

Introduction

A MATERIAL SPACE OF RADIANCE

Sculpture teaches us what it means to be in the world. When Heidegger turns to sculpture in the later part of his career—first somewhat tangentially in the early 1950s, then directly and in express collaboration with the sculptors themselves in the mid- to late 1960s—the encounter leads him to a rethinking of body, space, and the relation between these. A starker conception of corporeality emerges in these works, entailing a new conception of space as well. In fact, part of what is so tantalizing in these sculptural essays is the articulation of this reconstrued relationship between body and space, no longer one of the present body occupying empty space but something more participatory, collaborative, mediated, and welcoming. Bodies move past themselves, entering a space that is always receiving them to communicate and conuningle in the physicality of the world. To be in this world is to be ever entering a material space of radiance.

Heidegger's sculptural reflections are born out of a rethinking of limit whereby, in keeping with a favored expression of Heidegger's, the limit marks the beginning of a thing, not its end. Things begin at their limits for it is here that they enter into relationships with the rest of the world. Thinking limit in this manner, not as a border of confinement but one of introduction, ties the thing in question indissociably to its surroundings. Thinking limit permissively, in other words, leads to a thinking of the ecstaticity of body, all bodies, simply by virtue of their appearing in a world. To appear is to be drawn out beyond oneself in a multiplicity of relations, to appear is to "radiate" throughout these relations. But this would not be possible were space not receptive to these bodies and capable of distributing their radiance, bridging their distances, making these connections and contacts across vast distances. Space must become a medium of exchange, not simply defined

by an absence of body. Space must be understood “materially,” or rather, as no longer antipodally opposed to bodies. Only such a materially mediating thinking of space can allow the bodies to radiate beyond themselves and join in the multitudinous relationships that make up a world, a world indissociable from its spacing. Heidegger’s sculptural reflections trace the contours of this material space of radiance and in so doing proceed further along a path of thought passing through both *Being and Time* and “The Origin of the Work of Art.”

In the course of these later pieces, Heidegger corrects and expands upon some of his earlier analyses, not only of body and space (already no small task), but of the work of art as well. Heidegger’s 1964 and 1969 engagements with the sculptors Bernhard Heiliger and Eduardo Chillida are more developed (and of greater length) than the other aesthetic interests of his later thought (most notably the paintings of Cézanne and Klee). Heidegger is also here in the position to explicitly situate the artwork in relation to the demands of a technologically dominated world. His famed analysis of technology as *Gestell* (“positionality” or “enframing”) dates from 1949, over a decade after “The Origin of the Work of Art.” These sculptural texts thus offer the fullest account of Heidegger’s later thinking of art in its relation to technology (including extended reflection on the nature of *technē* (τέχνη) in the work of the sculptor, Greek or otherwise), and even revise the earlier “Origin” essay on one of its most guiding questions and concepts, the artwork’s role in truth.¹

Rethinking body, space, and art, these texts form a crucial stage in the work of the “late” Heidegger, and this despite the fact that Heidegger scholarship has largely neglected sustained confrontation with these texts and en-

counters, even when addressing his thinking of art and /or space.² These texts develop aspects of Heidegger's thinking that were otherwise left unexamined in the earlier, more familiar works such as *Being and Time* and "The Origin of the Work of Art." A brief rehearsal of the role of body and space in these earlier texts should help to better reveal the path that led Heidegger to refashion their relationship in his thinking of sculpture.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explores the existential nature of Dasein (literally "being there") as a being-in-the-world. This is surely a departure from the metaphysical tradition of subjectivity and the idea of a self-present subject independent of the world around it. Being "there" is written into the very term *Dasein* and with it a certain spatiality, such that being-in-the-world is "something that belongs essentially" to Dasein (SZ 13). But Dasein is not in the world like other objects, "its spatiality cannot signify anything like occurrence at a position in 'world space,'" Heidegger writes (SZ 104). A closer look at the spatiality of Dasein, however, reveals it to be surprisingly narrowly defined, a space of equipmental efficiency, ultimately unsuitable for the ecstatic corporeality of sculpture.

An issue first arises when considering the relationship between being-in-the-world and being in space.³ When Heidegger writes that "Dasein itself has a 'Being-in-space' of its own; but this in turn is possible only on the basis of *Being-in-the-world in general*" (SZ 56), such a claim could be taken to suggest that spatiality is not equiprimordial with world, that being-in-the-world would underlie a subsequent entry into space. Supporting this view would be the 1928 summer lecture course *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, where Heidegger not only delves deeper into the concrete nature of Dasein, but also explicitly treats of Dasein prior to its "dispersion" or "dissemination" into

factual existence. It is only due to this factual dispersion that spatiality would be of concern, for an “essential possibility of Dasein’s factual dissemination is its spatiality” (GA 26: 173–74 / 138). Dasein’s factual dispersal is spatial as well as bodily: “As factual, Dasein is, among other things, in each case dispersed in a body” (GA 26: 173 / 137). Both body and space arise from a dissemination into factual concretion. “Neutral” Dasein, as Heidegger refers to Dasein prior to its factual dispersal, would not know space.

Now it must be noted that Heidegger is clear even here that “Neutral Dasein is never what exists; Dasein exists in each case only in its factual concretion” (GA 26: 172 / 137), but there nonetheless remains a troubling emphasis upon a pre-individuated, prefactual, and thus prespatial, Dasein, even if only to say that the “essence” of this prefactual Dasein is always to be factual, corporeal: “The metaphysical neutrality of the human being, inmost isolated as Dasein, is not an empty abstraction from the ontic, a neither-nor; it is rather the authentic concreteness of the origin, the not-yet of factual dispersion” (GA 26: 173 / 137). There is surely room for debate on this point. Dasein’s factual dispersal has been a problem for Derrida, for instance, and there are a number of ways to cast the ontic-ontological character of Dasein to avoid these appearances of bifurcation.⁴ But this does not change the fact that Heidegger proceeds to think Dasein according to such a split, however propaedeutic it might be: “The peculiar *neutrality* of the term ‘Dasein’ is essential, because the interpretation of this being must be carried out prior to every factual concretion” (GA 26: 171–72 / 136). In the later work on sculpture, this methodological conceit is abandoned in order to think the body from out of itself, space from out of itself, and not through a factual /existential divide, however nuanced this may be.

But even granting an essential spatiality to Dasein, the character of this space is still determined by factors that would otherwise inhibit what we have termed the “radiance” of worldly being that Heidegger seeks to present in his writings on sculpture. *Being and Time* details “Dasein’s existential spatiality” (SZ 56), but insofar as the character of this space is drawn from Dasein’s use of equipment (the “ready-to-hand”), it remains rather problematic.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues against the primacy of a detached or isolated subject that would regard the world around it as objects of scientific observation or investigation. Instead, Dasein’s fundamental being-in-the-world is a matter of explicit engagement with the things around it toward the various projects that it entertains at any given moment. Heidegger distinguishes between the modes of being that reveal themselves in these various contexts. The beings of the detached, scientific regard are the objective beings termed “present-at-hand,” while the beings of use in fulfilling our projects exist as “ready-to-hand,” as equipment. While the “objective” being of the present-at-hand stands over against a subject that regards it, the case is otherwise for the ready-to-hand: “What is ready-to-hand in our everyday dealings has the character of *nearness* [Nähe]” (SZ 102; tm).

The nearness in question is the nearness of our concerned dealings in the world. Dasein is futural, always engaged in projects, and these projects matter to it for its being is at issue: “Dasein, in its very Being, has this Being as an issue; and its concern discovers beforehand those regions in which some involvement is decisive” (SZ 104). What Dasein makes use of in carrying out these projects, the equipment as ready-to-hand, it brings near to itself (or “de-severs,” to use Heidegger’s term). This nearness is nothing measurable (“Every entity that is ‘to hand’ has a different nearness, which is not to be

ascertained by measuring distances" [SZ 102; tm]). The glasses at the end of one's nose, to cite a famous example, are more distant than the picture one contemplates upon the wall (see SZ 107). Dasein's concerns determine what comes to the fore for it, what it brings near. Nearness of this sort is more a matter of the preoccupying proximity of the objects of our concern, the ability to foreground a concern against an indifferent or less exigent background, than anything traditionally spatial.

For Dasein, this nearness is instrumentally determined: "This nearness regulates itself in terms of circumspectively 'calculative' manipulating and using" (SZ 102). The equipment that addresses our concerns has its place; "place is the definite 'there' or 'yonder' of an item of equipment which *belongs somewhere*" (SZ 102).⁵ Equipment defines the places that come together to determine the "worldhood" of our world: "Space has been split up into places. . . . The 'environment' does not arrange itself in a space which has been given in advance; but its specific worldhood, in its significance, articulates the context of involvements which belongs to some current totality of circumspectively allotted places" (SZ 104). As such, the "existential" spatiality of Dasein is born of its circumspective and concernful ties to the world—its equipmentality, broadly construed. Such a space is ultimately too narrow to accommodate the excessive character of embodiment found in Heidegger's later work, and this on a number of counts.

First, let us note that Dasein is, in a certain sense, at the "center" of this space, or at the very least it organizes this space around its own ends. Insofar as space arises through the equipment attending the projects of our concern and all our equipment points around to Dasein itself as its ultimate purpose, space arises with Dasein as its focus. Equipment is employed "toward" an

end, and these ends all lead back to “a ‘towards-which’ in which there is *no* further involvement. . . . The primary ‘towards-which’ is a ‘for-the-sake-of-which.’ But the ‘for-the-sake-of’ always pertains to the Being of *Dasein*, for which, in its Being, that very Being is essentially an *issue*” (SZ 84). Space becomes a function of *Dasein*. *Being and Time* can only propose this domesticated space for *Dasein*.⁶ Gone is the sense of being lost in space or the feeling of space’s overwhelming excess. *Dasein* is the organizing principle of its worldhood. Only as a deprivation of this would there be “space”: “Space becomes accessible only if the environment is deprived of its worldhood” (SZ 113).

Second, this space’s origins in equipmentality are not without effect upon the quality of this space. *Dasein*’s “existential” space is one of utility and efficiency. Nearness is governed by utility. Built for projects, this space offers no resistance to projects’ achievement. What is brought close and what remains far, what rushes into the foreground or telescopes off into the background, does so effortlessly and without restriction. This space is a homogeneous field of frictionless organization of concerns, an unvariegated space of efficient functioning. It would seem that *Dasein*’s space has the makings of an ideal, frictionless workshop.

Last, this space is eerily devoid of objects. In explaining the spatiality of objects, Heidegger considers an everyday expression like “the chair is touching the wall”:

Taken strictly, “touching” is never what we are talking about in such cases, not because accurate reexamination will always eventually establish that there is a space between the chair and the wall, but because in principle the chair can never touch the wall, even if the space between them should equal to zero. If

the chair could touch the wall, this would presuppose that the wall is the sort of thing “for” which a chair would be *encounterable*. An entity present-at-hand within the world can be touched by another entity only if by its very nature the latter entity has Being-in as its own kind of Being—only if, with its Being-there [Da-sein], something like the world is already revealed to it, so that from out of that world another entity can manifest itself in touching, and thus become accessible in its Being-present-at-hand. (SZ 55)

Chairs do not touch the wall. They do not share the same space and are unable to encounter each other. Space does not bring any relation to them, it serves no mediating purpose. The space of Dasein is the space of the world, but as Heidegger remarks, things like chairs and walls are “*worldless* in themselves” (SZ 55). The things themselves do not enter space; instead our space serves to grant us unilateral access to their deployment in our projects. The mediating role of space—its communicativity and commutativity, its *reciprocity*, the ways in which space allows for relationships through separation and *varies* these relations according to the disruptions, interferences, and calmings that it suffers at the time—all this is absent from Dasein’s spatiality.

The space of *Being and Time* is a Dasein-oriented space of efficiency uninfluenced by the participation of objects. With Heidegger’s later turn to sculpture, gone is even the suspicion that our existence could take place or be adequately thought apart from spatiality or be considered along anything like the parameters of *Being and Time*. In these later texts space is no longer construed instrumentally; rather, technology is now seen as an assault upon space that yields the very empty space of efficiency that, in *Being and Time*, is deemed “existential.” Heidegger’s shift away from his earlier view of spatial-

ity is moderated by a new focus upon the work of art in the decade following *Being and Time*. In “The Origin of the Work of Art” (1936), Heidegger refines his thinking of equipmentality and embarks upon a thinking of the “work” character of the artwork. This allows him to develop the notion of shining (radiance) as well as the sense of space peculiar to it that will be so important for understanding the ecstatic corporeality of sculpture in the decades ahead.

If the space of *Being and Time* was a space defined by the tool, then “The Origin of the Work of Art” provides an opportunity for rethinking that space by reconceiving the tool. The tool is no longer simply an item of service. Serviceability and utility are now inscribed within a larger context of reliability (*Verlässlichkeit*)—“The serviceability of the equipment is, however, only the essential consequence of reliability” (GA 5: 20 / 15; tm)—where reliability names the tool’s ability to negotiate a space beyond the control of Dasein. Heidegger’s much maligned interpretation of Van Gogh’s painting of peasant shoes brings to the fore the uncertainty endemic to reliability, here in the context of the peasant woman’s “uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, wordless joy at having once more withstood want, trembling before the impending birth, and shivering at the surrounding menace of death” (GA 5: 19 / 14). All of Dasein’s projects are “thrown” through such a space of uncertainty. The openness of reliability keeps the tool from closing in on itself and falling into orbit around Dasein. The tool thus serves to maintain a relationship with this beyond, to manage and negotiate it. The trick of reliability is to maintain this openness to the unexpected, for this reliability relation can all too easily decay through habituation and be worn away, yielding the sense of sheer utility and serviceability that was operative in *Being and Time*: “The individual piece of equipment becomes worn out and used up. But also customary usage itself falls into

disuse, becomes ground down and merely habitual. In this way equipmental being withers away, sinks to the level of mere equipment. Such dwindling of equipmental being is the disappearance of its reliability. . . . Now nothing but sheer serviceability remains visible" (GA 5: 20 / 15). Reliability surpasses sheer serviceability in tending to a relationship with the unknown.

"The Origin of the Work of Art" thus reveals the closure of equipmentality to be circumscribed by an uncertain beyond. Reliability names an excess of the tool directed toward this beyond. But insofar as the tool provided Dasein with a certain worldhood in *Being and Time*, a rethinking of the tool likewise entails a rethinking of world as permeable to this excess. In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger names this excess "earth." Earth is the key to a thinking of radiance, for it is the earth that comes to "shine" in the artwork, and "world" now facilitates that shining.

Earth names an excessive and groundless phenomenality, an appearing that is untethered from an underlying substance. In the tool, this earthly "matter" is "used and used up. It disappears in serviceability. The less resistance the material puts up to being submerged in the equipmental being of the equipment the more suitable and the better it is" (GA 5: 32 / 24; tm). In the artwork, however, the material is allowed "to come forth for the very first time" (GA 5: 32 / 24). The earth then appears as an incalculable phenomenality that resists objectification, quantification, and confinement. Heaviness and color illustrate this resistance:

The stone presses downward and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness weighs down on us, at the same time, it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such penetration by smashing the rock, then it shows us its

pieces but never anything inward, anything that has been opened up. The stone has instantly withdrawn again into the same dull weight and mass of its fragments. If we try to grasp the stone's heaviness in another way, by placing it on a pair of scales, then we bring its heaviness into the calculable form of weight. This perhaps very precise determination of the stone is a number, but the heaviness of the weight has escaped us. Color shines and wants only to shine. If we try to make it comprehensible by analyzing it into numbers of oscillations it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth shatters every attempt to penetrate it. It turns every merely calculational intrusion into an act of destruction. (*GA* 5: 33 / 25)

The earth disappears in contexts of equipmental utility, but comes forth to shine when removed from these utilitarian constraints. Utility seeks always what is of benefit to the subject, however that subject might be defined (as individual or as society). The goal of utility is always an appropriation of otherness for the benefit of the self-same and self-centered subject. In breaking with this, the artwork is freed from subordination to a purpose beyond itself, allowing the earth to shine out as inappropriable in a display of material beauty.

This shine of the earth radiates through "world." The world is presented as an expanse of relations, as in Heidegger's famed discussion of a Greek temple:

It is the temple work that first structures and simultaneously gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire for the

human being the shape of its destiny. The all-governing expanse of these open relations is the world of this historical people. (GA 5: 27–28 / 20–21)

The expansive paths of open relation make up the world, relations no longer thought on the basis of equipment. The world stands as the medium through which the shining of earth distributes itself through relations of significance. We are subject to relationality, the relationality of the world, as long as we exist: “World is that always-nonobjectual to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse, keep us transported into being” (GA 5: 30–31 / 23). To exist is to be transported along the lines of relation.

The shining of the earth is the shining of untethered being, uncontained, and now free to reach out to us, meaningfully (worldly). But the artwork could not issue out into these relations were there not a permissive space through which to do so. Corresponding to this conception of the worldly shining of the earth, then, Heidegger’s artwork essay elaborates a nonobjective, nonutilitarian space as equi-originary with the artwork, the open clearing of “truth” (*Wahrheit*).

The relations of earth / world that issue through the work unfurl a space of appearing, or rather, they can only come forward in a space of unconcealment. Heidegger’s thinking of truth begins from the Greek sense of *alētheia* (ἀλήθεια) as unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*), where the emphasis falls not on any unitary phenomenon but on a struggle between concealment and unconcealment, “truth” naming the tension between the two. “Setting up a world and setting forth the earth, the work is the fighting of that fight in which the disclosure of beings as a whole—truth—is won” (GA 5: 42 / 32). The work is one way in

which truth takes place. The interplay of concealment and unconcealment is enacted across the clearing of truth. The artwork's strife between world and earth establishes it within this contested space and serves to hold it open: "In this open, therefore, there must be a being in which the openness takes its stand and achieves constancy. In taking possession of the open, the openness holds it open and supports it" (GA 5: 48 / 36).

The work is thus a delicately balanced construction that stages the tension between earth and world such that a clearing may be opened. The work, however, does not do this on its own, but can only do this when "preserved." The truth (*Wahrheit*) occurs in a preservation (*Bewahrung*) of the work whereby the work is "allowed" to be a work: "allowing the work to be a work is what we call its preservation" (GA 5: 54 / 40). The work "cannot come into being" without these preservers (GA 5: 54 / 40). The preservers allow the work to be a work by "standing within the openness of beings that happens in the work" (GA 5: 54 / 41), which is to say that the preservers do not reduce the work to something merely present (as an object for a subject) or to something merely enjoyable (as a matter for lived experience), nor do they mistake the work for a tool and allow its earthen materiality to be absorbed in service of any kind. Instead, the preservers refrain from imposing their will upon the work and allow the work to stream out in its clearing of relations. They participate in the relationships it opens, guard their persistence, and hold them open, where, as Heidegger writes "'To hold' [Halten] originally means 'to watch over' [hüten]" (GA 5: 43 / 32).

The space of the work is no mathematical, scientific, or objective space. It is likewise not thought in distinction from or in opposition to bodies, but instead as participating in the truth with them. This space of truth is itself no

empty space, but is a sheltered space guarded by the preservers of the work. It is a changed space, a medium for appearing. The work can only appear as work, in its truth, as a node of relations between earth and world, in just such a sheltered space. "The Origin of the Work of Art" thus provides for a thinking of spatial mediation that makes possible a thinking of shining and radiance.

Heidegger's engagements with sculpture in the 1960s are thus deeply enmeshed in his earlier thinking. They emerge from a rethinking of body and space that departs from the earlier conceptions of *Being and Time* and continues the trajectory of inquiry opened in "The Origin of the Work of Art," developing these latter ideas in a more explicitly corporeal vein than ever before in his work. Heidegger's texts present us with a thought of the mutual belonging together of space and body, a thought that allows the art of sculpture to touch us so.