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# The Relationship Between Philosophy and Art: Martin Heidegger as a Model

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**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between philosophy and art in the thought of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger believes that poetry is the only refuge for human beings, as it enables them to reclaim their authentic existence and liberates them from the grip of dominant technology. His preoccupation with poetry was not merely an artistic concern, but rather an essential part of his fundamental engagement with the very question of thought itself especially in the context of his discussion on the “end of philosophy.” Poetry, as explored by Heidegger, became an ontological issue imposed by the thought of Being, where he opened a dialogue between thought and poetry to restore it to its original poetic roots. This aims to transcend the concept of art as defined by metaphysics, which confined its boundaries within a form of technique. An authentic vision of the work of art must go beyond the framework established by Western metaphysics, which, by focusing on beings, transformed the work of art into a mere object. In contrast, art plays a fundamental role in revealing Being. A topic of this nature requires both analytical and historical methodologies.

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## Introduction:

The issue of the relationship between philosophy and art has always been an ambiguous one, as it has received divergent answers from thinkers and philosophers. Throughout its historical development, philosophical thought has oscillated between attraction and repulsion in addressing this issue. Consequently, the reader may discern contradictory positions in the philosophical evaluation of artistic discourse and in determining its rank among cultural discourses. One may recall the pre-Socratic philosophers, who did not reject the artistic style, in contrast to Platonic philosophy, which regarded art as an illusion limited to the imitation of sensory existence an existence that is itself merely a copy of the world of forms.

This divergence was not confined to the Greek era; it can be observed throughout the various stages of philosophical development. If the relationship between philosophy and art within the framework of axiology (the study of values) is an epistemological reference positioning philosophy as a field of knowledge that studies art as its object and if judgments concerning the capacity of art to apprehend the world have often taken a stance of disdain and devaluation, especially from the rationalist approach that places absolute confidence in reason while diminishing all other cognitive paths, then the irrationalist philosophical orientation, particularly that of postmodern philosophers, has posed the issue in a radically different manner.

This transformation in the estimation of art is what we find in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Thus, aesthetic perception becomes an epistemological vision capable of comprehending Being and penetrating its essence more deeply than philosophical cognitive tools grounded in reason. Hence, we shall focus on the following problem: Can art reveal the truth of Being? In light of this central question, several subsidiary issues arise, through which we aim to understand and deconstruct the nature of the topic, starting from its fundamental problem, namely:

How can one return to the Greek origin in order to undermine metaphysics? What is *techne* (the technique)? What is the technological threat to the destiny of humankind? And if poetry is the savior from this threat, what is its relation to the work of art?

### **1. Returning to the Greek Origin in Order to Undermine Metaphysics:**

Martin Heidegger says: "He who thinks about the truth of Being does not confine himself to metaphysics; yet this does not mean that he thinks against metaphysics. If we were to use a metaphor, we could say that he does not uproot the tree of philosophy, nor does he tear it from its roots; rather, he turns over the soil and cultivates the ground. Metaphysics remains the first material of philosophy, but it never attains to being the primordial material of thought. For thought that thinks the truth of Being is compelled to transcend metaphysics."

Heidegger defines his position toward the history of metaphysics by pausing precisely at the thinker who elevated it to the level of history namely, Hegel. In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel claims: "The subject matter of philosophy is the Idea in its concreteness, that is, as the unity of its various determinations; it is the universal, the absolute universal."

Heidegger believes that Hegel's definition of history as the development of thought is not incorrect but it is not entirely correct either. It is "true with the truth of metaphysics," for in Hegel metaphysics found for the first time the expression of its absolute essence within the philosophical system.

Metaphysics, since Aristotle, has defined itself as the science of Being qua Being. Yet Heidegger, in his *Holzwege* (Off the Beaten Track), states: "It is true that metaphysics represents beings in their Being, and thus it thinks the Being of beings; but it does not think the difference between Being and beings."

Western thought, precisely in the form of metaphysics, conceals from us here the event of this reflection. It defines the fundamental question of metaphysics, stating: "The fundamental, inescapable, and central question is: why is there being rather than nothing? This question holds the first rank in philosophical importance among other questions, yet this priority is not taken in a temporal sense. People usually ask themselves many questions with meaningful content in the course of their historical journey through time before they begin to ask this one. Many people have never faced this question at all or have never thought of asking it."

Among the reasons that make this question central is that it is a profound question that, by its depth, surpasses most other philosophical questions. It is the fundamental question for beginning the process of philosophizing. For this reason, it represents the forgotten of metaphysics and the unthought. It is the one most calling for thought in our time a time that calls for thinking because we do not yet think. (Heidegger, 2015).

Heidegger believes that in order to recollect, we must find our way toward the poets, and he summarized his philosophical project as: "Recollection of the beginning and decision toward the future." (Al-Sheikh, 2008).

In other words, metaphysics is forgetfulness of the difference between Being and beings. Hence, remembrance becomes a retrieval of Being as ontological difference. From this, Heidegger declares:

"We do not seek precision in what the thinkers have thought, but rather in what they have not thought in the unthought that unthought from which the thought draws its very essence." (Al-'Aali, 1991).

Heidegger's reflection on the beginning of metaphysics with Plato is not a meditation on a past event that has ended, for what happened with him still determines our present and even our future. Thus, the transformation that began with Plato is a decision that concerns Western history and defines even our era, marked by the dominance of scientific interpretation. (Heidegger, 2003).

For this reason, Heidegger insists on constantly returning to the Greek world to Parmenides and Heraclitus where thought spoke in a poetic manner and presented itself as a listening to the saying of language as the dwelling of Being. (Ibrahim, n.d.).

The inquiry into the essence of poetry was the result of Heidegger's concern with the question of the truth of Being and the truth of thought. If man is to consider the purity of thought, he must first free himself from the constraints of the technical interpretation of thinking a conception whose origins go back to the Platonic moment. If thought is in the service of action and directed toward production, the most significant outcome of this metaphysics is the preeminence of science and technology. Thought has thus come to stand in opposition to practice and action. According to Heidegger's view, technology today extends its total dominance over the universe, and it has therefore become necessary to stop the attempt to secularize thought, since there are various forms other than scientific thinking that can express the truth of thought, and the greatest of these forms is poetry in its relation to thought.

## 2. Technology:

Technology, as defined by Heidegger, who considers it one of the main components of modernity, is not merely about machines, objects, or inventions, but rather, a technical attitude above all else. This is because the essence of technology is not technical, but metaphysical a mode of human relationship with the surrounding things. (Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 2008).

We cannot reach its true essence except through an understanding that arises from human lived experience.

Thus, in its very essence, technology represents the era of the completion of Western metaphysics, since technology is fundamentally based on metaphysical principles that have been formed throughout the course of Western thought. Therefore, Heidegger believes that the act of transcending metaphysics has become a necessary condition for restoring the truth of Being, by re-posing the question of Being. In this way, we can open ourselves to an era in which thought regains its rightful place: "Yet precisely there, where by a special step the highest degree of reflection has been reached, thought must content itself with preparing the state of readiness for speech that humanity needs today." (Heidegger, *Philosophy Confronts Science and Technology*, 1998).

Hence, technology is the fulfillment, accomplishment, and realization of metaphysics. The technical discourse is the final expression of metaphysics, for according to Heidegger, the oblivion of difference results from the dominance of technology. He expresses this by saying:

"We inquire into the nature of technology, and by doing so we wish to establish a free relationship with it. The relationship will be free when it opens our being to the essence of technology. If we provide an answer to this essence, we can then recognize the technological tendency within its limits." (Heidegger, 1995).

Heidegger affirms at the beginning of his lecture "The Question Concerning Technology" (published in his collection *Lectures and Essays*, 1954) the necessity of distinguishing between technology and the essence of technology, for technology is not its own essence or rather, "the essence of technology is never something technical.

For Heidegger, technology does not have a purely technological meaning ; rather, it possesses a metaphysical significance it characterizes the relationship that modern man establishes with the world surrounding him. The fundamental condition of modern times is not technological because of the existence of steam engines followed later by internal combustion engines; rather, these things exist because this era itself is a technological one".(Pauto, 2004).

Heidegger begins his reflection on the essence of technology by presenting the instrumental or anthropological definition of technology as a set of tools and means to achieve a specific purpose, on the one hand, and as a distinct human activity, on the other. However, he rejects this definition because such a conception makes science the foundation of technology, rather than the reverse. Moreover, this view does not distinguish between ancient and modern technology, and it assumes that humans are capable of controlling technology whereas, in reality, the opposite is true. So, what does the word "technē" actually mean?

Heidegger traces the etymological meaning of the word technology back to the Greeks, where it was connected with *epistēmē*, meaning knowledge or understanding. Returning to Aristotle, Heidegger finds that he differentiates between knowledge (*epistēmē*) and *technē*, considering *technē* as a form of *aletheia*, that is, the uncovering or revealing of truth. Thus, the essence of technology is related to truth itself.

Therefore, technology is a form of poiesis a bringing-forth in which the four modes of causality are at play. It is a kind of poetic production in the highest sense of the word.

According to Heidegger, the essence of technology here corresponds to Greek thought, that is, to craftsmanship or artisanal technē, but it does not correspond at all to modern technology. Hence, Heidegger asks:

What, then, is the essence of modern technology that allows it to dare to employ the exact natural sciences?

It is also a form of revealing, but the revealing that governs modern technology does not appear as a form of poetic bringing-forth. Rather, the revealing that prevails in modern technology is:

“A challenging, through which nature is compelled to yield energy that can be extracted and stored up.”

The revealing that governs modern technology thus takes the form of a summons or provocation a kind of calling-forth or incitement. This calling occurs when the hidden energy of nature is liberated; what is obtained is then transformed, accumulated, stored, distributed, and consumed anew.

Accordingly, modern natural science can only be considered a variation of modern technology, and therefore the relationship between science and technology must be inverted. Their common essence disappears in what Heidegger calls “enframing” (Gestell) or the mode of inquiry. (Heidegger, 1995).

### 3. The Essence of Truth:

Heidegger’s position on the question of truth can be understood through two key texts in which he traces the transformations of the concept of truth.

The first is his work “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” published several times, most notably in 1954, together with “Letter on Humanism,” and later in 1967 as part of a collection of twelve essays and lectures entitled “Pathmarks.”

The second is his famous lecture “On the Essence of Truth,” delivered in 1930 and published in 1943.

In his lecture “On the Essence of Truth,” Heidegger establishes the foundation upon which every inner possibility of openness that is, the path or reason leading to the correspondence and conformity of judgment with the thing itself is grounded in freedom. It is through freedom that the human being is able to open himself to what is disclosed.

Freedom, in this sense, is not something possessed by man, nor is it a property that distinguishes him; rather, freedom belongs to Being itself. Through stepping outside of grounding and conformity, Heidegger states:

“Freedom is not confined to what common understanding likes to conceive under this name namely, the sense of whim or caprice that sometimes arises within us and pushes us to choose this or that side... Freedom, before all else, is the gift or dedication to the unconcealment of beings as such. This unconcealment itself is preserved and safeguarded in the externalizing gift. It is by virtue of this gift or dedication that the openness of the open becomes possible.” (Heidegger, Call of Truth, 1977).

Thus, the essence of truth is freedom, and freedom lies within the very essence of truth itself.

What, then, does Heidegger mean by essence?

He emphasizes that by essence he means the inner foundation of possibility underlying what we take to be immediately and generally known. The question of essence has nothing to do with ready-made answers or predefined explanations; rather, it revolves around a single axis that which distinguishes truth as such. (Al-Quddous, 2004).

### 4. The Essence of Poetry and Its Relationship with the Work of Art:

According to Heidegger, all paths of thought lead, in an obscure and unusual way, through language, for language, in his view, is “the house of Being.” He establishes a direct connection between language and poetry, stating:

“But poetry is not merely a wandering thought; what poetry presents as a revealing projection and casts forward toward the open does so in a way that lets it resonate amid beings.” (Heidegger, Technology - Truth - Being, 1995).

Poetry, for Heidegger, cannot be understood in isolation but only through its interrelation and harmony with three interacting realms: the work of art, language, and the sacred.(Haar, 1988)

The poem is therefore a work of art, whose material or rather, its very element is language, which magnifies the sacred. As Beda Alemany explains: “The concept of poetry, in this interpretation, can be broadened to such an extent that it no longer encompasses only poetry in the narrow sense, but also the field of art as a whole.”

Heidegger engaged in profound dialogues with poets such as Hölderlin, Trakl, Rilke, and Stefan George, as well as with thinkers like Parmenides and Heraclitus, and even with the painter Van Gogh.

For Heidegger, what matters is not poetry as versification, but rather poetry as a mode of art that expresses the spirit and profound meaning of poiesis, logos, and physis together a way of speaking the truth of Being, the truth of that which ought to be held sacred.

Thus, poetry has a broad and originary meaning that returns to the etymological root of the Greek word poiemata, meaning creation or bringing-forth that is, artistic and existential creativity itself.

When Heidegger asserts that all forms of art originate in poetry, he means that every art form involves an act of creation, imagination, and invention. Art, in this sense, is a process of bringing forth a new unfolding of being in its totality. This is what Heidegger calls the experience of truth, or, in other words, the experience of the presence of what is present in the work. Art, through its poetic essence defined by creation and production is the presence of the present, meaning the act of letting what is present reveal itself in presence. (Heidegger, 1976).

At the beginning of his analysis of the essence of poetry, Heidegger refers to a poetic passage by Hölderlin to determine the field or path through which we can intersect with poetry. Hölderlin says: “Poetic creation is the most innocent of all occupations.” (Heidegger, What Is Philosophy? What Is Metaphysics? Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry, 1964).

But how can poetic creation be the most innocent of all occupations? Because it remains pure speech and, as such, is devoid of any harm it is not directly linked to practical action. Its aim is not to change immediate reality; therefore, the poetic world remains confined within the realm of pure language. Hence, every inquiry into the essence of poetry is, in truth, an inquiry into the essence of language itself. Poetry produces its effects within language; it becomes art only insofar as it inaugurates the very possibility of language.

Poetry is language itself but not language as understood through linguistics or the philosophy of language and logic. Language is not the material of poetry. As Jean Beaufret states: “Language is not a system of signs or symbols; it is a relation to the world. This relation does not occur through an intermediary linguistic realm between us and the world of beings, as Humboldt sees it, but through the opening of the world itself.” (Jean, 1969).

For Heidegger, the essence of poetry transcends its author; the self holds no authority over what it writes. Poetry is not bound to its writer. In one of his readings of Georg Trakl's poem A Winter Evening, Heidegger writes: “The poem we have chosen is a poem by Georg Trakl. This does not mean that the author of the poem determines how it should be approached. A good poem is characterized by a presence that allows us to set aside the name and person of its author.” (Heidegger, The Call of the Beloved Readings in the Poetry of Hölderlin and Trakl , 1994).

Poetry grants language an ontological nobility its mission is to engage in the act of thinking about Being. The language of poetry is closer to thought than to metaphysics, and closer to Being than to beings. Thought, as the thought of Being, must remain near poetry, preserving the dialogue with poetic speech as the saying of Being itself. This proximity constitutes the essential neighborhood between thought and poetry. Heidegger writes: “Speech, as it concerns us, is not merely expression or a human activity; speech itself speaks. Therefore, we must seek the act of speaking within the speech of the poem. What must be sought, then, is the poetic essence of the speaking speech.” (Heidegger, 1976).

If every art is poetry, and every poetry is language, then language as such lies in bringing beings for the first time into the open realm. Language names beings; thus, beings reveal themselves to humans through language. From

this also follows that every artistic creation bears a profound relation to language. The creative nature of language is the practice of poetry that is, it resides in the very essence of language. Since language names beings, it brings forth Being, serving as humanity's means of disclosing the concealed Being in which it dwells. (Tawfiq, 1992).

The inquiry into the essence of art, therefore, can proceed only through the artwork itself. For this reason, Heidegger directs his analysis of the nature of art toward specific works, such as Van Gogh's A Pair of Shoes or the Greek temple as an artistic creation. Using his phenomenological method, he lets the artwork itself reveal its essence.

For Heidegger, the artwork is not tied to the subjective experience of the artist. He rejects any approach that considers the work merely as an expression of the artist's inner self. Art, for him, is defined only in its relation to Being; art is authentic only when it constitutes an open space within which Being is allowed to unfold.

### 5. The Thing and the Work of Art:

Heidegger begins his understanding of the nature of the work of art from its thingness, since the artist cannot produce a work apart from the materiality that constitutes it. Every work requires a material through which it is brought into existence, and every receiver of artistic works initially finds themselves in relation to things. There is always something material in architecture (stone), in painting (color). All works of art possess this thing-like aspect. Aesthetic experience cannot ignore the material dimension of the artwork: the stoniness in the architectural work, the woodenness in the carved object, the color in the painted canvas, the sound in the linguistic work, and the melody in the musical composition. (Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, 2003).

However, what Heidegger rejects in the discussion of the artwork's thingness is reducing the work of art to its mere material aspect. The artwork cannot be understood solely through its thingly character, but rather through its being as something that refers beyond itself. It thus performs a symbolic function, transcending what traditional aesthetics defines as the dominant feature of the work's materiality. Heidegger therefore rejects any aesthetic approach that views the being of the work superficially, that is, as an identification between the thing and the work of art.

Every genuine vision of the work of art, according to Heidegger, must go beyond the trajectory traced by Western metaphysics, which has focused on beings and reduced art to a mere thing. The truth of the artwork cannot be confined to its status as an object analyzable according to predetermined rules and methods. Rather, the work of art constitutes a world unto itself a world that is present in and through it. In this sense, the artwork becomes independent from both the creator's and the receiver's subjectivity. Thus, the essential meaning of art lies in its revealing function: it discloses Being by giving form to what we perceive. (Heidegger, *The Call of Truth*, 1977).

### Conclusion:

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that the inquiry into the problematic nature of art and especially poetry has, for many thinkers and philosophers, become a path of liberation from the grip of technicity, which represents an ontological condition governing our age. This historical condition, now declaring the completion and culmination of its own program, has transformed into a universal mode of thought. What once began as mere principles within traditional logic has now realized itself as an ontological reality an actual state whose manifestations in various domains have surpassed the limits of the rational.

Within this understanding, both poetry and philosophy will hold a significant place, for the essence of each has been reinterpreted in a new way. The essence of poetry and thought will thus be defined as two modes of expression of Being: one poetry expresses possibility, while the other thought expresses actuality. Being itself is both possibility and actuality at once. Through this interpretation, all traditional oppositions between poetry and philosophy collapse those that once reduced the rank of poetry to a lesser epistemic status. Heidegger, however, regarded poetry as a fertile ground for creativity. Hence, thought must recover from the rational domination that has gripped Western thinking as a whole. For once reason occupies the realm of thought, it subjugates all fields of knowledge to its authority.

Heidegger's preoccupation with poetry, as has become evident, was not a purely aesthetic concern but rather a response to a central question his ontological inquiry into the essence of thought in the context of the end of philosophy. The question of poetry, as Heidegger practiced it, became an ontological question imposed by the thinking of being itself. It opened a dialogue between thought and poetry, aiming to return thinking to its original

poetic soil, so that it might transcend the metaphysical conception that confined its possibilities within the boundaries of technique.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study is based on theoretical, philosophical, and textual analysis of published works by Martin Heidegger and secondary literature in the fields of aesthetics, ontology, and hermeneutics. No human participants, personal data, or empirical experimentation were involved. Accordingly, the research complies with standard ethical guidelines for humanities and philosophical inquiry. All referenced sources have been cited accurately, with intellectual contributions properly attributed.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. No personal, financial, or academic relationships influenced the analysis or conclusions presented in the study.

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