

## Table of contents: The Origin of the Internet

• <b>Prologue - Prometheus v.2.0.</b>	P. 3
• Introduction.	P. 7
<b>Division I – Setting the stage.</b>	
• Heidegger as Aristotle’s ventriloquist.	P. 9
<b>Division II – The Internet.</b>	
• What is the Internet?	P. 10
• Plato’s devaluation of art as impetus of technological subjectivism.	P. 14
• Thing-concepts.	P. 16
• From <i>Kunst als Bild</i> to <i>Kunst als Bau</i> .	P. 18
• Conclusion: what is the Internet and how does it disclose the virtual world?	P. 20
<b>Division III – The virtual world.</b>	
• What is the virtual world?	P. 22
• Being-with-in-the-virtual-world.	P. 23
• Conclusion: Being-with-in-the-virtual-world.	P. 27
<b>Division IV – Aesthetic rapture and oblivion.</b>	
• The ‘there’ distinct to the virtual world.	P. 28
• The state-of-mind engendered by the disclosing of the virtual world through aesthetic rapture.	P. 30
• Conclusion: oblivion & aesthetic rapture.	P. 32
<b>Division V – The privatization of truth.</b>	
• The privatization of truth.	P. 33
• What is privatization?	P. 34
• <i>Aletheia</i>	P. 35
• What is truth?	P. 36
• Conclusion: What is truth?	P. 45
• Conclusion: the privatization of truth & the Origin of the Internet.	P. 46
• Truth or dare?	P. 49
• Bibliography	P. 51

*The Origin of the Internet**Master-thesis R.P.C. Boudestein**0844128*

Sing in me, O muse, and through me tell the myth,  
 Of that man skilled in all the ways of contending;  
 A wanderer, harried for years on end...

*You* who seek a great fortune,  
*You* who are now *in chains*.  
 You will find a fortune –  
 Though it not be the fortune you seek!

First you must travel,  
 A long and difficult road...  
 A road fraught with peril...  
 You shall see things,  
 Wonderful to tell.  
 And O so many startlements...

I cannot tell you how long this road shall be.  
 But fear not the obstacles in your path,  
 For fate has vouchsafed your reward.  
 Though the road may wind,  
 Yea, your hearts grow weary –  
 Still shall ye follow the way!  
 Even unto... *your salvation?*

*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

Coen brothers.

### The future is prologue...

- Prometheus v.2.0.

Is there anybody, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that remembers where man originally comes from? If not, let me spin you the tale where from, so you may envision where to...

After the golden race, subjects of Cronos, who lived without cares, eating honey that dripped from trees, were lulled into sleep... came the silver race, likewise divinely created. The silver race was ignorant, though they lived to be a hundred years. To revel in ignorance while blessed with longevity... *Never!* Zeus blasted them into oblivion on a whim. After infernal thunderbolts rained down unto the earth, setting ablaze the trees until they were nothing but ash... came the brazen race, who fell as fruits from ash-trees, born armed with weapons. They ate flesh; the cornucopia of plenty was depleted. With scarcity about they made war, reveling in the rapture of combat, but apart from that were insolent men. Blackened by birth, Nyx seized them all. Next came the second brazen race, who were nobler, being begotten by Olympians on mortal mothers. They fought gloriously in the siege of Thebes, the expedition of the Argonauts and the Trojan War. These men, who are heroes of the iron race, now dwell in the Elysian Fields.

And so the iron race was begotten by men of the second brazen race on mortal mothers; unworthy descendants – to see one of these one need only look into the mirror. Why, if we be miscreants, are we still here today to spin the original tale? The reason we have not been extirpated by Zeus is Prometheus, that most cheeky mythological bugger...

In the titanomachy between the titans and the Olympians, Prometheus, son of Ouranos and Gaia, sided with the Olympians and was made of their kind. Athene taught him architecture, mathematics, medicine and other arts. Prometheus passed these on to mankind, thereby giving us the essential equipment for the pursuit of knowledge through technology; giving us the Grand Style needed to treat knowledge through technology as a cultural endeavor.

Zeus, foreseeing that man was ultimately destined to surpass the Olympians in power, grew angry... Jealous anger awakened because we are capable of growth, never subject to the eternal boredom of perfection that holds hostage the gods. To build towards and ultimately exceed Olympian 'perfection' *and still be hungry for more*, that is the fate Zeus allotted us – and he couldn't stomach it.

Dark clouds gathered...

Just before apocalyptic thunder began to roll over heads-in-the-clouds-men, Prometheus intervened with Zeus to spare mankind. Zeus, remembering the services rendered by

Prometheus in the titanomachy, forgot the nature of Prometheus as a traitor to his kind and granted us mercy... but punished Prometheus by withholding fire to mankind. In doing so, the flame needed to kindle the passion of the Greeks' Grand Style went out and mankind was plummeted into darkness. Zeus meanwhile, having nipped mankind in the bud, was pleased. To celebrate his victory he threw himself a bacchanal on mount Olympus, getting drunk and ravishing his women.

But Prometheus' hubris got the better of him. As Zeus lay, sunken deep in drunken dreams, Prometheus went to Athene to implore her to grant him backstairs admittance to Olympus, and this she did – eventually... Upon arrival at the summit, he lit a torch at the fiery chariot of the Sun and broke from it a fragment of glowing charcoal, which he thrust into the pithy hollow of a fennel-stalk. Then, extinguishing his torch, he snuck away to present fire to mankind.

When Zeus awoke to find mankind busy bees again, he swore revenge. He ordered Hephaestus to make a clay woman; Pandora. Zeus sent her to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus so they may be wed, but Prometheus had warned him never to accept a gift from Greeks, so Epimetheus respectfully excused himself. In turn Prometheus, getting the better of Zeus on three occasions, was chained to a pillar in the Caucasian mountains, where an eagle tore at his liver all day. Each night it grew back and at daybreak the eagle came circling down again – and so on in perpetuity...

Zeus excused his savagery by circulating what he believed a falsehood: Athene, he said, had invited Prometheus to Olympus for a secret love affair. She provided access to the summit, it made sense the other Olympians would believe it. Unbeknownst to him, he was in the right. The never before uncovered truth of the matter is, however, more opportunistic and prophetic for mankind. Prometheus came to Olympus for our sake, and imploring Athene to get in her good graces, he made love to her with a longing passion that far-exceeded Olympian ravishing. He made her feel the all too human potential of unfulfilled wanting with your whole being... and it rocked her perfect Olympian world by Zeus' side. Athene, swept up in ecstatic rapture, having tasted what mankind will become, couldn't withhold Prometheus anything... Not even truth herself could be withheld from him by Athene, for she gave birth to Aletheia; the daughter not of Zeus, but of Prometheus. Aletheia; goddess of childbirth.

Truth, I always found, has a distinct human halo about her... And she is essentially our half-sister by progeny; our relationship to her has always been semi-incestuous.

Epimetheus meanwhile, having heard what fate had befallen his brother, hastened to marry Pandora and undo the torture of his brother at the hands of Zeus. But Pandora was the original revenge Zeus had sworn. In marrying her off to Epimetheus vengeance with a vengeance was seemingly exacted – for Pandora was as mischievous as she was beautiful. The night of their

wedding Pandora opened a jar, which Prometheus had told Epimetheus never to open, in which he had imprisoned the Spites that might plague mankind: Old Age, Labor, Vice and Discord. Out these flew to attack mankind. Yet we did not succumb to them, because Delusive Hope, whom Prometheus had also shut in the jar, discourages us from a general suicide by whispering lies... *Lies? Lies to refrain from suicide are truths to keep striving. Hope lives – even delusive hope that ‘lies’.* Her original falsity is the savior of mankind. She is our ontological fallacy; the genie in Pandora’s jar. Delusive Hope’s whispers kept us going, building, discovering, applying ourselves to existence – and so we strived. Because all we need when something ostensibly cannot be done is the faintest whisper carried on the winds of change...

So what of truth? *What* of Aletheia? *Who* is she? This goddess of childbirth cares for the fate of mankind and the children of men in particular. Since our recent reconciliation, our relation has become intensely private after 2.5 millennia of separation at the hands of the polarizing god of metaphysics; the deified Socrates, we have almost become seamlessly atoned today, like four hands on a pregnant belly... Now that we approach the level of power over nature and perfection of the body wherein the Olympians exalted, we’ve become worthy bed-partners. Whoever considers this hubris need only remember: when in doubt – *act*... If there’s anything Prometheus as a father taught us it’s that hubris gets you ahead, though the consequences be dire. We cannot help ourselves – we’re a chip off the old block!

In her belly grows a new Prometheus, made to our likening and liking. This Prometheus will be created in our spotless image of him, which is to say: image of us. By us, for us, from us... Provided we are willing to stand by her side, surrender to the as of yet concealed future and not resist the onslaught of man that lies in her loins. *Ever since we were essentially awakened by Prometheus, who kindled in us the pursuit of excellence by knowledge through technology, we were destined to do this by way of Aletheia...* What? –To skillfully remake man to our imagination and crown him truth. And Mother Truth is – and always has been – the caring vessel for our re-creation as man. She cannot *Be* separate from man, nor can man *exist* without her. She carries our child in her womb, where man and truth will converge into art. She will die in childbirth... and the original flame that kindled man’s striving for knowledge through technology will extinguish, only to be relit as the *Who* she will bring forth.

I herald this futuristic apotheosis of superficiality, for we will become superficial out of depth, like the Greeks, but different: for the Greeks’ pursuit of knowledge through technology will be the original depth our new-found superficiality will cover up. Though we too, like the Greeks, still worship the human form as the most perfect, we take that form as our private identity, not our outward appearance. The unconditional beauty of ourselves, the way we live our lives as

projects aimed at outshining other projects one encounters along the virtual way, are what we worship again today through the square-form whose matter shines tantalizingly upon our faces. We live in an age of virtual heroes; YouTubers, Insta-celebs and what not... A mythological age aimed at ordering up and accumulating as much of life's experiences as possible, a process that comes-to-pass by enshrining your life on a pedestal build of likes and shares in the virtual world. Superficial indeed... Our superficiality is the writing on the screen of the apotheosis dawning on us, which starts with the virtual age, whose origin is the Internet. Via aesthetic rapture, truth and art start to merge into one another again after 2500 years of separation, as they were once merged in the original clearing that arose out of oblivion, when wonderment dawned on men as men dawned, which started us on our way with question: *what is being qua being? What is, for short, The Thing?* And all it took after the dichotomy of two worlds was overcome was to make a real-time mirror that reflects and feed backs world privately to you, me, everybody, right here, right now; a mirror challenged forth through the hands and minds of men riding the current of modern technology. *Deep-mirror, mirror-image in the screen, show me the prefection of an origin unforeseen...*

That is my impression wherefrom we hail and where to we are beckoned. –And I don't doubt you will have to travel 250 years forward to find someone who can say: *it is mine, too...*

You think I'm peddling BS? I hear your doubtful silence, I see disbelief in your eyes. But think back, listing closely and look ahead... We can see this futuristic apotheosis starting to happen already, right here and now, as what I will explain as the privatization of truth.

Is it not Heidegger that says art is the realm that holds the key to the rethinking of technology?<sup>1</sup> But this rethinking asks after a constellation, for which Heidegger provides a method; that of *Gelassenheit*. If this method is not practiced, modern technology will make us "*lose access to the primal truth.*"<sup>2</sup> Look around – you see *Gelassenheit* prevailing anywhere? Is the Western world growing-on-its-own or resting-in-itself? It's adrift... its destining lacks conviction; its Grand Style is self-destructing... Do not fret, dearest reader! *All creation requires destruction.* In what follows I will swing the hammer against 'the houses of the holy' – the sovereign Self and its Truth – so you might envision what I envision, once enough walls have been knocked down for you to see.

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, Harper and Row 1977, p. 35

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 28

- Introduction

Only astonishment, boredom, angst and oblivion about the world are pretexts to be overcome by philosophical questions. You don't feel at home in- or at one with the world. The familiarity is gone and the questions this unfamiliarity brings to bear is what sets you out on the road to harmony.

One night I was at home reading Heidegger's *Question concerning Technology*. The light failed; darkness enveloped me. I took my phone and used its flashlight to orient myself. While was browsing my drawers for candles, the light flipped on again as though nothing had happened. As I was checking WhatsApp while I had my phone in hand anyway, I noticed I had no access to the Internet. Electricity in all its essential facets still eluded me. I was in the dark, unable to orient myself, as no digital information was accessible to me... Being cut off from the Internet means being cut off from my day to day access to the world's memory; its present happenings, as well as cut off from my practical, everyday future. I couldn't put any query to the Internet to orient myself regarding my concerns.

Being offline came as a shock. All of a sudden the world felt like a small, *unheimisch* cage; like I didn't belong – offline, with only my senses that extend naturally through time and space to experience my immediate surroundings, cut off from what is happening *out there*: the internet that is always within arm's length on my phone. Even in my own home, I couldn't shake the feeling I first and foremost belonged out there, because in our day and age, especially in the West, it is the way to be – and I was missing out, oblivious as to what was happening in the world for me. FOMO brought to bear the angst of not-belonging, which in turn broached questions:

What is the Internet? What do we do with it? How does it affect our lives? How is our perception of the world changed because of it? And is there such a 'thing' as the virtual world? This all led me to formulate the following thesis-question and claim:

**Question:** How is the virtual world disclosed to us through the Internet and how does this disclosing in turn change our understanding of- and behavior (Being) in the real world?

**Claim:** Because disclosing and disclosedness relate in a primordial way to the phenomenon of truth, the radical difference in the way the virtual world is disclosed to us in turn transforms the way truth is found by us and what truth is for us. Truth has become privatized. Therefore, the Internet is an origin. Every origin comes at a loss. In our case access to primal truth, as envisioned by Heidegger in *The Question Concerning Technology*. This inaccessibility means that

the previous disclosedness of world will be closed off and sink into oblivion, a fate hidden in coining our day and age the post-truth era.

- In Division I I will set the stage by framing Heidegger's thought as the transformative rethinking of Aristotle and contrasting it to Descartes.
- In Division II I will think the Internet as a one-of-a-kind-thing akin an artwork by explaining *The Origin of the Work of Art*.
- In Division III I will think the virtual world engendered by the Internet as a structure of relational significance and involvement akin Heidegger's reading of world in *Being & Time*.
- In Division IV I will think the way the virtual world is disclosed to us by alluding to mood and state-of-mind as Being-there in *Being & Time*.
- In Division V I will explain the privatization of truth by elucidating Heidegger's reading of truth as *aletheia* in *Being & Time*.

Let's get to it!



## Setting the stage

- Heidegger as Aristotle's ventriloquist.

There is a question<sup>3</sup> and a definition<sup>4</sup> provided by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* that guide my thesis. The question concerns the essence of being; *ti to on tis he ousia* and the definition concerns man: the being that exists aided by technology and consideration; *kai technei kai logismois*. Throughout my thesis, I will come back to this question and this definition.

Heidegger's thinking is a rethinking of Aristotle. On Heidegger's interpretation, Aristotle argues that meaningful appearances of beings require a way in which we *take what is made present as*. This capacity for taking-as and making-present-to is the essence of human existence. The taking-as unifies the different modes of Being, with the *taking* meaning *understandable* and *as* meaning *made present*. For Heidegger, taking-as is rooted not just in the present – as it has been taken throughout the tradition of metaphysics –, but in a deeper temporal unity of past meanings and future possibilities.

Heidegger's Ontological Difference articulated in the Guiding and the Grounding Question clarifies what this means.

I move in a world where people tend to think of philosophers as tree-hugging hippies. This valuation isn't unjustified. Even those who do not seek the fruits of wisdom that philosophy bears, are familiar with Descartes' likening of philosophy to a tree:

*"The whole of philosophy is like a tree. The roots are metaphysics, the trunk is physics, and the branches emerging from the trunk are all the other sciences.."*

–René Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*, preface, p. 6.

To exacerbate matters, Heidegger improves upon Descartes' metaphor in *Was ist Metaphysik* by asking what remains unsaid in Descartes, namely the ground wherefrom the tree draws its sustenance and wherein it finds stability.<sup>5</sup> This rooting of Descartes' metaphor is also articulated between what Heidegger calls the Guiding Question of philosophy: what is the essence of being and the Grounding Question of philosophy: what is Being.<sup>6</sup> A tree is a being; it *is*. But what provides the ground and clearing for the tree to come up as tree; wherein does the tree root as tree? –That would be Being.

---

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysica* VII, 1028b 2

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. I, 980b 28

<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt a. M. 1978, p. 361

<sup>6</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, Pfullingen 1961, §11

According to Heidegger, Aristotle's first question actually contains two questions:

- It asks after being qua being.
- It seeks to answer being as a whole by asking for a *prima causa* or supreme being; *theion*.<sup>7</sup>

Philosophy has never inquired after what Being itself is. It has kept a fixed gaze on being, never moving past by conjuring up a supreme being to explain the whole of being. Heidegger coins the term *onto-theo-logy* to signify the dereliction of philosophy to seek and understand that what makes a being be, is never another being that is magically endowed with the capacity for creation, but something else entirely, provided we do not take *some-thing* literally, for, as Heidegger points out, "*the Being of being 'is' not itself a being.*"<sup>8</sup>

Heidegger formulates the Grounding Question: what is Being itself. If we were to only ask the Guiding Question we cannot reach the center of philosophy, but will remain stuck in the anteroom of philosophy juggling about the absolute values of truth, good and beauty, which presuppose the dichotomy of two worlds; one of appearance and one of truth, and all the classical oppositions that come with this metaphysical territory.<sup>9</sup> This anteroom shows beings to us in light of the metaphysical trinity of absolute values, which preconditions the way beings *appear to us, seen from us and by us*. This light is misleading, yet shines with a private intensity as never before. These values have been reduced to human, all too human projections we have mistakenly taken to be at the center of things because we took being as a whole to be created intentionally by a supreme being. But God is dead and with His demise the answers to the Guiding Question *seemingly* depleted...

With the death of God made explicit by Nietzsche no *prima causa* can be unveiled by the Guiding Question to explain the essence being needs in order to be as is. Heidegger attempts with the Grounding Question to provide the framework to articulate Being in its relation to beings, in its relation to man – and finally, Being in itself. He takes Being as that which shows itself in our activities; both of mankind (Dasein as a communal way of life) and individual Dasein that moves and orients itself within the scope of the communal way of life. Whether it be as a way of life or an individual, we have a *natural understanding* of Being. It is what silently guides us in our interaction with things and other Dasein.<sup>10</sup>

To think Being means to think the way our understanding is guided and wherein this understanding is grounded; the how and the where. This guidance of how to where is not a matter of man's volition, because man partakes in Being. However, there is no Being without

---

<sup>7</sup> Gerard Visser, *Nietzsche & Heidegger*, SUN Nijmegen 1989, p. 31

<sup>8</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, § 2

<sup>9</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, Pfullingen 1961, §11

<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, § 2

man, nor man without Being. Man has a unique relation to Being, since he is capable of asking questions and seeking answers about what it means to be.

But how do people nowadays sense meaning? Sensing structures the way we ask questions and seek possible answers. And it goes via your smartphone or personal computer, hooked up to the Internet, disclosing the virtual world to you. The medium is an integral part of any message... So what is this thing called the Internet?

## II

## The Internet

- What is the Internet?

What is the Internet? The Internet is a thing; a web of optic-fiber woven many a-times around the Earth that enables information-exchange with the speed of light. A thing gathers what belongs to it under its heading. To establish such a heading you need a sign that refers to the thing, and so naming invest the thing with the power to gather, indicate and refer.

For instance: If we think of 'chair' this sign gathers, reveals and circumspectively discloses what belongs under its heading as its possible forms and matter, and what 'chair' as an item of living-equipment refers to with-in a greater referential whole of possible involvements. We use chairs, but does anyone nowadays question 'chair' or whatever is in question – in any thoughtful sense? Or do we, when a question occurs "*just google it*", thereby outsourcing the thinking-process of revealing to that way of revealing distinct to the Internet's virtual world? Just google "Internet" if you want to know its definitions.

Definitions of *what* the internet's function is for us aside, *how* do we encounter it as a thing? What kind of thing is the Internet? As I'll attempt to show, the Internet is equipment on the one hand, but as equipment it is invested with the world-disclosing-power of the artwork on the other.

The Internet is a thing we interact with on a daily basis. It is often the first thing encountered when we wake up and the last thing we handle before going to sleep. When you look at your phone for the time, it is synched with the Internet and your location. The Internet is valuable because of the amount of time we spent interacting with it, and as such it is a special kind of thing 'invested with a special kind of value', namely: ontological value. The virtual world's Being is constituted by ontological power, defined as time spent and attention given. However, it belongs to things 'invested with value' that they can be handled as equipment possessing the Being of Readiness-to-hand.<sup>11</sup> The Internet, too, is equipment with the Being of the Readiness-to-hand; but of what kind? –It is world-disclosing-equipment.

The Internet's possibility for disclosure, the queries and clicks taken as signs and references, are in turn mediated through operating the smartphone or computer. But note: every user is involved with-in the virtual world's referential structure and is *the constitutive sign* for this entire global network of significance.

---

<sup>11</sup> **The ready-to-hand** is the primary mode in which we encounter entities as things "in order to" do something. (source: Wikipedia's Glossary of Terms concerning Heidegger)

Smartphones and computers, too, are properly thought of as equipment. But of what kind? One need only to think of being deprived of your smartphone or having your personal computer crash – and the accompanying dread where you feel as though you lost part of yourself – to see how important their functioning as equipment is. These items of equipment feel as though they belong to our person; we are attuned to them as though they were part of our embodiment. These items of equipment are private – they are *private equipment*.<sup>12</sup> Nobody else can access my phone without password or fingerprint. It does not get more private than that. When my smartphone, computer or access to the Internet fails me, I cannot wholly *be myself without them*, because I cannot go about my business; its loss in whatever way affects my behavior directly. Reverse engineer this reasoning and it becomes clear that our usual dealings with things and people, our work and social-life, our presence in the world; our Being itself is affected by the Internet. *These items of equipment, namely your smartphone and computer are intensely private and hence the Internet is encountered in a private sense. Why? –Because the Internet is open for interaction through your particular smartphone or personal computer. In turn, this private sense extends over the Internet and discloses to us the virtual world in a privatized clearing.*

There is one thing called Internet and correspondingly a proper noun to signify it as a one-of-a-kind thing. It is a thing in the sense planet Earth is a one-of-a-kind thing, or the Mona Lisa. So, what does it gather, what belongs under its heading, given the fact there is but one-of-its-kind? – It gathers us; its users all over the world hooked up to it via smartphone or computer, into a singularity: right here, right now. This singularity has two sides: the one side is that the Internet itself is a singularity: there is but one of its kind. The other side is that each person hooked up to it experiences the virtual world that matters to him as this singularity of right here, right now. How? Because the Internet brings its users together with the speed of light, reducing our sense of time and space into a rectangular screen that incessantly shines in front of your nose, within arm's length, under your thumb. It gathers us into right here, right now.

The information exchange with the speed of light is how this Internet-gathering is achieved. But what does this gathering into right here, right now constitute? Involvement and relational significance: the constituents of world. Why? –For each person hooked up to the Internet is involved with it and has a stake in its significance. This participating in turn gives rise to phenomenon of the virtual world, for wherever men are brought together by a thing through which they orient themselves and therefore sense meaning in their involvement with it, that thing has disclosing power. What does the Internet disclose? –The virtual world.

---

<sup>12</sup> For more on Equipment, the modes of Readiness-to-hand and Presence-at-hand, see: *Being & Time*, §§ 14/15/16

Other one-of-a-kind-things that have world-disclosing-power Heidegger calls artworks. Let's see if *The Origin of the Work of Art* offers perspectives to the question I seek to answer: What is the Internet?

- Plato's devaluation of art as impetus of technological subjectivism

The distinction this text hinges on is that of *Kunst als Bild* and *Kunst als Bau* – coined by Dieter Jähnig in *Weltgeschichte: Kunstgeschichte*. This distinction goes back to Plato's devaluation of art in *Politeia*<sup>13</sup> wherein he argues for serviceability over passionate sensibility on logical and moral grounds.<sup>14</sup>

The method to ascertain truth becomes a logical one of *eidōs* corresponding to *idea*. The subject-object/S=P-relation is born by articulating the thing represented (*eidōs*) through this grammatical construction. Truth becomes *orthotes*, a method of directed perceiving and articulating; uttering (*verba dicendi*).<sup>15</sup>

Since passions bar men from reaching the eternal truth of the ideas, they are condemned as not belonging to the best possible life – which is the central question of *Politeia*. That is the moral ground for the devaluation.

The artwork is reduced to *mimesis* and the thing made to function elevated to a higher degree – of conformity to its *idea*. Accordingly, the enjoyment of the thing depicted in the work brought forth is of lower value than the serviceability of the thing made. Plato uses five examples, three of which are about the manufacturing of equipment. The *eidōs* of the bed (*kline*) corresponds to its *idea*; the bed produced with a view to sleeping is the *eidolon* of its *idea* brought forth as its materialized form. But the bed depicted with a view to beautiful semblance stands farthest from the truth of the *idea*; it is the 'non-functional' *eidolon* of the bed made for sleeping, which is itself already the shadow of the *idea*. Likewise, passionate sensibility evoked through beautiful semblance is severed from exhibiting – corresponding to – the eternal truth of the idea it supposes to resemble.

With that affectivity, the relation of sensibility to world as a way of perceiving, is declared devoid of truth and in its stead comes the abstract, logical subject-object-relation, which pervades our language and thought to this day. Truth came to pass in Plato's *Politeia* only to stagnate into an operation of a subject representing the object through *eidōs* in correspondence with the eternal *idea* of the object represented.

---

<sup>13</sup> Plato, *Politeia*, X 597e

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. X 606d

<sup>15</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt. a. M. 1978, p. 228.

I claim, as does Heidegger: *Plato's Politeia is where technological subjectivism taken as the drive to objective truth regarding the thing received its impetus. This impetus drives the destining of Western culture.* The entire tradition of metaphysics is an ever-widening orbit of subjectivism, placing man more and more at the centre of things. This movement originated with the change of truth in Plato, birthing the subject-object-dichotomy and its two worlds: the shadowy, sensible world of becoming, and the clairvoyant, ideal world of eternal truth. As a result art becomes worldly as semblance and truth remains other-worldly. The centre between man and world – affectivity – cannot hold and the original self-gathering of things is swallowed up by the gaping void of sensibility exhibited in this dichotomy. Nietzsche's entire philosophical development can be read as the attempt to fill this void, when he writes in a late-period notation:

*"Very early in my life I took the question of the relation of art to truth seriously: and even now I stand in holy dread in the face of this discordance"*

-Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW)* VIII.3: 296

It's a consequential happening – Plato's devaluation entails a transformation of the essence of truth, i.e. the way truth is found, but we need to leave this past transformation be in order to focus on the privatization of truth as the one happening right here and now.

Plato's taking functionality as identity cleared the way for Descartes *cogito ergo sum*, in which technological subjectivism came to form as the modern sciences we know today. For Descartes takes the subject as the only thing one can truly be certain of. The idea of identity constituted by the function a thing has for us (as an object), means of course its identity is constituted by us (as a subject). Truth becomes grounded in the self-consciousness of the individual ego.

But Descartes' subject isn't all thought. The thinking subject as *fundamentum inconcussum* also cleared the way for the rise of aesthetics as a realm for philosophical inquiry.<sup>16</sup> Descartes' doubt concerning the existence of the outside world likewise assured the feeling subject's lived-experience – which takes place inside the private theatre of the soul – as being real, although unmeasurable and therefore irrational. That sphere of the subject still lay *pro-fundamentum inconcussum*. It has been unearthed by Nietzsche's turn to the body.

Nowadays, this feeling subject has itself become the measure of things, with everything shown to it tripping the light fantastic of the virtual world – the private theatre for every embodied soul. Who needs congruent scientific truth on the basis of what can be objectively

---

<sup>16</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Will to Power as Art*, translated by David Ferrell Krell 1991, p. 83

measured in whatever way, shape or form, when you have private truth on the basis of you identifying yourself with it subjectively? The subject is constitutive for what counts as an object anyhow, so *"I'll be the judge as to what is objective and in what sense, thank you very much(!)"* – When something shown in your private theatre jives with your 'soul', that's all the congruence needed. However, this analogy of us as subjects to the Internet as Object does not hit the Internet's essence, which is akin the artwork's: it has world-disclosing-power.

- Thing-concepts.

Heidegger's stake in the text is to explicate what the artwork is. Heidegger asks what is thingly about the work – for it is obviously a thing. He gives examples of the thingness of the thing that have dominated Western thought and have since long become self-evident.<sup>17</sup>

These concepts do not meet the thingly aspect of the thing, its growing-on-its-own and resting-within-itself. Heidegger states that *"we have the feeling that violence is done to the thingly in the thing"*<sup>18</sup>, which bars us from becoming thoughtful. What weight do we give this feeling? – The mood is centre-weight that brings us to middle-ground:

*"What we name 'feeling' or 'mood' is more perceptive, because it is more open to Being than all reason. Of course the familiar concept of the thing fits everything every time. Nevertheless, it overtakes the thing."*<sup>19</sup>

This overtaking can perhaps be avoided by the way the thing shows itself as formed stuff.

The thing as formed stuff. What gives the thing constancy in its presence is stuff – and with it the form is co-positated. However, Heidegger mistrusts this explication as well. Why? – On the grounds that *"if indeed form is ordained to the rational and stuff to the irrational, and if the rational is taken to be the logical, while the irrational is the illogical (i.e. sensible –RB), and if with this conceptual pair, form/stuff, is coupled also the subject-object-relation, then the power of representation has availed itself of a conceptual mechanism to which nothing can resist."*<sup>20</sup>

This concept still holds two worlds apart categorically, but this explication does prepare us to enter the middle ground and enables us to answer the question of the thingly aspect about the artwork.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege*, Frankfurt a. M. 1977, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 9

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 9/10

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 12

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 11



This distinction of stuff and form, although it is the conceptual scheme for art-theory and aesthetics, does not originally belong to the domain of art. So the question becomes: “*Where does the stuff-form jointure have its origin, in the thingly of the thing or the workly of the artwork?*”<sup>22</sup> – Equipment is stuff standing in a particular form, but with equipment it is not the form that is the consequence of the stuffs organization, but the form determines the ordering of the stuff. The form is imposed upon the stuff with a view to serviceability – beforehand, meaning: its being brought forth has serviceability as a ground characteristic. Equipment is man-made intentionally with a view to function, i.e. what service it can provide to us. Hence, serviceability is the ground out of which the form-giving and choice of stuff are determined and vice versa wherein form and stuff are rooted.

To recap; with stuff-form we hit the origin of the subject-object-relation birthed by Plato in *Politeia*.

Stuff and form have their home, therefore, in equipment, characterized by functionality, i.e. serviceability.<sup>23</sup> But what is serviceable about an artwork? You cannot produce a painting with a view to serviceability, the same way you produce a hammer. Still, common sense dictates the work is produced. Heidegger hints the artwork hinges on this ambivalence – the work is a being brought forth by man, and yet, once brought forth, it rests in itself and grows on its own like a thing, because it isn’t produced with a view to utility:

*“The name equipment names what is produced on for its use and utility. The equipment rests within itself as finished like a mere thing, but it does not have the growing-of-its-own (physis. –RB). On the other hand, the equipment shows kinship to the artwork, in so far as it is something brought-forth by a human hand (poiesis. –RB). However, the artwork, through its self-sufficient presence, rather resembles the mere thing growing-on-its-own and forced-to-nothing.”*<sup>24</sup>

Traditionally – Heidegger understands the dominance of thinking in terms of serviceability by grounding it in the Mosaic creation of the Biblical faith – man is taken as a builder with the entirety of creation as stuff to impose form on. The stuff-form jointure, which determines the Being of equipment as serviceability, easily lends itself as the “*immediately intelligible constitution of every being, because man the maker has a share in the way equipment comes into Being.*”<sup>25</sup> Since equipment occupies this middle ground between mere thing and work – it is not a stretch for this thing-concept to encompass the both ends of that spectrum. Because the Christian faith represents the whole of being as created intentionally by God, the mere thing too,

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 12/13

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 13

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 13/14

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 14

as *ens creatum*, is thought out of the unity of *materia and forma*.<sup>26</sup> Even with God dead we cannot get away from seeing the whole of being as *being there – for us* to use and utilize for ends we set, with stuff procured by us and forms we impose.

Heidegger concludes we have long since lost the original speaking-power of thing-concepts like *eidos* and *hule*. But they are powerful. “*In the course of the history of truth about the being (spurred on by Aristotle’s question –RB.), these explications have coupled themselves to one another so that they hold for thing, for equipment, and for work. This way preconceives all immediate experience of Being and ties down beforehand any effort to think the Being of whatever is.*”<sup>27</sup>

We need to be made aware of how we are tied down by these thing-concepts, in order to be able to become truly thoughtful. Only then can we think the thingness of the thing with respect to its Being and so thinking letting it rest upon itself.<sup>28</sup>

*The thingness of the thing...* Heidegger’s asking the same question Aristotle’s asks. Indeed; “*that the thingness of the thing lets itself be said with particular difficulty and only seldom, is unmistakably documented by the history of its explication. This history coincides with the destiny, in accordance with which Western thinking to this day has thought the being of beings. But is it an accident, that the thing as stuff and form attains a particular dominance? This determination of the thing stemmed from the explication of the Being-equipment of the equipment. This being, the equipment, is close to man’s representing, because it reaches into Being through our own producing.*”<sup>29</sup>

- From *Kunst als Bild* to *Kunst als Bau*.

With the destruction of the thing-concepts complete, Heidegger embarks on the quest to experience “*the Being-equipment of the equipment*”.<sup>30</sup> This question can only be answered if we stave off the overreaching of the habitual explications. To avoid letting ourselves be shackled, Heidegger alludes to a pictorial representation by Van Gogh portraying a pair of peasant shoes, instead of actual or represented shoes, to show *how* through this image (*Bild*) of the shoe-equipment, the world (*Bau*) of the peasant (*Bauer*) who wears them is disclosed – and in so doing, understanding the serviceability of the shoes as reliability.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 14

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 15/16

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 16

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 17

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 19

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p. 19

What is essential about Heidegger's example, is that it is neither the shoes made with a view to serviceability nor a report about the process of making shoes through which the Being-equipment of the equipment has been unearthed. It has been unearthed by the image in the artwork, through which *"the Being-equipment of the equipment comes properly to its appearance."*<sup>32</sup> This entails a reversal of the primacy given by Plato to the serviceability of the being over and above its beautiful semblance as being more truthful. It is the other way around, but not as mere semblance. Even though the painting cannot be utilized and is not subject to reliability, it has unveiled to us wherein the Being-equipment of the equipment in truth consists and rests-within-itself – as reliability. What is reliable, is that which can be *built* upon...

Now we can ask the question concerning truth in relation to art. Heidegger:

*"What is happening here? Van Gogh's painting is the opening up of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, in truth is. This being stepped forth out into the uncoveredness of its Being. The uncoveredness of beings is called by the Greeks aletheia. In the work, if there happens an opening up of beings into what and how they are, a happening of truth is at work. In the work of art, the truth of beings has set itself to work."*<sup>33</sup>

And he continues with a question to move from *Kunst als Bild* into the dimension of *Kunst als Bau*:

*"Is it our opinion that painting would take a copy of the actual and transpose this copy into a product of artistic production? –In no way!*

*Thus the work of art is to render the universal Being of things. But where and how then is this universal Being, so that the artwork can agree with it? With what essence of what thing should then a Greek temple agree?"*<sup>34</sup>

With the Being of the artwork as constituting and disclosing world –with *Kunst als Bau*. How come a *thing* can set-itself-to-work – and so working *disclose world and what it means to be human*? What is this relation between work and truth?

*"A Greek temple portrays nothing. The temple-work first joins and at once gathers around itself the unity of paths and relations in which birth and death, endurance and decay win for mankind the gestalt of its destiny. The swaying expanse of these open relations is the world of this*

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 21

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 21/22

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 22

*historical people. Only out of this world and in it does a people come back to itself for the fulfilment of its vocation.*"<sup>35</sup>

- Conclusion: what is the Internet and how does it disclose the virtual world?

The artwork is *Kunst als Bau*; as a thing it opens world as a realm of historical meaning and future possibilities. The work is a beacon for a people to orient itself.

What thing nowadays renders what the Greek temple once did? –The Internet. It is the Internet that stands in the centre of the clearing as the being around which we congregate to coordinate our lives. It does so by gathering us with-in-virtual-world right here and now; the private realm of meaning and possibility that shines in front of your nose, within arm's length under your thumb.

The Internet has the same disclosing power exhibited in great works of art taken as one-of-a-kind-things capable of rendering the universal Being of things. Likewise, there is but one Internet, yet contrary the artwork it renders our universal Being by gathering us with-in the right here, right now of the virtual world. Paradoxically, the virtual world in turn is disclosed to you and me in a private sense – updating you and me privately on whatever question or happening we're involved with. How? –This dimension of right here, right now is opened up by fixing our senses on the screen, by being bodily attuned to the private-equipment to the point of taking your smartphone as a technological extension of the self. Through this dimension we find ourselves to be somewhere else. We are raptured; aesthetically raptured. Aesthetic rapture is the mood distinct to the virtual world.

With respect to this I claim: The Internet originally and the virtual world engendered by it constitute our future and present understanding of Being. A hint could be looking at how Heidegger's saying "*only out of this world and in it does a people come back to itself for the fulfilment of its vocation*" fares against the Internet. Something happens. We exist in a world. In world stands the Internet as our beacon to orient ourselves within-the-world and our Being in it. The Internet achieves this orientation within-the-world by disclosing the virtual world. There are two worlds intermediated by the Internet. However, to move between two worlds there has to be a gateway. Our being turned away from one world and being drawn with-in another, transforms Heidegger's 'out-of-'in-it'-come-back'-structure from a circular motion into a back and forth. How we cross to and fro is via aesthetic rapture. But what of the fulfilment of our vocation? What is the future gestalt of our destiny? –If aesthetic rapture goes all the way, there will be no coming back to ourselves.

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p 31/32

What is this world that raptures us aesthetically and how do we relate to it? What is the virtual world and my grounds for claiming its Being as Being-with-in-the-virtual-world?

## III

## The virtual world

*"In a world of illusion,  
you only see what you feel."*

-Mysterious Times by Sash! featuring Tina Cousins

- What is the virtual world?

What is world? –World is a realm of historical meaning and future possibilities that provides us orientation to act in the present. Only in a world, taken as a gathered and structured whole of meaning and possibility, can our behavior be sensible and meaningful.

What makes the virtual world virtual? –Contrary the 'real' world, its constituents of involvement and relational significance *are visible and tangible* on screen. *The ontological constituents themselves have become ready-to-hand as equipment.* How? Because the virtual world is *only* a global network of relational significance for all participants hooked up to the Internet, who, as participants, are involved with-in its referential structure and constitute, via time and attention given, the ever-changing relational significance of the virtual world; its becoming as world. In turn, the world, too, has essentially become ready-to-hand as equipment through the visibility and manipulability of its constituents. But only virtually, right? –Yes, but this virtual character of the constituents of world becoming visible and manipulable has its blowback on the way we perceive the world and truth. Our perception of world has become virtual due to its actual appearing to us as world. By contrast: you cannot see the world nor can you understand its relational character by manipulating the references.

The term 'virtual' stems from Medieval Latin's *virtualis*; meaning: *being something in essence or effect, though not actually or in fact.* The term has been used in the sense of not physically existing but made to appear by software since 1959. Paradoxically, the phenomenon of world is made to appear in the screen by sight and manipulable by touch as virtual world. But because the possibility of Being-with-in-the-virtual-world is beholden to our engagement with private-equipment, this means in turn that the world in the phenomenological sense, as structural complexity of involvement and relational significance, has become privatized because it is disclosed in a private sense. Just imagine what concerns you take care of via this private sense: all shopping done with the touch of your thumb, brought to you on a time of your convenience. A

structure of involvement and relational significance tailored exactly to your identity; your private sign as the constitutive sign for your virtual disclosedness – that is how the virtual world is made to appear through your private equipment.

Deeper still, ‘virtual’ derives from virtue (Latin: *virtus*); behavioral guidelines that stem from the *trinity of values*. In the virtual world, this trinity of values is brought into play, but in a reversed hierarchy and transformed structure of evaluation: the primary value is the aesthetic (for via the aesthetic the virtual world is disclosed and disclosable as world in the first place) and the evaluating is subject to statistical interpretation and manifestation in the virtual world through relative quantification. Think followers, likes, going viral, retweets, shares – all quantifications of value; value-investing acts by participants in the virtual world.

*The absolute qualities have become relative quantities.*

From the perspective of an Internet-participant the evaluating is privatized and absolute in congruence with the sovereign self who identifies him- or herself with what is virtually encountered. Therefore, the way truth is perceived and found in the virtual world, which comes-to-pass on the ground of aesthetic rapture, transforms the essence of truth.

What is Being-with-in-the-virtual-world? Looking at Heidegger’s exploration of the phenomenon of world sheds light on what I understand as Being-with-in...

- Being-with-in-the-virtual-world.

Heidegger started off analyses of the structure of relations that make up world by postulating the existentials that is essentially Dasein’s concern as Being-in-the-world. In this paragraph we come back to Being-in-the-world. In doing so, we’ve come full hermeneutical circle... But this time, instead of taking off from Dasein’s ontical proximity to Things ‘invested with value’, Heidegger approaches Being-in-the-world from the ontologico-existential constituents of involvement and significance.

How are these constituents laid out in *Being & Time*?

Heidegger begins paragraph 17 by reiterating his claim regarding the ontological structure of references and contrasting it to the grammatical S = P structure of reference: “we have indicated that the state which is constitutive for the ready-to-hand as equipment is one of reference or assignment. But the ‘indicating’ of the sign and the ‘hammering’ of the hammer are not properties of entities.”<sup>36</sup> This means that serviceability is a reference, and not something a thing possesses in any case, but “rather the condition (so far as Being is in question) which makes it

---

<sup>36</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, p. 114/115

*possible for the character of such an entity to be defined by its appropriateness. But what, then, is “reference” or “assignment” to mean?”<sup>37</sup>*

The Being of the ready-to-hand, which *has* the structure of reference, has in itself the character of *having been referred*.<sup>38</sup> Heidegger goes from the present tense – for this structure is visible whenever one interacts with equipment in the here and now – to taking its character of having been referred in the past-perfect tense, because the Being of the ready-to-hand makes that any equipment must have already found its place within the world, otherwise the equipment would not be ready-to-hand at all.

Referring as an ontological structure is a how, which in turns makes up the what (the ontical appropriateness) of the entity in question.<sup>39</sup> Keep in mind that neither are properties of the entity, i.e. predicates of the subject; there is – ontologically – a letting the entity be taken as involved with another entity in... Hence Heidegger concludes with regards the structure of reference: *“With any such (discovered –RB) entity there is an involvement which it has in something. The character of Being that belongs to the ready-to-hand is just such an involvement. If something has an involvement, this implies letting it be involved in something. The relationship of the “with... in...” shall be indicated by the term “assignment” or “reference”.”<sup>40</sup>* So we have the with-in from within-the-world elucidated as reference, with world forthcoming as relational significance, which is a structure made visible by the different kinds of involvement or with...in..., that together form a chain which is ultimately or originally anchored in a “for-the-sake-of-which”.

This with-in of Being-with-in-the-virtual worlds means just that: involvement. Between man, the Internet, and his privatized virtual world.

Involvement is not an ontical assertion about an entity, but an ontological relation between entities that in relating it to other entities is a definitive characteristic of the Being of such an entity.<sup>41</sup> The involvement-structure goes like this: I am writing on a computer (with-which), in the Royal Library (in-which), in order to produce a thesis (in-order-to), which is aimed at thinking the ‘the Internet’ (towards-this) for the sake of concluding my study (for-the-sake-of-which). Each moment of my existence, any activity I engage in is structured in terms of these involvements, thus constituting a ‘fork in my road’ where I choose a way to be, whereby my past, current projects and future possibilities are laid bare, which is essentially bound up with

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p. 115

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 115

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 115

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 115

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 116



the way in which other entities are made intelligible to me. Why? –Because “*the ‘for-the-sake-of’ always pertains to the Being of Dasein, for which, in its Being, that very Being is essentially and issue.*”<sup>42</sup> How? –Because every ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ is the base structure of an equipment-defining totality of involvements that reflect a possible way for me to factually be-in-the-world.

The ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ is the origin out of which the totality of involvements rolls out. So an involvement is nothing meaningful and intelligible taken on its own, but is a relation that as a relation between entities determines those entities as *relata*, i.e. letting them be involved with each other in a certain way. The different kinds of involvement constitute an ever-widening, ever-deepening network of intelligibility that at the base is a for-the-sake-of-which, which constitutes the totality of involvements: the result being a large-scale *network of interconnected relational significance* – giving rise to the ontological phenomenon of world.

Heidegger points out the ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ is a final ‘towards-which’ that lies at the base of the totality of involvements where there is no further involvement possible, because it relates to an entity which “*is not entity with the kind of Being that belongs to what is ready-to-hand within a world; it is rather an entity whose Being is defined as Being-in-the-world, and to whose state of Being, worldhood itself belongs.*”<sup>43</sup> What could this entity be? –Who else but you and me? So, the ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ is where Dasein and the world are nearest one another. It is the deepest kind of ‘involvement’, relating two different kinds of Being; that of Dasein as Being-in-the-world to that of equipment ready-to-hand within-the-world. This final involvement is therefore an interconnection, ‘inter’ signifying the different kinds of Being that are connected, “*by which the structure of involvement leads to Dasein’s very Being.*”<sup>44</sup>

The structure of involvement leads to Dasein’s Being-in-the-world. So what does Being-with-in-the-virtual-world mean? Here, too, at the base there is Dasein. Its clicks and queries, its circumspective disclosures are the signs and references that make up its virtual world. However, each private Dasein is itself the constitutive sign around which all Dasein has disclosed in the virtual world with queries congregates, with all possible involvements that come with this privately disclosed territory.

The ontological relationship between Dasein and world can be characterized as disclosing/disclosedness of entities for-which; this ‘for’ being Dasein and ‘which’ being our concern. How does this disclosing relate to the way “*for which entities within-the-world are*

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 117

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 116

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 117

*proximally freed must have been previously disclosed?*"<sup>45</sup> It relates to the act of understanding, on the precondition that to Dasein's Being, an understanding of Being belongs.<sup>46</sup>

We will need to get into view how the disclosing of world works. We can do so by relating involvement and significance to understanding.

The understanding of world amounts to understanding the context of relations, i.e. the possible ways we interact the entities within-the-world that have been freed up or previously disclosed – for what? –For possible ways of interaction; involvement and significance. This freeing up/disclosing amounts to the possibility that Dasein lets entities be involved, which is grounded in our understanding of how these entities can be involved, which goes back to a 'for-the-sake-of-which' – as the potentiality-for-Being which Dasein itself is and wherefrom Dasein assigns itself to an 'in-order-to'.<sup>47</sup> Any such chain of involvements has to be disclosed with a certain intelligibility or understanding, before the shackles of the chain link up in any significant way. However, the place wherein the involvements go about their way, is *"that wherein Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself. The "wherein" of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this "wherein" is the phenomenon of the world."*<sup>48</sup>

In the act of understanding, we disclose that wherein entities can be made intelligible. But this disclosing likewise entails the coming into view of the phenomenon of world, due to the act's assigning or referring itself, which ultimately anchors in a 'for-the-sake-of-which'.

What is Dasein's assigning itself ontologically? It is the act of understanding that holds the different relations in the open, in disclosedness, so that through this openness the assignment can operate. Understanding is both the disclosing as well as the disclosedness. *"The relational character which these relationships signify, we take as one of signifying."*<sup>49</sup> This signifying, taking its leave with Dasein, goes together with the totality of involvements. Together they constitute a primordial totality: they are, as structures of signifying, originally to be understood by Dasein as Being-in-the-world, albeit tacitly. *"This relational totality of signifying we call "significance". Dasein, in its familiarity with significance, is the ontical condition for the possibility of discovering entities which are encountered in a world with involvement (readiness-to-hand) as their kind of Being."*<sup>50</sup> But Dasein's familiarity with significance is the ontological condition for Dasein to understand; to take entities as.

- Conclusion: Being-with-in-the-virtual-world.

---

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. 118

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 118

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 119

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 119

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 120

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 120

The Being of the ready-to-hand as involvement is structured by defining these involvements as a context of assignments or references, and in so doing, the phenomenon of world has come into view.

In the virtual this network of relational significance congregates around its constitutive sign with-in-the-virtual-world; you. You, me, every private person is a constitutive sign on its own. Each constitutive sign adheres to the different kinds of involvement in its own specific way, just as the structure of involvements is tailored to individual Dasein living in a 'we'-world. The difference is the virtual world is a billion 'me'-worlds together privately. In the end, involvement is likewise the interconnection between two entities: a private person and the Internet.

Regarding my thesis-claim, we need to understand the way world is disclosed, because if we are to think how truth comes-to-pass in the virtual world we must lay out how the disclosing of world works. We do that by looking at mood and state-of-mind as Being-there. When we get that into view, we look at how the understanding distinct to the virtual world transforms the way truth is found and perceived.

## IV

## Aesthetic rapture and oblivion.

The most striking contrast between the 'real' world and the virtual world is this: the virtual world is virtual exactly because, as a world, it is both visible and tangible, which is a characteristic unheard of with regard to a phenomenon. But it's easy to see, that, as a structure of involvements and significance, in its involving and referring the virtual world is operated with touch and sight by its participants, the users of the Internet. It likewise means that these ontological constituents of world have themselves become equipment in the Ready-to-hand, experienced in a private sense via smartphone and computer, hooked up to the Internet, through which we reside with-in the referential structure of the virtual world.

Let's investigate the Being-there as state-of-mind and Dasein's Being-attuned as how the world is disclosed primordially, while along the way contrasting it to the attunement or mood distinct to the virtual world and the way world is disclosed through it.

- The 'there' distinct to the virtual world.

By definition of the unitary phenomenon of Being-in-the-world, Being-in... can never signify a subject-object relation, for this would be a dichotomy that cannot be grounded in a common origin where they are atoned.<sup>51</sup> In dividing categorically, the 'between' can never be found, because the phenomenon is split asunder beforehand and thereafter put together, usually by positing some first being like God. Heidegger's stake is not splitting the phenomenon, but *"to keep its positive phenomenal content secure."*<sup>52</sup> This positive content is shown in Heidegger's 'there'.

So how is this 'between' of man and world found in the 'there' of Being-there as state-of-mind? -In the 'there' man and world meet up in a primordial way. How? The 'there' has disclosing power to open up world as a realm of meaning wherein Dasein moves and orients itself.

Dasein, *"the entity which is essentially constituted by Being-in-the-world is itself in every case its 'there'."*<sup>53</sup> If there is a 'there', there is likewise a 'here' and a 'yonder'. The 'here' is Dasein is to be understood in relation to a 'yonder' Ready-to-hand, *"in the sense of a Being towards this 'yonder' – a Being that is de-severant, directional and concernful."* So, in a sense, the 'here'

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. p. 170

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 170

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 171

belongs to man, i.e. our location in the world and the 'yonder' indicates our orientation in the world, an orientation guided in turn by "*something encountered within-the-world*"<sup>54</sup>

Only out of the 'there', can there be a 'here' and 'yonder'<sup>55</sup>. What is this 'there'? – "*In the expression 'there' we have in view this essential disclosedness. By reason of this disclosedness, this entity (Dasein), together with the Being-there of the world, is 'there' for itself.*"

What 'there' is distinct to the virtual world? –How does Dasein find itself with-in-the-virtual-world? By what is its 'there' constituted? Dasein finds himself taken 'there' by *aesthetic rapture*. What is aesthetic rapture? –Aesthetic rapture is the 'there' through which man and virtual world are disclosed. However, paradoxically, this 'there' – taking into account the meaning of rapture – likewise entails a being here and being taken over yonder. So the disclosing of the virtual world also and always entails an enclosing. You need two worlds to make possible rapturing. You need the world you find yourself in, always and already as Being-in-the-world, and you need the virtual world, which has the Being of Being-with-in-the-virtual world.

How does this rapturing take place? Via the aesthetic, meaning; from sensory perceptions emanating from the virtual world through the Internet as significations, notifications, buzzes, pings. We are so attunement to the Internet, that every time the virtual world comes to call we respond without reservation, hesitation or contemplation on these sensory perceptions emanating from private-equipment, in whose answering we are drawn with-in the virtual world. For each signification from the virtual world signifies something new – however uninteresting though it may be; it's always new. Novelty shines titillating through the screen... Are you not curious when your phone buzzes what this signification might mean to you? –Of course you are. You are, as are I, curious enough to stop what you are doing and drawn toward the novelty awaiting to be revealed with the touch of your hand. Novelty means: to be and stay distracted in the moment.

Heidegger claims: "*Dasein is its disclosedness.*"<sup>56</sup> Dasein's sense of meaning (*how*) is guided by our perceptions of *what* we encounter as disclosed within-the-world. The fact we sense meaning in our perceiving is an indication as to the truth of Heidegger's proposition.

If Dasein is its disclosedness, which, with regard to Being-in... means openness towards world – taken as a realm of historical meaning and future possibilities disclosed in the 'there' – wherein Dasein exists, how does Dasein's disclosing/disclosedness relate to the virtual world and its distinct 'there'? The disclosedness of aesthetic rapture is in every case Dasein's own, meaning: it is a privatized disclosedness, for the rapturing happens between Dasein and its

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 171

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 171

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p. 171

interaction with the Internet and participation with-in the virtual world. What does this privatization mean?

Example: ten people are sitting in a classroom discoursing upon a subject. The disclosedness of this discourse is shared by those ten people. Now imagine ten people sitting in a classroom, all of them with phone under their thumb and eyes fixed upon the screen. They are engaged with the virtual world, a world which in each case is disclosed to them privately. Although they be together, they are 'miles apart' and in different worlds altogether, they are de-severed in their private way, have their own directionality and are privately engaged in their own concerned dealings. They have been raptured, taken from their shared proximally closest 'we-world'<sup>57</sup> and raptured, via the aesthetic, to the virtual world.

The aesthetic rapture distinct to Dasein's being taken away with-in-the-virtual-world, aims to keep us with-in-the-virtual-world by grappling for our attention and time by keeping our senses fixed on private-equipment, hooked up to world-disclosing-equipment, disclosing our virtual world to us.

However, *Rapture* is also a prophetic word in the sense of being taken by the *prima causa* and called 'home' via ascending into bliss – permanently. Is it possible to think aesthetic rapture as a word of prophecy? As a bridge between two worlds, which, after the other side's been reached dissolves behind those raptured – permanently? What origin beckons us thither? What one thing has the capacity to gather us in rapture in such a way? What's happening right here, right now?

To recap: the 'there' is the primordial manner in which 'here' (man) and 'yonder' (world) are originally atoned. The being of the 'there' is constituted by *state-of-mind* and *understanding*<sup>58</sup> – these two constituents of the 'there' are equiprimordial and disclose world in the most fundamental manner, namely through *discourse*<sup>59</sup> as being able of being understood as a structural complexity of involvements and relational significance revealed by language, signs and references.

- The state-of-mind engendered by the disclosing of the virtual world through aesthetic rapture.

State-of-mind is the ontological term for what ontically is familiar to us as the mood we find ourselves in.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 93

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 171/172

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 172

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 172

We move from mood to state-of-mind ('there') as follows: "*A mood makes manifest 'how one is, and how one is faring'. In this 'how one is', having a mood brings Being to its 'there'.*"<sup>61</sup> Dasein is its 'there' in such a way that Dasein finds itself in a state-of-mind which brings Dasein before itself, in the sense of finding itself in the mood it is in. But this finding is not a directed seeking on the part of Dasein, but rather, this finding is more oft than not turning-away.

*"It is always by way of a state-of-mind that this turning-away is what it is."*<sup>62</sup> This is quintessential with regard the state-of-mind distinct to the virtual world. Aesthetic rapture's the mood that makes us turn away from whatever concern we attend to within-the-world, by being drawn to another. Such is the nature of rapture. But what does the state-of-mind distinct to the virtual world turn us away from? –From the 'real' world. We turn away from it; become oblivious to it. All de-severing and directionality is nowadays achieved through the Internet and the virtual world. These constituents of Dasein's Being-in-the-world are mediated via the Internet. This ultimately leads to an oblivion so deep that we will lose our traditional sense of self, world – and truth. Because the Internet changes the way we sense meaning. But no ending comes without new beginnings... A new sensibility lurks in the virtual, but it takes more than 20k words to think it with footnotes and references, so that sensibility we will just have to let lurk.

There are three<sup>6364</sup> aspects to states-of-mind, but we will focus on one:

- Circumspection. Disclosedness permits beforehand what can be encountered within-the-world. It has the character of becoming affected<sup>65</sup>, because Being-in as Being-there discloses what can be encountered in such a way that it matters to us. "*The fact that this sort of thing can "matter" to it is grounded in one's state-of-mind.*"<sup>66</sup> With openness to world constituted by our attunement to a state-of-mind, the senses gain an ontological depth, because only because we are in-the-world with a state-of-mind – not just accidentally, but necessarily – can our senses "*be 'touched' or can we 'have a sense for'*"<sup>67</sup> something in such a way that it matters.

The state-of-mind makes plain that entities wherewith we concern ourselves within-the-world matter to us.

- Conclusion: oblivion & aesthetic rapture.

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 173

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p. 173

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 175

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 176

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p. 176

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p. 176

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 177

The state-of-mind that belongs to the Internet I call oblivion, because although the virtual world is disclosed as aesthetic rapture, this in turn, on the basis of the private relation to the world-disclosing-equipment called Internet, achieved by sensing via private-equipment of smartphone and P.C., leads to oblivion with world and the privatization of evaluative standards.

We do not care anymore what happens way 'out there', out of our immediate grasp, we just care to be taken away, raptured, bombarded with novelty and beauty, right here, right now. Taken away so we can be with-in-the-virtual-world. The Internet and the virtual world it discloses achieves this for us, but this achievement comes at a price: it entails the private enclosing of Dasein in the 'real' world through the disclosedness of aesthetic rapture distinct to the virtual world. Words like "information-bubble" and "echo-chamber" approach this phenomenon of virtual disclosing as private enclosing. They also indicate its consequence: the privatization of truth.

Oblivion as a state-of-mind renders world by virtue of a technologically engendered solipsism. There is no world outside what you have disclosed and what is fed to you on the basis of your clicks and queries. Disclosed are the things that matter to you – and nothing else matters...

With all constituents now laid out and explained, we can turn our attention on what is happening right here and now: the privatization of truth.



## The privatization of truth

*“Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact.  
Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.”*  
-Marcus Aurelius.<sup>68</sup>

- The privatization of truth.

What is the privatization of truth? We have a process in privatization and a phenomenon in truth, that both need elucidating.

(1): what is privatization and (2): what is truth?

We’ve seen how the Internet is encountered primarily through private-equipment and therefore that the virtual world is experienced in a private sense. The private disclosing is achieved via aesthetic rapture: the particular mood that assails us and attunes us with-in the virtual world. We’ve seen how this disclosing in turn constitutes the state-of-mind that discloses world nowadays as oblivion – which is properly thought of as a private enclosing. This happens due to the primacy of disclosing and revealing via queries and clicks, the particular way (*aletheuein* as Heidegger would say) pertaining to the virtual world. This has changed the way truth is found and perceived – and will ultimately constitute the opening up of a new domain for truth itself. Quite a claim...

My claim is set in relief against the background of a belief: that with the arrival of the Internet as world-disclosing-equipment and the privately experienced virtual world it engenders, Heidegger’s warning in *The Question Concerning Technology* regarding the primacy of the way of revealing (*aletheuein*) distinct to modern technology, namely that it will make us “lose access to the primal truth”<sup>69</sup>, is coming to fruition presently. Why? –Because modern technology labours to nullify time and space<sup>70</sup>, I dare say the Internet, which enables information-exchange with the speed of light and always resides within arm’s length through private-equipment, is its crowning achievement thus far.

---

<sup>68</sup> This quote circulates since 2015 on social media – it’s false: Marcus Aurelius never wrote it. Who cares? Privately evaluate that...

<sup>69</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt Harper and Row 1977, p. 28

<sup>70</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Over denken, bouwen, wonen* translated by H.M. Berghs, Sun 1999, p. 66

The way of revealing prevalent nowadays is often heard as *the* answer to *any* question: “just google it!” When you have a question, your first thought is not about whatever is in question, but your immediate reaction is to google it, see what is revealed or disclosed by your query and take it from there by clicking. On the one hand it’s like outsourcing the revealing-process, and so outsourcing bringing-forth a myriad of possible outcomes to choose from in what is revealed and referred to, while on the other hand holding the results of what our ‘thinking’ – the query regarding whatever is in question – has revealed, as achieved by us. This is evidenced by the equally often heard remark when someone espouses what they think on whatever matter: “that’s my truth!”

“Just google it” and “that’s my truth”... The first concerning the way truth is found, outsourcing the revealing process, the second to the way truth is perceived, as private; as something *you own or make your own*. Truth as private property? How does such ownership of truth come about?

Platitudes are revealing by virtue of being common to the parlance of the times. They reveal by killing off discourse – paradoxically. It is like hitting a wall once someone utters them. And precisely beyond is where the realm of philosophy begins, as the unspeakable that awaits utterance. When platitudes are invoked they point toward a phenomenon ‘beyond the wall’, that has itself not yet been brought out into the open.

These two platitudes together make up the coin that forms the privatization of truth: (1); the way of revealing and circumspective disclosure achieved by queries and clicks and (2): the results of this revealing being privately appropriated as true in a privately disclosed domain. What is most interesting is what happens in between: for it is not man that reveals, but orders up the revealing of whatever is in question by querying the virtual world, yet man claims this revealing and subsequent appropriation of what is uncovered as his own, as if he revealed, uncovered and established as true whatever he asserted by bringing it out into *his open – in truth*.

- What is privatization?

Privatization is the process by which what was hitherto publicly shared becomes privately owned. The term is particularly prevalent in economics and has been since the early ‘80’s. Almost all resources of planet Earth have been carved up this way, as well as most domains of life, except what has not yet been disclosed as possible domain of exploitation. Everyone is a privatized resource in a sense. How and why? –Everybody is owned by his/her debtors and debt itself comes into Being out of nothing – yet another way of privatization.

Since the financial crisis we have become acutely unaware (due to novelty) that we are born into debt and never get out of this hole. The financial crisis came down to a tremendous private debt that was collectivized so that the private ownership of resources and debt owed to banks by private persons could be sustained and maintained. The paradoxical irony of this cannot be overstated. As a consequence of previous crises people started robbing banks, but nowadays banks rob the people, by imposing their private debt collectively upon us and holding this debt over our heads – as far as they are concerned – into perpetuity. We are owned in collective debt obligation to the same institution we bailed out by taking on its private debt, without reciprocal accountability or obligation. Now, I'm not going into this any further, save to say this: privatization is a one-way street. Once initiated, the die is cast. There will be another crisis – with either a bigger, better bail-out or a total collapse of the world economy and the global conflicts that come with such a catastrophe.

All privatization, whether it is recourses, people's mortgage-debt or printing money, i.e. creating debt out of thin air, commences with an original theft. Privatization deprives what was previously collectively shared and accessible by denying access to it, by laying claim to it. With people's mortgage they put up their productivity over 20+ year periods, thereby privatizing themselves with regard to their debtor, while the debtor puts up a theoretical value against this; money/debt.

- *Aletheia*

*Aletheia* is formed from *lethe*, meaning concealment – or oblivion – and the *alpha privans*-prefix “a-”; making it its opposite: not concealment but uncoveredness, not oblivion but remembrance. It means to deprive of concealment; to rob from oblivion. *Privare* in Latin means to rob; to make your own.

*Techne* is man's authentic way of revealing, to which philosophy, whose handicraft moves in the dimension of *logos*, pertains. *Techne* is an *aletheuein*; way of bringing out into the open. In this sense “robbery” pertains to Heidegger's phenomenological reading of truth as *aletheia*. It is taken as the process of disclosing what is hidden by depriving it from oblivion and bringing it into the world. It is a revealing. But the robbing achieved by the privatization of truth attacks exactly Heidegger's notion of robbery – like a universal acid. For everything previously disclosed, that was collectively shared and understood as within-the-world, with unifying standards of evaluation for what the true, the good and the beautiful are, is being torn asunder by privatization. The robbery privatization achieves is an enclosing of the original disclosedness, which will lead to its being closed off for good – the oblivion of world. This state-of-mind is presently already the prevailing one. Even truth itself, taken as the original domain cleared in for

the western world's destining, its potentiality-for-Being, will become out of bounds for us eventually... So what is this primordial domain that Heidegger sought out and was still able to reach?

- What is truth?

You can fill libraries with answers to this question and still not have accumulated in volume the qualitative richness and profundity of the primordial source. But as I claim: the way has been outsourced, barring us access to the primordial source or the source itself has been depleted same as a mine runs out of resources, wherefore the way needed to be outsourced. I will confine myself to Heidegger's reading of truth as *aletheia* in *Being and Time* § 44, for it stands to reason that his warning must be read as his interpretation of access to the domain of truth, as well as what truth itself is.

As a background to this analysis of the way truth is found and what truth is and my subsequent contrasting it with the virtual world's way of revealing, a historical embedding is needed to show what is happening on the foreground; a happening which manifests itself as the privatization of truth.

The potentiality of the becoming and destining of western culture was given its breadth and impetus by the Ancient Greeks, who thought the archetypes of philosophy by providing the first answers to the original question of our tradition as defined by Aristotle: "*ti to on tis he ousia?*"

This question guides the Grand Style of western culture, which I define – taking into account Aristotle's definition of man as the being that lives aided by technique and language – as knowledge (*logos*) through technology (*techne*). Therefore, western culture has a strong drive to a certain kind truth, where knowledge is ascertained in a secure way – but what kind of truth does this drive aim at and stem from? What counts as knowledge or what we take as true regarding things is how we can handle things, what we can do with them; in their potentiality for interaction with us, we find the domain (*aletheia*) wherein the being shows itself as is. All that we take the western world to be is engendered by this first question, that has had a tremendous potentiality for answers over time. But the source is depleted; the impetus has ground to a hold. –Or has it? Well, it is the post-truth era, something is amiss. But maybe we are just in a convergence – a tipping point? Does the first question shed some light on what has hitherto remained hidden concerning this question; does this question have a flipside?

What is the being qua being? For short, this is the question concerning the thing. But this question, as I claim in the conclusion of this aphorism, is but one side of the philosophical medal,

for this question which asks after the being can only be asked if man is aware of his separation from the being, yet understand himself related to it via shared origin. Hence the other side contains the question: what is man?

What is man? Is man a what or is man a who? And is this “who” to be questioned as a sovereign self – or is the proper question perhaps: *who are we?*

Heidegger noticed that “the expression ‘truth’ can be used as term for ‘entity’ and ‘Being’.”<sup>71</sup> Of course, this distinction plays and comes to deployment in Heidegger’s ontological difference. Therefore, he asks: “What ontico-ontological connection (entity-Being – RB) does ‘truth’ have with *Dasein* and with that ontical characteristic we call the “understanding of Being”? Can the reason why Being necessarily goes together with truth and vice versa be pointed out in terms of such understanding?”<sup>72</sup> Traditionally, three theses have been presupposed as to what truth is, how it is found and where it happens.

(1): the ‘locus’ of truth is assertion; judgement, (2): its essence lies in the agreement or corresponding of the judgement with its object, (3): that Aristotle first proposed these definitions of truth as agreement, with as its ‘locus’ the judgement.<sup>73</sup>

Heidegger starts off with this traditional set of theses (constituting the presence-at-hand mode of Being) to show how, where and when the subjectivist tendency began deploying itself; by locating truth in the judgement. –Why? Because a judgement can only come from someone who utters it; truth is therefore not outside of us, but in us – awaiting utterance (*verba dicendi – logos*; speaking)<sup>74</sup>. It is the object that reflects the judgement uttered as corresponding or agreeing with its content, which links up via its outward appearance to the idea represented in the mind’s eye. So, *who* looks and *how* (*orthotes – theoria*; looking)<sup>75</sup> is the quintessence of the subject-object dichotomy. The subject (as underlying) is taken as constitutive for the object, by conditioning beforehand how it can possibly be made available for us as an object. In short, the dichotomy is a ‘how’ that structures the possibility of a ‘what’. But what standard of evaluation is coupled to it? It places truth-value on the functionality of the object; *what its use is for us*, and establishes its identity in truth accordingly.

Aristotle may be wrongly accused<sup>76</sup> of being the proponent of defining judgement as the locus of truth<sup>77</sup>, Plato himself stands rightly accused of decisively transforming truth by

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 256

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 256

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 257

<sup>74</sup> Gerard Visser, *Nietzsche & Heidegger*, SUN 1989, p. 156

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 156

<sup>76</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, p. 268

devaluating art to *mimesis* in *Politeia* because it lacks functionality, i.e. serviceability.<sup>78</sup> This put the weight of truth in the subject's capacity for judgement-making, a logical procedure which evaluates the object on the grounds of its functionality. It crowned the logical, dispassionate, turned-away-from-the-body-state-of-mind as the sovereign of truth. This tipped the scales in favour of subjectivism – and cleared the way for it to flourish the way it did (with Descartes as its most radical proponent) and still does in the form of what we call modern technology.

Heidegger alludes to Aristotle's supposed definition of truth. This assertion, that the soul's (mind's eye) representations are likenings of things<sup>79</sup>, was consequently transposed in Latin as "*the essence of truth as adequation intellectus et rei.*"<sup>80</sup> This assertion turned definition was able to hold its own even in the neo-Kantian epistemology, that "*often characterized this definition of 'truth' as an expression of methodologically retarded naïve realism, and declared it to be irreconcilable with Kant's 'Copernican revolution.'*"<sup>81</sup> But Kant never brought this definition into question, instead, he presupposes it as a given, stating: "*Truth and illusion are not in the object so far as it is intuited, but in the judgement so far as it is thought.*"<sup>82</sup>

Because this line of thought does not bring us anywhere phenomenologically or ontologically, Heidegger asks: "*What else is tacitly posited in this relational totality of the *adequatio intellectus et rei?*'"*

What is *adequatio*? –It means 'agreement'. What is agreement? – "*The agreement of something with something* (note: two times 'something', signifying we have a relation between entities, a subject-object relation, i.e. presence-at-hand –RB) *has the formal relation of something to something. Every agreement, and therefore 'truth' as well, is a relation. But not every relation is an agreement.*" –Indeed, because the relation of disagreement, of an assertion judged regarding an entity that is proven wrong, is likewise a relation, namely the negative of the relation of agreement. – But also in this sense: "*A sign points at what is indicated. Such indicating is a relation, but not an agreement of the sign with what is indicated.*"<sup>83</sup>

The question is: "*With regard to what do intellectus and res agree? If it is impossible for intellectus and res to be equal because they are not of the same species, are they perhaps similar?*"<sup>84</sup> Yet, knowledge (taken as judgements proven true) claims it 'gives' the thing in question 'just as' it is.<sup>85</sup> But does it, if we think it in the sense of the subject-object dichotomy? –No, because of

---

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. p. 268

<sup>78</sup> I use functionality and serviceability interchangeably.

<sup>79</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, p. 257

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p. 257

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p. 258

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. p. 258

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p. 258

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p. 259

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p. 259

the preconditioning of what can be the object of knowledge that is implied in this sense (its 'how' is a derivative of the primordial source).

So the real question has pointed us toward the "*epistemological' problematic as regards the subject-Object relation*" itself, with its "*immanent consciousness of truth*", which remains "*within the sphere' of the subject?*"

This problematic is one that unfolds in the two layers implied in judgement and knowledge; taken on the one hand as a "*Real psychical process, and that which is judged, as an ideal content. Of the latter it will be said that it is true.*" Why? –Because what is true is knowledge, yet knowledge is judging. According to opinion the ideal content stands in a relation of agreement. But of what kind? –Of the presence-at-hand kind. The connection is one between content and the "*Real thing as that which is judged about. How are we to take ontologically the relation between an ideal entity and something that is Real and present-at-hand? Such a relation indeed subsists; and in factical* (Heidegger introduces temporality into the 'how'; the ascertaining of knowledge –RB) *judgement and the Real Object, but likewise as a relation between the ideal content and the Real act of judgement.*"<sup>86</sup>

Now we move into what the 'subsisting' of said relation consists of in the ontological sense. Is there perhaps a domain out of which this relation arose, that would make the term 'subsisting' ontologically one that corresponds across two levels of Being?<sup>87</sup> What needs to be done to clarify the kind of Being that belongs to *adequatio*, is clarifying which kind of Being belongs to knowledge itself. Only if this structure is elucidated properly, can the phenomenon of truth – "*a phenomenon (...) characteristic of knowledge*"<sup>88</sup> – come into view. Truth becomes phenomenally explicit in knowledge when "*such knowing demonstrates itself as true*"<sup>89</sup>, thereby assuring itself of its truth. So how does the demonstrating work, that shows us the relation of *adequatio*?

Heidegger uses the example of a picture hanging on the wall, of which someone, who is with his back turned to the wall asserts it is hanging askew.<sup>90</sup> Only after the man turns round and actually perceives the picture hanging askew, has the truth of his assertion been assured as true. There is confirmation of the assertion – and the asserting itself is related to the real picture on the wall, and nothing else. Therefore, "*asserting is a way of Being towards the Thing itself that is. And what does one's perceiving of it demonstrates? Nothing else that this Thing is the very entity which one has in mind in one's assertion.*"<sup>91</sup> –So we have in assertion a Being towards the entity itself; thus what is to be confirmed or demonstrated is that this Being uncovers the entity

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p. 259

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p. 259

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 260

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. p. 260

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p. 260

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p. 260

towards it is 'directed'. "*What gets demonstrated is the Being-uncovering of the assertion.*" But the knowing remains solely related to that entity towards which the assertion made is directed, and this entity enacts the confirmation by showing itself just as it is in itself; "*that is to say, it shows itself that it, in its self-sameness, is just as it gets pointed out in the assertion as being – just as it gets uncovered as being.*"<sup>92</sup>

Assertion is a pointing towards an entity (same as signs indicate or point towards entities, but do not agree with them), taken as 'such and such as being the case'; demonstrating shows such and such indeed being so, enacting it via confirmation. "*Confirmation,*" therefore, "*signifies the entity's showing itself in its selfsameness.*" And the demonstration solely pertains to "*the Being-uncovered of the entity itself – that entity in the 'how' of its uncoveredness.*"<sup>93</sup> Therefore, the Being-true of an assertion must be taken as Being-uncovering. With this Heidegger breaks through the subject-object-dichotomy, for truth in this sense "*has by no means the structure of an agreement between knowing the object in the sense of a likening of one entity (the subject) to another (the Object).*"<sup>94</sup> Instead, what emerges in this breakthrough is a domain of unhiddenness (*aletheia*), wherein truth comes-to-pass as something temporal, in the sense of entities at a certain point being brought out into the open (*aletheia*) by way of the revealing facilitated by signs, thereby disclosing these hitherto hidden entities, which thereafter become available for circumspection within-the-world.

Therefore, Being-true as Being-uncovering is possible only on the basis of Being-in-the-world.<sup>95</sup> Accordingly, the privatization of truth, taken as Being-true as Being-uncovering is possible as a relationship between assertion, demonstration, confirmation → knowledge *only* on the basis of Being-with-in-the-virtual-world. But with-in-the-virtual-world this entire relational totality – of men making assertions and ascertaining knowledge by way of demonstration – is privatized as is the inversion of Heidegger's sense of Being-uncovered as disclosedness within-the-world. Within-in the virtual world, we establish identity by identifying ourselves with the entity in question – by private standards of aesthetic evaluation. –*Do you 'like' it... or not?*

–Let's follow this up, to see if in Heidegger's sense the primordial phenomenon of truth, which is based up Being-in-the-world, can likewise be captured in the virtual – thus private – sense. I think so: all I am saying of Heideggerian truth with relation to the privatization of truth constitutes an inversion, a reversal of what has been previously disclosed into private enclosure and eventual oblivion, pertaining to my fundamental belief: *that access to the primordial source of truth is lost as indicated by the post-truth era* (either by depletion of the source– or by outsourcing the way and transposing the relational totality of ascertaining knowledge upon the

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. p. 260

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. p. 260

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 260

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 260



virtual world, a totality now constituting the private disclosedness with-in-the-virtual-world). *The unhiddenness itself*, a clearing opened up by the Greeks' wonderment with the original question, whose answering unveiled to them the archetypes of philosophy will be closed-off and *sink into oblivion*; only to reopen radically anew, clearing in a domain shaped by new archetypes, by new forms – a new destining.

What question, understood in what sense, has the Form-engendering power to open up this clearing?

In section (b) of §44 Heidegger starts exploring the primordial phenomenon of truth in its original temporal dimension, after breaking through the subject-object relation as a mere derivative by explaining and embedding it within this dimension.

*"Being-true means Being-uncovering."* So there is an activity implied in 'uncovering', but not the kind pertaining to *adequatio*, i.e. agreement. So what is Being-true? *"Its Being-true is aletheuein of taking entities out of their hiddenness and letting them be seen in their unhiddenness. The aletheia signifies what shows itself – entities in the "how" of their uncoveredness."*<sup>96</sup> Now, the *aletheuein* distinct to man's bringing-forth (*poiesis*) is *techne*. *Poiesis* is counterpart to *physis*, which is the coming up into the open of nature itself, the way nature reveals itself as present-in-itself. However, man's way to reveal is *techne*, which is a bringing-forth into the open – and all bringing-forth pertains to *poiesis*.<sup>97</sup> Both are ways entities show themselves as they are in their unhiddenness (*aletheia*). The practice of philosophy likewise pertains to *techne*, as a bringing-forth out into the open by means of *logos*.

What is unhiddenness or *aletheia*? Heidegger alludes to a distinction drawn by Heraclitus between those who are lacking in understanding of *logos*, and those who are in understanding of it. *Logos* pertains to *how* entities comport or show themselves. *"To those who are lacking in understanding, what they (entities – RB) do remains hidden – lantanei. They forget it (epilantanontai); that is, for them it sinks back into hiddenness. Thus to the logos belongs unhiddenness – a-letheia."*<sup>98</sup> Understanding has to do with knowing *how* entities comport themselves. With *logos* and *aletheia* brought together in their primordial relation, Heidegger proposes 'his' definition of truth as uncoveredness and its *aletheieun* or method being one of bringing-forth into the open by means of *logos*, stating that in so proposing he hasn't *"shaken off the tradition (of metaphysics in its distinct how of the subject-object relation –RB), but have appropriated it primordially; and we shall have done so all the more if we succeed in*

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p. 262

<sup>97</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, Harper and Row 1977, p. 10

<sup>98</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, p. 262

*demonstrating that the idea of agreement (adequatio –RB) is one to which theory (the disengaged looking of the presence-at-hand mode of Being – RB ) had to come on the basis of the primordial phenomenon.”<sup>99</sup>*

With this elucidated, Heidegger starts to connect the dots from the primordial phenomenon of truth; *aletheia*, to Dasein and world, to disclosedness and the “there”. He states: *“Being-true as Being-uncovering is a way of Being for Dasein. What makes this uncovering possible must necessarily be called ‘true’ in a still more primordial sense. Uncovering is a way of Being of Being-in-the-world.”* After linking up uncovering with Being-in-the-world, Heidegger introduces the temporal distinction between Being-uncovering and Being-uncovered in connection to truth; *“what is primarily ‘true’ – that is, uncovering, is Dasein. “Truth” in the second sense does not mean Being-uncovering, but Being-uncovered (uncoveredness).”<sup>100</sup>* So we have a sense of Being-uncovering as the primordial ‘activity’ of man as a necessary participant in this uncovering. With this uncovering coming-to-pass, what is disclosed – or deprived from what is hidden – by being brought-forth into the open becomes circumspective accessible within-the-world. But the uncoveredness (acquired through Being-uncovering) of beings within-the-world is grounded in the world’s disclosedness, which in turn is *the “basic character of Dasein according to which it is its “there”. Disclosedness is constituted by state-of-mind, understanding and discourse, and pertains equiprimordially to world.”<sup>101</sup>* And then he moves to link up disclosedness to uncoveredness and the “there”: *“Only with Dasein’s disclosedness is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained. What we have pointed out earlier with regard to the existential constitution of the “there” (§32) and in relation to the everyday Being of the “there” (§33), pertains to the most primordial phenomenon of truth, nothing less. In so far as Dasein is its disclosedness essentially, and discloses and uncovers as something disclosed to this extent it is essentially ‘true’. Dasein is ‘in truth’.”*

Heidegger makes four statements pertaining to Dasein’s past, present, future, and as counterpart to Dasein being in truth as standing out in the clearing, the circumference of Dasein being in untruth as being enclosed by that original clearing. *“(1) To Dasein’s state of Being, disclosedness in general belongs. It embraces the whole structure-of-Being.”<sup>102</sup>* I ask, after giving this analysis of disclosedness and the “there”, truth as uncovering/uncoveredness and Dasein being in ‘in truth’: *What is Being itself?* Being itself is taken by Heidegger as the destining (taken as a becoming occasioned by the original clearing shaped by the potentiality of questioning the archetypes over time) of world. I think he is right. But ‘this here’ Being around us has rendered – through its destining into oblivion – the potential of another Being emerging ‘over yonder’. I believe It will

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. p. 262

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 263

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p. 263

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p. 264

come to pass through the “there” of aesthetic rapture, which is a rich and multi-layered phenomenon. I think it cannot just be rendered as a mood of the virtual world and a state-of-mind of oblivion in turn pertaining to the way world is enclosed, but also as a gateway between two tendencies of destining of ‘this here’ Being and the possibility of Being ‘over yonder’. If I am right, the Internet does harbour a future sense of Heideggerian authenticity, once this ‘over yonder’ emerges.

Presently, aesthetic rapture takes us away with-in-the-virtual-world, yet it is already transforming how we sense meaning as right here, right now. But it can *also* be thought as the entrance and proving ground to think the virtual world itself as Will to Power-world<sup>103</sup>, and then by looking back at ourselves understand we are *presently* virtual voyeurs of our own lives in a triumphant, formless, boundless, Wagnerian *rapture*<sup>104</sup> – but I will have to leave the other side of the looking glass and how we look through it un-thought. For now, we are with-in-the-virtual world as *falling*: “Proximally and for the most part Dasein is lost in its ‘world’. Its absorption in the “they” signifies that it is dominated by the way things are publicly interpreted.” Note that the “they” in the virtual world is but a reflection of the self and the way things are publicly interpreted is privatized but taken as publicly interpreted, because it is encountered with-in-the-virtual-world. “That which has been uncovered and disclosed stays in a mode in which it has been disguised and closed off by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Being towards entities has been uprooted.” In this sense, our Being-towards (the way; *aletheuein*) entities via the virtual has likewise been “uprooted”, what I call out-sourced. “Entities have not been completely hidden, they are precisely the sort of thing that has been uncovered, but at the same time disguised. They show themselves, but in the mode of semblance.”<sup>105</sup> –As we take the way of revealing via clicks and queries distinct to the uncovering and uncoveredness of the virtual world, we understand that every entity – and the virtual world itself – manifests itself through- and in semblance<sup>106</sup>. This makes it virtually impossible to distinguish between what is true and untrue; and this impossibility in turn renders truth as a constitutive value for the virtual world – and in turn

---

<sup>103</sup> Ponder this power-structure of the virtual world: electricity powers the Internet; our *time and attention* power the virtual world (ontological power) and the differentiating relation of Will to Power as power-quanta of all entities coupled to its participants with likes, shares, retweets is what makes the virtual world be and become. Its attention-competing-structure is twofold: an undivided kind of attention keeping you raptured with-in-the-virtual-world, and a differentiating kind, your private diffusing of time and attention on the virtual world.

<sup>104</sup> See: Martin Heidegger, *The will to Power as Art*, translated by David Ferrell Krell 1991, §16: My ‘aesthetic rapture’ taken as a ‘mood’ does right now, right here achieve this Wagnerian rapture. But that’s just the preparatory stage whilst taking the plunge into oblivion. The potential for an entirely new sense of meaning, and therefore understanding of Being, is hidden in my ‘aesthetic rapture’.

<sup>105</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, p. 264

<sup>106</sup> I take the semblance of the virtual world in a Nietzschean sense of *Schein* as operating principle of the virtual world itself; it is the protean nature of the will to power visible to us. See: *KGW VII.3.386* & *The Gay Science* § 54.

world – null and void; the aesthetic is the only value that remains as a way of evaluating what is virtually encountered, but it too is privatized in its sensing. *“Because Dasein is essentially falling, its state of Being is such that it is in ‘untruth’.”*<sup>107</sup>

With this interplay between truth as Dasein’s authentic disclosedness as potentiality-for-Being and untruth in Dasein’s state of Being as *falling*, perhaps we can extrapolate this truth-untruth connection active within the clearing onto the clearing of unhiddenness itself (*aletheia*) and what circumferences it as hiddenness, as *lantanei* – extrapolate it onto Being itself. If we do that, we capture the sense in which I mean that truth has always been an affair of privatization, of appropriation, of bringing it into a shared clearing, as well as understand that the present privatization of truth is merely a preparatory stage for a wholly new Being as its destruction, eventually clearing in a new sense of meaning and understanding of Being, emerging ‘over yonder’ – with its own authentic potentiality-for-Being, as standing out in a new clearing, shaped by new archetypes, with its own destining. This also means we can now take Dasein as a communal way of life as falling deeper and deeper through the privatization of truth... back to where the future begins.

Heidegger goes further into the essence of uncoveredness itself, stating: *“Truth is something that must always be wrested from entities. Entities get snatched out of their hiddenness. The factual uncoveredness (its Being-uncovered by our uncovering – RB) of anything is always, as it were, a kind of robbery (a privatization; an original theft – RB). Is it accidental that when the Greeks express themselves as to the essence of truth, they use a privative expression – a-letheia?”* No, it isn’t accidental that occidental philosophy, stemming from the question “what is the being”, thinks about the answers to this question in the sense of depriving it from hiddenness. For Heraclitus, who lived near the primal source and dwelled in the clearing engendered by it, said of what is present-in-itself: *“nature loves to hide”*.<sup>108</sup> But we love to sense what is hidden – and we deprive what is hidden through technology by bringing-forth out into the open. Because our *aletheuein* is *techne*, this nowadays means *robbing nature blind so we may see* is the way Dasein (as a communal way of life) is proper to itself in its Being-in-the-world as disclosedness.

- Conclusion: What is Truth?

The crux of my analysis of the way truth is found and the domain of truth itself is this: *what has been disclosed previously as true and the domain truth wherein this revealing takes place is now rapidly being appropriated and privately enclosed by the privatization of truth. It is an inversion of*

---

<sup>107</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985, p. 264

<sup>108</sup> Heraclitus B123, translated by C. H. Kahn, in: *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge 1979

*disclosing as enclosing which will eventually lead to oblivion of the western world as the ultimate consequence of its drive to truth.*

What will re-emerge out of this radical enclosure and the subsequent plunge into oblivion it foreshadows? The cohesion of world as a historical and cultural phenomenon, stemming from the Ancient Greeks, disintegrates by coming to fruition with the depletion of answers to the first question. The drive to truth has unmasked truth itself as false – same as Nietzsche predicted.<sup>109</sup> What remains, now that truth belongs to the past? The definition of our day and age as post-truth era alludes to this; it takes feelings and emotions of the individual and places higher upon them than facts and knowledge about the world.

So, what remains? What remains when there are no more standards of evaluation as collectively shared beliefs of what is true, good and beautiful, because the way truth is found and perceived is achieved in a private sense; the private sense of aesthetic rapture?

Nothing but us remains. What remains is a who. The new impetus of the western world, now that we stand at the end of the orbit of the first question, will come from answering its other side: who are we? And the only way to properly ask and answer this question cannot be through the private sense distinct to the virtual world. I predict the private sense itself will become collective, and this collectivisation will open up an original domain of truth wherein this new impetus is given its breadth – thereby providing us with guidance; direction and orientation for us to understand ourselves, the world and our place in it. *A new Grand Style will emerge...* This will come-to-pass when private-equipment and its hook-up to world-disclosing-equipment becomes ingrained in our embodiment via implants... *That, in turn, constitutes a transformation of man as the being that lives aided by technology and language into the being that lives as technology.*

What will the world engendered by this radically new ‘who’ look like? How will we disclose ourselves to ourselves in truth? The future is face-timing us over the Internet. The future of the artist formerly known as man is pure potentiality – although the present confronts us with oblivion. Fear not! We were destined to do this by way of *aletheia* and the archetypes that emerged from pondering this clearing – specifically in relation to the being; the thing. But going all the way also means destroying the world this question engendered to make way for a new one and an accompanying question as counterpart to the first one. *All creation requires destruction.* With the Internet and the virtual world it engendered, which caused the privatization of truth through the Internet’s nullification of time and space, I believe we stand at the eve of destruction.

---

<sup>109</sup> KGW, VI. I: 153, see for more on Semblance and Truth in Nietzsche: Gerard Visser, *Nietzsche & Heidegger*, Sun 1989 § 16, p. 174/193

- Conclusion: the Privatization of Truth & The Origin of the Internet.

What has truth become and what will truth become? –It’s domain isn’t found anymore, we take the wrong path and have been for some time now... Instead, already a new domain of truth has emerged, a privately disclosed domain, where truth is evaluated by each person on the basis of feelings and taste; standards derived from their path of lived-experience. *We virtuals have become the beachcombers of our own lives, gathering lived-experience as truth along the shores of oblivion.* But the way truth is found nowadays and the private domain it discloses – constituted and evaluated by each person’s lived-experience – is a transition...

Therefore, the question isn’t anymore: what is truth? but: who is truth? –Who? –You...

Heidegger says: “*Dasein* (here taken as a communal and historical way of life – RB) *is its disclosedness.*” But the disclosedness of the virtual world isn’t communally achieved, it isn’t historical – *yet* – in any overarching sense; it is privately achieved and historical only on an individual level as the amalgam of your clicks and queries and the results of those circumspensive disclosures thereafter appropriated as belonging to you; corresponding to you – robbed by you. Nothing but the process of privatization itself is shared by all. This particular way of finding truth is shared, for we all have smartphones and computers with access to the Internet, but the results of the revealing and subsequent appropriation of the results are googolplex – and are evaluated on the basis of our own private tastes and feelings. Therefore, the virtual disclosedness is there, but to each his own.

In turn, the disclosedness of world is closed off by privately enclosing each of us who reside with-in the virtual world’s disclosedness and dislosing – due to the way we reveal entities in the virtual world and what we do with what is so revealed. This virtual disclosing means for each of us a privately enclosing of world or, if we think the disclosedness of world in the sense of *Dasein* accorded to it by Heidegger: a complete loss of access to its disclosedness, to the world-at-large and therefore access to the primal truth. The centre cannot hold, and mere oblivion is loosed upon the world. What was communal, shared, is now privately owned. The Truth lacks all conviction, while my truth is full of passionate intensity... Oblivion of world is its consequence... What sensible beast, its hour come round at last, re-emerges from oblivion? A new type of human perhaps. No *animale rationale*, not even *Dasein* or mortal – but one that lives as technology and the world it engendered wholly interwoven with its embodiment. For now, I cannot but see oblivion dawning on us, yet am convinced that the artist formerly known as man will re-emerge anew, for we are a resilient bunch. Quite a claim! –

If the world isn’t shared anymore, when there is no cohesion between generations, between neighbours, between lovers even – *who are worlds apart with phone in hand*; how can such a world, in the sense of disclosedness as what makes it a shared world, continue to thrive?

It's destiny lacks direction, there is nothing to guide us anymore. It can't guide us if we take thriving to be a communal affair. I believe it very much is, yet the writings on the virtual wall predict otherwise. We are headed for the ringer. There is an onslaught happening right now, right here. An old world sinks into oblivion and a billion worlds emerge on its swells. How do we fare then, when we are each in our own world? What could possibly guide us ashore? The same phenomenon that engenders the state-of-mind of oblivion by guiding our attention away from the world and bringing it with-in the virtual world: –aesthetic rapture...

We are our disclosedness through aesthetic rapture, which draws us with-in-the-virtual world, with its constituents of involvement and relational significance ready-to-hand, visible and manipulable. Every private person is their own disclosedness of involvement and relational significance. The whole history of your clicks and queries, disclosing your own virtual world to yourself through the Internet, making the results of your circumspective disclosures your own, and in turn contributing to the enclosing of world and its plunge into oblivion – that is what I understand to be the privatization of truth and how this way of revealing wreaks havoc on our behaviour (Being), our understanding of world and who we are in it. We are privately in it when we are with-in-the-virtual-world – and most of us are with-in it and finely attuned to it via private-equipment. What does this wreaking havoc on our behaviour and understanding look like?

The most radical contrast between the world and the virtual world is what happens to our sense of spatiality and temporality. With-in-the-virtual-world space and time are nothing but synonyms for right here and now.

It is in this nullification of our sense of time and space where the possibility for a new impetus lurks; a Form-engendering force or Grand Style. What shape will this form take? Our form – for the body seeks to perfect itself through technology and technology labours to nullify time and space. Immortality, in whatever way, shape or form, is the ultimate mission. This transformation in turn makes it impossible for us to reach the primal truth.

The privatization of truth – enabled by private-equipment hooked up to world-disclosing-equipment – has as a consequence the nullification of time and space into right, right now. This consequence is what distorts our access to the primal truth, for there is no repose from aesthetic rapture; it keeps our senses attuned to this touch-screen under our thumb and by extension our sense of meaning remains latched onto it. This fixed sense of meaning entails a transformation of our experience of temporality and spatiality. How? –It reduces our experience of them with the speed of light into a singularity: your private-equipment emanating with notifications of what is happening in your world, right here, right now. By virtue of this nullification aesthetic rapture

becomes the only way the world matters to us and can matter to us. Hence, the temporality and spatiality that gave the breadth for world to deploy as a cultural phenomenon, as a shared, historical way of life that, has become distorted. To access the primal truth you need to jive with both in their original form to sense its domain. This possibility is drowned out by aesthetic rapture.

As the equipment will become more and more private (think implants and nano-tech that are hooked up to the Internet), eventually, the original way will be shut – for good.

The way we sense meaning is the way in which a possible understanding of Being presents itself to us. The virtual way we sense meaning and reveal on the basis of feelings and beliefs has the future. This new sense of meaning makes way for itself a new world by first dissolving the old world into oblivion. And in due time an entirely new domain of truth will be opened up through this nullification achieved by aesthetic rapture. –In there lies the transformation of man, out of which a new impetus will spring. This is the essence of my aesthetic rapture.

Words like “echo-chamber” and “information-bubble” both point to the phenomenon I call privatization of truth. Both play on the enclosing of world by the private disclosing achieved via the virtual way. The world around you becomes enclosed and your privately disclosed virtual world drowns out all that does not guide, direct or concern you individually. The virtual world will take whatever is in question for us and reveal to us that it is real because we encounter it; that it is meaningful because you have revealed it by querying – and that provides enough basis to take it as true, to attach private value to it by identifying yourself with it.

When you have assured yourself that what you have asserted as being the case, and judged what was subsequently uncovered virtually as ‘indeed’ being so, you take it as true; it becomes knowledge – by corresponding to *your truth as private disclosedness*. And whatever you assert as being the case, will be uncovered as being so.

The virtual world validates any opinion, thought or feeling as meaningful and truthful. The structure of assertion, demonstration and confirmation will fit any query you put to the virtual world and it – by uncovering whatever is posited as being the case in the assertion and demonstrating it is indeed so, in turn confirming it – makes proper knowledge out of it. Can we as private people not discern what we take as meaningful and truthful? Are we not reasonable folk? Intelligent and rational? To a certain extent. But because we can find anything we desire in the virtual world we can find justification for anything, and we most of all desire to vindicate ourselves; to justify what we opine, think and feel as true – for the sake of who you, me, *all of us are in our own private sense*. We disclose ourselves to ourselves as truth.



Seek and ye shall find – thyself? But what are men profited privately when we each of us ‘gain’ our own world, yet lose ourselves?

- Truth or dare?

I pass the torch onto you, dearest reader, with a dare: to play the identity-game. Though not in the sense of identity-politics, which, coupled to the Internet and the privatization of truth tends to oblivion. Yet there is a time and a place for identity-politics, too – and it’s right here, right now. But there is another side to the identity-game, the time and place beyond right here, right now. There lies the future, ‘over yonder’. Aesthetic rapture will take us there. *It fits; this submerging into oblivion is what’s going to transform and rebirth ‘us’.* –It reminds me of what a great thinker once said about a great people. For Nietzsche sensed the Greeks in their nature more than any other thinker, when he set straight a prevailing opinion about the classical-Greek period: *“If only people would stop this soft talk of the Homeric world as the springtime of the Greeks, and so on. In the sense in which it is maintained, the idea is false. That a tremendous, wild conflict, emerging from dark crudity and cruelty precedes the Homeric era – this is one of my most certain convictions. The Greeks are much older than people think. One can speak of spring as long as one has a winter to precede it, but this world of purity and beauty did not drop from the sky.”*<sup>110</sup>

Grant me my thesis-claim for the nonce and ponder what must become of a culture that has as its only unifying characteristic the privatization of truth turned total vindication of the sovereign self? I think it must dissolve into oblivion. The question staring back at *us* in the mirror is: who are *we*? This question ended time immemorial and started time memorial. It came with another question that arose simultaneously but reached us first... The question concerning the thing has guided the understanding of both the world as well as our understanding of self through its scope, as evidenced by our first question. By making our way through this question, which drove the western culture’s Grand Style as knowledge through technology, we now find ourselves at the end of that question’s orbit. Is it only befitting that the question “*who we are*” should confront us anew while standing on the precipice of oblivion.

So, I dare you to venture out and *think the Internet itself as its transformation of our sense of meaning, which is to say: to think the way of turning of our future ‘soul’ onto itself.* –Why the Internet, why not us if the question is who we are? –*Why not the virtual world?* Because the virtual world will be wholly embodied and cease to be virtual – and there will be no difference between us and world once we become beings that live *as* technology. Therefore, the one-of-a-

---

<sup>110</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche to Erwin Rohde, 16 July 1872, in: *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, translated by Christopher Middleton, Hackett Classics 1996

kind-thing called the Internet is *the Thing* upon which we need to focus in order to answer the question *who we are*. Therefore, *the Internet is an origin*. It holds the key to the future identity of man because it will be its transformative source. –We will be transformed like the Greeks once were “*to worship semblance, to believe in forms, sounds, words, the whole Olympus of semblance. These Greeks were superficial – out of depth.*”<sup>111</sup>And so will we... The depth we will cover-up was their original superficiality and our new-found superficiality will spring from the Internet. It may now still disclose only private worlds to private persons and destroy the old world conceived in antiquity, but it is already our culture’s Greek temple and will become our Olympus of semblance, by eventually engendering our future Form. The Internet harbours the riddle of tomorrow’s identity and we haven’t even glimpsed it yet – it’s just oblivion as far as the eye can see for now... But whoever we are, whoever we will be become, however this new world will be lived *authentically* – I feel it will be as beautiful as it is radical in all its raw potential. But for now, that’s just my truth...

---

<sup>111</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, §4, p. 20

### **Bibliography: The Origin of the Internet**

- **Primary literature**

Martin Heidegger, *Being & Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Blackwell 1985.

Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, Harper and Row 1977.

Martin Heidegger, *Over denken, bouwen, wonen* translated by H.M. Berghs, Sun 1999.

Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege*, Frankfurt a. M. 1977.

Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt. a. M. 1978.

Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, Pfullingen 1961.

Martin Heidegger, *The will to Power as Art*, translated by David Ferrell Krell 1991.

Aristotle, *Metaphysica*.

Plato, *Politeia*.

Heraclitus B123, translated by C. H. Kahn, in: *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge 1979.

- **Secondary literature**

Gerard Visser, *Nietzsche & Heidegger*, SUN Nijmegen 1989.

- **Additional literature**

Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Penguin 2017.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, De Gruyter 2002.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, translated by Christopher Middleton, Hackett Classics 1996.

René Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*.