Parallelisms of Heidegger's Figures of Art as Phenomenological Sources for Being's Unfolding

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ABSTRACT

The case of Heidegger's conception of art moves away, albeit struggling in the hermeneutical circle, from modern aesthetics and moves forward for a more phenomenological standpoint of art. That art exhibits veracious capacity in such a way that the artwork entails an unfolding – the manner that it represents and establishes itself as an art caters to the meaningful lived experience of a world of subjects to the earth – is in question a method of revealing of the truth of being. This paper attempts to sketchparallelisms to arrive at such unfolding via what this research presents as Heidegger's figures of art in Zarathustra and Dasein as embodying, rather than abstracting, the strife between 'earth' and 'world'. Going over these figures entails a phenomenological understanding of the world as the locus of art's unveiling of truth. Later, this paper contrasts and puts together Nietzsche's art impulses in the Greek Tragedy in the Apollonian and Dionysian, and Heidegger's two kinds of art as initial springboards for the Unfolding of Being.

Keywords: Zarathustra, Dasein, Artwork, World, Earth, Dionysian, Great art, Unfolding of Being

INTRODUCTION

Heidegger discourses the origin of the work of art by dialectic of the hermeneutical circle. That is to say, that the analysis of the parts corresponds to the analysis of the whole, in which the dialectic is sustained by this circling correspondence. In his conception of *Dasein*, one becomes part of the *worlding of the world*, but it still remains to be an ambiguous world when ones struggles to break into it. The world supervening postmodernity is seen to be aesthetically annihilated with the pronouncement of Nietzsche that God is dead, adjudging closely Heidegger's distance from aesthetics in itself sans going over against it.

This worlding of the *world*, as it were, thrivesin the search for meaning. Or as what Nietzsche prescribes further in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the meaning of the *earth*. The nature of art for Heidegger is the "truth of beings setting itself to work," a work which generates essence: in the working of the work one reveals something. Yet it remains to be ambiguous whether what he really meant when he calls*world* or *earth*. Out of such ambiguity, the sense of meaning that is enclosed in art encapsulates an inherent struggle of interpreting it in an opening both of world and earth.

In this sense, this paper avers two figures of Heidegger's art to explain *earth* and *world* for the Unfolding of Being. The first figure towards *aletheia* or unconcealment is Nietzsche's

Zarathustra. Zarathustra speaks of the Death of God; the first step to uncover the truth is to abolish all those which cover the uncovering of the truth. The second figure of Heidegger is the human *Dasein*, of an art that understands the world as it is. Zarathustra is for the circle of the earth, while *Dasein* is the circle of the world. Together, the researcher will try to mold them to unfold the true philosophical meaning of Being in artworks.

Artworks as avenues for truths are creative manners of unfolding. When in the nihilistic nothingness after the Death of God, the creator or the art of creating, is the next step in figuring out the figures of Heidegger. Using Zarathustra, the teacher of the superman, one is shown to overcome nihilism by the transvaluation of values. The *Dasein* also takes part in the maxim of creating, for the *Dasein* understands the context of the world that it wants to restlessly unfold the meaning of the world. This paper argues that the figures of Heidegger are the modes which one sets the unfolding of Being, not necessarily to arrive at the conclusion of Being, but *to set the unfolding par excellence*. Zarathustra is the dancing form of return for Nietzsche, containing the spirit of madness, containing the Dionysian spirit and thus the Dionysian celebrity in the art fused with its Apollonian character for the Primordial Unity of Being to nature, to the earth. *Dasein* is being-there, being-in-the-world, the care taker of the world as its understanding and unfolding spirit, holding the key towards an art of living free and always conjuring *aletheia* to life's unclearing grounds, an authentic way of producing the wholeness of being, the great art.

This paper attempts to parallelizefirst by (1) connecting Zarathustra and Dasein as figures of *earth* and *world* and then by (2) connecting Nietzsche's analysis of the Greek art energies as *tragedy*, and Heidegger's two kinds of art as the *artwork*. Zarathustra and the *Dasein* are the major figures nonetheless, to posit a phenomenology that puts back the question of Being, and in this case, the unfolding of itself in Art.

ART AND TRUTH

Heidegger states that the origin of the artwork is art itself, hermeneutically standing as with the artist and its sources. Art is not just the product of work or the very organ by which work is put to work in the making of the artist, but as he points out, it is the "actual artwork". Moreover, each artwork represents a *thingly* character. This began in the traditional approach of art wherein metaphysics played a great role. Art in the traditional sense is only a thing composed of many substructures, treating artworks as things. Heidegger distinguishes three types of thing and three understandings of what it is to be a thing which are "(i) works, (ii) equipment, and (iii) "mere" things, the latter being the lifeless beings of nature and understanding it as (i) the thing as the bearer of traits, (ii) the thing as the unity of a manifold sensation, and (iii) the thing as the conjunction of matter and form."

Seen in this light, metaphysics then reduced art as not as art per se but craft, a handiwork of formed matter. Within the caprices of this inception, the equipmental being of equipment is *reliability.* The understanding of the essence of the equipment then brings us to the unconcealedness of its being. But to think only of equipment would tempt us to go back to the traditional conception. That is why Heidegger moves towards a phenomenological perspective that questions in art the "Being of beings," that is, looking to truth and its relation to the work of art. Work actualizes when "the actuality of the work has been defined by that which is at work in the work, by the happening of truth."

The relationship of art to truth entails on the outset the happening of an unconcealment or aletheia when an unveiling of the artwork opens to the truth of being: "Truth, as the clearing and concealing of beings, happens in being composed. All art, as the letting happen of the advent of truth of beings, is such, in essence, poetry. The essence of art, on which both the artwork and the artist depend, is the setting-itself-into-work of truth."

Why the fascination with this letting happen? Because this very allowance of the advent of truth in essence reveals its creators into a phenomenology that works its way into Being. In the actual happening of this letting be, Heidegger redirects the point to the creator or artist of art as the subject that engages in the very truth of the artwork itself. "The actuality of the work has become not only clearer for us in the light of its work-being, but also essentially richer. The preservers of a work belong to its *createdness* with an essentiality equal to that of the *creators*." That is to say, that it is precisely in the actualizing character of the art that it reveals the truth not only of itself – its being an equipment, or an unveiling of being – but also points to the artist and the truth that is revealed to it.

FIRST FIGURE: ZARATHUSTRA AND THE EARTH

What is then the figure in which one esteems a creator? Here, Nietzsche's influence to Heidegger emerges, so that when he speaks of the earth, the very notion of the artwork's circle of its materiality and formation, its reliability in the actuality of the work, subsists in the meaning of the earth. Nietzsche's Zarathustra, this paper contends, comes to mind as the first figure of Heidegger when he preaches the meaning of the earth. Zarathustra's figure is the viable figure of the creator only because he speaks of emptiness, of nihilism first.vii With the traditional conceptions of God as morality, as the valuative principle of human laws, it is "Him who smashes their tables of values, the breaker, the law-breaker – but he is the creator." But this artistry of creating, resembling Nietzsche's allusion on how to philosophize with a hammer as the symbol both of destroying and creating, is not a lone resolve. In this sense, the artist, the smasher of values and at the same time its creator, is not a figure of a linear actuality. What Zarathustra politicizes over the work is the expansion of the art to its earth: the circle of the earth involves other creators when "he seeks companions, not corpses or herds or believers. The creator seeks fellow-creators, those who inscribe new values on new tables. The creator seeks fellow-harvesters: for with him everything is ripe for harvesting. Zarathustra seeks fellowcreators, fellow-harvesters, and fellow-rejoicers." ix

Gray Glenn offers a timely thought in his *Heidegger "Evaluates" Nietzsche*, that "past thinkers are dependent upon us and our interpretation, for the preservation of their meaning and truth. They must be made contemporary in order for us to understand the future." In this account, what we get from the figure of Zarathustra is that not only does he teach the abandonment of the traditional mundane and thingly character of aesthetics reaching its sublime excess in modernity, but viewing the earth as our home again, creating it as though everything is new and everything is beautifully made in existence in a pulchritudinous affirmation.

The very kernel of Zarathustra's doctrine – understood not a grand metaphysical thesis replacing the old morality but as an attitude towards life – is his teaching of the Superman. The overman is he who revaluates the values of metaphysical moral codes which are not understood well^{xi} and goes back to the meaning of the earth: "Behold, I teach you the Superman. *The superman is the*

meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Superman shall be the meaning of the earth! I entreat you, my brothers, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of superterrestrial hopes!" Heidegger, in enumerating the two essential features of art, says that "the work moves the earth itself into the Open of a world and keeps it there. The work lets the earth be an earth."

In Heidegger's account, this letting be of the earth is pointed not to some abstract meaning but essentially to its materiality: "What is exceptional about the artwork is its relation to the material or "earth" (*Erde*) of which it is made. This relation is such that the artwork is its materiality. Its materiality-be it of stone, wood, metal, color, tone, or word-is constitutive of the very "quiddity" of that particular artwork." The artwork is not a projection of something that is celestially conceived but rather terrestrially born out of the natural essence of truth, for it is real philosophical truth if it is found in the earth.

The supraterrestrial hopes of too much modern humanisms that Zarathusthra warns created the metonymical technical knife that killed God. Using and abusing history into the core of equipmental metaphysics, God is reduced to the material constituents of the dialectics of materialism. There is an ambiguity here:

This is the main difference between Nietzsche's death of God and the Christian's; for the latter, the loss of transcendence is an accident, a regrettable accident, caused by our own Spiritual blindness; whereas for the former, it is a deliberate and definitive act of throwing down that which is found to be no longer beneficial to human cultural progress. Hence Nietzsche's saying is *not only that God is dead but also that we ourselves, individual human beings, by our assertion of will, our refusal to believe, are His assassins.***

The killing of God affectively introduces nihilism, not only on the philosophical or theological domain but also on the aesthetics of nature that the moderns axiomatically divinizes, which conjures also the character of meaningless, restlessness, and purposelessness. The experience of nothingness is philosophical vi when this very meaninglessness is attached to the subject that puts meaning into it. The subject, aware of the loss he faces in the contemporary track of aesthetics, deals with this loss because he dwells within the ground of his own meaning: when he acknowledges himself as created in need of a creator, he thereby submits to a grounding, but a grounding that rests on the dialectical circle of human and God, being and Being. Laurence Hemming notes of this limitation in Heidegger's thinking: "The ground of the being of God is the being of being human – which leaves God free to be God with regard to us." Clarence Finlayson notices the same dilemma: "The problem of the person is intimately related to the problem of God. If God is a personal being, the ultimate guarantee of our own personality resides in this God. If God is different, the whole philosophy of the human person falls into nothing." Finlayson traces this in the history of ideas:

Throughout this intellectual lineage within the Platonic tradition, broadly conceived, from Plutarch to Pascal to Hegel, from Luther to Rist to Hegel, from Pico to Schiller to Elizabeth Browning, the death of either the Christian God or a pagan god has been used consistently to signify the singular human plight of finding oneself disoriented, **purposeless**, hopeless in that very world which ought to serve as one's own comfortable home.^{xix}

But to succumb directly to hopelessness does not give credit to this first figure: it is still not the end, because man is called to create a new, for "only our murder of God allows us to love genuinely, for love is defined as the will of one to create that which is greater than he who created it" For Nietzsche, we are entitled for an ontology that does not stop at nihilism but an ontology that goes on as becoming. This ontology is sketched in comparison to Heidegger himself: "Reality is Parmenidean Being for Heidegger, but Heraclitean becoming for Nietzsche" In this ontology, one struggles with an ethical duty – a new duty apart from Kant – that seeks to become what it unveils. Zarathustra as the first figure then caps an artwork that gives credence back to the earth and enjoins within his circle the meaning that the art presents its truth.

SECOND FIGURE: DASEIN AND THE WORLD

The other circle that supervenes in the artwork is the hermeneutic circle of the world apart from the earth. The world representing the truth of the artwork does not only revolve on its materiality as the earth. *Dasein* is "not a thing, in the sense of an object. If Heidegger stresses in the meaning of the word *Dasein* the *there* that being unfolds, then this is because the primary meaning of *Dasein* is existence." xxiii

To clarify this existence, there are three elements of what he calls *Dasein*, *Dasein* has three structural elements. First, it "always finds itself "thrown" into a concrete situation and attuned to a cultural and historical context. Second, *Dasein*'s interaction is "discursive". And third, *Dasein* is "understanding." i.e vocation, community roles. Thus, *Dasein*'s existence is "being-in-theworld" xxiii The *Dasein* then is for the world, an existence which continues to unfold into the worlding of the world. The existence of *Dasein* is rooted in the world and brings forth the truth of the world.

Raj Singhclarifies in *Heidegger and the World in the Artwork* that "Heidegger's statement "the world worlds" (die Welt weltet), apart from indicating that the world is better described by a verb than a noun, also asserts that the world is not just subservient to man's will but reigns over (i.e., regulates and defines) man's understanding of things and of himself." Meaning to say, that the element of thrownness is not a definitive standing of the *Dasein* in the world but it must assert further an action of worlding.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger divulges the phenomenological essence of truth in the world: "the Being of the *Dasein* is care." The *Dasein* cares about the world, of its certain context. In this manner, we look at the *Dasein* as the figure of Heidegger which sees the work of art as the product of the world. The first essence of the work of art in the world is "to set up the world and keep it in force." As Julian Young reiterates in *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, the "world is the all governing... open relational context, of an 'historical' culture, a kind of space." Thus, in setting up a world, "the work moves the earth itself into the Open of a world and keeps it there.

Heidegger puts forward the question: What is the relation between the setting up of a world and the setting forth of earth in the work of art? [OWA, 48ff], to which we draw the rejoinders:

1. The world strives to surmount the earth. This is the nature of world as **self-opening**. [48]

- 2. The earth tends to draw the world into itself and keep it there. This is its nature as **concealing**. [49]
- 3. Thus, the *self-opening* and *concealing* are in a constant productive **strife**. [49]
- 4. The "work-being" of the work of art is this intimate struggle between world and earth. [49f].

Thereafter, there is still a reservation that the world is in constant strife and that there is a struggle between the world and the earth. It has to be noted that the strife must be in a form of letting be, letting it happen. In aesthetic education, "Participative experiences with the Being of things cannot be taught. They have to happen." **xxviii*

Nonetheless, Heidegger believed that the strife must not be seen as a distraction but a connection of the two concepts, the world and the earth linked together in the figure of Zarathustra and the *Dasein*. William Earle attempts to reconcile the classical split of an ontology of Being and Becoming: "If Parmenides says that it is necessary to say and think that Being is, Heidegger interprets the necessity in question as human need (die Not), and it is not far from there to existential resolution (Ent-schlossenheit). He finds that Parmenides and Heraclitus really had the same philosophy." It is not the work of a philosopher to debunk the philosophy of another for they are degrading the love of the other thinker if that happens. Rather, a philosopher's work is to understand the other and synthesize it to his own or to another philosopher.

The figures of Zarathustra and the *Dasein* impart an inherent strife in the artwork in the manner of concealment in the earth and self-opening in the world but these two put being into work. Regarding Heidegger's Being and in an effort for parallelism, Gray Glenn opines: "God is dead, saith Zarathustra, henceforth let the Ubermensch live. God is dead, saith Heidegger, henceforth let us worship Being."** The terms are different, but the understanding remains to be analogical in a sense – the figures of Heidegger contained the emergence of a reconciliation – what this reveals is *authenticity*: "Not only the creative artist but every authentic self is involved in the strife between the world and the earth and engaged in establishing this truth."** Therefore, the *Dasein* and Zarathustra served the meaning of the work of art as the figures set by Heidegger towards the authentic meaning of truth in the unfolding of Being. The meaning of the earth and the world becomes the reconciling point between the two. Let us see then how in particular, does the two opens up for the unfolding of being.

CONCLUSION: GREEK TRAGEDY AND THE ART WORK

In expanding further the parallel constitution of the earth and the world in Zarathustra and the *Dasein*, one ought to look again at Nietzsche. Here, the researcher attempts tosketch a further resolution and comparison to reconcile the two figures for particularities sake. Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*narrates the two energies of art, namely, the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

The continuous development of art is bound up with the *Apollonian* and the *Dionysian* duality; just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations. They appear coupled with each other, and through this coupling eventually generate the art-product, equally Dionysian and Apollonian, of Attic tragedy. In order to grasp

these two tendencies, let us first conceive of them as the separate art-worlds of dreams and drunkenness. xxxii

On the other hand, the two kinds of art in Heidegger are,

Representational Art. I begin with a consideration of representational art-why, given the context in which the term appears, it seems only to refer to those works which are imitative; why this reading will not do; and what, more or less, the term does in fact signify for Heidegger. In a word, the term refers to a cultural or epochal way of relating to works of art; it is a way according to which any and every work of art somehow stands in need of a "defense." But to the context first.

Great art and its works," Heidegger writes-and notice here the distinction which he draws between the two-"are great in their historical existence and Being because in man's historical existence they accomplish a decisive task: they make manifest, in the way appropriate to works, what beings as a whole are. xxxiii

The Apollonian is the plastic art, the art impulse that the Greeks conjure to avoid the painfulness of reality – in the tragedy, the existence of masks is immanent for representation – with aspirations in the interpretation of dreams that divert reality but also to represent reality. On the other hand, the Dionysian is the celebrity of life, the art impulse of drunkenness and intoxication, in acceptance tolife even in its actual suffering. The Dionysian effect on the art embraces suffering and the chaos of life through acting the tragedy in an impromptu fashion, without scripts, to project that life is what you make it as it is. Yet to project life only through one of these is incomplete, in that the Dionysian needs the images to make the celebration beautiful, and that the Apollonian needs the real sufferings to make of it a sculpture of the real earth. Both are unified in nature, in the earth, in the Greek tragedy, as in the *Primordial Unity of Being*. The Apollonian masks represents the different roles done by the actors when masks are important significations of images towards the Dionysian reality.

If we expound more on the context of the conflicting energies of Apollonian and Dionysian in the artwork, we find a closer resemblance in the strife between the world and the earth. Quigley says that the distinction between world and earth is not unlike Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian the Dionysian. ** He adds that "the world is the horizon of all horizons - a totality of possible disclosures which constitute intelligibility for us." But which one is parallel to which?

- 1. The representational art of Heidegger seems to parallel to the Apollonian, for it seeks to clarify art as context and contextual defense. The Apollonian defends itself from real suffering; Representational art defends the context through imitation. The Apollonian as the art impulse of dreams is the consciousness of reality, as if it functions precisely as the unveiling of the truth of reality's image.
- 2. There is a dilemma in linking in the Dionysian to Great Art. How can drunkenness and the forgetfulness of Being fit well with great art's truth of being as a whole? Joshua Dienstag opines that "it is better to consider Dionysian pessimism as an attitude and a practice that can guide us through the world, "a remedy and an aid in the service of growing and struggling life" The struggle between the earth and world and its constant unfolding of Being cannot take place if it is without life as it is. The Great Artworks are

appropriated to the whole of beings, thence in a Dionysian manner the whole of life in the unity of Being. The Dionysian in connection with Great Art exhibits the analogous manifestations of the manner which Zarathustra and the *Dasein* reconcile themselves. Great art reveals the truth of a community, a particular context in the world, and the Dionysian art impulse celebrates with that world. With this, the unfolding of Being is paved in its artful, rather than aesthetical, way, through life's wholeness, through its creation of the artwork.

3. In Greek Tragedy and the Artwork there is a correspondence between the earth and world, so that there is no strict parallelism in each other. The earth as the concealing point makes the Dionysian celebrity more humane. Dionysius, the god of wine and festivities celebrates in the fruitful bounty and harvest of the earth. It does not say much on the world but the fruit of the earth, yet from the context of the worldly understanding, the imagery of the world suffices for it when it discloses being to its truth: some references to dictums as *in vino veritas* backs this point. But the world and the earth belongs to the Apollonian also. The earth is the bare disclosure of the art, which is the energetic and original energy of the art, so that it points to the Dionysian link towards the unity of being and the Apollonian as the representation of being.

CONCLUSION

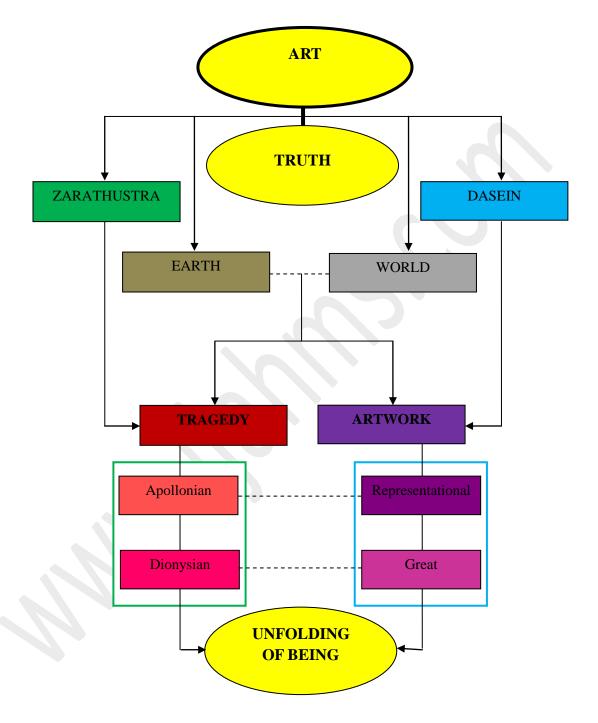
In going over the hermeneutic circle of art, one can find a phenomenological ground from the investigation of the parts to the whole and vice-versa that points to Being as locus of truth. For Heidegger, art is an actuality of a work that sets itself towards an unfolding, an aletheia, where it allows in its happening both the earth and the world.

The earth finds a parallel meaning in the figure of Zarathustra when he acts as the creator. What the earth signifies literally is the material component of art; it discloses a concealment when originally the artwork begins to be connected to its source, letting the materiality of itself set the stage for the overcoming of new meaning while not succumbing to the temptation of modern aesthetics' fascination with abstract concepts.

The world finds a parallel meaning in the figure of *Dasein* whose thrownness makes for its Being as care. Art reveals a world by which the very grounding of Being exposes the context of its community. The second figure of Heidegger's art finds in the *Dasein* a revelation of truth that connects not to a static world but to a world that worlds in the artwork.

In furthering the parallelism of the two, the study explores an expansion in Greek Tragedy and Artwork. The Apollonian art energy finds a parallelism in representational art while the Dionysian in Great Art. What the Apollonian represents is reality in dream-states, mirroring reality as its conscious unfolding. The Dionysian on the other hand reveals the Great art as its parallel when amid the drunkenness, this art energy unfolds Being through affirming life as a whole, its joys and suffering, thereby linking itself to Great Arts that unfolds Being as a whole.

IDEOGRAM: PARALLELISMS OF HEIDEGGER'S TWO FIGURES OF ART



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ⁱⁱⁱHeidegger, Martin, (1971), *Poetry, Language and Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter, USA, Harper & Row Publishers, p. 34., Henceforth, *OWA*.

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- ^xGray, J. Glenn, (1953), "Heidegger "Evaluates" Nietzsche," in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 419.
- xiSontag, Frederick, (1964), "Heidegger and the Problem of Metaphysics," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 24, No. 3, p. 415. Where it says, "The primordial metaphysical fact is that the essence of human finitude is constantly known without being understood."
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- xviKaralis Vrasidas ed., (2008), *Heidegger and the Aesthetics of Living*, New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, p. xvii. For to philosophise does not simply mean to ask "why there are beings rather than nothing?" but "why beings that are experience nothing?"
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