

## Chapter 2

# Musings of Heidegger. Arts Education and *the Mall* as a ‘Debased’ (Dreyfus) Work of Art

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**Abstract** The article starts by investigating the phenomenology of artworks using Heidegger’s notion of *Seinsgeschichte* (history-of-being) as a point of departure. Three different architectural structures from different epochs are juxtaposed (the temple, the cathedral, and the mall). The readings of these three structures are used as a prism to arrive at an interpretation of what we are currently in the process of becoming in our relation to artworks in general. From here the article moves on to discuss such themes as commitment, truth and school culture in the way such categories can currently be disclosed in an arts education context. Connecting such diverse categories as *The Acropolis*, St. John the Baptist and J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* with the theme of teacher authenticity, the article offers a fresh account of the challenges currently being faced within the broad field of arts education.

**Keywords** Phenomenology • Artworks • Arts education • Teacher authenticity

## 2.1 Heidegger’s Conception of Artworks as a Prism for an Understanding of Being

### 2.1.1 *The Artwork as Prism*

For Heidegger artworks gather, produce, manifest and condense the specific ‘something’ which constitutes the common background understanding of the world which applies to a culture or a regional community in a given time. In this perspective, artworks are associated with the experience of meeting the fundamental mood of a given cultural community (Varkøy and Pio 2012; Dreyfus 2006). Artworks provide an imaginative (non-discursive, pre-reflexive) way for a regional culture to vindicate

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its world. Artworks exercise an important function in their ability to shine and shed light on the world in which we live:

The way in which art thoroughly spans the being-in-the world of human beings as historical, the way in which it illuminates the world for them and indeed illuminates human beings themselves, putting in place the way in which art is art – all this receives its law and structural articulation from the manner in which the world as a whole is opened up to human beings in general. (Heidegger, quoted in Dreyfus 2007, pp. 413–414)

However to unfold the depth of this point, we first have to do a certain amount of work. In this chapter we will do this in an arts education context. Heidegger understands artworks as a potential prism reflecting how a given community puts its world in order and thus lives out a pre-reflexive understanding of its being. Such an understanding amounts to a basic sense of reality characterizing a community. It is a way to call forth the world in a holistic, meaningful way. Heidegger is thus interested in how an artwork works and what its function is. The famous example here is the Greek temple:

The temple first joins and at the same time gathers the unity of the courses and relations around itself, in which ... the human being achieves the form of its destiny. (Heidegger 1950, pp. 27–28)

Heidegger sees the poetical dimension of art as tied to the way a human inhabits its world. The earth is only earth in its habitational aspect. And this habitation is fundamentally carried out as a poetical occurrence (Heidegger 1954b, pp. 195–196). Heidegger sees the human as a habitating being, dwelling between the world and the sky (cf. ‘Hölderlin’s Erde und Himmel’ in Heidegger 1944, pp. 178–179). For Heidegger, this thought is all about (*Besinnung*) grasping a dimension which manifests itself poetically. He talks about a ‘measuring out’ (*Vermessung*) which is *not* calculative in nature, but appears as a ‘sizing up’ of man’s inhabitation of the dimension between the world and the sky. Heidegger sees that this dimension is basically poetical – even musical – in its character<sup>1</sup> (Heidegger 1954b, pp. 189–190).

All objectivizing approaches to the world (calculating, computing, stipulating, etc.) are rooted in a more essential and poetical way to be in the world. It is this primary being-in-the world that makes it possible subsequently to make sense of the world as a measured object. Only on the basis of a pre-reflexive, poetical experience of the world:

... the person receives the standard for the fullness of its being ... (Heidegger 1954b, p. 190)

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<sup>1</sup> Hölderlin ‘sings’ his poetry in the shape of ‘hymns’ (Heidegger 1944, pp. 169, 171, 179). And Heidegger talks about Hölderlin’s (*Tonart*) ‘key’ (p. 180). This suggests that in Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin the sonorous sound matter of tone is ontologized, in a way where it works as ether or as a fugue (*Fuge*) shaping the fourfold and disclosing its inner holism as a manifestation of Hölderlin’s *Innigkeit*, which designates how everything contains more than itself. The fourfold of the world (*das Geviert*) is thus described as a song (*Gesang*): “Vier Stimmen sind es, die tönen” (op. cit., s. 170). These four voices are yielded into a belonging in which the center that unites them makes up a (*Fuge*) fugue (op. cit., s. 179). As sounding voices they are as such yielded into an unending relation.

Human beings can only be domiciled in their habitation of the world, in so far as the poets come forth as the ones:

... who size up (*das Mass nehmen*) the architecture, for the house structure (*Baugefüge*) of dwelling. (Heidegger 1954b, p. 196)

In continuation of this, one can say that the quoted example above with the temple as an artwork is disclosed in its being, in so far as it constitutes the horizon of the Greek man in Antiquity. The temple in this way summarizes what living in this specific world was all about:

The poetical first of all allows humans in their dwelling to approach their being. The poetical is the original way to allow dwelling. (Heidegger 1954b, p. 196)

In Heidegger's reading the temple as an artwork opens for the presencing of the gods in the world of Greek men and women. It is this reservoir of existence that the temple as an artwork is rooted in. As such the artwork exercises a world-disclosing ability (Thomson 2011, p. 66). A great work of art is characterized by disclosing the ontological posit of its epoch through the sovereignty of its statement. As Thomson nicely puts it:

... the great poets and thinkers receptively shape the lenses through which we see the world and ourselves by creatively responding to the way things show or suggest themselves. (Thomson 2011, p. 76)

And this point can produce an insight if it is updated and thus 'translated' into our own time. But what can we see today 'looking through Heidegger's glasses'? Which artwork can bring us to perceive our modern way to call forth the world today? To answer this question we will take the Greek temple as our point of departure.

As mentioned above, Heidegger ties the function of artworks to concrete communities and their way of making sense of the world. But at the same time one realizes that today the Antique world of Greek man is gone. Thus today an artwork like the temple is:

... torn out of the space of its own being. (Heidegger 1950, p. 26)

The temple remains there today, left behind as an objectivized monument, as a testimony of a being-in-the-world (the *Dasein* of Greek man) that no longer has any place in our modern world. The temple thus no longer *works* as an artwork. It no longer reflects the world in which it was originally created. When this happens, the temple falls into the decay of becoming just an object: an antiquated exhibit, a museum piece, a tourist attraction, a money-machine efficiently milked (Heidegger 1950, p. 56). As an artwork it has now ceased to exist. About such works Heidegger says:

... the work constituted as object ... does not make up its being as a work. (Heidegger 1950, p. 27)

For instance, in this perspective Bach's *Johannes-Passion* is also currently obliged to find itself torn out of the lived religiosity of the eighteenth century.

This work of art contributed originally to upholding this specific world. But today ‘the passions’ of Bach have become an aesthetical object: ‘a classic’, an item (in the ‘Amazon basket’) in the form of a digital box-set with lots of ‘extras’ including articles written by prestigious icons in the business. This artwork has now been lifted out of the world in which it was created. Such artworks are thus today threatened by a certain homelessness (Heidegger 1950, p. 26).<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1.2 Heidegger’s *History-of-Being*

After the publishing of *Being and time* (1927) Heidegger sees that being is a fundamentally *historical* occurrence. The world is thus called forth in new figurations according to the transformations of being that occur:

... in the West for the first time in Greece ... [w]hat was in the future to be called being was set into work, setting the standard. The realm of beings thus opened up was then transformed into a being in the sense of God’s creation. This happened in the Middle Ages. This kind of being was again transformed at the beginning and in the course of the modern age. Beings became objects that could be controlled and seen through by calculation. At each time a new and essential world arose. (Heidegger, quoted in Dreyfus 2007, p. 415)

In this light the Greek temple condenses a way of making sense of the world which is specific for this epoch. A meaningfulness appears here which delimits this period from the later Roman-Christian era. Heidegger’s thinking is thus based on the insight that being has a *history* consisting of changing figurations of intelligibility across epochs:

‘Being’ – it is not god and not a world foundation. Being (*Sein*) is essentially wider than all being-ness (*Seiende*) and yet being (*Sein*) is closer to humans than any being-ness (*Seiende*) .../Being (*Sein*) is the next as that which is adjacently near. However this nearness stays far from man. First and foremost humans always-already stick to the being-ness (das *Seiende*). (Heidegger 1949, p. 23)

When Heidegger sees that being changes historically, this results in a *Seinsgeschichte* – a history of being (Heidegger 1969, pp. 8–10). Heidegger claims that Western culture has gone through several horizons of being (Heidegger 1950, pp. 90–91). And as mentioned above, important artworks are seen as closely tied to these specific horizons of being, as each understanding of being in an epoch is gathered in specific artworks:

The composure regarding what constitutes art is completely and utterly determined by the question of being. (Heidegger 1950, p. 73)

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<sup>2</sup>It should be mentioned here that Gadamer has founded a form of philosophical hermeneutics which offers these artworks the possibility of melting into a contemporary horizon. In Gadamer’s conception, artworks can dissolve their object character as they are handed down from one epoch to the next (Ehrenforth 1971).

The question becomes which artwork in a given epoch will be capable of commanding a sensitivity receptive enough to register and incarnate the sense, mood and style of an epoch and bring the tacit values given here to the fore in the joining of these elements together into a united work?

However, great art has drawn itself back from modern man, Heidegger says (Pöggeler 1977, p. 53). Heidegger is here aiming at the discourse of the immortal, eternal value of classical 'Grand Art'. Heidegger finds that this ideal is a symptom of the fear of thinking (Heidegger 1950, pp. 67–68). The notion of an artwork having *eternal* value (*Ewigkeitswert*) is for Heidegger a sign that modern man is losing sight of the essence of art. The immortality perspective is blurring the essence of the artwork as a seismograph for the way a *specific* epoch calls forth the world.

In what follows we will try (i) to transpose this thought of 'being-as-temporal' (*Seinsgeschichte*) into a contemporary example, and then (ii) to show its bearing on an arts education context:

It is about venturing into the attempt to bring our accustomed notions round to an unusual, yet simple experience of thinking. (Heidegger 1944, p. 154)

### 2.1.3 *The Mall*

To illustrate the points made above, Heidegger refers to how the above-mentioned Greek temple as an architectural artwork originally gathered a world (i.e. condensed what it was all about) for Greek men and women and thus constituted a center for an existence in the presence of the gods:

In firm repose the work of the temple opens a world and in addition refers this back to the earth, which thus itself comes forth as the native soil. (Heidegger 1950, p. 28)

Almost 2,000 years later the Christian cathedral as an architectural artwork focused the world of Christian believers around God as the creator of the world. High above the world dwelt the saints, assembled in God's presence and thus ascended and vindicated in contrast to the overthrown, fallen souls.

Thus Heidegger in his anthology *Holzwege* ('Off the beaten track') connects artworks to the phenomenology of the holy (cf. Dorrance Kelly and Dreyfus 2011; Heidegger 1950, pp. 269–320; Heidegger 1974, pp. 231–237, and Heidegger 1944, pp. 66–70). One can extend, modernize and thus challenge this thinking by asking what kind of architectural artwork we can see today as a condensation that summarizes essential features of our time?

To all appearances the answer could very well be the large, multi-floor shopping center as we know it from 'the big city', fully equipped with a large, fenced car park and underground infrastructure facilitating the constant influx and discharge of the available reservoir of consumers. We will henceforth call it 'the mall'. The mall has gradually assumed the character of a new ritualized place of worship, a platform of adoration complete with new matching cultural practices preserving the world



**Fig. 2.1** The Mall (Photo: Author's own)

upheld here. Here it is just the casual kick of consumption that is adored. As a young girl said in the television news:

When I feel empty inside, I shop to make it go away (Fig. 2.1).

The mall as a modern cathedral is designated as ‘a center’, even though in itself it is rather the opposite: it is without a center, and is more like a labyrinth.<sup>3</sup> Being without a center, the mall illustrates in an architectural way the life of the typical modern average subject: leveled, often without a center. Heidegger talks about *Wohnungsnot* as a repressed crisis in our ability to dwell (Heidegger 1954b, p. 156) and about our *Heimatslosigkeit*, the ‘homelessness’ of modernity (Heidegger 1949, p. 30). Today the endless, claustrophobic underground car park becomes a picture of the unconscious of the modern subject.

But this circumstance has to do with why this center-less mall can become the center in our modern, urban life. As the Greek temple functioned for the man of Antiquity more than 2,000 years ago, and as the Christian cathedral much later functioned for medieval believers, *so is the mall today characterized by gathering*

<sup>3</sup>A labyrinth making you feel like Theseus fumbling your way ahead. The difference here is that the red thread of Ariadne is unfortunately missing this time. But the Taurus is still there. Ever waiting for the rendezvous (for instance in the form of your financial adviser monitoring your spending and potentially closing down your credit card).

*and condensing the background for how modern men and women typically perceive themselves.* This has to do with our self-assured arrogance when we as modern subjects comprehend ourselves as technical resources.

### 2.1.4 *Three Worlds*

The examples above with the three architectural works demonstrate that the human being of (i) Greek Antiquity, (ii) Christian Middle Ages, and (iii) modernity lived in distinctly different worlds. This point can be illustrated by the following three figures. These work as icons reflecting distinctly different figurations of meaning and value from epoch to epoch.

The Greek hero:

In Homer's account of the Trojan War, Achilles is presented as an iconic Greek hero of Antiquity. Through Achilles as a hero, the Greek adoration of *Physis* manifested itself in a merciless subjugation of any weakness. This came to the fore in the Dionysian cultivation of 'the titanic' and 'the barbaric' (Nietzsche 1872, pp. 40–41). It was all about the adoration of the highest life forms, as they found an expression through sovereign pride and self-assurance.

The Christian saint:

Later, through Saint John the Baptist, the life of humanity appeared as a Christian sojourn in the valley of death, facing the call of Christian charity and agape love in the attempt to exempt oneself from sin. So on the final day of the apocalypse we could enter the life beyond in the presence of God.

The modern star:

The relationship of the modern, anonymous consumer to itself as a resource always standing by for further optimization appears in a distinctly different *third* figuration. As a resource the consumer upholds the world of the mall through the cultural practices of consuming. This happens through the adoration of the modern star by virtue of the use of entertainment services and goods like merchandise, accessories, franchise products, cable TV, lifestyle products, clothing, etc.

As Christian believers, the monks originally upheld the practices of the cathedral through their religiously organized everyday routines. In the same way, the anonymous 'consumer' (from the endless suburbs) now cultivates a meaningful world through the media and their distributed narratives of celebrity stardom. The star thus incarnates the high-water mark of the current aesthetical stylized life.

The hero (e.g. Achilles) and the Christian saint (e.g. St. John the Baptist) and the modern star (e.g. John Travolta) constitute figures rooted in three distinctly different sets of cultural practices. Each of the three above-mentioned architectural structures (the temple, cathedral and mall) is thus tied into three thoroughly different worlds. Each with a distinct icon (hero, saint, star).

### 2.1.5 *The Mall as Work of Art?*

All things considered, we are uniquely challenged in our modern times because we are no longer able to uphold common references as to which types of meaning and value should be used to unite people around a common belief or project. Greek Antiquity as well as the later epoch of Christianity were both (each in its own way) characterized by the existence of common referents as to what was considered important and valuable for everyone and what was considered unimportant and reprehensible. Apart from our fascination with technical control, such a type of common referent seems to be absent today (Varkøy 2012).

In a way the chapter of our epoch becomes a testimony of a certain crisis. More specifically, the mall as an architectural structure becomes an emblem of this crisis, in the way that in the mall our cultural practices have exalted ‘the culture-of-reinforced-concrete’ with its dubious aesthetics and used it in the construction of a modern ‘cathedral-like’ mall – an artwork – of our time.

Exactly in its capacity as condensing a current pattern of ways to make sense of the world (the modern, mass-oriented consumer-culture), this is in Heidegger’s thinking an artwork we are dealing with. And as such the mall is – in an updating way – *duplicating the functions* that were carried out by the temple (in Antiquity) and by the cathedral (in the Middle Ages). It is in this sense that the mall is “... setting the truth into motion ...” (Heidegger 1950, p. 21), as the historical way for a people to inhabit their world, is upheld through their artwork (Heidegger 1950, p. 66). The mall is an artwork because it gathers its ‘players’ and summarizes the significant cultural practices around itself as a sovereign architectural manifestation. A manifestation which is art because all the elements become integrated into a concluded whole defined by its continuous functioning (Heidegger 1944, p. 196).

The mall as manifested phenomenon should beyond any doubt be conceived as an expression in our time of truth. This architectural work is stirring truth in the sense that here is articulated the technical understanding of being in our time. And with that the belonging of the modern subject is defined into its technical being (as individualized subject, consumer, resource). Thus through the mall a common sense of reality is manifested (Heidegger 1950, p. 65). This technical rationality is inscribed into the enormous concrete constructions, the endlessly distributed ‘wholes’ as small ‘pockets’ in the structure each containing its own boutique or store. The labyrinthian structure is created in order to lead a maximum of people the shortest way to the highest number of shopping opportunities (Fig. 2.2).

As small, technical resources we swarm around this calculated infra-structure, all carefully administering our own individualized agency, which is given to each of us in the form of a credit card balance hovering somewhere in the cyberspace of netbanking. However, as Heidegger points out, there is something dangerous about this technical way to conceive of our being. This most uncomfortable aspect has to do with the fact, that the mall as a concrete center – and as a macro junction in our modern public space – appears to us today, *as a replacement of a functionality that*



**Fig. 2.2** Inside the mall (Photo: Author's own)

*was handled earlier in history by completely vital, authentic and ethical artworks like the temple and the cathedral:*

Image and temple cannot be achieved through a prize competition, when the god is dead; you can have no priests, when the flash of lightning of the gods does not strike, and it will not strike as long as the earth of home ... as such is not upheld in the space of the storm. (Heidegger, quoted in Pöggeler 1977, pp. 29–30)

The temple of Antiquity and the Christian cathedral were vital artworks in a completely literal sense for the people that lived back then. These works instigated *Lebensraum*, and thus framed a background, on the basis of which life could be lived in its fullest sense. In a way the mall is just as important and vital today. But it says something about the technical clearing of our time and the fierce vehemence it contains, that this substitution has happened in the way it has. According to Heidegger, what is being displayed here is normalized nihilism. Thus he asks in 1967:

How is art doing as part of the industrial society, which has started to become a cybernetical world? Are the statements of art becoming some kind of information in this world and for it? .../These questions are gathered in one single question which goes: How are humans doing as encapsulated in their scientific-technical world?. (Heidegger 1967, pp. 19–20)

According to Heidegger, the world of art becomes 'cybernetic' because humans (whose fate it has become to be the ones who call the artwork into its being) are now assuming the character of a resource. With that, the artwork is reduced to bits of

information which can be stored cognitively, so the learning output (brought about by the sensation of the artwork) can be measured. The openness of existentiality (which Heidegger calls a *Lichtung*, which again facilitates the possibility of *Unverborgenheit* ‘un-hiddenness’; Heidegger 1969, pp. 74–78) is thereby closed down, as it is embedded into a scientific-technical ratio. In the mall the peculiar aesthetics of this technical control is found inculcated into concrete structures, in terms of a technical way to secure maximum functionality. In other words, the greatest possible capacity at the least possible expense. This technical rationality, which is currently containing our world-picture, Heidegger calls *das Gestell* (the frame; Heidegger 1962, p. 27). It is this technical understanding of being which is stirred, when we buy a ticket to the parking basement and disappear in our car into the dark entrance underground (like Jonas into the whale), only to appear ten minutes later on the ground floor, reborn as shopping consumers ready to rock. In the mall as artwork thus hibernates a value of truth. It is the truth that tacitly centers the cultural practices of our technical epoch.

### 2.1.6 Now What?

The above description of the mall poses the question of how far one can register a new departure regarding the notion of art in our contemporary epoch of technical rationality. It is in this context that Heidegger can claim in 1953:

The epoch of *Bildung* (educative formation) is coming to an end .... (Heidegger 1954b, p. 65)

‘Technique’ (*das Teknik*) for Heidegger is not about instruments and concrete technologies. The essential aspect of technical rationality is that it has become the way we disclose the world and thus allow it to appear for us in a distinct extract. This means that *das Teknik* (technique) has come so close to us, that we ignore the fact that it has grown in intimacy, to an extent where it is now *the* constituent for our being-in-the-world:

Technology is no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we pay heed to this, another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e. of truth. (Heidegger 1962, p. 12)

We have of course always had technique (*Teknik*) ever since our ancient ancestors discovered that stones could be used for splitting nuts. But our modern situation is a new situation. Our modern technical understanding of being fundamentally allows the world to appear as a distinctly definite extract, namely as a calculated resource. According to Heidegger, we are enclosed into this particular way of making sense of the world to an extent we are hardly aware of. Our tacit naturalness layered as a matter of course in our actions and thought thus makes it ever harder for us, to grasp that we can exist as something different than producers, consumers and as vehicle for input and output.

More and more we are obliged to appear for each other as individualized results of temporarily culminated developmental processes. We are all expected to be

readily accessible, optimizable and flexible resource units. And when you have defined yourself as such, you have already acknowledged the idea that as a modern subject you should preferably be under persistent, lifelong learning and development.<sup>4</sup> We have taken over this project so that we can recognize ourselves and feel ok. The key to this 'being ok' is about appearing to be as liberated and flexible as possible in our own eyes. We are constantly ready for change, administering an unlimited belief in our own autonomy. In the end everything becomes so flexible that there is no resistance in the world any more pressing the other way, and thus threatening to block the performativity-maximizing processes to pass off in ever more frictionless ways.

Today we are faced with a need to interpret the consequences of the fact, that our technical culture *is also shaping the way artworks appear to us* and the way we encounter them in our lives. If Heidegger is right, this is a formidable challenge. We must attempt to fathom the consequences that follow from our current situation, where artworks themselves have become ambiguous. So far we have:

- (i) Disclosed the modern mall as a phenomenon by (*Seinsgeschichtlich*) bringing it into Heidegger's *Unverborgenheit* (Heidegger's term for the 'un-hiddenness' of a phenomenon).
- (ii) This move has made us see that the mall is currently functioning today as a central artwork of our technical epoch.
- (iii) The two points (i) and (ii) finally compel us to come to terms with our modern being-in-the-world as technical, individualized resources.

## 2.2 The Mall as Artwork Functions Through the Framing of the Subject as a Modern Hybrid Between Aesthetics and Technique

### 2.2.1 *Aesthetics and Technical Rationality*

The theme above on the relation between the phenomenology of artworks and technical rationality calls for a further investigation of how a generalized aesthetical experience today seems to be tied to a re-description of the artwork in the modernity (characterizing the mall). What we are looking at, seems to be a beauty-oriented consumer logic defining the individual as a resource and thus connecting this determination of the subject to a practical understanding of what an aesthetical phenomenon is (Heidegger 1944/46, pp. 78–79). The mall as artwork thus centers a horizon of cultural practices that makes the world appear meaningful, by ascribing value to a distinct notion of what aesthetical phenomena are currently about. Consider the way a club sandwich is served in the bistro, the reason you choose a specially

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<sup>4</sup>Technical rationality is characterized by its focus on endless optimization and unending development (lifelong learning through competence development), cf. Illeris and Berri 2005.

designed pair of jeans, the synthetical replica flowers in a vase in the customer service department. These are examples of how we consume more and more input of sensuous stimulation as *aesthetical* input. As the world is torn and wrenched ever more each day our stylized life as consumers (in the ontic) increasingly becomes an ever more aesthetical project.<sup>5</sup>

The phenomenology of the aesthetical seems today to be connected to a logic of resource optimization. To a certain extent, a technical rationality has seized a considerable magnitude of the aesthetical phenomenology. The core example is our body, which seems to have become the ultimate artwork. The body as exhibited and flashed in the public space is perhaps the most aesthetical that ‘ordinary’ people today is responding to. Aesthetically our body is our own artwork as it centers our practices. The body as aesthetically organized phenomenon is focused as a resource as we engage in socializing practices of relating to fitness, pilates, clothing, food choice, plastic surgery, movies, etc.

The above seems to imply that the escalating aestheticalization of ourselves and our surroundings is tied to how we perceive ourselves and our surroundings as resources.

### 2.2.2 *Aesthetics and Modern Subjectivism*

According to Heidegger, artworks must play a key role if we are to move beyond the grip of technical rationality in which we find ourselves today. But to engage in artworks within such an endeavour, we must look beyond the paradigm of aestheticalization. Heidegger critically contemplates the notion of art as aesthetic. This critical inquiry is necessary if a countermove is to be made in relation to the technical rationality that is currently framing our relation to artworks. Not only is the *beautiful* brought about in artworks. There is also a potential experience of *truth* involved in the workings of artworks. For Heidegger beauty is a way in which truth (as un-hiddenness) comes to pass:

Beauty is a way for truth as un-hiddenness to come forth. (Heidegger 1950, p. 43)

The purely aesthetic approach conceals the fact, that artworks can potentially contain a deeper, ontological quality, demanding another kind of engagement in art than just contemplating it as beautiful (Heidegger 1950, pp. 62–63). But this insight is forgotten today *as it has been replaced by* a tendency toward (*Verwissenschaftlichung*) ‘scientificalization’ (Løgstrup 1993, pp. 44f.). This is what Heidegger calls:

... the increasing techné-ering (*Technisierung*) of all sciences. (Heidegger 2009, p. 211)

This reveals that the technical determination of the world as *an object* to be managed and controlled also posits *a subject* to stand in front of this surrounding

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<sup>5</sup>It should be underlined that what is described here does not remotely resemble the existential oriented ‘care of the self’ promoted by the late Michel Foucault (cf. Foucault 1984, pp. 281f.). A comparative approach to this theme, however, cannot be unfolded here.

world. This cartesian split is simultaneously *executed technically* as well as *underpinned aesthetically*. For instance, when music is called forth (on-line in the marketplace) as a technologically mediated, aesthetical resource. This is tied into the determination of the individualized subject, taking these resources on-line as consumer (for instance as purchase of a download):

The aesthetics become a psychology practised as natural science .../the arts become delivered over to the evidence of natural science and thus pushed into the realm of the factual sciences. As a matter of fact, the aesthetical inquiry about art in its last consequences is here brought to an end. (Heidegger 1944/46, pp. 89, 91)

Heidegger sees that the aesthetical experience of art is bound to end up in a numb dualism where the *subjective* dimension is *objectivized* by natural science. In our perspective we can recognize this pattern, when each single individual increasingly has its own, private, emotional experience of music as an aesthetically objectivized on-line product (available as a download from the net, mediated by smartphones complete with earplugs).<sup>6</sup> With that music is aestheticized as a deeply subjective occurrence closed off from the world:

That which determines the emotions of humans is aesthetics ... the beautiful. (Heidegger 1944/46, p. 75)

For Heidegger, this mix of emotions and aestheticization constitutes a complete dismantling of the ethical-authentic notion of artwork he finds in Greek Antiquity (the temple).<sup>7</sup> The aestheticization thus underpins a modern notion of the subject matching seamlessly with the resource logic of technical rationality.<sup>8</sup> This is a logic which adores 'the subject' as solemnly as a saint is elected. This adoration is carried out by highlighting the subject as equipped with methods, techniques, instruments, calculations to master and control objects in the surrounding world. Thus the *subject* with all its inner emotions is installed into a world consisting of meaningless *objects*. These are objects that remain meaningless until the subject – with an act of will – attributes a constructed value to the object<sup>9</sup>:

The work of art is employed as 'object' for a 'subject'. (Heidegger 1944/46, p. 76)

Here Heidegger writes about the experience – the feeling subject-object relation – as an expression of the 'subjectivity of the subject':

In this experience the self-assurance which belongs to the subjectivity achieves its most vacant emptiness because everything enters into it (*weil alles in sie eingeht*) .../With that the being-ness (*das Seiende*) has become an unconditional yardstick for the security of the experience (as 'truth', i.e. 'correctness', i.e. 'certainty'). (Heidegger 2009, p. 94)

<sup>6</sup>On privatization see Pio 2009a, pp. 131 f.; and 2009b.

<sup>7</sup>Cf. Heidegger's *Die Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*.

<sup>8</sup>Heidegger makes the point that the modern subject as 'a mental-autonomous entity' would stand in a completely alienated relation to the horizon of Greek Antiquity as to the question of what a human being is; cf. Pio 2012, p. 195.

<sup>9</sup>See Pio 2012, sections A and B for a description of Heidegger's critique of this dualism. There is a challenge here of clarifying the difference between the position of Husserlian phenomenology and social constructivist approaches when the relation between artwork and subject is determined, cf. Nielsen 2000.

That is, the significance of the subjective experience is swelling into accelerating importance. As a consequence, the artwork as an aesthetical product becomes entangled in the individualized subject's consumption of sensual pleasure. Here it is neither the temple nor the cathedral which comes into focus; it is the mall that becomes the new arena in which these practices are staged:

The aesthetics determine the work of art as an object ... of a sensual feeling in a broad sense. Today this sensual feeling is called 'the experience'. The way in which humans experience art shall throw light on its substance (*soll über ihr Wesen Aufschluss geben*) ... /Everything is experience. But perhaps the experience is the element in which art dies. This dying goes on so slowly that it takes some centuries. (Heidegger 1950, p. 67)

This purely aesthetical enjoyment of the music is a Kantian disinterested distanced, enjoyment. Here Heidegger cites Nietzsche for saying that:

Since Kant all talk of art, beauty, realization, wisdom has been messed up and defiled through the concept of 'without interest' (*Ohne Interesse*). (Heidegger 1944/46, p. 108)

The distanced experience of music, as aesthetical leisure enjoyment flows into one with the experience of 'the Mall' as a centerpiece in our current epoch of technical rationalization. 'The Mall' calls forth and exists through the subject as a resource with its distanced, aesthetical enjoyment of itself (Heidegger 1950, p. 67). Here no further engagement is needed. In this distanced enjoyment there is nothing at stake; there is no truth pointing beyond the internal self-reference<sup>10</sup> of the individualized subject. Such an aesthetical experience is debased as there is lots of foreground (*Welt*). But hardly any ontology (*Erde*).<sup>11</sup> With the ontological dimension erased, we lack the vital upholding of the artwork, which:

... makes each person distinct, not in relation to his or her experience, but the concrete person is drawn into a belonging to the truth happening in the work, and thus a being with each other and for each other is grounded .... (Heidegger 1950, p. 55)

### 2.2.3 *Ontology: Art?*

As far as I can see we have arrived at an aspect of a certain importance in relation to the current crisis and loss of societal prestige surrounding an educational subject like music (this point is also underlined by Nielsen 2010):

Perhaps the current exertion of art has no longer anything to do with the hitherto existing notions of art and its purpose. (Heidegger 2009, p. 393)

Removed, beneath the subjectivist consumption of aesthetical inputs the possibility always-already exist for us to engage with the artwork under the auspices of an ontologically oriented thinking. This is a turn away from aesthetics toward an experience of truth. This ontology of the artwork is not about a listening subject corresponding in a correct way to an aesthetical object. This concordant relation has

<sup>10</sup> On Luhmann's concept of 'self-reference', see Luhmann 1987, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger's distinction between earth and world is discussed elsewhere in this book.

nothing to do with the truth appearing as (*Unverborgenheit*) un-hiddenness also called *Aletheia* (Heidegger 1969, p. 77).

The artwork in its *Unverborgenheit* (un-hiddenness) calls forth something that overshadows the singular subject and its fervent emotions. What is called forth is an experience of that which is mastered as having its deeper repose in something not-mastered; the knowledge we have at our disposal as having its deeper repose in a non-knowledge (cf. Varkøy 2009, 2010). This is not about emotions and individual needs, but about a dwelling attitude of letting things be (*Gelassenheit*), which can take us into a mode of openness, where a reversal is allowed to happen, so that we suddenly find that the music has done something to us (and not the other way around). Such a mutual openness is described by Heidegger as *Lichtung* – 'a clearing'. The artwork is a latent seismograph, because the way the world is awake in us is all about a poetical frame of mind (as *Befindlichkeit*), which is more fundamental than any analytical, reflexive approach:

The poetical roots humans to the earth, and thus leads them into dwelling. (Heidegger 1954b, p. 186)

Here Heidegger talks of the importance of *Verweilen* (dwelling) or *Gelassenheit* (Pio 2012, p. 285). But this is forgotten in our un-poetical modernity. Because this *openness* of dwelling becomes the object of a distinct *closure* in a technical rationality (Pio 2012). So this vital, phenomenological theme of *openness* that Heidegger tries to pin down (with concepts like *Unverborgenheit*, *Aletheia*, *Lichtung*, *Entbergen*), with an especially underlined importance for the understanding of artworks, *cannot be accomplished in the mall*. The aesthetical enjoyment of the individualized subject is a symptom of this impossibility, as the subject finds itself framed by the mall as debased artwork (Heidegger 2009, pp. 107–108). In this context the aestheticalization of the artwork is regarded by Heidegger as a hugely significant event in Western civilization:

... the emergence ... of aesthetics is ... an event ... that concerns ... a transformation of history as a whole. (Heidegger 1944/46, p. 81)

Heidegger underlines the importance of this, as it is stated that:

... art appears on the horizon of aesthetics. This means: the work of art becomes an object of experience, and accordingly art is determined as the expression of the life of humans. (Heidegger 1950, p. 75)

This goes together with a modern subject affirming itself as the center of the world (Heidegger 1944–46, pp. 74–91). With the aestheticalization of art in place, artworks are predestined sooner or later to arrive in the world as items of consumption, a product. The consequence following from this is that artworks no longer summarize the background understanding of the world applying for a historical community. As an item of consumption, art is now just one specific type of offering in the marketplace within a wider range of cultural goods. In other words, art moves from a potentially ontological mode of function to a purely aesthetical (ontic) mode of function. But how does the mall – as a current aestheticalized, communal space – fit into this analysis? <sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Julian Young claims that there is no such communal space today (Young 2004, p. 121).

### 2.2.4 The ‘Machine’

As a hesitant, initial answer to this question, I have so far tried to show that ‘the mall’ is a modern centerpiece in our technical, rationalized culture. ‘A debased work of art’ in the sense understood by Dreyfus (cf. below). Here the modern notion of aesthetics is turned back upon itself. The mall as an artwork can be (phenomenologically) disclosed as a prism that works to summarize the cultural background-practices, that define the alliance between ourselves as individualized subjects and at the same time as resources constantly standing by for optimization. *As individualized subjects with our body as centerpiece we are presented – under the auspices of the Mall – as resources in the age of technical rationality. And this aesthetical scenario impacts how we can disclose music (art) as a phenomenon in our modern lives.*

In the mall we are all alone together. The mall ascribes certain practices centrality while others are marginalized. The mall centers the cultural practices of the subject as an individualized resource around a sovereign, architectonic, machine-like phenomenon. As shown above, *the mall is a gigantic kind of (structural) work, which stylizes cultural core-practices of modernity through an aesthetical encoding of life form.* So the mall is so much more than a certain ‘building’ or ‘buisness’. It can be disclosed as an artwork, because it joins together distinctly separate elements into one throbbing, unified whole. It is in this context that Heidegger compares *Kunstwerk* (artwork) with *Kraftwerk* (power plant):

a) Power plant (*Kraftwerk*)

Energy, vigour (*Kraft*)

Nature and work

The frame (*Ge-stell*)

b) Work of art (*Kunstwerk*)

Art and work (Heidegger 2009, p. 378).<sup>13</sup>

When we decode the Mall and disclose it as a huge artwork so close to our everyday life that we can hardly conceive of it this way, this clears a space before us for a different way to inhabit the world.<sup>14</sup> And thus a different way to experience artworks as part of our lives (Heidegger 1954c, p. 87).

It is the unified whole in its entirety as described above that dominates and contains the way arts subjects (such as music) can appear for students today in the general education system. As the everyday workings of ‘the mall’ are disclosed phenomenologically as a distinctly privileged artwork of our epoch (with its own distinct genealogy), this offers at the same time a possibility for us to rethink the

<sup>13</sup> See also the music psychology of Ernst Kurth, in which the sound material is described as a ‘stream of energy or vigour’ (*Kraftstrom*). The music is thus incarnated as a dynamic force deeply inspired from Schopenhauer’s ‘will of the world’. See Kurth 1947, p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> It is emphasized by Heidegger that what is closest to us is also the hardest to ‘see’ (i.e. to distinguish and decipher), cf. Pio 2012, pp. 55–57.

way we are currently contained by aesthetics in our (unmistakably *modern*) relation to art. Such an enterprise finds support in Heidegger, as it is stated that:

... sufficiently considered the essence of technique (*Technik*) consists not just in enabling a composure of art, but is a demand for this (*eine Besinnung auf die Kunst nicht nur ermöglicht, sondern verlangt*). (Heidegger 2009, p. 376)

### 2.2.5 *Danger and the Saving Force*

Have you ever walked along the long, narrow, stoney pathway leading slowly upwards to the *Acropolis* hovering above the city of Athens? This is actually the road you are on, as you leave the comfort of your car, to step onto the rolling escalator connecting the parking basement with the air-conditioned ground floor of the mall with all its glimmering, expensive offerings. As you emerge from the shady coolness of the parking basement into the glimmering light of the Mall, you step into one of the crown-jewels of the modern welfare society in its technical celebration of endless consumer happiness and equality. The gods have certainly left the building – long ago. But we have a modern artwork in the workings here, alive and kicking. A *debased* artwork for sure. But it is working its technique.<sup>15</sup>

So far I have attempted to bring Heidegger's approximately 70-year-old critique of aesthetics up to date. This has been carried out by identifying those lived practices that currently vitalize Heidegger's art-directed points in a current context. As a result, some insight has been gained regarding how the mall as an artwork functions (through the described practices). *The mall as an artwork works by bringing about the background* (i.e. *the anonymous, implied, self-evident backdrop*) *on which the processes of aestheticalization can stand out*.

So the mall becomes the implied background for the appearance of the multifarious aesthetical objects. The mall is the artwork that allows all the plentitude of aesthetical objects in our lives to function *as* aesthetical (i.e. as objects open to be 'objectivized' within a technical relation). The Mall frames the unconscious space that makes it possible for us to *consume* the aesthetical work. It works as a background artwork – that is as a *Kraftwerk* (power plant) as quoted in Heidegger – simultaneously producing (and being produced by) a technical understanding of being. Thus the mall (as *Kraftwerk*) provides power (*Kraft*) and impetus to the complex processes, through which we bring ourselves about as resources. Resources whose beauty goes hand in hand with our efficiency. And as resources we make the world more aesthetical (inviting, tempting) through our technical mastery of it. Why? Because we make the world available for our needs. And that is currently the pinnacle of beauty.

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<sup>15</sup> I do not wish to level the distinction between the great Acropolis and the anonymous Mall. But within Heidegger's history-of-being (*Seinsgeschichte*), I am obliged to draw a parallel between the epochs in which these two architectural structures belong.

So when Julian Young (2004) claim that our epoch is marked by the lack of an artwork that transgresses the aesthetical paradigm, this claim seems to be passing over the connections expounded here. With the mall one can see the ontology of art emerging in a quite uncanny way: at the very heart of aesthetics, as its stronghold. However:

Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst  
Das Rettende auch. (Hölderlin, quoted in Heidegger 1962, p. 41)<sup>16</sup>

### 2.2.6 *Unsolved Questions*

The reading of the mall has highlighted our current relation to artworks as precarious and ambiguous. In the article *Heidegger's ontology of art*, another example is mentioned by Hubert Dreyfus. Here it is cursorily stated without any further elaboration that the 'freeway interchange':

... is a debased work of art. (Dreyfus 2007, p. 413)

According to Dreyfus, this construction is "debased" because it applies an optimization-oriented efficiency agenda to nature which the ontology (*Erde*) of the artwork cannot resist. Heidegger refers to a congenial example of the water power plant installed in the the Rhine (Heidegger 1962, p. 15). This plant manifests the essence of how we are currently able to relate to the Rhine: as a technical resource supplying us with electrical power for our domestic comfort. In this way the water power plant discloses how the Rhine can appear today as a meaningful phenomenon. In the same way, the mall discloses what we are all about as human beings: the tale of the subject in its 'being in control' with all that this implies (comfort, effortlessness, beauty, success, enjoyment, wealth, prestige, career). What is opened up here in the mall and consumed through aesthetical enjoyment is the sheer human energy of life. There is a certain totalizing feel to this machinery. Thus it is hard to imagine outsiders of any kind not being stamped out in this smooth, grinding mill.

These examples tell us, that in our technical modernity we have still not prevailed in creating an artwork, which can re-configure our world to be entrusted with a new paradigmatic kind of beginning:

The possibility of a grand tremor of the historical *Dasein* (being-there, presence) of a people has faded away. Temple, image, manners and customs are unable to assume – in their entirety and from their foundation – the historical tradition of a people and to compel it into a new assignment. (Heidegger, quoted in Pöggeler 1977, p. 29)

Our epoch of technical rationality is accompanied by what Dreyfus – as mentioned – calls "debased" works of art. They are debased because they are unable to

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<sup>16</sup> Translated to english: Where there is danger/the saving force will grow.

shed light on our life world. Instead, they disclose a technical ontology. Thus Heidegger sees that art currently has lost its history-creating power:

... we must gain a new content for the word ‘art’ and for what it attempts to name. (Heidegger, quoted in Thomson 2011, p. 62).<sup>17</sup>

Heidegger briefly refers to Stravinsky as an example of the currently absent ability of art to vindicate a world (*Ort stiften*; Heidegger 1954a, p. 181). Heidegger sees that potentially it is around the artwork (in its ontology) that a new departure can be initiated as a countermove, in relation to the technical way in which we call forth our modern world. This change must contain a beginning, which is simultaneously a challenge:

Is art still an important and necessary way in which the crucial truth about our historical *Dasein* comes about, or does art no longer work in this way?. (Heidegger 1950, p. 68)

A re-evaluation of the current relation between art and aesthetics will have a say in the decision of whether art can become “*geschichtebildend*” – i.e. history-making (Heidegger 1944/46, p. 77). But such an artwork is currently absent in the modern world. So we still need to come to terms with what kind of shadow is cast by the mall:

So far the West has not produced any reconfiguring work of art that sets forth the earth and restarts history with a new struggle between earth and world. The question then arises for Heidegger whether our flexible style, which turns everything even ourselves into resources, could ever be reconfigured. (Dreyfus 2007, p. 418)

Heidegger sees our modern age as standing alienated (*undichterisch*) opposite the truth-evoking impact of poetical and musical works. This alienation goes together with a:

... mysterious excess in the shape of a rage of measuring and calculating ... . (Heidegger 1954b, p. 197)

The futurist question relates to whether we will be able to leave behind the resource logic that currently contains our self-image and thereupon disclose a new poetical experience of art in the world:

When and where a turning point of our un-poetical inhabitation of the world can be reached, this can only be awaited as we heed the poetical. (Heidegger 1954b, p. 197)

## 2.3 Educational Aspects

### 2.3.1 *Truth*

Today in the general education system, the phenomenon of truth is primarily promoted through the categorical grids of science. The culture of schooling currently emphasizes fingertip knowledge, tests, measurable learning goals, competencies set

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<sup>17</sup> In this context Thomson asks: “... which work of art does Heidegger think can help us late moderns learn to transcend modern aesthetics from within and thereby discover a path leading beyond modernity?” (Thomson 2011, p. 67).

out explicitly, the student as a stakeholder, quantitative output, pedagogy as codified by evidence-based knowledge, the eagerness to prove mechanisms of causality in teacher-student relations, and the promotion of OECD 'core subjects' (math, science, IT, among others) as enjoying privilege on almost all levels from kindergarten practices up to educational research-funding at universities.<sup>18</sup>

When students respond rationally to the tacit signals of this 'curricular environment' of 'what-is-important' and 'how to do school', this becomes connected to ideals of being able to solve problems quickly, to be efficient, to store as many bits of textbook information as possible, and then subsequently document the ability to reproduce that data in and interface with test software. These are virtues which are now part of the provisional end result of the science-rationalized school built in the West during the twentieth century. There seems to be a thematic proximity here to the quasi-*cybernetical* world mentioned by Heidegger above. For sure this dimension of school is necessary. But as this paradigm today assumes the character of an almost absolute discourse in school, it appears as an *uncannily narrow* notion of what 'the truthful' could be as a phenomenon in the world of the student. As stated by Theodor Wilhelm:

Always the free equality of rights of the arts has been suspected of standing in the way of the actual purpose of the school. At best the arts have only buttressed this purpose in an utmost indirect way. (Wilhelm 1969, p. 395)

As positioned within this narrow notion of truth, artworks, songs, and performances are reduced to aesthetics. A non-committally, sensual pleasure as a kick of entertainment, a leisure subject of disinterested pleasure (Kant). But does the possibility not exist to throw a light on the world of the school *from the point of departure opened up by artworks* such as songs or performances? Reflection and dialogue among teacher and students could then begin from the *inside of a wonder* initiated through the common experience of the artwork in question. For Heidegger this relates to the domicile of *thinking* (Heidegger 1956, p. 24). In such a shared situation there is a possibility of something more than a student-subject corresponding to an aesthetical music-object. The artwork ceases to formally be a communication of signs (from artist-subject to student-object). Instead, the performance in question happens in the world as a distinct event, which calls on all the involved people who are together in this concrete situation to behold the actions of the moment. This becomes a joint search for cracks of something unknown right within the hardcore of all that is familiar. Thus it is a common attempt to wrinkle the sphere of 'the possible' out of 'the actual' (Heidegger 1969, p. 90). In other words, an experiment with an imaginary dimension (Vetlesen 2004).

However, the period from the Enlightenment until today is a process of a slow but relentless dismantling of this insight into art as containing truth about the world we live in. The experience of artworks as a vigor of orientation blowing through our lives, has been erased by new ideals of exact knowledge and technical precision. The point,

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<sup>18</sup>This paradigm was confirmed in the 'No child left behind' act of the Bush administration in 2001 cf. Hoppman 2007.

of course is that both types of truth are necessary today: (i) the bookish, analytical and methodical dimension, as well as (ii) the poetical, imaginary way to disclose the world. Unfortunately, the balance between these two has been severely disturbed.

### 2.3.2 *The Misty Mountain Song*

According to Heidegger, we should:

... open our ears, to make them free for that in the tradition which address us, as being (*Sein*) appears in being-ness (*Seiende*). As we heed and listen to this address, we reach into an attunement to it. (Heidegger 1956, p. 22)

The task of 'opening our ears' is thus about opening our hearts to everything that addresses beingness (*das Seiende*) in its being (*Sein*):

"... ein Gehören zum Sein ..." becomes a belonging which "... auf das Sein hört ...". (Heidegger 1957a, p. 18)

And now translated: The task of listening (*Hören*) to being is thus about belonging (*Gehören*) to being. Among other things could this be about a recognition of an increasing need to *reconnect with a mythological dimension* in the phenomenology of music? What is involved here are projects which can bring people together around a common ritualized articulation of distinct values, ways of life, new icons. Consider the recently filmed novel *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien.<sup>19</sup> More specifically *the Misty Mountain Song* of the dwarfs in Bilbo's house the night before the departure that will take the fellowship of dwarfs toward the dragon's mountain. This scene is an example of music and song as an integral 'ether' gathering and focusing specific values or beliefs, setting the frame of mind around an important matter in life. A matter which marks a clear distinction in life between that which is vital and that which is trivial. The dwarfs thus sing:

Far over the misty mountains cold  
To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away ere break of day,  
To claim our long forgotten gold. (Tolkien 1937, p. 25)

In this scene the song and the music are connected to the intense engagement of a small, marginalized group. For decades the dwarfs have been expelled from their kingdom by a dragon, and they are now – assisted by the wizard Gandalf – setting out to take back what is theirs. In the song they sing, the essential background understanding of their world is focused, involving loss, hope, privation, and justice. This focus will turn out to be the most crucial factor for the outcome of their mission. The song that night in Bilbo's sitting room around the fireplace contains every truth in the world for the dwarfs involved. We are thus far distanced from disinterested aesthetics. The song rather comes forth as a way to vindicate the generational life

<sup>19</sup> *The Hobbit – an unexpected journey* (2012) directed by Peter Jackson.

project of the dwarfs. In Peter Jackson's film this is underlined, as the song is used as the general *leitmotif* through the entire movie.

Today we can choose to notice this as an important hint about the *possibility* of music in our ever more technically rationalized society of performativity. The challenge here could be to identify and invent platforms where music is allowed to appear as an 'ether or aura' leading a given community back toward a ritualized experience of the background which matters to them. Through the music and song it is affirmed that there can still be a commitment to certain values, and that not everything is yet sucked into our contemporary, technical logic of rationalization:

... to be recognized and appreciated, individual commitment requires a shared understanding of what is worth pursuing. But as our culture comes more and more to celebrate critical detachment, self-sufficiency, and rational choice, there are fewer and fewer shared commitments. (Dreyfus 2006, p. 347)

The commitment of the dwarfs can only manifest itself on the basis of a shared background understanding of what is valuable and important in *their* world. If such a common background is absent, any engaged agency will appear slightly irrational or even slightly comical. Any commitment thus needs to evoke a response originating from a common backdrop if it is to be authentic. We need poetical icons carried by ritualized artistic truth.

Taken together gods, icons, heroes and other demigods from our Western heritage (from Homer to Chris Nolan) all incarnate the value of unconditional commitment. However, today the integrity of these icons is technically severely disputed (as almost nothing more than entertainment). And thus they are increasingly absent from our general educational system. Today we are framed as resources, all of us with a legitimate expectation to be enhanced and used under optimum conditions. Therefore it becomes tinged with a touch of something un-democratic, intolerant and politically un-correct to create distinctions which intimate that something in human life is worth more than something else. Technically it thus seems irrational to establish distinctions of rank and value in any available reservoir of human resources. Almost everything is considered equally good and valid as long as we are able to smoothly extract the maximum value of the resources available in a given field (be it nations, classes, segments, organizations, groups of staff members, etc.):

With the help of sociology, psychology, psycho-therapy and other means, all people are soon, from all sides, deposited into the same condition of the same happiness. It will be taken care of that the equal well-being of all is secured. But this invention of happiness 'in spite of' will haunt human beings from one world war into the next. (Heidegger 1954c, p. 31)

In the name of the Enlightenment, this process of leveling (following the universal principle of equal value) relentlessly exorcises the 'intolerance of commitment'. So in school all heroes, all icons, all artworks, all musical intensities, and all poetical power handed down by tradition, which have given all kinds of communities something essentially important and life affirming to believe in, are already in the process of being done away with (as significant curriculum).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For the subject music in teaching and education in Denmark, this is documented in Nielsen 2010.

This urge us to note that the formal, official world of rules, principles, theories, formality, judicial sections, etc. all present us with an 'outside narrative' of the world. The exterior 'shell' so to say, which also corresponds with the intellectualized, measurable knowledge chased by students in their wish to fit into the culture of testing that is currently prevalent throughout the education system. However, our attempt to reinvent ourselves within this picture will strap us down to this outside shell of our world. But music, songs, pictures, stories and performances remind us of 'something' fundamental that somehow comes *before* this 'outside' narrative. Just like the singing in Bilbo's sitting room. There is no difference. Artworks thus lead to an openness to an (ontological) *inside* of the world. Here it is suddenly still possible to have that sinking feeling for the unknown, the possible, something 'more'. What is this? Somehow this reminds us of our inherent talent for love: our ability to cherish something to such an extent that we are prepared to go to extremes no matter what the cost might be. In art-directed practices, this could be about an attuned social mood, a reflection, a vague sense that there is something that is larger than yourself. Works of art have to do with an immediate experience of the world as it is awake within us, *before* we arrive at an intellectualized, analytical processing of the world. Musical phenomena can as such favor matters of life with a transparency. As such music calls forth truth as it did for the dwarfs in Bilbo's cabin (Pio 2014).

The above considerations leads us to the music with a renewed sensitivity. A sensitivity that suggests, that the auditive dimension is the part of the world that makes the deepest appeal to us, since we cannot renounce it. We cannot take our hearing away from an undesired sound, in the same way as we can remove our gaze from something we abstain from looking at. As listening beings we belong in a world that meets us sonorously. We hear a door slamming. We hear the wife scolding her husband a floor below. We never hear just acoustic data or neutral sound. We immediately hear a world 'worlding' as it happens (Heidegger 1954c, pp. 88–89). We listen from being (*Sein*) to being (*Sein*) in its unfolding process, before being becomes substantivized and made into beingness (*Seiende*), i.e. an object, a substance, a thing, a result (Heidegger 1957a, p. 37, 1954b, 166). The world is always-already there as something (*unerhört*) un-heard (Heidegger 1957b, p. 101) in our be-longing (*Ge-hören*) in it:

... the incentive of being speaks, according to whether it is heard or disregarded ... .  
(Heidegger 1956, p. 23)

This 'un-heard' is the lived out belonging in the world (Pio 2014). The un-heard is a holy chaos of 12-tone organized sonorous life. A chaos that craves to be realized in actual works, songs, and performances. In this way music becomes something that opens the world for us (Heidegger 1950: 54). Here one sees that music rests on pre-musical phenomena such as: celebration, feast, being together, loneliness, hope, fellowship, leave-taking, grief, and the safeguarding of specific times and events as 'high' or special. These pre-musical phenomena should not be misunderstood as non-musical phenomena. Because in their practical, lived dimension they make up

an ‘ether’ that extends deep into the most essential phenomenology of music (cf. Ehrenforth 2013). As Dufrenne nicely puts it:

... I can rediscover ... the world of Bach, for example, in the innocent games of a child, the sparkling grace of a dancer or of the early spring, or the smiling face of a man who has quelled his passions through happiness and not through the laws of conscience alone. (Dufrenne 1973, p. 519)

These pre-musical phenomena constitute *invariable* qualities in life. They can appear in a vast number of different kinds of circumstances and cultural contexts, but like sovereign manifestations in life, these pre-musical phenomena remain an invariable aspect of existence (Løgstrup 1993, pp. 48–50).

### 2.3.3 *The Precious Daring*

This discussion of art and ontology seems to indicate the need as a teacher to have a commitment to something. This might be relevant in relation to the songs and musical works the music teacher brings into her work. But today it seems that the common-sense focus is occupied instead with *means* (methods, techniques, templates, skills, tests). The interest in ‘means’ is about the belief that if you just work to make an effect on the *outside shell* of teaching (methods, techniques) you are automatically able to regulate at leisure *the inside* of teaching (to disclose the phenomenological content of the teaching, to reflect on and act in the concrete gathering of teacher and students). In my immediate attention to a student in teaching, there is *the inside* (being). And the exact same act on *the outside* (being-ness) now appears as a methodological theme regarding how teacher competence is operationalized in handling a problem.<sup>21</sup> What we call the inside of teaching is connected to that which Heidegger designates ‘to lead your composure on the way’, and this cannot be done methodologically in a calculative way:

But – are ‘method’ and ‘way-of-thinking’ identical? After all, has not the time come – in the technical world age – to take into consideration the peculiarity with regard to ‘way-of-thinking’ in its difference from ‘method’? (Heidegger 1954a, p. 233)

Heidegger is encircling a road of thinking (*Denkweg*) which is:

... a thinking-ahead (*Vordenken*) ... which is no longer planning (*Planen*) ... (Heidegger 1957a, p. 30)

The transition to this thinking is characterized as a ‘modulation’, which in musical nomenclature corresponds to a change of key:

... the second key is not derived from the first .../The second key is sounding for itself and out of itself, with no regard (*Anhalt*) to the first. (Heidegger 1957b, p. 95)

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<sup>21</sup> On the distinction between the outside and inside of teaching, see Pio 2012, p. 111 (Fig. 3: The didactic circle).

For the teacher this is about giving oneself over to the gathering of the teaching in a more complete way. This is what Bollnow describes as *the daring* (*Vågestykke*) of pedagogy (Bollnow 1969, 146–168). This is about making oneself visible as an advocate for specific values harvested through a life so far. Such pedagogical and musical values cannot be proved. On the other hand, one cannot get around them (or ignore them) as norms. As a teacher you cannot legitimize your norms, nor can you make them go away. Pedagogical and musical values should be fashioned in the student through the encounter with lived values, as these are incarnated through the teacher. Values cannot be fashioned for the student by means of a versatile teaching marked by an all-round neutrality (Breindahl 1999, p. 233). That will end up as a disservice of misunderstood tolerance. The executed choice of content and purpose of the teaching has to stand in an inner relation to a commitment that is carried by the person you are (and not a role you play). Only then can a weight and ground be registered beneath the technical, professional skills.

As far as I can see, Heidegger issues a challenge to educational thinking by obliging us to problematize the principle relation of: freedom/inhibition; rootedness/rootlessness. On the basis of a theoretical position the teacher has the possibility to reflect, select and plan. This activity constitutes a dimension of freedom as reflective educator. One can choose to do this or that. But if this reflexive freedom also comes to include an arbitrary freedom with reference *to the basis on which these free choices are made*, then the existential bound condition of the teacher in an unselected background is erased and not allowed to work. When this unselected background (being) is erased, it is a result of the fact that the reflexive and cognitive dimension has almost reached a supreme reign. This is what Heidegger calls *Seinsvergessenheit*, as being is forgotten. Total reflexive freedom will thus end up in the celebration of equal equality as a universal principle (Varkøy 2004, pp. 20–21). As the grand, historical illuminator of the Danish people N.F.S. Grundtvig once said:

Og han har aldrig levet  
Som klog på det er blevet  
Han først ej havde kær. (Grundtvig, quoted in Carlsen 2002, p. 84)<sup>22</sup>

So the way to the heart cannot be found only through an accumulation of competence with a view to expanding a technical repertoire of situational command. For the teacher an unselected rootedness in some kind of background must merge with the theoretical freedom of reflexivity. Only through the tension between these two united oppositions can a vital educational practice be unfolded (Pio 2014).<sup>23</sup>

So that which is worth fighting for (in the concrete pedagogical context) needs to be contrasted with the leveled indifference of the top-down regulating policy discourses of technical rationality. According to Heidegger, nihilism thus drains life of value (Heidegger 1944/46b, pp. 35–40). The concrete teacher should use

<sup>22</sup> This poem is hard to reproduce in English verse. But it says something like 'the one who thinks that the key to cherish something is to get wise on it, this person has never lived'.

<sup>23</sup> See the distinction between 'social relations' (ontic) and 'cultural practices' (ontological) in Pio 2012, p. 170.

him- or herself to create valuable distinctions. Often – in (*das Geringe*) all the small, insignificant aspects of everyday life (Heidegger 1944, pp. 173–174) one becomes part of as a teacher, the challenge of creating valuable distinctions is always-already there in its constantly overlooked presence in the everyday pressure. Heidegger cites Hölderlin for this:

Jetzt aber blüht es  
Am armen Ort. (Heidegger 1944, p. 171)<sup>24</sup>

But ‘*das Geringe*’ in all its insignificance is not that which has low value. *Das Geringe* is rather:

... the intensified word for ‘ring’, which designates that which is light (*das Leichte*), supple (*das Geschmeidige*), accommodating (*das Fügsame*): the small (*das kleine*) .../However ‘small’ (*klein*) originally means delicate (*fein*) and precious (*kostbar*) (op. cit., pp. 173–174).

In a pedagogical context the teacher can attend to this preciousness and take care of this ‘small-ness’, by demonstrating that not everything has equal validity (*des Überall-Gleichgültigen*) and *that life thus can make itself felt* through the gathered teaching with distinct demands that it is up to us to wield (Heidegger 1957a, p. 49; Higgins 2003, pp. 131f).

When what I do as a teacher (in a reflexive freedom) is at the same time overshadowed by something which is greater than me (from a being I have neither selected nor chosen to do without), this tension can potentially call forth the best of what I am able to do. The development of (a) your *professionalism* as a teacher will ultimately urge you to (b) find meaning through the *being in the world* you are. An educational turn toward music will remind us about this duality between (a) and (b) as united oppositions. If we resign from this ongoing strife, we are forsaking the students and ultimately the pedagogical task that has been laid upon us. A such falling away can for instance manifest itself through curricular principles for subject content prescribing the greatest possible, allround versatility. The teacher is thus assigned a role as an official or even worse: as an impartial clerk. Ultimately all this amounts to a fight of death against life.

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<sup>24</sup> English translation: ‘And thus it blossoms/In places of insignificance’.

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