

TRUTH IN THE INTERPRETATION OF BEING AND WORKS OF ART ACCORDING TO
GADAMER

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Abstract: Contemporary philosophical hermeneutics has developed a distinguishing approach to understanding being and works of art and the meanings they embody that is the Truth. From its very inception, hermeneutics, understood as the art and theory of interpretation, was concerned with discovering the meaning of texts. The term hermeneutics gained popularity as a specific field of study during the Protestant Reformation. As it became clear that significantly different readings of Scripture were appearing throughout the Protestant world, the reformers developed manuals specifying the rules for correct interpretation. By the seventeenth century, hermeneutics was seen as a branch of theology designed to provide a technique for ending the correct meaning of the Bible. The transition from this conception of hermeneutics as a subsidiary discipline in theology to contemporary philosophical hermeneutics can be seen as unfolding in two stages. The first stage was the shift, inaugurated by Schleiermacher in the early nineteenth century, from thinking of hermeneutics as a set of regional techniques for interpretation suited to specialized areas of inquiry to the idea of a general hermeneutics applicable to all forms of human expression. Only through this extension of the domain of hermeneutics did it become possible for hermeneutics to concern itself with the question of the meaning of artistic works in general. The second major transformation, starting in the twentieth century, began as a backlash against the understanding of hermeneutics as an epistemological or methodological discipline aimed at discovering rules for correct interpretation. Where epistemological hermeneutics sought a method for discerning the meaning of human expressions, the ontological hermeneutics developed by Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer attempted to clarify the being of the entities that interpret and understand, that is, human beings. Seen from the standpoint of ontological hermeneutics, the notions of meaning, understanding, and interpretation employed by traditional hermeneutic theorists are loaded down with uncritical ontological assumptions that need to be called into question. Gadamer points out that a portrait in earlier times was experienced not as a copy of some antecedently given thing, but rather as a way of making present the person portrayed. What is pictured in a painting, Gadamer argues that it comes to presentation in the representation. It presents itself there. In earlier ways of experiencing pictures, a portrait is a way of making something manifest the individual comes to be realized as the person he or she is through the picture. Therefore the portrait of the king does not represent the king, but it lets the king stand forth as the king he is and so brings to realization his being as sovereign. According to Heidegger he makes a related point that, when he says that it is not a portrait's purpose, to make it easier to realize how the god looks rather, it is a work that lets the god himself be present and thus is the god. This is because the picture defines the being of what it raises to reality. Gadamer demonstrates that the presentation that happens in a portrait is an ontological event. The content of the picture itself is ontologically defined as an emanation of the original which is the truth.

Keywords: (Hermeneutics, interpretation, Truth, ontology,)

Introduction

In this article we intend to discuss the project's overriding and unifying objective, which concerns the special position of the Work of art within human existence in its role of enabling and unfolding of truth, as developed by Gadamer. There is a common thread that brings his thoughts closest together to the question of the work of art and recognition that through the work of art, truth emerges that is not constrained by the scientific requirement of proof. In this article the importance of the artwork, its claim to truth and the way that it links to interpretation in contemporary practice have been shown. Finally, it will analyze how the metaphysical approach which Gadamer took in enquiry rather than constituting a correction of his predecessors. Attention have be given to the individual ways that Gadamer uses to treat the question of science and technology including how he stresses the need for understanding the implications of living in an increasingly technological world which helps to unveil the truth.

The Philosophical question of Truth and Being

Gadamer's general enquiry into the questions of Truth and Being, how they are interconnected is one of major theme in his work in truth and method. Particular attention is given to Gadamer's treatment of the question of truth and its manifestation in the work of art, which he sees as one of the founding events of truth. The critique of Heidegger's work has been followed with an analysis of the response from Gadamer who, from being one of his earliest pupils, continued throughout his career to acknowledge his intellectual debt to Heidegger (Heidegger, 1960). Mindful of this, we examine how in his privileged position as an imminent critic. At the same time Gadamer succeeds in developing his own distinctive philosophical hermeneutics.

He criticizes certain aspects of the metaphysical tradition. He can be seen to engage with metaphysics, especially Platonism, in a way that Heidegger endeavored to avoid. Moreover, Gadamer by means of his hermeneutics, he appeals to Plato and finds already within the tradition Platonic thought much of what Heidegger was seeking. Gadamer is enabled in some ways to move beyond Heidegger, in particular when it comes to the nature of image, truth, and the word (Gadamer, 1994). Gadamer's originality came to the forefront in his development of the concept of play (*Spiel*), as a means of understanding the ontological structure of art which, together with an understanding of the structure of the society in which we exist, leads ultimately to self-understanding.

Following the publication of *Truth and Method* in 1960, Gadamer wrote an introduction to the Reclaimed edition of 'The Origin of The Work of Art', in which he endorses Heidegger's theory of how, by means of conflict, which he equates to a conflict of world and earth, truth is enabled to emerge in the work of art. Gadamer stated that:

...No one can ignore the fact that "in the work of art, in which a world arises, not only is something meaningful given to experience that was not known before, but also something new comes into existence with the work of art itself". It is not simply the manifestation of a truth it is itself an event (Gadamer, 1977).

This approval of the theory of the disclosure of truth in the world, juxtaposed with its concealment by earth reveals the truth. Gadamer indicates how closely his thinking is connected to Heidegger's (Heidegger, 1977). However, Gadamer's failure to identify his own theory of truth within *Truth and Method* attracted some criticism, leading to speculation that the position he took in relation to truth is essentially the same as that taken by Heidegger. This criticism is not without foundation, by adopting the notion of *aletheia*, in line with Heidegger, Gadamer can be seen to subscribe to Heidegger's theory of the way that the work of art facilitates the disclosure of truth, even though, as we will show, with a different emphasis on the way this happening of truth occurs.

Furthermore, Gadamer appropriates the notion of 'event' to describe the phenomenon of the opposition of the revealing and concealing of truth in the work of art (Gadamer, 1960). He makes it clear that the phenomenon of revealing and concealing is not exclusively applicable to the truth of art, but is a characteristic of all instances of the event of truth:

The disagreement between revelation and concealment is not the truth of the work of art alone, but the truth of every being, for as unhiddenness, truth is always such an opposition of revelation and concealment. The two necessarily belong together (Gadamer, 1960).

We can observe by this that concealment is an integral and necessary aspect of all being, without which it would lack 'an inner depth of self-sufficiency that Heidegger calls its standing-in-itself, (Gadamer,1960) resulting in a total leveling of being which would render it indistinguishable. This contrast, as an inherent feature of all instances of disclosure and concealment, is a universal phenomenon which permeates all surfaces of existence.

However, although Gadamer describes the manifestation of truth as an event, he gives a very different account of how this event occurs (Gadamer, 1977). For Gadamer event of the truth happens as a result of process in mediation, dialectic and conversation, in which we are required to 'consider' and take our time with the event of encounter. For Gadamer our confrontation with truth always takes place as an unexpected, immediate, and unmediated occurrence which, in recalling Heraclitus, he likens it to a lightning flash. It has been suggested, by Dostal, that Heidegger's concept of the immediacy of the experience of truth has also been equated to accounts of religious instants of revelation (Gadamer, 1960).

Having singled out the question of art as a unifying feature of their thought, two of the significant areas in which Heidegger and Gadamer can be seen to deviate concern their treatment of metaphysics and their approach to the question of humanism. With his observation that every humanism is either grounded in metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one...every humanism remains metaphysical (Heidegger, 1977). Heidegger makes a direct connection between the area of metaphysics and that of humanism, in that way to some extent, indicating his position on the question of humanism.

By starting *Truth and Method* with a discussion on the human sciences, Gadamer's position concerning humanism becomes clear at an early stage. According to Grondin, he concisely states that 'Gadamer is a humanist and Heidegger isn't'. We intend to analyze the question of metaphysics and the issue of humanism in relation to the work of Gadamer and thereby observe the way in which these issues can be seen to impact his thinking. In addition, attention will be given to the way Gadamer treat the question of science and technology including how he stresses the need for understanding the implications of living in an increasingly technological world.

The Challenges of Metaphysics

According to Wachterhauser he anticipated Gadamer's:

For Gadamer it has never been a question of freeing oneself from this metaphysical tradition in anticipation of a thinking that is beyond metaphysics. Unlike Heidegger, who forecasts the ending of metaphysics, Gadamer looks toward its transformation, informed by human finitude. (Wachterhauser, 1977)

With this observation Brice Wachterhauser summarize the very different ways in which each of these thinkers approaches the question of metaphysics. However, Gadamer subscribed to the notion of finitude, he nonetheless worked from within a framework of metaphysics. Heidegger was unwilling and therefore unable to do. The compelling question of metaphysics, asked by Leibniz, to which Heidegger draws our attention, is contained in the inquiry 'Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?' (Heidegger, 2000) And, for Heidegger, it is the suppression of the 'nothing' by metaphysics that is problematic, as it can be seen to be in direct conflict with the notion of human finitude, which is a fundamental principle of his enquiry into the meaning of being, in fact, of Heidegger's entire philosophical thought.

However, any attempt to overcome the metaphysical tradition is weighed down with difficulties arising from the problem of how, to gain a vantage point from outside. This is a situation which can be equated to the difficulties we encounter when attempting to discuss the question of being (Heidegger, 2010). Blaise Pascal highlights the paradox of attempting to define the concept of being, by pointing out '...in order to define being one must say 'It is' and hence employ the word to be defined in its definition' (Heidegger, 2010). Heidegger responds to this problem by clarifying that the question 'what is metaphysics?' extends beyond metaphysics, in that it 'springs from a thinking that has already entered into the overcoming of metaphysics' (Heidegger, 1998).

At the same time as not attempting to argue with Pascal's position, he maintains that a query of this nature 'belongs to the essence of such transitions that, within certain limits, they must continue to speak the language of that which they help overcome', (Heidegger, 2010) which suggests an implicit admission, by Heidegger, of the impossibility of completely getting through the metaphysical tradition.

Gadamer's retrospectively reflects that, within his later work, Heidegger himself modified the overcoming of metaphysics and replaced it with a coming to terms with metaphysics, (Gadamer, 1997) giving further support to this assessment of Heidegger's position.

Gadamer, noted in his approach to metaphysics, within his philosophical hermeneutics brings out his awareness of the relevance of our metaphysical heritage is clearly manifested by his appeal to our 'effective historical consciousness', which he fears has been compromised by Kant's treatment of aesthetics. This is not to suggest that Gadamer is an advocate of metaphysics, but rather that he is cognizant of the debt that we owe to over two-thousand years of a metaphysical tradition and the movement for thinking that this tradition produced. Wachterhauser summarizes his appreciation of tradition and its importance within the human sciences (Gadamer, 1997) can be summarized as:

To stand in tradition and heed it is clearly the way of truth that applies in the human sciences. So too all criticism of tradition that we achieve as historians, serves in the end the goal of connecting us up with the genuine tradition in which we stand. Being so conditioned is not an impairment of historical knowledge, but rather a moment of truth itself (Wacheterhauser, 1994)

An additional move away from Heidegger, Gadamer leaves man in no doubt about the importance of tradition and the need for dialogue in furthering our knowledge and understanding of our place within this tradition, ultimately leading to self-knowledge. With Heidegger's attempt to think away from metaphysics in mind, Gadamer argues that the matter of 'overcoming metaphysics' should not be understood as a call for a complete break with the tradition of metaphysics (Heidegger, 2010). By linking the notion of overcoming (*Überwinden*) to 'convalescing' or 'coming to terms with' (*Verwindung*), Gadamer explained that 'overcoming' (Gadamer, 1997) within this context does not mean that it should be put in the past and forgotten, but rather, that we should retain an awareness of the place of metaphysics in the shaping of Western philosophy.

Gadamer differs significantly from other philosophers in his approach to metaphysics. In fact, within his philosophical hermeneutics his awareness of the relevance of our metaphysical heritage is clearly manifested by his appeal to our effective historical consciousness, which he fears has been compromised. This is not to suggest that Gadamer is an advocate of metaphysics, but rather that he is cognizant of the indebtedness that we owe to metaphysical tradition. The impetus for this thinking in such a tradition engenders metaphysics. His appreciation of tradition and of its importance within the human sciences is encapsulated by:

To stand in tradition and heed it is clearly the way of truth that applies in the human sciences. So too all criticism of tradition that we achieve as historians, serves in the end the goal of connecting us up with the genuine tradition in which we stand. Being so conditioned is not an impairment of historical knowledge, but rather a moment of truth itself (Gadamer, 1997).

Gadamer thus leaves us in no doubt about the importance of tradition and the need for dialogue in furthering our knowledge and understanding of our place within this tradition, ultimately leading to self-knowledge.

Bearing in mind that Hegel is deemed responsible for the demise of Western metaphysics, Gadamer recommended that 'we must stay with (Hegel) in a special way', (Gadamer, 1976) seeing in Hegel the means of enhancing our understanding of Heidegger's treatment of metaphysics, which has been the starting point of considerable confusion and misinterpretation. In addition, Dennis Schmidt directs us to Heidegger's dialogue with Hegel, for the purpose of dispelling any such confusion. Schmidt is of the view that Heidegger's argument for 'overcoming metaphysics' can be found in his lifelong dialogue with his predecessors, (Gadamer, 1997) which is encapsulated in his encounter with Hegel.

In this encounter with 'the self-proclaimed completer of metaphysics', (Gadamer, 1997) as Schmidt describes Hegel, we are afforded unique access to Heidegger's attempt to disengage with metaphysics. As Heidegger views it, Western metaphysics which is responsible for a forgetfulness of being, by which he means it disregards the notion of our finitude, starts with the ancient Greeks in the thought of Plato and Aristotle and ends with Hegel's concept of absolute knowledge.

However, despite Heidegger's critique of Hegel's theory of absolute knowing, it is interesting to note the commonality between their thinking that we are alerted to by Gadamer, who remarks on 'how persistently Heidegger's thought circles around Hegel and how he continues even to this day to seek new ways of demarcating his own thought from Hegel's'. (Gadamer, 1976) Two areas in particular where Heidegger's thinking comes close to Hegel can be establish, first, in the assimilation of history into his thought, which is evidenced by his alternative to the ancient Greeks, and second, as Gadamer points out, in 'the hidden and unnoticed dialectic that attaches to all essentially Heideggerian assertions'. (Gadamer, 1976) This unobserved dialectic referred to by Gadamer, which is a feature of Heidegger's enquiry, becomes evident in the way that he supports a claim, by first enquiring into the source of the problem and then suggesting a counter-argument before reaching a conclusion.

Gadamer maintains that the observation that Heidegger is not alone in attributing the collapse of Western metaphysics to Hegel, this is a view which is supported by historical facts. Hegel had claimed that Western philosophy has been the preserve of academia and it has rested with writers and thinkers outside the academic discipline of philosophy to satisfy the need for 'a philosophical vision of the world' (Gadamer, 1976). However,

what Gadamer queries is our understanding of Hegel's theory of the absolute and its role in Western thought, asking if it should be seen as a completion or a fulfillment. Furthermore, he questions how this relates to our understanding of the position of art work:

Does such absolute knowledge imply that finally all errors lie behind us? Or is that philosophy of absolute knowledge a first encounter with the entirety of our history... When Hegel, from the viewpoint of the philosophy of the absolute concept, speaks of art as a thing of the past... Is he saying that art no longer has a purpose, no longer states anything? Or did he mean that art is a thing of the past in respect to the standpoint of absolute concept, because it was always and will always be preliminary to conceptual thinking? (Gadamer, 1997)

Gadamer questions the concerning of judgment on the position of works of art. According to Heidegger, this conjecture was not intended, by Hegel, as a denial of the possibility that many new artworks and new art movements would arise. In addition, there is in fact no denying that since Hegel a significant amount of influential art has emerged, art which confronts us with the fundamental issues of existence and thereby challenges us to think.

In an Epilogue to *'The Origin of The Work of Art'* Heidegger considers Hegel's pronouncement on the end of art, and he takes the view that what Hegel calls into question is the primacy of art as a means of allowing the happening of truth. He suggests that the question Hegel is asking is if art still has the essential element that makes it possible for the happening of truth to occur or if this position has been taken over by philosophy and religion. Therefore, the search for the essence of art, which is the stated aim of Heidegger's investigation in his essay, can be understood as a response to Hegel.

However, any discussion on what art work may be exclusively determined in relation to being and to how it provides a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, Hegel makes it clear that the fundamental concern of the essay, as with all of Heidegger's writings, is the question of being (Gadamer, 1997). This leads Heidegger, by means of a critique of the artistic approach to art, to challenge the metaphysical thinking that continues to dominate and obstruct our understanding of being. And, by highlighting the aesthetic treatment of the work of art as an object of 'sensory apprehension' which, he dismissively states, is referred to as an 'experience' (*Erlebnis*), speculating that perhaps experience is the element in which art work dies, (Heidegger, 1998). Heidegger effectively isolates and complains about the destructive aspect of aesthetics.

The uniqueness of art's position is made clear, by Gadamer's observation that through the work of art an experience of truth occurs 'that we cannot attain in any other way (Heidegger, 1998). Furthermore, as we have ascertained from Heidegger, the human being and its distinct way of being is an essential element within any event of the disclosure of truth, therefore, this also holds true in the case of the truth of the artwork, whereby the disclosure of truth through the work of art is a reciprocal event, which requires our attentive participation and responsiveness. Moreover, in informing us that, The work of art is a challenge for our understanding since over and above it evades all our interpretations, this puts up an invincible resistance to being transformed into the identity of the concept, (Gadamer, 1997). Gadamer effectively places art outside the domain of subjective aesthetic appreciation.

Moreover, he elucidates his use of the term 'disinterested', by stating that 'a judgment on an object of satisfaction can be entirely disinterested yet still very interesting, i.e., it is not grounded on any interest but it produces an interest...' (Kant, 1956). Therefore, Kant's explanation contradicted any suggestion that disinterestedness, within this context, is synonymous with indifference and affirms it rather as a form of impartiality, which suggests that it prevent any form of subjectivism. Furthermore, in Heidegger's view, having mistakenly accepted Schopenhauer's findings, Nietzsche takes issue with Kant. At the same time missing the closeness which his own thinking bears to Kantian aesthetics and he thereby efficiently perpetuated the misunderstanding, which was espoused by the tradition. Gadamer identified the source of the problem with tradition's thinking as a misinterpretation of the term interest, thereby leading to what he views as:

The erroneous opinions that with the exclusion of interest every essential relation to the object are suppressed. The opposite is the case that is precisely by means of the devoid of interest the essential relation to the object itself comes into play. The misinterpretation fails to see that now for the first time the object comes to the fore as a pure object and that such coming forward into appearance is the beautiful. The word beautiful means appearing in the radiance of such coming to the for (Gadamer, 1997).

Along with this Heidegger brings to mind Heraclitus, for whom the lighting (*die Lichtung*) illuminates 'bestows the shining, opens what shines to appearance' (Heidegger, 1984) and thereby allows it to shine forth.

As Karsten Harries states, the significance of Heidegger's essay on art, is the way it invites human beings to think the essence of art in opposition to the aesthetic approach. (Gadamer, 1997). Furthermore, Harries explains that Heidegger's challenge to aesthetics can be seen as a challenge to our contemporary world, due to the fact that by understanding artwork primarily in aesthetic terms it denies art its essential ethical function and threatens our humanity (Kant, 1956). However, Heidegger's assertion towards the end of his essay that 'whenever art happens, whenever, that is, there is a beginning, a thrust enters history; history either begins or resumes' (Heidegger, 1984) could be understood as an affirmation of the continuing relevance of art in its special place as a source of truth and thereby an acknowledgement of its relevance in a contemporary world.

Moreover, by seeing the historical aspect of art as the 'creative preservation of truth in the work', (Heidegger, 1984) Heidegger took a positive view for the future of art. Having thus highlighted the diverse ways in which scholars and Gadamer treated the question of the work of art at the same time agreeing on the concerning its role in enabling the enactment of truth, we intend to enquire into the question of humanism and the way it relates to the work of Art in some thinkers more especially Gadamer.

The Question of Humanism

According Grondin, he argued that, for humanism, the true dignity of mankind does not reside in its actual state, but in the idea that it can be cultivated and elevated to its higher destiny (Heidegger, 1984) Through this observation, Grondin can be seen to suggest that the 'true dignity of mankind' has, according to humanistic thinking, yet to be achieved. However, we would like to challenge this notion by arguing that the true spirit of humanism lies in its recognition of the innate dignity of 'mankind', which includes the potential to enhance its understanding.

Although it has been suggested that the first seeds of humanism can be traced back to Socrates, for Heidegger, who rejects the notion that humanism could gain currency in the great age of the Greeks, (Heidegger, 1984) our first encounter with humanism occurs in Rome, it therefore remains in essence a specifically Roman phenomenon' (Heidegger, 1984). The Romans, as Heidegger gives explanation, made a distinction between humans (*homo humanus*), by which they meant the Romans, and barbarians (*homo barbarous*), who shared neither the virtue (*virtus*) nor scholarship of the Romans or the Greeks. And, even as attributing the start of humanism to the Romans, he acknowledges the influence that the thinking of late Greek civilization had in its commencement.

However, although, as Grondin observed, the forerunners of scientific discovery of the time, including 'Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon and Descartes were great humanists', (Heidegger, 1984) the humanistic approach to knowledge, at the same time not in conflict with the findings of science, extended beyond the scientific notion of correctness (Heidegger, 1984). The humanism which emerged in the twentieth-century saw a revival of the ancient Greek and Latin classics, the study of which was purported to comprise a humanistic education. The humanistic thinking whereby, mindful of the dignity and potential of humankind, we are constantly in pursuit of learning from others prevails into the present age and can be evidenced in the academic study of the humanities.

Moreover, this concept that the human being is continually striving towards self-improvement brought to mind Aristotle's theory of the teleological aspect of humankind, propelling us towards attainment of the ultimate good. Staying with the Greeks, the notion of the human being as an '*animal rationale*', which is attributed to the early Greeks, is contested by Heidegger, who takes the view that in its translation from Greek to Latin, this definition became distorted and, as he sees it, conditioned by metaphysics, reminding that metaphysics, which 'does not think the difference between being and beings', (Heidegger, 1984) misses the truth of being. By drawing our attention to the biblical teaching, which informs us that man has been made out of dust' and, in addition, that man was made in the image of God (*imago dei*), (Heidegger, 1976) Grondin, who appeared to be in agreement with Heidegger's contention concerning the emergence of humanism in Rome, claimed that since its inception, humanism rests on a theological understanding of man's position in the universe' (Heidegger, 1956) .

As already mentioned, in the first part of the twentieth-century the notion of human dignity faced an unconcealed disrespect and 'Man's inhumanity to man was witnessed on a shocking and monumental scale, which effectively destabilized the notion of humanism. The injury to the dignity of humanity, inflicted by the atrocities of the Second World War, led to a re-evaluation of the notion of humanism and prompted Jean-Paul Sartre to write his essay, 'Existentialism and Humanism'.

The significance of Beaufret's question which reflected widespread concern was, 'whether or not one could still have faith in human reason and its promise of emancipation after Auschwitz' (Heidegger, 1984) Surrounded by this the section of this dissertation intend by means of an analysis of his reply, want to uncover how Heidegger responded to the question of humanism through his philosophy of being, which is central to all of his thinking.

Furthermore, mindful of Grondin's observation that it is through the issue of humanism we are enabled to understand the significant differences between the thinking of both of these philosophers. We explore Gadamer's work in juxtaposition with Heidegger, (Heidegger, 1977) and thereby highlight the differences in the way each of these thinkers treats the traditional notion of the question of humanism.

Gadamer on Humanism

Up till now if Gadamer doesn't deal directly with Heidegger's position on humanism his philosophical viewpoint can be understood as a defense of humanism and hence as a response to Heidegger's repudiation of the humanistic tradition (Grondin, 1990). At the same time accepting this claim, we argue that Gadamer's entire philosophical investigation can be viewed as a response to Heidegger as, by his own admittance, the influence which Heidegger's thought exerted on his philosophical work, surpassed that of any other thinker, including Plato and Hegel.

Furthermore, as we have seen, Heidegger's influence on Gadamer's work is particularly evident in the area of his treatment of the truth claims of art where, following Heidegger he adopted the ancient Greek notion of *aletheia* to describe the event of truth. However, this is not to suggest that Gadamer is purely a mouthpiece for Heidegger. It has already been shown within this work how Gadamer succeeded in developing his own distinctive philosophical hermeneutics, his own voice, leading him on a unique path of enquiry in the area of art work and in the humanities, by means of which, he can be seen to move beyond Heidegger.

Gadamer's achievement took the argument further than Heidegger as recognized by Brice Wachterhauser, who attributed this success to the fact that 'while Heidegger was theoretically more original than Gadamer, Gadamer is more fruitful in that he has attempted to make the debate more focused by consciously applying Heidegger's thought to a host of issues rooted in the human sciences' (Gadamer, 1997). However, Wachterhauser's statement seems misleading, because although it suggests the breadth of Gadamer's enquiry, he appears to overlook Gadamer's position as an original thinker in his own right, one who is not just parasitic upon Heidegger and who is not solely concerned with Heidegger's thinking. Previously as acknowledged within this dissertation that, in Heidegger, Gadamer finds an drive for an original approach to his own hermeneutical enquiry, his originality as a thinker is discussed in detail, giving particular attention to his treatment of 'play', the social and participative event of conversation and 'humanism'(Gadamer, 1997).

The question of the play of art, including the social, interactive and communal aspect of the play of festival, is developed, by Gadamer, in a way that Heidegger, given his antipathy towards 'publicness' and his desire for the secretive or the rare, not to mention the 'they-self', failed to do. In 1960 two significant events occurred which served to establish Gadamer's autonomy as a thinker, these included the publication of his magnum opus *Truth and Method*, and his written introduction in response to Heidegger's request, to the Reclam edition of 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (Gadamer, 1997). The invitation to write an introduction to the essay on art, coming after his major publication, could be viewed as an acknowledgment of Gadamer's philosophical competence, by Heidegger, which had been absent following the publication of *Truth and Method*. And, as is clearly indicated by Gadamer's admission that, 'writing remained a torment. Gadamer argued that he had a terrible feeling that Heidegger was standing behind him and looking over his shoulder'.

Furthermore, Gadamer admitted that the ideas Heidegger expressed, in the three lectures which were combined to create his essay on the artwork, came so close to his own questions and his own 'experience of the proximity of art and philosophy' that they prompted him to follow with an 'immediate response'. Thus, Gadamer argument led him, through his philosophical hermeneutics, 'To adhere to the line of questioning of this essay *and the later Heidegger* and to make it assessable in a new way'. (Gadamer, 1997). The question of whether Gadamer succeeded in accomplishing this aim or if, in the process, he reduced or domesticated Heidegger's thinking, effectively 'depriving it of much of its challenge' has, according to Robert Bernasconi, been raised by Jürgen Habermas, only to be later dismissed and as Bernasconi's further observations indicated, Gadamer's attempts to present Heidegger in a more accessible language were considered to be successful.

In the second edition of *Truth and Method*, Gadamer indicated the direction of his philosophical enquiry, which is concerned with understanding the circumstances of our existence in the world, which are outside our control. Moreover, in marked contrast to Heidegger, Gadamer recognized the relevance of the question of humanism in furthering understanding, as he argues:

My real concern was and is philosophic: not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing. My starting point is that the historic human sciences, as they emerged from German romanticism and became imbued with the spirit of modern science, maintained a humanistic heritage which distinguishes them from all other kinds of modern scientific experiences and especially those proper to art. In Germany the tradition of aesthetic humanism remained vitally influential in the development of the contemporary conception of science (Gadamer, 1997).

Gadamer points out that the human sciences, far from considering themselves inferior to the natural sciences possess a proud awareness of being the true beneficiary of humanism. (Gadamer, 1997). The humanism that Gadamer espouses dates back to the German revival of the classics, through the work of Goethe, Schiller and other authors of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century. In line with Renaissance thinking, this traditional concept of humanism supports the notion that it is the task of the human being to keep striving towards perfection. Furthermore, Gadamer draws attention to the influence that aesthetic humanism exerted on the development of contemporary science. It is this humanist tradition with what he perceives as, its constant drive towards the metaphysical notion of the ideal, and that Heidegger attempts to distance him from.

Although his work concerns a study of the human sciences, Gadamer, accepts the necessity of a methodical approach to his enquiry, which is synonymous with the natural sciences, though with a difference, as a way towards attaining understanding of the truth of the human sciences. At the same time not entering into any discussion concerning contrasting scientific methods, he makes it clear that the difference occurs not in the method, but in the objectives of knowledge. He is not against scientific method *per se*, but only criticizes the scientific method of insistence on the verifiability of truth.

He explains that both the human sciences and the natural sciences each pursue knowledge in their own distinctive way and he points to the absurdity of attempts by either of the sciences to arbitrate on the other's field of activity. Gadamer elaborates by reasoning that 'moral preaching in the appearance of science seems rather absurd, as does the presumption of a philosopher who deduce from principles the way in which science must change in order to become philosophically legitimate', (Gadamer, 1997) thereby clearly delineating the two distinctive and authentic roles for both the human sciences and the natural sciences.

Failure to recognize this distinction can lead to a fallacious expectation that the human sciences can be measured by the yardstick of an increasing knowledge of regularity, (Gadamer, 1960) and he further emphasizes that there is no place for the intrusion of method by the natural sciences on the socio-historical world. According to Gadamer, one of the leading humanistic themes is the concept of *Bildung*, which had its commencement in the humanism of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment period, which championed the talents and the potential of the individual human being.

In addition, to link it to the traditional humanistic, the approach to the development of one's talents, Gadamer explains that *Bildung* is intimately associated with the idea of culture and designates primarily the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities. (Gadamer, 1960). It is worth noting that by rehabilitating the term *Bildung*, Gadamer is not suggesting an exclusive approach to the gathering of cultural knowledge, but rather he clearly makes a distinction between being cultured and the accumulation of knowledge.

The civilized person as Gadamer argues is one who is receptive to the views of others, has an openness and willingness to learn from the other and in Socratic fashion, possesses an awareness of the limits of their knowledge. Conversely, the scholar, who may have a support of factual knowledge, is one who assumes a dogmatic attitude of authority in relation to their knowledge which disqualify questioning and dialogue and consequently, in Gadamer's view, leaves them unaware of the level of their own ignorance.

Gadamer's Understanding of Technology

According to Gadamer, he believed that experience is inherently linguistic, which implies that we cannot separate our experience from our language. For Gadamer, language determines who the person is and what will become of him/her. In following his mentor's (Heidegger), famous dictum that, language is the house of Being, Gadamer argues that we live in and through linguistic practices, language is not just one of man's possessions in the world; rather, on it depends the fact that man has a world at all (Gadamer, 1997). Gadamer argues that language is much more than an instrument or tool that one can pick up, use and then put away for future use. Instead, he sees human beings as encompassed by their own language. He believes that we are always already at home in language, just as much as we are in the world (Gadamer, 1960).

Consequently, language is central to our understanding as Gadamer argues. This argument that language itself prefigures all experience in the world is revealed to man through language. However, Gadamer demonstrated that the power of language in creating and recreating a different world from what it was, when he states that, language is not limited to a stock of words and phrases, of concepts, viewpoints and opinions. In addition, looking through from another perspective, language is not its elaborated in conventionalism manner not in the burden of pre-schematization with which it loads man but the generative and creative power to unceasingly make this whole again fluent (Gadamer, 1997).

Gadamer, continued to argue that our world reveals itself through language and language prefigures all experience. In suggesting that the idea of language prefigures human experience, Gadamer used an analogy of a game which has its own existence apart from all the players who are involved in that game. The basic rules of the game will remain unchanged no matter when it is played or by whom. In the same way just like the game does not change its structure because different people play it at different times in history, language also lives on akin to the life of a game.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics emphasizes the need for a relationship that is founded on dialogical principles. The dialogical model that he proposes in *Truth and Method* is very similar to the Socratic style. He based his philosophical hermeneutics to the text being transformed into a dialogical relationship with the reader. Finally Gadamer's truth reveals from a genuine dialogue between the text and the reader views. He believes that only by engaging in a genuine dialogue, which is characterized by constant questioning and answering, will truth be made manifest.

Gadamer did not seek truth on the basis of the subjective meaning that the authors propose to convey to the reader. However he rather participates in secure conversation with the text and being open to the possibilities of meaning that the text engender. Gadamer's hermeneutical understanding is closely linked to his notion of *praxis*. In *Truth and Method*, he argues that understanding happens only through genuine dialogue with the other. He argue for an "I-Thou" relationship that is based on a position of symmetry of claims and is typified by non-domination. This type of relationship in the view of Gadamer is based on non-judgmental attitude, mutuality, and a willingness to listen to the claims of the other with an eye to their possible validity. Such a dialogue is characterized by a genuine "I-Thou" relation with the other and is "illustrated by such qualities as spontaneity, respect, and equality.

Gadamer's assessment of the effects of technology seem to be particularly relevant in the age of rapidly advancing computer technology, where we are offered easy access to the internet and to social media and which paradoxically, by bringing faceless 'friends' to our fingertips, invades our autonomy and effectively creates a greater distance between ourselves and the other. (Gadamer, 1997). Whereas Heidegger has singled art out, as a potential answer to enable us to retain our autonomy and further our understanding in a world that is dominated by science, Gadamer places his hopes on language. Both of these thinkers look to the area of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] to increase our understanding and thereby rescue us from the perceived threat of science and technology. And, for Gadamer, this understanding is attained by means of questioning through dialogue and conversation, for the purpose of which we rely upon language.

Gadamer argues that we may be accused today with the friendliest of intentions of feeling obliged to stand up for objectivity and epistemological assurance of the foundations of scientific knowledge in the area of the interpretation. What a perversion of all points of emphasis, as though it was necessary to put up a special fight for the victory round of modern science and of scientific research. This was the great achievement of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This brought about the victory of our experience of the world based on mathematics and methodology. Gadamer argues that technology contains an apparatus of endless mediation and extrication thus

the immediacy of spontaneous judgment and of spontaneous address is threatened again and again. Gadamer's linkages between truth and *bildung* and *phronesis* may become lost in the concern for technology and how the present generation utilizes it to construct a future.

Gadamer's analysis of Science and Technology

Throughout this dissertation, Gadamer's acknowledgement of the value of science and its contribution to knowledge has been made clear. Rather than rejecting the notion of scientific method, in his hermeneutical investigation of the human sciences, Gadamer employs scientific methodology. He argues that it is the objective of knowledge, rather than the method of discovery, that allows differentiating between natural science and the human sciences. The problem with the natural sciences is their failure to recognize a truth which does not satisfy their method of proof.

This can be seen as a defense of the human sciences, where Gadamer highlights what he considers to be the narrow scope of the natural sciences by their effective dismissal of the truths of religion, philosophy, and issues of worldview, which are unverifiable by scientific method and which seem to have been more effective in their support of an orderly society, than the contemporary sciences.

In line with Heidegger, Gadamer is aware of the far-reaching implications that rapidly advancing scientific and technological world poses for human existence. Furthermore, due to a contentment whereby humanity is resigned to accept its own limitedness, he detected a lack of confidence in philosophy's competence to supply a broader, more comprehensive account of knowledge than that which satisfies the method of the natural sciences (Heidegger, 1977). While hollowing Heidegger's apprehension, Gadamer informs us about the all-encompassing effect of contemporary technology, with its increasing threat to human autonomy and freedom, affirming that:

A result of technology is that it leads to such a manipulation of human society, of the formation of public opinion, of the life conduct of everyone, of the disposition of each individual's time between job and family and it takes our breath away. (Gadamer, 2001).

Gadamer's assessment of the effects of technology seem to be particularly relevant in the age of rapidly advancing computer technology, where we are offered easy access to the internet and to social media and which paradoxically, by bringing faceless 'friends' to our fingertips, invades our autonomy and effectively creates a greater distance between ourselves and the other.

Gadamer places the importance of language, he looks to the area of the human sciences to increase our understanding and thereby liberate the human being from the perceived threat of science and technology. This understanding is attained by means of questioning through conversation and discussion, for the purpose of which we rely upon language. Gadamer, revisits the problem of science's insistence on its supremacy in the adjudication of truth and its consequent failure to recognize the full scope of the question of truth. This effectively undermines the integrity of the human sciences as Gadamer argues:

How far it lies directly in the conduct of science that there are so many questions, the answers to which we must know, that it nevertheless forbids us. It forbids them, however, in that it discredits them...declares them meaningless. (Gadamer, 1977)

In this way it illustrates the preventive influence of science by prohibiting the pursuit of knowledge which is undefinable by scientific method. However, as we have seen within this work, Gadamer articulates confidence in the ability of language to transcend scientific dominance and to appeal to conversation to philosophy.

Conclusion

This article has indicated the unifying aspect of this research, which is concerned with the truth claims of art work, as investigated by means of the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer. It has been shown that, Gadamer, pursues his paths of enquiry into the manifestation of truth. He takes the view that through the work of art an unfolding of truth occurs, which is unrestrained by scientific methods and therefore exceeds the notion of truth as correctness. Having adopted the term *aletheia*, which Heidegger reclaims from antiquity, to describe the unfolding of truth, and even as finding areas of agreement, it can be seen how Gadamer continues, by developing his own unique approach to the question of the truth claims of art. Furthermore, it has been shown that the phenomenon of concealing and

revealing, whereby truth becomes manifested through the artwork, is also applicable to all instances of the manifestation of truth.

The other significant issue that has been discussed within this chapter, concerns the question of science and technology, the way that Gadamer responds to this question, and its relevance to the work of art. It has been shown, that Gadamer is cognizant of the importance of science's contribution to knowledge and aware of the way in which science and technology shape modernity. He advises vigilance in our approach to these phenomena. In Gadamer's view, the problem with the natural sciences is, due to their insistence on verifiable proof, according to the standards of the scientific method, they fail to recognize the truths of the human sciences and philosophy. Furthermore, Gadamer also warns about the harmful effects of contemporary technology and its manipulation of society he takes the view that the way to live with the effects of science and technology is through developing an understanding of them. For him this understanding is achieved by means of language. It is therefore incumbent on human beings, to take an informed approach and remain vigilant to the potential dangers, to benefit from the undeniable advantages which science and technology continue to offer in revealing the truth.

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