumed. If one correlates form with the rational and matter with the ir-rational, if, moreover, one takes the rational to be the logical and the irrational the illogical, and if, finally, one couples the conceptual duality between form and matter into the subject–object relation, then one has at one's disposal a conceptual mechanism that nothing can resist.

If this is how it is, however, with the matter–form distinction, how can it help us comprehend the special region of the mere thing as distinct from other beings? But perhaps this characterization in terms of matter and form can regain its power of definition if we just reverse the process of the broadening and emptying of these concepts. Yet this, of course, presupposes that we know in which region of beings they exercise their real power of definition. That this might be the region of mere things is, so far, merely an assumption. Taking into account the extensive use of this conceptual framework in aesthetics might rather suggest that matter and form are determinations which have their origin in the nature of the artwork and have been transported from there back to the thing. Where does the origin of the matter–form schema have its origin; in the thingness of the thing or in the work-character of the artwork?

The granite block, resting in itself, is something material possessing a definite, if unstructured, form. "Form," here, means the distribution and arrangement of material parts in a spatial location which results in a particular contour, that of a block. But the jug, the ax, the shoes are also matter occurring in a form. Here, form as contour is not the result of a distribution of matter. On the contrary, the form determines the arrangement of the matter. And not just that; the form prescribes, in each case, the kind and selection of the matter – impermeability for the jug, adequate hardness for

the ax, toughness combined with flexibility for the shoes. Moreover, the intermingling of form and matter that is operative in these cases is controlled beforehand by the purposes jug, ax, and shoes are to serve. Such serviceability is never assigned and added on afterwards to beings of this kind. But neither is it something which, as an end, hovers above them.

Serviceability is the basic trait from out of which these kinds of beings look at us – that is, flash at us and thereby presence and so be the beings they are. Both the design and the choice of material predetermined by that design – and, therefore, the dominance of the matter–form structure – are grounded in such serviceability. A being that falls under serviceability is always the product of a process of making. It is made as a piece of equipment for something. Accordingly, matter and form are determinations of beings which find their true home in the essential nature of equipment. This name designates what is manufactured expressly for use and usage. Matter and form are in no way original determinations belonging to the thingness of the mere thing.

A piece of equipment, for example, the shoe–equipment, when finished, rests in itself like the mere thing. Unlike the granite block, however, it lacks the character of having taken shape by itself. On the other hand, it displays an affinity with the artwork in that it is something brought forth by the human hand. The artwork, however, through its self-sufficient presence, resembles, rather, the mere thing which has taken shape by itself and is never forced into being. Nonetheless, we do not count such works as mere things. The nearest and authentic things are always the things of use that are all around us. So the piece of equipment is half thing since it is characterized by thingliness. Yet it is more, since, at the same time, it is half artwork. On the other hand, it is less, since it lacks the self-sufficiency of the artwork. Equipment occupies a curious position intermediate between thing and work – if we may be permitted such a calculated ordering.

The matter–form structure, however, by which the being of a piece of equipment is first determined, readily presents itself as the immediately comprehensible constitution of every being because, here, productive humanity is itself involved in the way in which a piece of equipment comes into being.^a Because equipment occupies an intermediate position between mere thing and work, the suggestion arises of using equipment (the matter–form structure) as the key to understanding non-equipmental beings – things and works, and, ultimately, every kind of being.

^a Reclam edition, 1960. (To its) into its presence.

The inclination to take the matter–form structure to be *the* constitution of every being receives, however, particular encouragement from the fact that, on the basis of religious – biblical – faith, the totality of beings is represented, in advance, as something created. And here, that means “made.” The philosophy of this faith can, of course, assure us that God’s creative work is to be thought of as different from the action of a craftsman. But when, at the same time or even beforehand, in accordance with a predetermination, taken on faith, of Thomistic philosophy for biblical interpretation, the *ens creatum* is thought out of the unity of *materia* and *forma*, then faith is interpreted by a philosophy whose truth is based on an unconcealment of beings that is of another kind than the world believed in by faith.^a

Now it is indeed possible that the idea of creation which is grounded in faith can lose its power to guide our knowledge of beings as a whole. Yet, once in place, the theological interpretation of everything that is, the viewing of the world in terms of matter and form that was borrowed from an alien philosophy, can remain in force. This is what happened in the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern period. The metaphysics of modernity is based, too, on the matter–form structure, a structure devised in the Middle Ages but which itself, in its own words, merely recalls the buried essence of εἶδος and ὕλη. Thus the interpretation of the thing in terms of matter and form, whether it remains medieval or has become Kantian–transcendental, has become commonplace and self-evident. But for that reason, no less than the other interpretations of the thingness of the thing we have discussed, it represents an assault on the thing–being of the thing.

The situation reveals itself as soon as we call actual things “mere things.” The “mere,” after all, means the removal of the character of serviceability and of being made. The mere thing is a kind of equipment that has been denuded of its equipmental being. Its thing–being consists in what is then left over. But the kind of being possessed by this remainder is not actually determined. It remains questionable whether the process of stripping away everything equipmental will ever disclose the thingness of the thing. Thus the third interpretation of the thing, that which bases itself on the matter–form structure, also turns out to be an assault on the thing.

The three modes of defining the thing we have here discussed conceive it as, respectively, the bearer of traits, the unity of a sensory manifold, and as

^a First edition, 1950. (1) The biblical faith in creation; (2) the causal-ontic explanation of Thomism; (3) the original, Aristotelian interpretation of the ὄν.

formed matter. In the course of the history of the truth about beings these interpretations have also combined with each other – a matter we may now pass over. This combination has intensified their tendency to expand in such a way as to apply in the same way to thing, equipment, and work. In this way they generate the mode of thinking according to which we think, not about thing, equipment, and work, in particular, but universally, about all beings. This long-familiar mode of thinking preconceives all our immediate experience of beings. The preconception shackles reflection on the being of particular beings. Thus it happens that the prevailing concepts of the thing block the way to the thingness of the thing, the equipmentality of equipment, and all the more to the workly character of the work.

This is the reason it is necessary to know about these concepts of the thing, in order, thereby, to pay heed to their limitless presumption as well as their semblance of self-evidence. This knowledge is all the more necessary when we venture the attempt to bring into view and to put into words the thingness of the thing, the equipmentality of equipment, and the workly character of the work. For this, however, just one condition is necessary: by keeping at a distance the preconceptions and assaults of the above modes of thinking, to allow, for example, the thing in its thing-being, to rest in itself. What could be easier than allowing a being to be just what it is? Or is it rather that this task brings us to what is the most difficult, particularly when such an intention – to allow a being to be as it is – is the opposite of that indifference which turns its back on beings in favour of an unexamined concept of being? We must return to the being and think about it itself in its being. At the same time, however, we must allow it to rest in its own nature.

This effort of thought seems to meet with its greatest resistance in attempting to define the thingness of the thing, for what else could be the reason for the failure of the above attempts? The inconspicuous thing withdraws itself from thought in the most stubborn of ways. Or is it rather that this self-refusal of the mere thing, this self-contained refusal to be pushed around, belongs precisely to the essential nature of the thing? Must not, then, this disconcerting and uncommunicative element in the essence of the thing become intimately familiar to a thinking which tries to think the thing? If so, we should not force our way into the thing's thingness.

The history of its interpretations outlined above, indicates beyond doubt that the thingness of the thing is particularly difficult and rarely capable of expression. This history coincides with the destiny in accordance with which Western thought has hitherto thought the being of beings. This,

however, is not all we ascertain, for in this history we discover, at the same time, a clue. Is it mere chance that, in the interpretation of the thing, the interpretation which is carved out in terms of matter and form achieved a particular dominance? This definition of the thing is derived from an interpretation of the equipmentality of equipment. This being, the piece of equipment, is, in an especial way, close to human representation, since it achieves being through our own manufacture. This being, the piece of equipment, with whose being we are familiar, occupies a particular position intermediate between thing and work. Let us follow this clue and search, first of all, for the equipmentality of equipment. Perhaps we will learn from this something about the thingliness of the thing and the workly character of the work. We must, however, be careful to avoid turning thing and work into a subspecies of equipment. We will, on the other hand, ignore the possibility that, in the way that equipment is, historically essential distinctions are present.

But what is the path to the equipmentality of equipment? How are we to learn what equipment in truth is? Obviously the procedure we now need must keep itself apart from any attempt which carries within it the assault we have seen to be represented by the usual interpretations. The best guarantee of that is simply to describe a piece of equipment quite apart from any philosophical theory.

We will take as an example an everyday piece of equipment, a pair of peasant shoes. We do not need to exhibit actual examples of this sort of useful article in order to describe it. But since what concerns us here is direct description, it may be helpful to facilitate their visual realization. To this end, a pictorial presentation suffices. We will take a well-known painting by van Gogh, who painted such shoes several times. But is there a lot to be seen here? Everyone knows what shoes are like. If they are not wooden or bast shoes, there will be leather soles and uppers held together by stitching and nails. Equipment of this kind serves as footwear. Whether it is for work in the field or for dancing, material and form vary according to use.

Correct statements such as these only tell us what we already know: the equipmentality of equipment consists in its utility. But what about this utility itself? In understanding it do we already understand the equipmentality of equipment? In order for this to be so, must we not look out for the useful piece of equipment in its use? The peasant woman wears her shoes in the field. Only then do they become what they are. They are all the more genuinely so the less the peasant woman thinks of her shoes while she is

working, or even looks at them, or is aware of them in any way at all. This is how the shoes actually serve. It must be in this process of usage that the equipmentality of the equipment actually confronts us.

But on the contrary, as long as we only imagine a pair of shoes in general, or merely look at the shoes as they stand there in the picture, empty and unused, we will never learn what the equipmental being of equipment in truth is. From van Gogh's painting we cannot even tell where these shoes are.^a There is nothing surrounding this pair of peasant shoes to which and within which they could belong; only an undefined space. Not even clods of earth from the field or from the country path stick to them, which could at least point toward their use. A pair of peasant shoes and nothing more. And yet.

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

But perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes. The peasant woman, by contrast, merely wears them. If only this simple wearing were that simple. Whenever in the late evening she takes off the shoes, in deep but healthy tiredness, and in the still dark dawn reaches for them once again, or passes them by on the holiday, she knows all this without observation or reflection. The equipmentality of equipment consists indeed in its usefulness. But this itself rests in the fullness of an essential being of the equipment. We call this reliability. In virtue of this reliability the peasant woman is admitted into the silent call of the earth; in virtue of the reliability of the equipment she is certain of her world. World and earth exist for her and those who share her mode of being only here^b – in the equipment. We

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Or to whom they belong.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. "Exist . . . here" = present.

say "only" but this is a mistake; for it is the reliability of the equipment which first gives the simple world its security and assures the earth the freedom of its steady pressure.

The equipmental being of the equipment, its reliability, keeps all things gathered within itself, each in its own manner and to its own extent. The usefulness of the equipment is, however, only the necessary consequence of reliability. The former vibrates in the latter and would be nothing without it. The individual piece of equipment becomes worn out and used up. But also, customary usage itself falls into disuse, becomes ground down and merely habitual. In this way equipmental being withers away, sinks to the level of mere equipment. Such dwindling of equipmental being is the disappearance of its reliability. Such dwindling, however, which gives things of use that boringly oppressive usualness, is only one more testament to the original nature of equipmental being. The worn-out usualness of the equipment then obtrudes as the sole kind of being that is (it seems) exclusively its own. Now nothing but sheer utility remains visible. It creates the appearance that the origin of equipment lies in a mere fabrication which gives form to some bit of matter. In fact, however, equipment acquires its equipmental being from a more distant source. Matter and form and the difference between them have a deeper origin.

The repose of equipment resting in itself consists in reliability. It is here that we first catch sight of what equipment, in truth, is. Yet we still know nothing of that for which we were originally looking: the thingness of the thing. And of that for which we are actually and solely looking – the workly character of the work in the sense of artwork – we know absolutely nothing.

Or have we now, rather, unexpectedly and, as it were, in passing, learnt something about the work-being of the work?

The equipmental being of equipment was discovered. But how? Not through the description and explanation of a pair of shoes actually present. Not through a report on the process of shoemaking. And not through the observation of the actual use of shoes as it occurs here and there. Rather, the equipmental being of equipment was only discovered by bringing ourselves before the van Gogh painting. It is this that spoke. In proximity to the work we were suddenly somewhere other than we are usually accustomed to be.

The artwork let us know what the shoes, in truth, are. To suppose that our description, as a subjective action, had first depicted everything thus and then projected into the painting would be the worst kind of self-delusion. If there is anything questionable here it is only this: that in the proximity of

the work we have experienced too little, and what we have experienced has been described too crudely and hastily. Above all, however, the work did not serve, as might at first seem, merely to make it easier to visualize what a piece of equipment is. Rather, what comes to explicit appearance first and only through the work is the equipmental being of the equipment.

What is happening here? What is at work in the work? Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, in truth *is*. This being steps forward into the unconcealment of its being. The unconcealment of beings is what the Greeks called ἀλήθεια. We say "truth" and think little enough in using the word. In the work, when there is a disclosure of the being as what and how it is, there is a happening of truth at work.

In the work of art, the truth of the being has set itself to work. "Set" means here: to bring to stand. In the work, a being, a pair of peasant shoes, comes to stand in the light of its being. The being of the being comes into the constancy of its shining.

The essential nature of art would then be this: the setting-itself-to-work of the truth of beings. Yet until now art has had to do with the beautiful and with beauty – not with truth. Those arts which bring such works forth are called the beautiful or fine arts [*die schönen Künste*] in contrast to the crafts or industrial arts [*den Handwerklichen Künsten*] which manufacture equipment. In the fine arts, the art is not itself beautiful, but is, rather, called so because it brings forth the beautiful. Truth, by contrast, belongs to logic. But beauty is the preserve of aesthetics.

Yet perhaps the statement that art is truth's setting-itself-to-work seeks to revive the view, now fortunately abandoned, that art is the imitation and depiction of reality? The repetition of what is present at hand requires, to be sure, correspondence to beings, appropriateness to them: the Middle Ages spoke of *adaequatio*, Aristotle already spoke of ὁμοίωσις. Correspondence to beings has long been taken to be the essence of truth. But do we then mean that this painting by van Gogh depicts a pair of peasant shoes that are actually present and count, therefore, as a work because it does so successfully? Do we think that the painting takes a likeness from the real and transposes it into an artistic . . . production? By no means.

The work, then, is not concerned with the reproduction of a particular being that has at some time been actually present. Rather, it is concerned to reproduce the general essence of things. But where, then, is this general essence and how should it be for the artwork to correspond to or agree with it? With what essence of what thing should the Greek temple

agree? Could anyone maintain the impossible position that the Idea of Temple is represented in the temple? And yet in this work, if it is a work, truth sets itself to work. Or take Hölderlin's hymn "The Rhine." What is given beforehand to the poet, and how is it given, so that it can be given once again in the poem? It may be that in the case of this hymn and similar poems, the idea of a copy-relation between a beautiful reality and the artwork clearly fails; yet the idea that the work is a copy seems to be confirmed in the best possible way by C. F. Meyer's² poem "The Roman Fountain"

The Roman fountain

The jet ascends, and falling fills
The marble basin round.
Veiling itself, this over-flows
Into a second basin's ground.
The second gives, it becomes too rich,
To a third its bubbling flood,
And each at once receives and gives
And streams and rests.

Der römische Brunnen

Aufsteigt der Strahl und fallend gießt
Er voll der Marmorschale Rund
Die, sich verschleiern, überfließt
In einer zweiten Schale Grund;
Der dritten wallend ihre Flut,
Und jede nimmt und gibt zugleich
Und strömt und ruht.

This, however, is neither a poetic depiction of an actual fountain nor the reproduction of the general essence of a Roman fountain. Yet truth is set into the work. What is the truth that happens in the work? Can truth happen at all and be, therefore, historical? Yet truth, it is said, is something timeless and supratemporal.

We seek the reality of the artwork in order really to find, there, the art prevailing within it. The thingly substructure is what proved to be the most evident reality in the work. To grasp this thingly element the traditional concepts of the thing are inadequate; for these themselves fail to grasp the essence of the thingly. The dominant concept, thing as formed matter, is taken not from the essence of the thing but from the essence of equipment. What has also become clear is that for a long time the being of equipment has commanded a peculiar preeminence in the interpretation of beings. This – the not explicitly thought out preeminence of the being

of equipment – indicated the need to pose the question of equipmentality anew while avoiding the familiar interpretations.

We allow a work to tell us what equipment is. By this means, it came to light what is at work in the work: the opening up of beings in their being, the happening of truth. If, however, the reality of the work is determined by nothing other than what is at work in the work, how do things stand with regard to our project of searching out the real artwork in its reality? As long as we supposed the reality of the work to lie primarily in its thingly substructure, we went astray. We now confront a remarkable result of our considerations – if “result” is what it can be called. Two points become clear.

First, the prevailing concepts of the thing represent an inadequate means of grasping the thingly element in the work.

Second, the thingly substructure, which we wanted to treat as the most evident reality of the work does not, in that way, belong to the work at all.

As soon as we become fixated on finding such an element in the work we have unwittingly taken the work as equipment to which we then ascribe a superstructure supposed to contain what is artistic about it. But the work is not a piece of equipment that is fitted out in addition with aesthetic worth adhering to it. The work is no more than the mere thing is a piece of equipment minus the marks of authentic equipmentality – usefulness and being made.

Our posing the question of the work has been disturbed by the fact that we asked, not about the work but, rather, half about a thing and half about equipment. That, however, was not a way of raising the question first developed by us. This way of raising the question belongs, rather, to aesthetics. The way in which aesthetics is disposed, in advance, to view the artwork stands within the dominion of the traditional interpretation of beings in general. But to disturb this familiar mode of questioning is not what is essential. What really matters is that we open our eyes to the fact that the worklikeness of the work, the equipmentality of equipment, and the thingliness of the thing come nearer to us only when we think the being of beings. A condition of this is that the limits imposed by self-evidence first fall away and that current pseudo-concepts be set aside. This is why we had to take a roundabout route. But it brings us directly onto the path that may lead to a determination of the thingly aspect of the work. The thingly in the work should not be denied out of existence; rather, given that it belongs already to the work-being of the work, it must be thought out of that work-being. If this is so, then the path to the determination of the thingly reality of the work runs not from thing to work but from work to thing.

The artwork opens up, in its own way, the being of beings. This opening up, i.e., unconcealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work. In the artwork, the truth of beings has set itself to the work. Art is the setting-itself-to-work of truth. What is truth itself, that it happens,^a at times, as art? What is this setting-itself-to-work?

THE WORK AND TRUTH

The origin of the artwork is art. But what is art? Art is real in the artwork. That is the reason we look, first of all, for the reality of the work. In what does it consist? Thingliness is exhibited by artworks universally, albeit in very different ways. The attempt to comprehend the thingly-character of the work *via* the usual concepts of the thing failed. It failed not only because these concepts of the thing failed to grasp the thingly, but also because, by asking about the work's thingly substructure, we forced it into a preconceived framework which obstructs access to the work-being of the work. Nothing can be discovered about the thingly aspect of the work until the pure standing-in-itself of the work has clearly shown itself.

But is the work in itself ever accessible? In order for this to happen it would be necessary to remove the work from all relation to anything other than itself in order to let it stand on its own and for itself alone. But that is already the innermost intention of the artist. Through him, the work is to be released into its purest standing-in-itself. Precisely in great art (which is all we are concerned with here) the artist remains something inconsequential in comparison with the work – almost like a passageway which, in the creative process, destroys itself for the sake of the coming forth of the work.

Well, then, the works themselves are located and hang in collections and exhibitions. But are they themselves, in this context, are they the works they are, or are they, rather, objects of the art business? The works are made available for the public and private enjoyment of art. Official agencies assume responsibility for the care and maintenance of the works. Art connoisseurs and critics busy themselves with them. The art dealer looks after the market. The art-historical researcher turns the works into the objects of a science. But in all this many-sided activity do we ever encounter the work itself?

The “Aegina” sculptures in the Munich collection and Sophocles’ *Antigone* in the best critical edition are, as the works they are, torn out of

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Truth from out of the Event.

their own essential space. However high their status and power to impress, however well-preserved and however certain their interpretation, their re-location in a collection has withdrawn them from their world. Yet even when we try to cancel or avoid such displacement of the work – by, for example, visiting the temple at its site in Paestum or Bamberg cathedral in its square – the world of the work that stands there has disintegrated.

World-withdrawal and world-decay can never be reversed. The works are no longer what they were. The works themselves, it is true, are what we encounter; yet they themselves are what has been. As what has been they confront us within the realm of tradition and conservation. Henceforth, they remain nothing but objects of this kind. That they stand there before us is indeed still a consequence of their former standing-in-themselves. But it is no longer the same as that. Their former self-sufficiency has deserted them. The whole of the art industry, even if taken to extremes and with everything carried out for the sake of the works themselves, reaches only as far as the object-being of the works. This, however, does not constitute their work-being.

But does the work remain a work when it stands outside all relations? Does it not belong to the work to stand in relations? Of course – except that it remains to be asked in which relations it stands.

Where does a work belong? As a work, it belongs uniquely within the region it itself opens up. For the work-being of the work presences in and only in such opening up. We said that in the work, the happening of truth is at work. The reference to van Gogh's picture tried to point to such a happening. The question arose, in this connection, as to what truth might be and how truth could happen.

We pose now the question about truth with the work in view. In order, however, to become more aware of what the question involves, it will be necessary to make the happening of truth in the work visible anew. For this attempt, let us choose a work that cannot be regarded as a work of representational art.

A building, a Greek temple, portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rocky, fissured valley. The building encloses the figure of a god and within this concealment, allows it to stand forth through the columned hall within the holy precinct. Through the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is, in itself, the extension and delimitation of the precinct as something holy. The temple and its precinct do not, however, float off into the indefinite. It is the temple work that first structures and simultaneously gathers around itself the unity of

those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire for the human being the shape of its destiny. The all-governing expanse of these open relations is the world of this historical people. From and within this expanse the people first returns to itself for the completion of its vocation.

Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws out of the rock the darkness of its unstructured yet unforced support. Standing there, the building holds its place against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm visible in its violence. The gleam and luster of the stone, though apparently there only by the grace of the sun, in fact first brings forth the light of day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of the air. The steadfastness of the work stands out against the surge of the tide and, in its own repose, brings out the raging of the surf. Tree, grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter their distinctive shapes and thus come to appearance as what they are. Early on, the Greeks called this coming forth and rising up in itself and in all things $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$. At the same time $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ lights up that on which man bases his dwelling. We call this the *earth*. What this word means here is far removed from the idea of a mass of matter and from the merely astronomical idea of a planet. Earth is that in which the arising of everything that arises is brought back – as, indeed, the very thing that it is – and sheltered. In the things that arise the earth presences as the protecting one.

Standing there, the temple work opens up a world while, at the same time, setting this world back onto the earth which itself first comes forth as homeland [*heimatliche Grund*]. But men and animals, plants and things, are never present and familiar as unalterable things fortuitously constituting a suitable environment for the temple that, one day, is added to what is already present. We will get closer to what *is* if we think everything in reverse^a – assuming, of course, that we have, in advance, an eye for how differently everything then faces us. A mere reversal, made for its own sake, reveals nothing.

Standing there, the temple first gives to things their look, and to men their outlook on themselves. This view remains open as long as the work is a work, as long as the god has not fled from it. So it is, too, with the sculpture of the god which the victor of the athletic games dedicates to him. The work is not a portrait intended to make it easier to recognize

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Reversing – where to?

what the god looks like. It is, rather, a work which allows the god himself to presence and *is*, therefore, the god himself. The same is true of the linguistic work. In the tragedy, nothing is staged or displayed theatrically. Rather, the battle of the new gods against the old is being fought. In that the linguistic work arises from the speech of the people, it does not talk about this battle. Rather, it transforms that speech so that now every essential word fights the battle and puts up for decision what is holy and what unholy, what is great and what small, what is brave and what cowardly, what is noble and what fugitive, what is master and what slave (cf. Heraclitus, Fragment 53 in Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*³).

In what, then, does the work-being of the work consist? Keeping in steady view what has just been – roughly enough – outlined, two essential features of the work may have become immediately clearer. With these we depart from the long-familiar foreground of the work's work-being, its thingliness, which underpins our usual relationship to the work.

When a work is brought into a collection or placed in an exhibition, we also say that it is "set up," but this setting up is essentially different from the construction of a building, the raising of a statue, the presentation of a tragedy in the holy festival. The setting up we refer to is an erecting in the sense of dedication and praise. Here, "setting up" no longer means merely putting in place. To dedicate means to consecrate [*beiligen*], in the sense that, in the workly construction, the holy [*Heilige*] is opened up as the holy and the god is called forth into the openness of its presence. Praise belongs to dedication as doing honor to the dignity and splendor of the god. Dignity and splendor are not properties beside and behind which there stands, additionally, the god. Rather, it is in the dignity, in the splendor, that the god comes to presence. In the reflected glory of this splendor there glows, i.e., illuminates itself, what we called "world." To erect [*Er-richten*] means: to open up the right in the sense of the measure which guides us along, in which form that which is essential gives its guidance. Why, however, is the setting up of the work an erecting that consecrates and praises? Because, in its work-being, the work demands it. How does the work come to demand such a setting up? Because it itself, in its own work-being, is something that sets up. What is it that the work, as work, sets up? Rising-up-within-itself the work opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force.

To be a work means: to set up a world. But what is this item, a world? We gave some intimation of an answer in talking about the temple. On the path we must here follow, the nature of world can only be indicated. Even

this indication is confined to warding off that which might initially distort our view into the essence of things.

World is not a mere collection of the things – countable and uncountable, known and unknown – that are present at hand. Neither is world a merely imaginary framework added by our representation to the sum of things that are present. *World worlds*, and is more fully in being than all those tangible and perceptible things in the midst of which we take ourselves to be at home. World is never an object that stands before us and can be looked at. World is that always-nonobjectual to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse, keep us transported into being.^a Wherever the essential decisions of our history are made, wherever we take them over or abandon them, wherever they go unrecognized or are brought once more into question, there the world worlds. The stone is world-less. Similarly, plants and animals have no world; they belong, rather, to the hidden throng of an environment into which they have been put. The peasant woman, by contrast, possesses a world, since she stays in the openness of beings. In its reliability, equipment imparts to this world a necessity and proximity of its own. By the opening of a world, all things gain their lingering and hastening, their distance and proximity, their breadth and their limits. In worlding there gathers that spaciousness from out of which the protective grace of the gods is gifted or is refused. Even the doom of the absence of the god is a way in which world worlds.

A work, by being a work, allows a space for that spaciousness. "To allow a space" here means, in particular: to make free the free of the open and to install this free place in its structure. This in-stalling [*Ein-richten*] presences as the erection [*Er-richten*] mentioned earlier. As a work, the work holds open the open of a world. Yet the setting up of a world is only the first of the essential traits of the work-being of the work that we need to discuss here. The second essential trait which belongs to it we shall attempt to make visible by starting, in the same manner as before, from the foreground of the work.

When a work is brought forth out of this or that work-material – stone, wood, metal, color, language, tone – we say that it is made, set forth [*bergestellt*] out of it. But just as the work required a setting up, in the sense of consecrating-praising erection (since the work-being of the work consisted in a setting up of world), so a setting forth [*Herstellung*] is also necessary, since the work-being of the work has itself the character of a

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Being-there [*Da-sein*]. Third impression 1957: the Event.

setting forth. It belongs to the essence of a work, as a work, that it makes, sets forth. But what is it that the work sets forth? We will only discover this by investigating what, in a superficial and everyday sense, is referred to as the making or production of works.

To the work-being belongs the setting up of a world. Thinking of it from within this perspective, what is the nature of that which one usually calls the "work-material"? Because it is determined through usefulness and serviceability, equipment takes that of which it consists into its service. In the manufacture of equipment – for example, an ax – the stone is used and used up. It disappears into usefulness. The less resistance the material puts up to being submerged in the equipmental being of the equipment the more suitable and the better it is. On the other hand, the temple work, in setting up a world, does not let the material disappear; rather, it allows it to come forth for the very first time, to come forth, that is, into the open of the world of the work. The rock comes to bear and to rest and so first becomes rock; the metal comes to glitter and shimmer, the colors to shine, the sounds to ring, the word to speak.^a All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of the stone, into the firmness and flexibility of the wood, into the hardness and gleam of the ore, into the lightening and darkening of color, into the ringing of sound, and the naming power of the word.

That into which the work sets itself back, and thereby allows to come forth, is what we called "the earth." Earth is the coming-forth-concealing [*Hervorkommend-Bergende*]. Earth is that which cannot be forced, that which is effortless and untiring. On and in the earth, historical man finds his dwelling in the world. In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth. "Setting forth [*Herstellen*]" is to be thought, here, in the strict sense of the word.^b The work moves the earth into the open of a world and holds it there. *The work lets^c the earth be an earth.*^d

Why, however, must this setting forth of earth happen in such a way that the work sets itself back into it? What is the earth, that it reaches the unconcealed in just this manner? The stone presses downwards and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness weighs down on us, at the same time, it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such penetration by

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Saying something [*verlauten*], speaking.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. Inadequate.

^c Reclam edition, 1960. This means? Compare "The Thing": the fourfold [*Ge-viert*].

^d Reclam edition, 1960. The Event.

smashing the rock, then it shows us its pieces but never anything inward, anything that has been opened up. The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull weight and mass of its fragments. If we try to grasp the stone's heaviness in another way, by placing it on a pair of scales, then we bring its heaviness into the calculable form of weight. This perhaps very precise determination of the stone is a number, but the heaviness of the weight has escaped us. Color shines and wants only to shine. If we try to make it comprehensible by analyzing it into numbers of oscillations it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth shatters every attempt to penetrate it. It turns every merely calculational intrusion into an act of destruction. Though such destruction may be accompanied by the appearance of mastery and progress in the form of the technological-scientific objectification of nature, this mastery remains, nonetheless, an impotence of the will. The earth is openly illuminated as itself only where it is apprehended and preserved as the essentially undisclosed, as that which withdraws from every disclosure, in other words, keeps itself constantly closed up. All the things of the earth, the earth itself in its entirety, flow together in reciprocal harmony. But this confluence is no blurring of outlines. What flows here is the self-sustaining stream of boundary-setting, a stream which bounds everything that presences into its presence. So in every self-secluding thing there is the same not-knowing-one-another. The earth is the essentially self-secluding. To set forth the earth means: to bring it into the open as the self-secluding.

This setting forth of the earth is what the work achieves by setting itself back into the earth. The self-seclusion of the earth is, however, no uniform, inflexible staying-in-the-dark [*Verhangenbleiben*], but unfolds, rather, into an inexhaustible richness of simple modes and shapes. To be sure, the sculptor uses stone just as, in his own way, the mason uses it. But he does not use it up. That can be, in a certain sense, said of the work only when it fails. To be sure, the painter, too, makes use of pigment; he uses it, however, in such a way that the colors are not used up but begin, rather, for the first time, to shine. To be sure, the poet, too, uses words, not, however, like ordinary speakers and writers who must use them up, but rather in such a way that only now does the word become and remain truly a word.

Nowhere in a work is there any trace of work-material. It is even doubtful whether, in the essential determination of equipment, that in which it consists is encountered in its equipmental essence when it is described as matter.

The setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth are two essential traits belonging to the work-being of the work. Within the unity of that work-being, however, they belong together.^a This unity is what we seek when we reflect on the self-sufficiency of the work and try to express in words the closed, unitary repose of this resting-in-itself.

But, in the essential traits just mentioned, if our account is anywhere near the mark, what we have made visible in the work is by no means a repose but rather a happening: for what is rest if not the opposite of movement? It is, at any rate, not an opposite which excludes, but rather one which includes movement. Only what moves can rest. The mode of rest is determined by the mode of movement. In motion that is the mere change of place of a body, rest is, admittedly, only the limiting case of motion. When rest includes motion, there can be a rest which is an inner collection of motion. Such rest is, therefore, a state of extreme agitation – presupposing that the kind of motion in question requires such rest. The repose of the work that rests in itself is, however, of this sort. We will come, therefore, into the proximity of this repose if we can manage to grasp the movement of the happening in the work-being of the work as a unity. We ask: what relationship do the setting up of a world and the setting forth of the earth exhibit in the work itself?

The world is the self-opening openness of the broad paths of simple and essential decisions in the destiny of a historical people. The earth is the unforced coming forth of the continually self-closing, and in that way, self-sheltering. World and earth are essentially different and yet never separated from one another. World is grounded on earth, and earth rises up through world. But the relation between world and earth never atrophies into the empty unity of opposites unconcerned with one another. In its resting upon earth the world strives to surmount it. As the self-opening it will tolerate nothing closed. As the sheltering and concealing, however, earth tends always to draw the world into itself and to keep it there.

The opposition of world and earth is strife. We would, to be sure, all too easily falsify the essence of the strife were we to conflate that essence with discord and dispute, and to know it, therefore, only as disruption and destruction. In essential strife, however, the opponents raise each other into the self-assertion [*Selbstbehauptung*] of their essences. This self-assertion of essence is, however, never a rigid fixation on some condition that happens to be the case, but rather a surrendering into the hidden originality of the

^a Fifth edition, 1957. Only here? Or here, rather, only in the mode of construction?

source of one's own being. In the struggle, each opponent carries the other beyond itself. As a consequence, the strife becomes ever more intense as striving, and ever more authentically what it is. The more intransigently the strife outdoes itself on its own part, the more uncompromisingly do the opponents admit themselves into the intimacy of their simple belonging to one another. The earth cannot do without the openness of world if it is to appear in the liberating surge of its self-closedness. World, on the other hand, cannot float away from the earth if, as the prevailing breadth and path of all essential destiny, it is to ground itself on something decisive.

In setting up world and setting forth earth the work instigates this strife. But this does not happen so that the work can simultaneously terminate and settle the conflict in an insipid agreement, but rather so that the strife remains a strife. By setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work accomplishes this strife. The work-being of the work consists in fighting the fight between world and earth. It is because the strife reaches its peak in the simplicity of intimacy that the unity of the work happens in the fighting of the fight. The fighting of the fight is the continually self-surpassing gathering of the agitation of the work. The repose of the work that rests in itself thus has its essence in the intimacy of the struggle.

It is from out of this repose of the work that we are first able to see what is at work in the work. Until now the assertion that truth is set to work in the artwork has remained a merely provisional one. In what way does truth happen in the artwork, i.e., now, in what way does truth happen in the fighting of the fight between world and earth? What is truth?

How meager and truncated is our knowledge of the essence of truth is shown by the thoughtlessness with which we use this fundamental word. Mostly, we use "truth" to mean this or that particular truth. It means, in other words, something that is true. A piece of knowledge, articulated in a statement is an example of this kind of thing. It is not merely statements, however, but also things that we call "true" – true as opposed to fake gold. "True," here, is equivalent to "genuine" or "real" gold. What does this talk of "reality" mean? To us it means that which, in truth, is. That which is true is what corresponds to reality, and reality is that which, in truth, is. Once again the circle has closed.

What does "in truth" mean? Truth is the essence of what is true. What is it we are thinking of in speaking of "essence"? Usually, it is that common thing in which everything that is true agrees. An essence is discovered in generic and universal concepts which represent the one that holds indifferently for

the many. This in-different essence (essentiality in the sense of *essentia*) is, however, only the inessential essence. In what does the essential essence of something consist? Presumably it lies in that which a being, in truth, *is*. The true essence of something is determined by its true being, by the truth of each being. At the moment, however, what we are looking for is not the truth of essence but rather the essence of truth. A curious entanglement reveals itself here. Is it a mere curiosity, is it the vacuous hair-splitting of a playing with concepts, or is it – an abyss?

Truth means the essence of what is true. We will think it from out of the memory of the word used by the Greeks. Ἀλήθεια means the unconcealment of beings. But is that really a definition of the essence of truth? Are we not passing off a mere change of words – “unconcealment” instead of “truth” – as a characterization of the fact of the matter? Certainly we do not get beyond a change of names so long as we fail to experience what must happen for us to be compelled to speak the *essence* of truth in the word “unconcealment.”

Does this require a revival of Greek philosophy? Not at all. A revival, even were such an impossibility possible, would not help us. For the hidden history of Greek philosophy consists from its beginning in this: that it does not measure up to the essence of truth that lit up in the word ἀλήθεια, and so, of necessity, has misdirected its knowing and saying about the essence of truth more and more into the discussion of the derivative essence of truth. In the thought of the Greeks and all the more completely so in the philosophy that followed, the essence of truth as ἀλήθεια remained unthought. Unconcealment is, for thought, what is most concealed in Greek existence. At the same time, however, it is that which, from early times, has determined the presence of everything present.

But why can we not be satisfied with the essence of truth that has, by now, been familiar to us for centuries? Truth means, today, as it has done for a long time, agreement of knowledge with the facts. In order, however, for knowledge, and for the sentence that forms and expresses it, to correspond to the facts it is necessary, first of all, that the fact which is to be binding on the sentence show itself to be such. And how is it to show itself if it is unable to stand out of concealment, unable to stand in the unconcealed? A statement is true by conforming to the unconcealed, i.e., to that which is true. The truth of statements is always, and is nothing but, such correctness. The critical concepts of truth which, since Descartes start out from truth as certainty, are mere variations on the definition of truth as correctness. This familiar essence of truth, truth as the correctness of representation, stands and falls with truth as the unconcealment of beings.

When, here and elsewhere, we conceive of truth as unconcealment, we are not merely taking refuge in a more literal formulation of the Greek word. We are reflecting upon that which, unexperienced and unthought, underlies our familiar and therefore worn out essence of truth in the sense of correctness. From time to time we bring ourselves to concede that, of course, in order to verify and grasp the correctness (truth) of an assertion we must return to something that is already manifest. This presupposition, we concede, is unavoidable. But as long as we talk and think in this way, we understand truth merely as correctness. This requires, of course, a still further presupposition, one that we just make, heaven knows how or why.

But it is not we who presuppose the unconcealment of beings. Rather, the unconcealment of beings (being^a) puts us into such an essence that all our representing remains set into, and in accordance with, unconcealment. It is not only the case that that *in conformity with which* a cognition orders itself must already be somehow unconcealed. Rather, the whole *region* in which this “conformity with something” occurs must already have happened as a whole within the undisclosed; and this holds equally of that *for* which a particular correspondence of a statement to the facts becomes manifest. With all our correct representations we would be nothing – we could never make the presupposition of there being something manifest to which we conform ourselves – if the unconcealment of beings had not already set us forth into that illuminated realm^b in which every being stands for us and from which it withdraws.

But how does this happen? How does truth happen as this unconcealment? First, however, we must make it clearer what this unconcealment itself is.

Things are, and human beings, gifts, and sacrifices are, animals and plants are, equipment and work are. The being stands in being. Through being passes a covert fate ordained between the godly and what goes against the godly. There is much in beings man cannot master. But little comes to be known. The known remains an approximation, what is mastered insecure. Never is a being – as it might, all too easily, appear – something of our making or merely our representation. When we contemplate this whole in its unity we grasp, it seems, all that is – though we grasp it crudely enough.

^a Reclam edition, 1960: i.e., the Event.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. If the clearing were not to happen, i.e., the appropriating [*Er-eignen*].

And yet: beyond beings – though before rather than apart from them – there is still something other that happens.^a In the midst of beings as a whole an open place comes to presence. There is a clearing. Thought from out of beings, it is more in being than is the being. This open center is, therefore, not surrounded by beings. Rather, this illuminating center itself encircles all beings – like the nothing that we scarcely know.

The being can only be, as a being, if it stands within, and stands out within, what is illuminated in this clearing. Only this clearing grants us human beings access to those beings that we ourselves are not and admittance to the being that we ourselves are. Thanks to this clearing, beings are unconcealed in certain and changing degrees. But even to be *concealed* is something the being can only do within the scope of the illuminated. Each being which we encounter and which encounters us maintains this strange opposition of presence in that at the same time it always holds itself back in a concealment. Concealment, however, reigns in the midst of beings, in a twofold manner.

Beings refuse themselves to us down to that one and seemingly most trivial feature which we meet most immediately when all we can say of a being is that it is. Concealment as refusal is not primarily or only the limit of knowledge in each particular case; it is, rather, the beginning of the clearing of what is illuminated. But concealment, though of course of another sort, also occurs within the illuminated. Beings push themselves in front of others, the one hides the other, this casts that into shadow, a few obstruct many, on occasion one denies all. Concealment, here, is not simple refusal. Rather, a being indeed appears but presents itself as other than it is.

This concealment is an obstructing [*Verstellen*]. If beings did not obstruct one another we could not err in seeing and doing, we could not go astray and transgress, and, in particular, could not overreach ourselves. That, as appearance, the being can deceive us is the condition of the possibility of our deceiving ourselves rather than the other way round.

Concealment can be either a refusal or merely an obstructing. We are never really certain whether it is the one or the other. Concealment conceals and obstructs itself. This means: the open place in the midst of beings, the clearing, is never a fixed stage with a permanently raised curtain on which the play of beings enacts itself. Rather, the clearing happens only as this twofold concealment. The unconcealment of beings – this is never a state

^a Third edition, 1957. The Event.

that is merely present but rather a happening^a. Unconcealment (truth) is a property neither of the facts, in the sense of beings, nor of statements.

In the immediate circle of beings we believe ourselves to be at home. The being is familiar, reliable, ordinary. Nonetheless, the clearing is pervaded by a constant concealment in the twofold form of refusal and obstructing. Fundamentally, the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny [*un-gebeuer*]. The essence of truth, i.e., unconcealment, is ruled throughout by a denial. This denial is, however, neither a defect nor a fault – as if truth were a pure unconcealment that has rid itself of everything concealed. If truth could accomplish this it would no longer be itself. *Denial, by way of the twofold concealing, belongs to the essence of truth as unconcealment.* Truth, in its essence, is un-truth. We put it this way emphatically to indicate, with a perhaps off-putting directness, that refusal in the mode of concealing is intrinsic to unconcealment as clearing. On the other hand, the sentence “the essence of truth is un-truth” should not be taken to claim that truth, fundamentally, is falsehood. Equally little does it mean that truth is never itself but, dialectically represented, is always its opposite as well.

Truth presences as itself only because the concealing denial, as refusal, is the continuing origin of all clearing but yet, as obstructing, metes out to all clearing the rigorous severity of error. “Concealing denial” is intended to denote that opposition which exists within the essence of truth between clearing and concealment. It is the conflict of the primal strife. The essence of truth is in itself the ur-strife [*Urstreit*]^b in which is won that open center within which beings stand, and from out of which they withdraw into themselves.

This open happens in the midst of beings. It displays an essential trait we have already mentioned. To the open belongs a world and the earth. But world is not simply the open which corresponds to the clearing, earth is not simply the closed that corresponds to concealment. World, rather, is the clearing of the paths of the essential directives with which every decision complies. Every decision, however, is grounded in something that cannot be mastered, something concealed, something disconcerting. Otherwise it would never be a decision. Earth is not simply the closed but that which rises up as self-closing. World and earth are essentially in conflict, intrinsically belligerent. Only as such do they enter the strife of clearing and concealing.

^a First edition, 1950. The Event.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. The Event.

Earth rises up through world and world grounds itself on the earth only insofar as truth happens as the ur-strife between clearing and concealment. But how does truth happen? We answer: it happens in a few essential ways.^a One of these ways in which truth happens is the work-being of the work. Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the fighting of that fight in which the disclosure of beings as a whole – truth – is won.

Truth happens in the temple's standing there. This does not mean that something is correctly portrayed and reproduced here but rather that that which is as a whole is brought into unconcealment and held there. "To hold" originally means "to watch over [*büten*]." Truth happens in van Gogh's painting. That does not mean that something present is correctly portrayed; it means, rather, that in the manifestation of the equipmental being of the shoe-equipment, that which is as a whole – world and earth in their counterplay – achieves unconcealment.

In the work truth is at work – not, that is to say, merely something that is true. The picture which shows the peasant shoes, the poem that says the Roman fountain, does not merely show what these isolated beings as such are – if, indeed, they show anything at all. Rather, they allow unconcealment with regard to beings as a whole to happen.^b The more simply and essentially the shoe-equipment is absorbed in its essence, the more plainly and purely the fountain is absorbed in essence, the more immediately and engagingly do all beings become, along with them, more in being. In this way self-concealing being becomes illuminated. Light of this kind sets its shining into the work. The shining that is set into the work is the beautiful. *Beauty is one way in which truth as unconcealment comes to presence.*

In certain respects, we have, now, certainly grasped the essence of truth more clearly. What is at work in the work may, therefore, have become clearer. Yet the work-being of the work that has now become visible still tells us nothing at all about the most immediate and salient reality of the work, its thingliness. It even seems as if, in pursuing the all-consuming aim of comprehending the self-subsistence of the work itself as purely as possible, we have completely overlooked one crucial point: a work is always a work, which is to say, something worked or produced [*ein Gewirktes*]. If anything distinguishes the work as a work it is the fact that it has been created. Since the work is created, and since creation requires a medium

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Not an answer since the question remains: what is it which happens in these ways?

^b Reclam edition, 1960. The Event.

out of and in which the work is created, thingliness, too, must be part of the work. So much is indisputable. The question remains, however: how does being created belong to the work? This issue can only be elucidated when two points have been clarified:

- (1) What is meant, here, by being-created and by creation as distinct from making and being-made?
- (2) What is the innermost essence of the work itself, from which it can be gauged to what extent being created belongs to it, and to what degree being-created determines the work-being of the work?

Creation, here, is always thought with reference to the work. To the essence of the work there belongs the happening of truth. The nature of creation we define in advance in terms of its relation to the essence of truth as the unconcealment of beings. The belonging of being-created to the work can only come to light through a still more primordial clarification of the essence of truth. The question of truth and its essence returns.

If the statement that truth is at work in the work is to be something more than a mere assertion, we must raise this question once again.

First of all, we must now ask, in a more essential way: to what extent is an impulse to something like a work contained in the essence of truth? What is the essence of truth, that it can be set into the work – even, under certain conditions, must be set into the work – in order to have its being as truth? The setting-of-truth-into-the-work is, however, how we defined the essence of art. Hence, the question just posed becomes:

What is truth, that it can happen as art, or even must so happen? To what extent *is there* [*gibt es*] such a thing as art?

TRUTH AND ART

Art is the origin of both the artwork and the artist. An origin is the source of the essence in which the being of a being presences. What is art? We seek to discover its essential nature in the actual work. The reality of the work was defined in terms of what is at work in the work, in terms, that is, of the happening of truth. This happening we think of as the contesting of the strife between world and earth. In the intense agitation of this conflict presences repose [*Ruhe*]. It is here that the self-subsistence, the resting-in-itself [*insichruhen*] of the work finds its ground.

In the work, the happening of truth is at work. But what is thus at work is at work *in* the work. This means that the actual work is already presupposed,

here, as the bearer of this happening. Straight away we confront again the question concerning the thingliness of the work before us. One thing thus finally becomes clear: however diligently we inquire into the self-subsistence of the work, we will fail to discover its actual reality as long as we fail to understand that the work is to be taken as something worked. To take it thus rests on what is closest at hand; for in the word “work [*Werk*]” we hear “worked [*Gewirkte*].” The workly character of the work consists in its being created by the artist. It may appear strange that this most obvious and all-clarifying determination of the work is mentioned for the first time only now.

The work’s createdness, however, can obviously be grasped only in terms of the process of creation. Hence, we are constrained by the facts to agree to investigate the activity of the artist in order to discover the origin of the artwork. The project of determining the work-being^a of the work purely from the work itself proves to be incapable of completion.

Turning away now from the work to investigate instead the nature of the creative process, it will be as well, nonetheless, to keep in mind what was said initially about the peasant shoes and the Greek temple.

We think of creation as a bringing forth. But the making of equipment, too, is a bringing forth. Admittedly, handicraft [*Handwerk*] – a significant turn of phrase – creates no work [*Werk*], even when we contrast the hand-made with the factory product. But what is it that distinguishes bringing forth as creation from bringing forth in the mode of making? It is as easy to make a verbal distinction between the creation of works and the making of equipment as it is difficult to track down the essential traits of the two modes of bringing forth. Going by first appearances, we find the same kind of behaviour in the activity of the potter, the sculptor, the carpenter, and the painter. The creation of works requires the activity of handicraft. Great artists prize craftsmanly ability above all else. Before everything else they demand its careful cultivation based on complete command. More than anyone else they are at pains constantly to renew their grounding in a thorough craftsmanship. It has often enough been pointed out that the Greeks (who understood a thing or two about works of art) used the same word, τέχνη, for both handicraft and art, and used the same term, τεχνίτης, to refer to both the craftsman and the artist.

It seems advisable, therefore, to determine the nature of creation in terms of its aspect as craft. The reference, however, to the linguistic usage of the

^a Reclam edition, 1960. What does “work-being” mean? Ambiguous.

Greeks – which indicates their experience of the facts – must give pause for thought. Thus, however usual and plausible the reference to the Greek practice of using the same word, τέχνη, to designate both craft and art may be, it remains, nonetheless, off-target and superficial; for τέχνη means neither craft nor art, and absolutely not the technical in the modern sense. It never means any kind of practical accomplishment.

Rather, τέχνη designates a way of knowing. “Knowing” means: having seen, in the broad sense of seeing which means the apprehension of something present as something present. For Greek thought, the essence of knowing is based on ἀλήθεια, on, that is, the unconcealment of beings. Unconcealment supports and guides all comportment toward beings. As knowledge experienced in the Greek manner, τέχνη is a bringing forth of beings in that it brings forth what is present, as such, out of concealment, specifically into the unconcealment of their appearance. τέχνη never designates the activity of making.

The artist is not a τεχνίτης because he is also a craftsman but rather because both the setting-forth [*Her-stellen*] of works and the setting-forth of equipment happen in that bringing forth which allows beings, by assuming an appearance, to come forth into their presence. All this happens, however, in the midst of beings which arise of their own accord, in the midst of φύσις. The designation of art as τέχνη does not at all mean that the activity of the artist can be discovered via handicraft. What looks like craft in the creation of the work is a different kind of thing. Such activity is determined and pervaded by the essential nature of creation, and remains, as well, contained within it.

If not handicraft, what is to guide our thinking about the essential nature of creation? How could it be anything other than having in view the to-be-created, the work? Though the work first becomes an actual thing through the completion of creative activity and is, therefore, dependent on such activity for its reality, the essence of creation is determined by the essence of the work. And now it can no longer seem strange that, first of all and for a long time, we spoke only about the work and brought its createdness into view only at the end. If its being-created is as essential to the work as the word “work” makes it sound, then we must try to understand still more essentially what up to now has been identified as the work-being of the work.

In the light of the delineation of the essence of the work we have reached, according to which the happening of truth is at work in the work, we can characterize creation as the allowing of something to come forth in what has

been brought forth. The work's becoming a work is a mode of the becoming and happening of truth. Everything depends on the essence of truth. What, however, is truth for it to be the case that it has to happen in something like a creation? To what extent does truth, on the basis of its essence, have an impulse towards the work? Can we understand this from the essence of truth as it has been clarified to date?

Truth is un-truth in that there belongs to it the originating region [*Herkunftsbereich*] of the not-yet- (the un-)disclosed in the sense of concealment. In un-concealment as truth is present, too, the other "un-" of the twofold refusal. Truth as such is present in the opposition between clearing and the twofold concealment. Truth is the ur-strife in which, always in some particular way, the open is won; that open within which everything stands and out of which everything withholds itself – everything which, as a being, both shows and withdraws itself. Whenever and however the strife breaks out and happens, it is through it that the contesting parties, clearing and concealing, separate from one another. In this way the open of the field of combat is won. The openness of this open, i.e., truth, can only be what it is, namely *this* open, when and as long as it establishes itself in its open. In this open, therefore, there must be a being in which the openness takes its stand and achieves constancy. In taking possession of the open, the openness holds it open and supports it. Setting and taking possession [*Setzen und Besetzen*] are here always thought in the sense of the Greek *θέσις*, which means a setting up in the unconcealed.

With reference to the self-establishment of openness in the open,^a our thinking touches on an area which cannot here be elucidated. Only this should be noted; that if, in some manner, the essence of unconcealment belongs to being itself (compare *Being and Time*, section 44), then it is being which, in virtue of its essence, allows the freeplay of openness (the clearing of the "there") to happen, and introduces it as *a place of the sort* in which, in its own manner, each being arises.

Truth happens only by establishing itself in the strife and space it itself opens up. Since truth is the opposition of clearing and concealment, there belongs to it what may here be called "establishment." But truth is not present in itself beforehand, somewhere among the stars, so as then, later on, to find accommodation among beings. This is impossible since it is the openness of beings which first affords the possibility of a somewhere and

^a Reclam edition, 1960. In this connection, the "ontological difference"; see *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 47ff.

a place filled by the things that presence. Clearing of the openness and establishment in the open belong together. They are the same thing, an essence of the happening of truth. This happening is, in many different ways, historical.

One essential way in which truth establishes itself in the beings it has opened up is its setting-itself-into-the-work. Another way in which truth comes to presence is through the act which founds a state. Again, another way in which truth comes to shine is the proximity of that which is not simply a being but rather the being which is most in being. Yet another way in which truth grounds itself is the essential sacrifice. A still further way in which truth comes to be is in the thinker's questioning, which, as the thinking of being, names being in its question-worthiness [*Frag-würdigkeit*]. Science, by contrast, is not an original happening of truth but always the cultivation of a domain of truth that has already been opened. It does this through the apprehension and confirmation of that which shows itself to be possible and necessarily correct within this sphere. If, and to the extent that, a science transcends correctness and arrives at a truth – i.e., an essential disclosure of beings as such – it is philosophy.

Since it belongs to the essence of truth to establish itself within beings in order first to become truth, an *impulse to the work* belongs to the essence of truth as one of truth's distinctive possibilities for achieving being in the midst of beings.

The establishment of truth in the work is the bringing forth of a being of a kind which never was before and never will be again. The bringing forth places this being in the open in such a way that what is to be brought forth first clears the openness of the open into which it comes forth. When this bringing forth brings with it specifically the openness of beings, that is, truth, that which is brought forth, is a work. Bringing forth of this kind is creation. As such a bringing it is, better expressed, a receiving and taking over that occurs within the pull [*Bezug*] toward unconcealment. In what, then, does createdness consist? It may be elucidated through two essential determinations.

Truth establishes itself in the work. Truth is present only as the strife between clearing and concealing in the opposition between world and earth. As this strife of world and earth, truth wills its establishment in the work. The strife is not resolved in something brought forth specifically for that purpose, but neither is it merely housed there. The strife is, rather, opened up by the work. This being must, therefore, contain within itself the essential traits of the strife. In the strife the unity of world and earth is won. As a

world opens itself up, it puts up for decision, by a historical humanity, the question of victory or defeat, blessing and curse, lordship and slavery. The dawning world brings to the fore that which is still undecided and without measure and decisiveness.

As a world opens itself up, however, the earth rises up. It shows itself as that which bears all, as that which is secure in its law and which constantly closes itself up. World demands its decisiveness and measure and allows beings to attain to the openness of its paths. Earth, bearing and rising up, strives to preserve its closedness and to entrust everything to its law. The strife is not rift [*Riss*], in the sense of a tearing open of a mere cleft; rather, it is the intimacy of the mutual dependence of the contestants. The rift carries the contestants into the source of their unity, their common ground. It is the fundamental design [*Grundriss*]. It is the outline sketch [*Auf-riss*] that marks out the fundamental features of the rising up of the clearing of beings. This design [*Riss*] does not allow the contestants to break apart. It brings the contest between measure and limit into a shared outline [*Umriss*].

Truth establishes itself as strife in a being that is to be brought forth only in such a way that the strife opens up in this being; the being itself, in other words, is brought into the rift-design [*Riss*]. The rift-design is the drawing together into a unity of sketch and fundamental design rupture and outline. Truth establishes itself in a being in such a way, indeed, that this being itself occupies the open of truth. This occupying, however, can only happen in such a way that what is to be brought forth, the rift, entrusts itself to the self-closing that rises up in the open. The rift must set itself back into the pull of the weight of the stone, into the dumb hardness of the wood, into the dark glow of the colors. As the earth takes the rift back into itself, the rift is for the first time set forth into the open and therefore placed, i.e., set, into that which rises up in the open as the self-closing and as the protecting.

This strife which is brought into the rift-design, and so set back into the earth and fixed in place, is the *figure* [*Gestalt*]. The createdness of the work means: the fixing in place of truth in the figure. Figure is the structure of the rift in its self-establishment. The structured rift is the jointure [*Fuge*] of the shining of truth. What we here call "figure" is always to be thought out of *that particular* placing [*stellen*] and placement [*Ge-stell*] as which the *work* comes to presence when it sets itself up and sets itself forth.

In the creation of the work, the strife, as rift, must be set back into the earth; the earth itself must be set forth and made use of as the self-closing. This making use of, however, does not use up and misuse the earth as mere

matter; rather, it frees it to be, for the first time, itself. Such using of the earth is a working with it that indeed looks like the employment of matter in handicraft. This is what created the appearance that the creation of a work is also craft activity. It never is. But it remains always a using of earth in the fixing in place of truth in the figure. By contrast, the making of equipment is never, in the first instance, an effecting of the happening of truth. The production of equipment is finished when the material has been so formed as to be ready for use. The equipment's readiness for use means that it is released beyond itself to disappear into usefulness.

Not so the createdness of the work. This will become clear through a consideration of the second characteristic, which may be introduced at this point.

The readiness of equipment and the createdness of the work have in common that each is something that has been brought forth. But what makes the createdness of the work different from every other bringing forth is that it is also created into the created work. But is this not true of everything that has been brought forth or in any other way has come into being? Everything that is brought forth, if endowed with anything at all, is endowed, surely, with its having-been-brought-forth. Certainly. But in the work createdness is expressly created into what is created, with the result that it expressly rises up out of the work. If this is how things are, then it must be possible to experience createdness in the work itself.

That createdness stands forth out of the work does not mean that it should be a salient feature of the work that it is made by a great artist. The point is not that the created work be certified as a product of ability so as thereby to raise the public profile of the producer. What is announced is not "*N.N. fecit.*" Rather, "*factum est*" is what is to be held forth into the open by the work: in other words this, that an unconcealment of beings has happened here and, as this happening, happens here for the first time; or this, that this work *is* rather than is not. The thrust that the work, as this work, is and the unceasingness of this inconspicuous thrust constitute the constancy of the self-subsistence of the work. Precisely where the artist and the process and circumstances of the work's coming into being remain unknown, this thrust, this "that [*dass*]" of createdness, steps into view at its purest from out of the work.

To be sure, "that" it is made also belongs to every piece of equipment that is available for, and in, use. This "that," however, is not salient in the equipment; it disappears into usefulness. The handier a piece of equipment, the more inconspicuous is the fact that, for example, a hammer of a certain

kind is, that is, exists; the handier a piece of equipment, the more completely it preserves itself in its equipmentality. We are capable, in general, of noticing of anything present that such a thing is; but as soon as this is noted it falls, just as quickly, into the oblivion of the commonplace. What, however, is more commonplace than that a being is? In the work, on the other hand, the fact that it *is* as such a thing, is what is unusual. The happening of its createdness does not simply reverberate through the work; rather, the work casts before itself the eventful fact that, as a work, this work is, and exhibits this fact constantly. The more essentially the work opens itself, the more luminous becomes the uniqueness of the fact that it is rather than is not. The more essentially this thrust comes into the open, the stranger and more solitary the work becomes. In the bringing forth of the work there lies the offering forth of the “that it is.”

The question of the createdness of the work should have brought us closer to the work-character of the work and thereby to its reality. Createdness has revealed itself to be the strife’s being fixed in place through the rift in the figure. By this means, createdness itself is specifically created into the work and stands as the silent thrust into the open of the “that.” But even createdness fails to exhaust the reality of the work. However, this view of the essence of the createdness of the work puts us into a position to take the step to which everything that has been said up to now leads.

The more solitary the work, fixed in the figure, stands within itself, the more purely it seems to sever all ties to human beings, then the more simply does the thrust that such a work *is* step into the open, and the more essentially the extraordinary is thrust to the surface and the long-familiar thrust down. Yet there is nothing violent about this multidirectional thrust, for the more purely is the work itself transported into the openness of beings it itself opens up, then the more simply does it carry us into this openness and, at the same time, out of the realm of the usual. To submit to this displacement means: to transform all familiar relations to world and to earth, and henceforth to restrain all usual doing and prizing, knowing and looking, in order to dwell within the truth that is happening in the work. The restraint of this dwelling allows what is created to become, for the first time, the work that it is. This allowing the work to be a work is what we call its preservation. It is in such preservation that, in its createdness, the work first gives itself as the real which now means, is present in its work-character.

Just as a work cannot be without being created, just as it stands in essential need of creators, so what is created cannot come into being without preservers.

If, however, a work does not – or does not immediately – find preservers who respond to the truth happening in the work, that does not mean that a work can be a work without preservers. If it is in other respects a work, it always remains tied to preservers even, and precisely, when it only waits for preservers and only solicits and awaits their entry into its truth. Even the oblivion into which the work can fall is not nothing: it is still a preserving. It lives off the work. Preservation of the work means: standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work. This urgent standing-withinness [*Inständigkeit*] of preservation is, however, a knowing. Yet knowing does not consist in mere acquaintance with and ideas about something. Whoever truly knows what is knows what he wills in the midst of what is.

The willing referred to here, which neither merely applies knowledge nor decides in advance of it, is thought out of the foundational experience of the thinking of *Being and Time*. The knowing that is a willing, and the willing that is a knowing, is the existing [*existierenden*] human being’s allowing himself ecstatic [*ekstatische*] entrance into the unconcealment of beings. The resoluteness⁴ which is thought in *Being and Time* is not the decisive action of a subject, but rather the human being’s [*Daseins*] opening up from out of its captivity by beings into the openness of being. In his existence, however, man does not move from something inward to something outer. Rather, the essence of existence is the out-standing standing-within the essential separation belonging to the clearing of beings. Neither the creating discussed earlier nor the willing that is our current topic is thought of as the achievement or action of a subject who sets himself a goal that he strives to achieve.

Willing is the sober resoluteness [*Entschlossenheit*] of that existential [*existierenden*] self-transcendence which exposes itself to the openness of beings as it is set into the work. In this way, the urgent standing-within is brought into law. As knowing, preservation of the work is the sober standing-within the awesomeness of the truth that happens in the work.

This knowing which, as willing, makes its home in the truth of the work – and only thus remains a knowing – does not take the work out of its self-subsistence, does not drag it into the sphere of mere experience [*Erlebens*] and does not degrade it to the role of a mere stimulant to experience. Preservation of the work does not individualize human beings down to their experiences but rather, brings them into a belonging to the truth that happens in the work. By so doing it founds their being-with-one-another [*Miteinandersein*] as the historical standing out of human existence [*Da-seins*] from out of the relation to unconcealment. Most particularly, knowing in the mode of

preservation is far removed from that merely cultivated connoisseurship of the formal features of the work, its qualities and intrinsic charms. Knowing as having seen is a being-decided; it is a standing-within the strife that the work has fixed into the design [*Riss*].

The manner of the proper preservation of the work is created and prefigured for us only and exclusively by the work itself. Preservation happens at different levels of knowledge, always with differing degrees of scope, constancy, and lucidity. If works are presented to be enjoyed merely as art, it is not yet established that they stand in preservation as works.

As soon as the thrust into the extra-ordinary [*Un-gebeure*] is captured by familiarity and connoisseurship, the art business has already begun to take over the works. Even the careful handing down of works to posterity and the scientific attempt to recover them no longer reach to their work-being itself, but only to a memory of it. But even this can still offer a place to the work from out of which it can contribute to the shaping of history. The ownmost reality of the work, however, comes to bear only where the work is preserved in the truth that happens through it itself.

The reality of the work is determined, in its fundamental features, from out of the essence of its work-being. We are now in a position to return to our opening question: how do matters stand with that thingliness of the work which guarantees the work's immediate reality? They stand in such a way that we no longer ask the question about the work's thingliness. For as long as we pose that question we take it as a foregone conclusion that the work is present to us as an object. In this way, our questioning proceeds not from the work, but from ourselves. From ourselves – we who do not allow the work to be a work but represent it, rather, as an object that is supposed to bring about certain conditions within us.

That element within the work, however, which looks like its thingliness when the work is taken as an object (according to the usual concepts of the thing), experienced from out of the work, is its character as earth. Earth rises up within the work because the work is present as something in which truth is at work, and because truth only presences where it establishes itself in a being. In the earth, however, as the essentially self-closing, the openness of the open encounters the highest form of resistance and through this finds the site of its steady stand in which the figure must be fixed in place.

Was it, then, superfluous to go into the question of the thingliness of the thing? By no means. It is true that the work's thingliness cannot be defined in terms of its work-character, but, on the other hand, knowing the work-character of the work can point the question of the thingliness of the thing

in the right direction. This is no mean achievement, when we recollect that those modes of thinking familiar from ancient times are an attack upon the thingliness of the thing, and all the more when we recollect that they submit beings as a whole to an interpretation which is incapable of grasping the essence of equipment and of work, and makes us blind to the primordial essence of truth.

To determine the thingliness of the thing, neither reference to the bearer of properties nor to the unity of the manifold of the sensorily given is adequate. Least adequate of all is the matter-form structure, taken by itself, which is taken from the realm of equipment. To provide an authoritative and deep interpretation of the thingliness of the thing we must turn to the belonging of the thing to earth. The essential nature of earth, of the unmasterable and self-closing bearer, reveals itself, however, only in its rising up into a world, in the opposition between world and earth. This strife is fixed in place within the work's figure and becomes manifest through this figure. What is true of equipment, that we experience its equipmentality proper only through the work is true, also, of the thingliness of the thing. That we never know of the thingliness of the thing directly, and if we know it at all do so only in an indefinite kind of way – in other words, that we need the work – this fact shows indirectly that in the work-being of the work the happening of truth, the disclosure of beings, is at work.

But, we might finally object, if the work is indeed to bring thingliness into the open in a striking way, must not the work, for its part – before, and for the sake of its createdness – have been brought into relation to the things of the earth, to nature? Someone who must have known about it, Albrecht Dürer, made, after all, the well-known remark: "For in truth, art is found in nature; whoever can wrest it from her has it." "Wrest [*reißen*]" means here, to bring forth the rift [*Riss*] and to seize [*reißen*] it with drawing pen and drawing board. Immediately, however, we raise the counter-question: how can the rift be wrested forth except as the rift, and that means if it has not first been brought into the open, through the creative sketch, as the strife between measure and unmeasure? Certainly, there is found in nature a rift, measure, and limit, and bound to them the potentiality for a bringing forth, art. But it is just as certain that this art which is in nature is made manifest only by the work, made manifest because it is found in the work in a primordial way.

Our efforts concerning the reality of the work should have prepared the ground for discovering, in the reality of the work, art and its essential nature. The question of the nature of art, and of the path to knowing it,

needs first to be placed on firm ground again. The answer to the question is only the final result of the last step of a long sequence of questioning steps. Each answer remains in force as an answer only as long as it is rooted in questioning.

In the light of its work-being, the reality of the work has become not only clearer but, at the same time, essentially richer. To the createdness of the work the preservers belong just as essentially as the creators. But it is the work which makes the creators possible in their essence and which, in virtue of its essence, needs the preservers. If art is the origin of the work this means that it lets originate, in its essence, the essential belonging together at work of creator and preserver. What, however, is art itself that justifies us in calling it an "origin"?

In the work, the happening of truth is at work; at work, indeed, in the manner of a work. Accordingly, the essential nature of art was specified, in advance, as the setting-itself-to-work of truth. But this definition is intentionally ambiguous. On the one hand, it says: art is the fixing in place of self-establishing truth in the figure. This happens in creation, understood as the bringing forth of the unconcealment of beings. At the same time, however, setting-to-work also means: bringing the work-character of the work into motion and happening. This happens as preservation. Thus art is: the creative preservation of the truth in the work. *Art is, then, a becoming and happening of truth.* Does truth, then, arise out of nothing? It does indeed, if by nothing is meant the mere not of beings, and if we represent the being as that which is present in the ordinary way – that which later comes to light through the standing there of the work as what is merely presumed to be a true being, that which is brought into question. Truth will never be gathered from what is present and ordinary. The disclosure of the open and the clearing of beings happen, rather, only insofar as the approaching openness is projected within thrownness.

Truth, as the clearing and concealing of that which is, happens through being poeticized.^a *All art*, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is, *in essence, poetry.* The essence of art, on which both the artwork and the artist depend, is truth's setting-itself-into-work. From out of the poeticizing essence of truth it happens that an open place is thrown open, a place in which everything is other than it was. In virtue of the projection

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Questionability of "poetry" – as the use of the saying [*als Brauch der Sage*]. The relationship between clearing and concealing inadequately portrayed.

of the unconcealedness of beings which is set into the work and casts itself toward us, everything ordinary and hitherto existing becomes an unbeing. This unbeing has lost the capacity to give and to preserve being as measure. What is curious here is that the work in no way affects hitherto existing beings through causal connection. The effecting [*Wirkung*] of the work does not consist in a taking effect [*wirken*]. It lies in a transformation of the unconcealment of beings which happens from out of the work, a transformation, that is to say, of being.^a

Poetry, however, is no aimless imagining of whimsicalities, and no flight of mere representations and fancies into the unreal. What poetry, as clearing projection, unfolds of unconcealment and projects into the rift within the figure is the open; poetry allows this open to happen in such a way, indeed, that now, for the first time, in the midst of beings, it brings them to shine and sound. If we fix our gaze on the essence of the work and its relation to the happening of the truth of beings, it becomes questionable whether the essence of poetry, of that is to say, projection, can be adequately thought in terms of imagination and the power of imagining.

It may here be emphasized that the essence of poetry, of which we have now learned in its full breadth (but not, on that account, in a vague kind of way) is something worthy of questioning, is something that remains to be thought through.^b

If the essence of all art is poetry, then architecture, the visual arts, and music must all be referred back to poesy. That is completely arbitrary. Certainly it is, if we mean that these arts are branches of the art of language – if we may be allowed to designate poesy with a title easily capable of misunderstanding. But poesy is only a mode of the illuminating projection of truth, of, that is to say, poeticizing in this broader sense. Nonetheless, the linguistic work, poetry in the narrower sense, has a privileged position among the arts as a whole.

To see this all we need is the right concept of language. According to the usual account, language is a kind of communication. It serves as a means of discussion and agreement, in general for achieving understanding. But language is neither merely nor primarily the aural and written expression of what needs to be communicated. The conveying of overt and covert

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Inadequate – relationship between unconcealment and "Being"; Being = presence, compare *Time and Being*.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. Also worthy of questioning is that which is unique to art.

meanings is not what language, in the first instance, does. Rather, it brings beings as beings, for the first time, into the open. Where language is not present, as in the being of stones, plants, or animals, there is also no openness of beings, and consequently no openness either of that which is not a being [*des Nichtseienden*] or of emptiness.

Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and to appearance. This naming nominates beings *to* their being and *from out of* that being. Such saying is a projection of the clearing in which announcement is made as to what beings will come into the open as. Projecting [*Entwerfen*]^a is the releasing of a throw [*Wurf*] as which unconcealment sends itself into beings as such. This projective announcement immediately becomes a renunciation of all dim confusion within which beings veil and withdraw themselves.^b

Projective saying is poetry: the saying of world and earth, the saying of the arena of their strife and, thereby, of all nearness and distance of the gods. Poetry is the saying of the unconcealment of beings. The prevailing language is the happening of that saying in which its world rises up historically for a people and the earth is preserved as that which remains closed. Projective saying is that in which the preparation of the sayable at the same time brings the unsayable as such to the world. In such saying, the concepts of its essence – its belonging to world-history, in other words – are formed, in advance, for a historical people.

Poetry is here thought in such a broad sense, and at the same time in such an intimate and essential unity with language and the word, that it must remain open whether art, in all its modes from architecture to poesy, exhausts the nature of poetry.

Language itself is poetry in the essential sense. But since language is that happening in which, each time, beings are first disclosed as beings, poesy, poetry in the narrower sense, is the most primordial form of poetry in the essential sense. Language is not poetry because it is *ur*-poesy; rather, poesy happens in language because the latter preserves the primordial essence of poetry. Building and plastic creation, on the other hand, happen, always and only, in the open of saying and naming. It is this open which permeates and guides them. For this reason, they remain their own particular ways and manners in which truth orders itself into the work. They are an

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Projecting – not the clearing as such, for it is only in this that the projection is located. Rather, projecting of rift-designs [*Risse*].

^b Reclam edition, 1960. Only thus? Or as destiny? Compare the set-up [*das Ge-stell*].

always unique poeticizing within the clearing of beings which has already happened, unnoticed, in the language.^a

As the setting-into-work of truth, art is poetry. It is not only the creation of the work that is poetic; equally poetic, though in its own way, is the preservation of the work. For a work only actually is as a work when we transport ourselves out of the habitual and into what is opened up by the work so as to bring our essence itself to take a stand within the truth of beings.^b

The essence of art is poetry. The essence of poetry, however, is the founding [*Stiftung*] of truth. “Founding” is understood, here, in a threefold sense: as bestowing, as grounding, and as beginning. But it only becomes actual in preserving. Thus to each mode of founding there corresponds a mode of preserving. All we can do at present is to make this essential structure visible in a few strokes, and even that only to the extent that the earlier characterization of the essential nature of the work provides an initial clue.

The setting-into-work of truth thrusts up the extra-ordinary [*Ungebeure*] while thrusting down the ordinary, and what one takes to be such. The truth that opens itself in the work can never be verified or derived from what went before. In its exclusive reality, what went before is refuted by the work. What art finds, therefore, can never be compensated and made good in terms of what is present and available for use. The founding is an overflowing, a bestowal.

The poeticizing projection of truth, which sets itself into the work as figure, is never carried out in the direction of emptiness and indeterminacy. In the work, rather, truth is cast toward the coming preservers, that is to say, a historical humanity. What is cast forth, however, is never an arbitrary demand. The truly poeticizing projection is the opening up of that in which human existence [*Dasein*], as historical, is already thrown [*geworfen*]. This is the earth (and, for a historical people, its earth), the self-closing ground on which it rests, along with everything which – though hidden from itself – it already is. It is, however, its world which prevails from out of the relationship of existence to the unconcealment of being. For this reason, everything with which man is endowed must, in the projection, be fetched forth from out of the closed ground and explicitly set upon this ground. In this way, the ground is first founded as a ground that bears.

^a Reclam edition, 1960. What does this mean? Does clearing happen through language or is it the Event of clearing [*das ereignende Lichtung*] which first grants saying and renouncing [*Entsagen*], and therefore language. Language and body (sound and script).

^b Reclam edition, 1960. In the sense of an urgent standing-within our practice [*Brauch*].

Because it is such a fetching-forth, all creation is a fetching, as in fetching water from a spring. Modern subjectivism, of course, misinterprets creation as the product of the genius of the self-sovereign subject. The founding of truth is a founding, not merely in the sense of a free bestowal, but in the sense, too, of this ground-laying grounding. The poeticizing projection comes out of nothing in the sense that it never derives its gift from what is familiar and already here. In another sense, however, it does not come out of nothing; for what it projects is but the withheld determination of man's historical existence itself.

Bestowal and grounding have in themselves the abruptness of what we call a beginning. But this suddenness of the beginning, the uniqueness of what is unique to the leap^a from out of this suddenness, does not exclude – rather it includes – the fact that the beginning has inconspicuously prepared itself over the longest time. As a leap, the genuine beginning is always a leaping-ahead, a leaping-ahead in which everything to come is already leapt over, even if as something veiled. Concealed within itself, the beginning^b contains already the end. A genuine beginning, of course, is not a beginning in the sense of being primitive. The primitive, because it lacks the bestowing, grounding leap and the leap-ahead, has no future. It cannot release anything more from itself since it contains nothing save that in which it is caught.

A beginning, by contrast, always contains the undisclosed fullness of the extraordinary, and that means the strife with the ordinary. Art as poetry is founding in the third sense of the instigation of the strife of truth; it is founding as beginning. Whenever what is as a whole, as what is, itself demands a grounding in openness, then art, as founding, accedes to its historical essence. In the West, this first happened in Greece. What would, in the future, be called being was set into the work in a standard-setting way. The thus-opened totality of beings was then transformed into beings in the sense of God's creation. This happened in the Middle Ages. This kind of being was again transformed at the beginning, and during the course, of the modern age. Beings became transparent objects capable of being mastered by calculation. Each time, the openness of beings had to be established in beings themselves, through the fixing in place of truth in the figure. Each time, the unconcealment of beings happened. It set itself into the work, a setting which is accomplished by art.

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Concerning “the leap” see *Identity and Difference*, the lecture about identity.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. To think the beginning as the beginning in terms of the Event.

Whenever art happens, whenever, that is, there is a beginning, a thrust enters history and history either begins or resumes. History, here, does not mean a sequence of events in time, no matter how important. History is the transporting of a people into its appointed task [*Aufgegebenes*] as the entry into its endowment [*Mitgegebenes*].

Art is the setting-itself-to-work of truth. An essential ambiguity is concealed in this sentence, present because “truth” functions as both subject and object. Yet “subject” and “object” are inappropriate terms, here. They prevent our thinking this ambiguous essence – a task that no longer belongs to our reflections. Art is historical and, as historical, is the creative preservation of truth in the work. Art happens as poetry. This is founding in the threefold sense of bestowing, grounding, and beginning. As founding, art is essentially historical. This does not just mean that art has a history, a history in the external sense that, in the passage of time, art appears together with many other things, and in the process changes and passes away, and offers changing aspects to the study of history. Art is history in the essential sense: it is the ground of history.

Art allows truth to arise [*entspringen*]. Art arises as the founding preservation of the truth of beings in the work. To allow something to arise, to bring something into being from out of the essential source in the founding leap [*Sprung*] is what is meant by the word “origin [*Ursprung*].”

The origin of the artwork – of, that is, creators and preservers, which is to say, the historical existence of a people – is art. This is so because, in its essence, art is an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, becomes, that is, historical.

We are inquiring into the essential nature of art. Why do we thus inquire? We do so in order to be able to ask properly whether or not, in our historical existence, art is an origin, whether, and under what conditions, it can and must become one.

Such reflections cannot compel art and its coming-to-be. But this reflective knowledge is the preliminary and therefore indispensable preparation for the coming-to-be of art. Only such knowledge prepares, for art, the space,^a for creators, the path, and for preservers the location.

In such knowledge, which can only grow slowly, it is decided whether art can be an origin – and therefore must be a leap ahead – or whether it should remain a mere postscript, in which case it can only be carried along as a cultural phenomenon that has become routine.

^a Reclam edition, 1960. The place of its staying.

Are we, in our existence, historically at the origin? Or do we, rather, in our relationship with art, appeal, merely, to a cultured knowledge of the past?

For this either-or and its decision there is a certain sign. Hölderlin, the poet whose work still stands before the Germans as a test, put it into words when he said:

Reluctant to leave the place
Is that which dwells near the origin.

Schwer verlässt
Was nahe dem Ursprung wohnt, den Ort.
("The Journey," ed. Hellingrath, vol. IV, p. 167)

AFTERWORD

The foregoing considerations are concerned with the enigma [*Rätsel*] of art, the enigma that art itself is. They are far from claiming to solve the enigma. The task is to see the enigma.

Almost as soon as specialized thinking about art and the artist began, such reflections were referred to as "aesthetic." Aesthetics treated the artwork as an object, as indeed an object of αἴσθησις, of sensory apprehension in a broad sense. These days, such apprehension is called an "experience." The way in which man experiences art is supposed to inform us about its essential nature. Experience is the standard-giving source not only for the appreciation and enjoyment of art but also for its creation.^a Everything is experience. But perhaps experience is the element in which art dies.^b This dying proceeds so slowly that it takes several centuries.

One speaks, of course, of the immortal works of art and of art as an eternal value. One speaks this language which, in all essential matters, deals with nothing precisely because one fears that dealing with things precisely calls, in the end, for – thinking. What fear is today greater than the fear of thinking?

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Has modern art moved out of the realm of experience? Or is it only *what* is experienced that has changed, so that, of course, what is experienced has become even more subjective than before: the object of experience is now "the technology of the creative drive" itself – the how of making and invention. "Art without form [*informell*]" and the corresponding indefiniteness and emptiness of the "symbolic," that itself still remains metaphysics. The experience of the self as "society."

^b Reclam edition, 1960. This statement does not, however, say that art is absolutely at an end. That would only be the case if experience remained the absolute element for art. Everything depends on getting out of experience and into being-there [*Da-sein*], which means achieving an element for the "becoming" of art quite other than experience.

Does this talk of the immortal works and eternal values of art have any content or substance? Or are these merely the half-thought clichés of an age in which great art, together with its essence, has departed from among men?

The most comprehensive reflections on the nature of art possessed by the West – comprehensive because thought out of metaphysics – are Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*. Here one finds the following statements:

Art no longer counts as the highest way in which truth finds existence for itself.^a
(*Werke*, vol. X, I, p. 134)

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

(*ibid.*, p. 135)

In all these connections art is, and remains, with regard to its highest vocation, a thing of the past.

(*ibid.*, p. 16)

The judgment made in these sentences cannot be evaded by pointing out that since the last time Hegel lectured on his aesthetics, the winter of 1828–9, we have seen the advent of many new artworks and art movements. This possibility was one Hegel never wanted to deny. Yet the question remains: is art still an essential and necessary way in which that truth happens which is decisive for our historical existence, or is this something that art no longer is? But if art is that no longer, the question remains as to why this is so. A decision concerning Hegel's judgment has not yet been made; for behind the judgment there stands Western thinking since the Greeks, a thinking which corresponds to a truth of beings that has already happened. The decision about the judgment will be made, when it is made, from and about this truth of beings. Until then, the judgment remains in force [*in Geltung*]. But for this very reason we need to ask whether the truth it expresses is final and conclusive, and what then follows if it is.

Questions such as these which touch us, sometimes quite clearly, sometimes only in a vague kind of way, can only be asked if we give thought to the essence of art. We attempt to take a few steps in this direction by posing the question of the origin of the work of art. What is needed is to bring into view the work-character of the work. What we mean, here, by the word "origin" is thought out of the essence of truth.

The truth of which we have spoken does not coincide with what is generally recognized under this name – that which is assigned to knowledge

^a Reclam edition, 1960. Art as mode of truth (here, the certainty of the absolute).

and science as a quality to be distinguished from the beautiful and the good, terms which function as the values of non-theoretical activities. Truth is the unconcealment of beings as beings.^a Truth is the truth of beings. Beauty does not occur alongside this truth. It appears when truth sets itself into the work. This appearing (as this being of truth in the work and as the work) is beauty. Thus beauty belongs to the advent of truth. It does not exist merely relative to pleasure, and purely as its object. Beauty does, however, consist in form, but only because the *forma* once took its light from being and the being of beings. At that time, being made its advent as εἶδος. The ἰδέα fits itself into the μορφή. The σύνολον, the unitary whole of μορφή and ὕλη, in other words, the ἔργον, is in the manner of ἐνέργεια. This mode of presence became the *actualitas* of the *ens actu*. This *actualitas* became actuality, reality. Reality becomes objectivity. Objectivity becomes experience. In the manner in which, for the world determined in the Western way, beings exist as the real, there lies concealed a particular convergence of beauty and truth. To the transformation of the essence of truth there corresponds the essential history of Western art. This can no more be grasped by taking beauty by itself than it can in terms of experience – supposing that the metaphysical concept of art is adequate to the essence of art.

APPENDIX

On pages 38 and 44, the attentive reader will be forced to take note of a real difficulty: it looks as though the remarks about the “fixing in place of truth” and about the “letting happen of the advent of truth” can never be made consistent with each other. For in “fixing in place [*Feststellen*]” there is implied a willing which blocks and prevents truth’s advent. In “letting happen,” on the other hand, what is presented is a submitting – and, therefore, so to speak, a not-willing – as that which clears a space for the advent of truth.

The difficulty is resolved if we think “fixing in place” in the sense in which it is intended throughout the entire text of the essay, above all, in the key specification “setting-to-work.”^b Together with “to place [*stellen*]” and “to set” belongs “to lay”; all three meanings are contained as a unity within the Latin “*ponere*.”

^a Third edition, 1957. Truth is the self-illuminating being of beings. Truth is the clearing of the difference [*Unterschied*] (settlement) through which clearing determines itself out of the difference.

^b Reclam edition, 1960. Better “bringing into work”; bringing forth; bringing as allowing; ποιησις.

“To place” must be thought in the sense of θέσις. So one reads on p. 36: “Setting and taking possession [*Setzen und Besetzen*] are here always (!) thought in the sense of the Greek θέσις, which means a setting up in the unconcealed.” The Greek “setting” means: placing as allowing to arise, for example, a statue. It means: laying, laying down a sacred offering. “Placing” and “laying” have the sense of bringing *hither*^a into unconcealment, bringing *forth* among what is present, that is, allowing to lie forth. “Setting” and “placing” here never mean the summoning of things to be placed over and against the self (the “I” as subject) as conceived in the modern fashion. The standing of the statue (i.e., the presence of the radiance that faces us) is different from the standing of what stands over and against us [*Gegenstand*] in the sense of an object [*Objekt*]. “Standing” (cf. p. 16 above) is the constancy of the radiance. In the dialectic of Kantian and German idealism, on the other hand, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis refer to a placing within the sphere of the subjectivity of consciousness. Accordingly, Hegel – correctly in terms of his own position – interpreted the Greek θέσις as the immediate positing [*Setzen*] of the object. This positing is for him, therefore, untrue since it is not yet mediated by antithesis and thesis (compare “Hegel and the Greeks” in *Pathmarks*⁵).

But if, in the context of the artwork-essay, we keep in mind the Greek sense of θέσις – to let lie forth in its radiance and presence – then the “fixed” corresponding to “fix in place” can never mean the stiff, motionless, and secure.

“Fixed” means: outlined, admitted into the boundary (πέρας), brought into the outline (compare pp. 38ff. above). The boundary, in the Greek sense, does not block off but, rather, as itself something brought forth, first brings what is present to radiance. The boundary sets free into unconcealment: by means of its outline, the mountain stands in the Greek light in its towering and repose. The boundary which fixes and consolidates is what reposes, reposes in the fullness of movement. All this is true of the work in the sense of the Greek ἔργον. The work’s “being” is ἐνέργεια, a term which gathers into itself infinitely more movement than the modern “energies.”

It follows, then, that, properly thought, the “fixing in place” of truth can never run counter to “allowing to happen.” In the first place, this “allowing” is nothing passive; rather, it is the highest form of action (see *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 1954, p. 49) in the sense of θέσις, an “effecting” and “willing” which, in the present essay, is characterized as “the existing human being’s

^a Reclam edition, 1960. “Hither”: from out of the clearing.

allowing himself ecstatic entrance into the unconcealment of beings" (p. 41 above). In the second place, the "happen" in the "letting happen of truth" is the prevailing movement in clearing *and* concealment or, more precisely, in their union; in other words, it is the movement of the clearing of self-concealment as such, from which, in turn, all self-illumination arises. This "movement" even requires a fixing in place in the sense of a bringing forth, where this "bringing" is to be understood in the sense indicated on p. 37, in that the creating (creative) bringing forth "(is) a receiving and taking over that occurs within the pull [*Bezug*] toward unconcealment."

The meaning of the word "*Ge-stell* [placement]" used on p. 38, is to be understood in accordance with the above elucidation: the gathering together of the bringing forth, the allowing to come forth into the rift as bounding design (πέρας). The Greek meaning of μορφή as figure is clarified by "*Ge-stell*" understood in this way. Now, in fact, the use of "*Ge-stell*" in later writings specifically as the key word for designating the essence of modern technology⁶ is thought out of this use of the word – *not* from bookcase [*Büchergestell*] or installation. This derivation is the more essential one since it corresponds to the destiny of being. *Ge-stell*, as the essence of modern technology, comes from letting-lie-before experienced in the Greek manner, λόγος, from the Greek ποίησις and θέσις. In the putting in place of *Ge-stell* – which now means the summoning of everything into assured availability – there speaks the claim of *ratio reddenda*, i.e., of λόγον διδόναι. It speaks, of course, in such a way that, today, this claim that is made by *Ge-stell* assumes dominion over the absolute. And placing-before, representation [*Vor-stellen*], gathered out of the Greek notion of apprehension, becomes making fast and fixing in place.

When we hear the words "fix in place" and "*Ge-stell*" in "The Origin of the Artwork" we must, on the one hand, forget the modern meaning of placing and enframing. Yet on the other, we must not overlook the fact that, and extent to which, being as *Ge-stell*, definitive of modernity, comes forth from out of the Western destiny of being and is nothing thought up by philosophers; rather, it is something which is thought to the thoughtful (compare *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, p. 28 and p. 49).

There remains the difficult task of discussing the definitions given on pp. 36ff. for the "establishing" and "self-establishing of truth in beings." Here again, we must avoid understanding "establishing" in the modern sense, avoid understanding it as "organizing" and "making ready" in the manner of a lecture on technology. Rather, "establishing" thinks toward the "impulse of truth toward the work" referred to on p. 37, the impulse

that, in the midst of beings, truth itself should be as a work, should come to be in being (p. 37 above).

If we recollect how truth as the unconcealment of beings means nothing other than the presence of beings as such – that is, of *being* (see p. 45) – then the talk of the self-establishment of truth (i.e., of being) in beings touches on the questionableness [*das Fragwürdige*] of the ontological difference (compare *Identity and Difference*, pp. 47ff.). For this reason p. 36 of "The Origin of the Work of Art" sounds a note of caution: "With reference to the self-establishment of openness in the open our thinking touches on an area which cannot here be elucidated." The entire essay moves knowingly yet implicitly, along the path of the question of the essence of being. Reflection on what *art* may be is completely and decisively directed solely toward the question of *being*. Art is accorded neither an area of cultural achievement nor an appearance of spirit; it belongs, rather, to the Event out of which the "meaning of being" (compare *Being and Time*) is first determined. What art may be is one of the questions to which the essay offers no answer. What may give the impression of such an answer are directions for questioning (compare the first sentences of the Afterword).

Among these directions are two *important hints* (on p. 44 and p. 49). At both places there is talk of "ambiguity." On p. 49 an "essential ambiguity" is mentioned with respect to the definition of art as the "setting-to-work of truth." On the one hand, "truth" is the "subject," on the other the "object." *Both* characterizations remain "inappropriate." If truth is subject, then the definition "setting-to-work of truth" means the setting-*itself*-to-work of truth (compare p. 44 and p. 16). In this manner art is thought out of the Event. Being, however, is a call to man and cannot be without him. Accordingly, art is at the same time defined as the setting-to-work of truth, where truth *now* is "object" and art is human creating and preserving.

Within the *human* relation lies the other ambiguity in the setting-to-work which, on p. 44, is identified as that between creation and preservation. According to pages 44 and 33, it is the *artwork* and *artist* that have a "special" relationship to the coming into being of art. In the label "setting-to-work of truth," in which it remains undetermined (though *determinable*) who or what does the "setting," and in what manner, lies concealed *the relationship of being to human being*. This relationship is inadequately thought even in this presentation – a distressing difficulty that has been clear to me since *Being and Time*, and has since come under discussion in many presentations (see, finally, "On the Question of Being" and the present essay p. 36 "Only this should be noted; that . . .").

The problematic issue that prevails here, then, comes to a head at the very place in the discussion where the essence of language and of poetry is touched upon, all this, again, only in reference to the belonging together of being and saying.

It remains an unavoidable necessity that the reader, who naturally comes to the essay from without, at first and for a long time thereafter, represent and interpret the facts of the case from out of the silent domain that is the source of what has been thought. But for the author himself there remains the necessity to speak each time in the language that is, in each case, appropriate to the various stations on his way.

The Age of the World Picture

In metaphysics, reflection on the essence of beings and a decision concerning the essence of truth is accomplished. Metaphysics grounds an age in that, through a particular interpretation of beings and through a particular comprehension of truth, it provides that age with the ground of its essential shape. This ground comprehensively governs all decisions distinctive of the age. Conversely, in order for there to be adequate reflection on these phenomena [*Erscheinungen*], their metaphysical ground must allow itself to be recognized in them. Reflection is the courage to put up for question the truth of one's own presuppositions and the space of one's own goals (Appendix 1).¹

One of the essential phenomena of modernity is its science. Of equal importance is machine technology. One should not, however, misconstrue this as the mere application of modern mathematical science to praxis. Machine technology is itself an autonomous transformation of praxis, a transformation which first demands the employment of mathematical science. Machine technology still remains the most visible outgrowth of the essence of modern technology, an essence which is identical with the essence of modern metaphysics.

A third, equally essential phenomenon of modernity lies in the process of art's moving into the purview of aesthetics. This means the artwork becomes an object of experience [*Erlebens*] and consequently is considered to be an expression of human life.

A fourth modern phenomenon announces itself in the fact that human action is understood and practiced as culture. Culture then becomes the realization of the highest values through the care and cultivation of man's highest goods. It belongs to the essence of culture, as such care, that it, in turn, takes itself into care and then becomes the politics of culture.