

Building Dwelling Thinking and Aesthetic Relations in Urban Spaces: A Heideggerian Perspective on Relational Pedagogy as a Form of Disclosure

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This paper works with Martin Heidegger's notion of building and dwelling as a way of being in the world with particular application to aesthetic constructions in urban spaces. Particular attention is paid to the way Heidegger uses language to unearth the potentials of meanings and how we can move beyond mechanistic thinking to reveal a clearing of Being. The questions raised by Heidegger to do with building, dwelling and thinking are brought into proximity with relations of aesthetics and technology. Bridging these relations are questions to do with the labouring subject. Cases of two cities are excavated to discover and discuss some recent culture-building strategies: Newcastle and Gateshead in England, whose buildings (as edifices and dwelling places) reveal a palimpsest of time, place and technology. Through two key texts by Heidegger the paper considers his perspective on how material things gather and reveal, focusing us on what things or entities do rather than what they are in the world as a pedagogical process of revealing the essence of technology as "disclosedness".

Introduction to aesthetics and pedagogical openings

To the thing as technological component and as scientific object Heidegger opposes the thing as the place where the truth of Being, disclosedness, happens (Krell, 1999: 344).

This paper deals with aesthetic relations between cultural production and urban spaces, building and dwelling, and thinking and being, as it seeks to open relational pedagogy as a critical pedagogy for living. The philosophical aspects of the discussion are concerned with the matter of aesthetics, urban spaces and the way we dwell in cities, and the ways cities dwell in time, and in us, disclosing our Being to us. Thus both a politics of place and a politics of Being are set to work. Through this we are seeking a "clearing" as an "openness that grants a possible letting appear" (Heidegger, 1999d: 443). In this we must heed Martin Heidegger on the method and matter of philosophy when he says that, "philosophy knows nothing of the clearing. Philosophy does speak about the light of reason, but does not heed the clearing of Being" (443). Heidegger is speaking here of the need to dismantle productionist metaphysics in Western thinking and practice. By seeing art, architecture and cultural events, and their initiations in urban settings, as ways of building and dwelling, the paper shows how cultural constructions, and artworks as aesthetic building, in the Heideggerean sense of building as dwelling, can initiate time and place as a pedagogical procedure. As objects they are set to work in their locale, not as matter and form, but as a clearing for Being.

As aesthetics has a fundamental place in this discussion I will begin by looking at this term. *Aesthetics* is derived from the Greek *aisthesis*, perception and has a rich tradition in German thinking. Since it emerged in philosophical discourse in the eighteenth century aesthetics has

referred to the question of beauty and its appreciation. However its performance in the lexicon of thought and perception is wider than this. It “has come to be used to designate among other things, a kind of object, a kind of judgement, a kind of attitude, a kind of experience, and a kind of value” (Shelley, 2009).

To trace a genealogy of aesthetics takes us to the rich tradition of German idealism in which aesthetics and matters of spirit found purchase in dialogues on the work of art, human emancipation, labour and freedom, beauty and the concept of taste. Here lies the impetus and necessity for Heidegger’s dismantling procedures. The tradition includes key philosophical texts: J.J. Winckelmann’s treatise on painting and sculpture in 1755, and in 1766 G.E. Lessing’s *Laocoon*, Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, 1790, and Friedrich Schiller’s *Letters on the Education of Man*, 1795, and G.W.F. Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics*, published posthumously in 1835, accounting for art as the spiritual transformation of brute matter. Hegel’s legacy claims that art is a matter of beauty and such beauty can be realised in form and matter as a site of freedom for the human subject. In the twentieth century there has been a process of questioning and dismantling of this idealised account of art and aesthetics based as it was in a metaphysical grounding of the world. Significant are the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger in their contestations and dismantling of the metaphysical tradition of German idealism, and engagement with the German tradition of aesthetics in the writings of Theodore Adorno.¹

While traces of aesthetics as questions of judgement, taste and value according to some idealist principles still run as a river beneath the postmodern discourses of difference, today such judgements of aesthetic value are seen in proximity with specific contexts of social, cultural, economic, political and moral value. This position moves aesthetics to its relations with the wider world of ideas, faculties and things. Today when one engages an aesthetic judgement there is at work a negotiation of specific cultural contexts, as well as familiar ways of seeing and understanding the world. This position situates aesthetics as a culturally dependent term lacking scientific or empirical proof of an answer to the propositional question of aesthetic judgement. Inferences from rationalist principles fail and absolute aesthetic truth then becomes impossible to achieve.

This paper is not going down the track of trying to sort out an absolute meaning or non-meaning for aesthetics. It is however ever mindful of Heidegger’s position on the dangers of what he calls “our sheer aesthetic-mindedness” (1977a: 35). This is an attitude that separates us from the need to “guard and preserve the coming to presence of art” (35). Rather this discussion is interested in the way material or cultural productions act upon us as human beings to engage our aesthetic perceptions, and the way those aesthetic sensibilities are activated and also activate relational processes to open up potential understandings of ourselves and the world, in particular the world of urban spaces. Working through Heidegger the discussion is engaging questions of ontological difference in relation to the everyday of urban dwelling.

A form of relational aesthetics could be at work here. However while this may be somewhat akin to the “relational aesthetics” coined by French curator, Nicolas Bourriaud (2002), it also differs from it. The relational disclosures discussed here are those that reveal a process of eliding proximity and distance in ontological difference. Clare Bishop (2004), in her interrogation of Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics, succeeds in problematising the concept of

relationality as used by Bourriaud in that she demonstrates how some artists “problematized any idea of these relations being fluid and unconstrained by exposing how all our interactions are, like public space, riven with social and legal exclusions” (2004: 73-74). Bishop refers in particular to Santiago Sierra’s relational installation in the Spanish Pavilion of the 2003 Venice Biennale in which Sierra created work with paid participants to draw attention to the exercise of arbitrary power in the production of labour. Sierra works within spaces of territorial and ideological exclusions via a series of critical interrogations of the invisibilisation and exploitation of workers in capitalist power systems. Thus as cultural and creative knowledge workers seek to experience intersubjective encounters as relational acts, there is recognition of the politics of contingency in temporal, spatial and social spaces. Bishop’s perspective draws from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985: 193) who “conclude, politics should not be found itself on postulating an ‘essence of the social’ but, on the contrary, on affirmation of the contingency and ambiguity of every ‘essence’ and on the constitutive character of social division and antagonism” (Bishop, 2004: 74, note 58). Claims to reconcile difference into any sort of resolved state of being are displaced by acceptance of agonism in and through ontological sites of difference. Tension is sustained in relational processes of activating or initiating aesthetics as a site of human and social being, recognising that social being is already partial and contingent.

Extending beyond definitions of aesthetics per se, while still acknowledging traces of these definitions, or at least the search for understandings in the usage of the word *aesthetics*, this discussion works through the writings of Martin Heidegger. It looks specifically at his essay, *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1999a: 347-363), as a way of approaching some understanding of aesthetic relations between public space, building, dwelling and Being. Heidegger’s thinking can then be applied to the aestheticising processes of culture-led regeneration in two urban centres: Newcastle and Gateshead, beside the River Tyne in North East England, where there has been a cultural renaissance in action over the past thirty or more years. In these urban centres following the post World War Two decline in shipbuilding and other heavy industries attention was paid to the conditions of economic and social deprivation that had accompanied the growth of heavy industries and reappeared with their retreat, with warehouses left empty and urban spaces desolate. The process of cultural regeneration witnesses the bringing together of two cities in a relational space, opening them to a form of being, which might be called a renaissance palimpsest. This palimpsest is envisaged as a form of dwelling through a renewed present in which there is an agonistic process at work. The past and future are being both “concealed” and “unconcealed” at one and the same time through activating sites of technology. Here is a bridging with Heidegger’s essay, *The Question Concerning Technology*, raising a questioning attitude to “the essence of technology” (1977a).

With this in mind the discussion is interested in the implications for critical and relational pedagogy in that by being more aware of one’s sites of living in cities as a way of dwelling, and one’s relationships with building and technology as a locale, one could be more aware, perhaps, of pedagogical relations. This could disclose the struggle with urban alienation in the overly technologised tendencies of contemporary life. The labouring self is at stake here as labour and freedom are in coexistence through liberal and neoliberal thought in the political and social economies of our times. Working through the writings of Heidegger is a way of revealing a kind of critical pedagogical process at work in seeking to dismantle the technologies of these coexisting schemas. The pedagogy, as such, is about teaching a way of thinking and being as one who dwells in the world by building and caring for self, other and

the world by way of “letting appear” (Heidegger, 1999d: 443). In the two city case studies, through which the objects of aesthetic consideration—be they works of art, dance, theatre, music, literature, designs, bridges or buildings—are seen as activating sites or “things”, there is a pedagogical opening to questions of the working through of the essence of the true as a form of disclosure, or to use a Heideggerean language style, disclosedness of Being.

Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, language and Laing

As this discussion references Martin Heidegger’s essay, *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1999a: 347-363) it is useful to position the *raison d’être* of this philosophical text and to trace the way Heidegger uses language as a core basis for his philosophical thought-process. “Early and late, Heidegger remained on the trail of language”, writes David Krell (1999: 394) in his introduction to another essay by Heidegger, *The Way to Language* (1999c: 393-426). Heidegger seeks to show “the way in which language essentially unfolds as language; that is, the way it perdures; that is, the way it remains gathered in what it grants itself on its own as language” (1999c: 405). By working through the trail of language Heidegger builds relations between words and things in the world and the being of Beings. He seeks to show the way relations between one thing and another thing (be it a word, a person, object or thing in the world) can disclose and be disclosed; the way they can perform disclosures of place and time rather than be set in binary opposition one to another. In this sense Heidegger is quite phenomenological and indeed phenomenological method and attitude from Edmund Husserl had a great deal of influence on Heidegger.

The way Heidegger uses language to reveal processes of disclosure of our everyday experiences of the world is crucial to his methodology, which is his pedagogical process. He reveals his methodological approach to the disclosures of relational being via his poetics as well as his tracing of etymological conditions of language. He works through changes occurring through common usage and sources of meanings in the Old German or Ancient Greek, as a way of freeing language from the mastery of its propositional logic. Heidegger is not alone in foregrounding the relations between thinking and language. In another discourse, that of psychiatry, there is a passage in *The Divided Self* by R.D. Laing (1969) that seems to be particularly apt in respect of Heidegger’s methodology of writing through disclosures of language usage and statements:

The thought is the language, as Wittgenstein has put it. A technical vocabulary is merely a language within a language. A consideration of this technical vocabulary will be at the same time an attempt to discover the reality which the words disclose or conceal (Laing, 1969: 17).

Although Laing does not specifically refer to Heidegger here in the use of language, he shares with Heidegger an interest in the way language discloses or conceals. This has been noted by Avital Ronell in *The Telephone Book* (1989: 4), where she points out that Laing “constructs a theory of schizophrenia based, he claims, on Heidegger’s ontology”. Then, Ronell says that Laing “falls into error” in that he places his schizo language “on a continent other than that of Heidegger’s claims for language” (4). In his own way Laing focuses on the concealment of realities in psychiatric frameworks in the technical vocabularies of definition. On the other hand, Heidegger works through the etymologies of words to disclose the concealment of meanings in their common usage. Each is intent on unearthing the relations of beings in the world through ways of thinking, one with an-other, and the ways those relations may disclose the struggles of everyday living; and each works through the thinking that language carries

to reveal serious objections to mechanistic vocabulary with its tendencies to isolate, order and divide. As Laing puts it:

The words of the current technical vocabulary either refer to man in isolation from the other and the world, that is, as an entity not essentially 'in relation to' the other and in a world, or they refer to falsely substantialized aspects of this isolated entity (1969: 17).

Both Laing and Heidegger, in their seeking of relationality and the disclosure of false substantialisation, one in psychiatry and the other in philosophy, are engaged in dismantling mechanistic thinking. Engaging a mixture of psychoanalytic, existential and phenomenological discourses, Laing seeks understanding of the disintegration of "the self" as he unearths the way some people suffer estrangement from themselves as well as from others. Whereas Laing problematises the notion of "self", as a developed cogito, Heidegger focuses philosophically on the question of being prior to any "self" as an entity that may or may not be divided. He questions the metaphysical assumptions of being focusing not like Laing on the divided self of being as the subject of analysis, but on what does "being" mean?

In his essay, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger's attention is on the relation between building and dwelling, and the kind of thinking and being that can arise within this relation. He advances his thoughts on this relation and its implications for the meaning of being in three lectures to the Darmstadt Symposium on *Man and Space*, in August 1951: *Building Dwelling Thinking (Bauen, Wohnen, Denken)*, *The Thing* and *Poetically Man Dwells*. Referring to concrete examples of constructions Heidegger talks about bridges and houses, in a more everyday sense of being in a world of things. He speaks of building as dwelling. His interest is to show how things can open our thinking about place and bring what he calls the *fourfold* into our presence so we may dwell on earth, under sky, with divinities, and relating to one another as mortals (Heidegger, 1977a). In this he speaks of dwelling "in the sense of the stay of mortals on the earth" (1999a: 351).

Heidegger asks two questions in *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, and each is relevant to this discussion: (1) What is it to dwell?; and (2) How does building belong to dwelling? (1999a: 347). To answer, or at least work through these questions, Heidegger turns to the words, their origins and changed meanings. Engaging his particular methodology of tracing thought as language, he works through the etymology of the word *bauen*, to build, which suggests nearness and neighbourliness, from the old High German word for building, *baun*, meaning to dwell or to remain in place. Seeking to find an etymological relationship between building and dwelling, he points out that "the proper meaning of the verb *bauen*, namely, to dwell, has been lost to us. But a covert trace of it has been preserved in the German word *Nachbar*, neighbor" (1999a: 348-349). He then shows that the *Nachgebauer* is the "near-dweller, he who dwells nearby", and that "*huri, buren, beuren, beuron*, all signify dwelling, the place of dwelling" (349). But he does not suggest that dwelling is a passive state. To the contrary dwelling involves our work, travel, living and sheltering, and it is clear Heidegger's interest lies in dwelling as a state of being in the world: "Where the word *bauen* still speaks in its original sense it also says how far the essence of dwelling reaches" (349), or how we are on earth as humans. As he puts it, "The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *baun*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell" (349). However, as Heidegger points out, words bring with them changes of meaning, and "The proper sense of *bauen*, namely dwelling" changes

as what is contained in these words, this language, “easily falls into oblivion in favor of foregrounded meanings” (350). The political struggle continues in and through the very language that categorises and demarcates.

So it is that in mechanistic thinking, speaking and writing, which so pervades these present, overly technologised times, *building* or *to build* has become an instrumentalised act; thereby it has lost its sense of dwelling that once was there.

Working through of *alētheia*, truth, unconcealment

Following Heidegger’s etymological trail, the discussion is moving in the direction of reclaiming *bauen*, to build, as dwelling. It is seeking to find the way aesthetic responses and relations as a way of living can unconceal or disclose the nature of dwelling in the realm of constructed environments. This endeavour is much reliant on understanding the nature of “truth” or “the true” and the way it is unconcealed in and through language.

In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger (1977a: 17) establishes how, in productionist metaphysics, the resources of thinking and things (technological entities that are not to do with technology per se) become as “standing-reserve” to be stored-up for later possible use for the labouring self. This applies even to ideas or thoughts, which can become objectified as a demand upon us and keep us in suspenseful anxiety. In this means-end relationship of instrumentalisation, there is a lack of any working through or unconcealment; there is an obfuscation of struggle in interpersonal, linguistic, temporal and spatial relations. There is only waiting expectantly for what may or may not occur. As our spaces for living and work are enframed, so we are enframed as beings. In the process of storing up, the future itself becomes positioned as an entity in time, a “standing-reserve” for later capitalisation, and we become separated from the time of present-ness and future orientation of our Being as *Dasein*. We lose thereby any possibility of building and dwelling as Beings in the time of being. “The Being of *Dasein* finds its meaning in temporality” (Heidegger, 1999a: 63); and this condition includes “the position of the possibility of historicity as a temporal mode of being of *Dasein* itself” (63). As we become separated repetitively from this temporality in the time of being we become separated from our environment, the earth, sky, divinities and mortals—others as well as ourselves (Grierson, 2008: 49).

Over-technologisation of attitude can conceal what it proposes to reveal. We have been inured to a way of thinking that does not question propositional logic, the “whatever is *is*” of logical correspondence. What is *is*? How did it become so? Here we might dwell on the accepted meaning of truth as “the conformity of knowledge with the matter” (Heidegger, 1999b: 176), but such matter “must show itself to be such” if there is to be a conformity or correspondence, “otherwise the matter cannot become binding on the proposition” (176). In the search for the working through of the true in the disclosure of the matter, a form of critical pedagogy is in action. In the process of activation of disclosure, acts of building (artworks, architecture, bridges et al.) become initiating sites for the working through of the essence of the true, not truth as an assumed correspondence or propositional statement. There has been too much camouflage. Just because Being exists as a universal concept, says Heidegger, this does not mean, “it is the clearest and that it needs no further discussion” (1999e: 43). So he seeks the working through of truth as a disclosure. Of truth as the “essence of the true”, Heidegger recollects “the Greek word *alētheia*, the unconcealment of beings” (1999b: 176). In this way critical pedagogy seeks unconcealment as an opening of a *critical conscience* towards the

world and its oppressions, which arise continually from the dominations of unquestioning, over calculative, propositional thinking, being and doing.

The bridge: from Heidegger to NewcastleGateshead

Heidegger goes on to explain that we inhabit two sorts of building, constructing an edifice, and building as a way of dwelling or being on the earth (1999a: 349). In the relations between building and dwelling, he shows that “not every building is a dwelling” (347) and proceeds to work through the questions arising out of this statement. Then in addressing the second question that he poses in *Building Dwelling Thinking*, “How does building belong to dwelling?” (347), Heidegger seeks to “clarify for us what building, understood by way of the essence of dwelling, really is” (353). Thus, far removed from the logic of correspondence, he is seeking the working through of the true as unconcealment. For this process he uses the example of a bridge in terms of the way it gathers disparate elements together. He says, “the bridge swings over the stream ‘with ease and power.’ It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream” (354). There is a bridging in action. The bridge as a material production is an activating force initiating and opening the possibility of new sets of relations in and of the environment. The bridge, in bringing the banks into our line of sight activates the potential of opening the *fourfold* to us, i.e. earth, sky, divinities and mortals, and us to the fourfold (Heidegger, 1977a).

This may appear to be quite a transcendental way of languaging the world, and indeed Heidegger’s work has been criticised for its flowery language, such as, “The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars...” (1999a: 351). Theodore Adorno (1973), for example, claimed Heidegger was using pedantic jargon suggestive of transcendence. However it must be said that through his particular linguistic methodology Heidegger turns propositional language away from its concealing tendencies to open the potential of words to the processes of ontological difference pervading all beings and actions in the world. Heidegger is opening the potential of building beyond its instrumentalist implications to a way of revealing. There is an implicit emphasis on the importance of dwelling as a locale of caring and being, and as he calls it, “sparing [which] pervades dwelling in its whole range” (351). Heidegger’s thoughts, ideas and language intervene in the excessive instrumentalism that productionist metaphysics are given to and alter our perception of the world of being and things. In his present example of the bridge, Heidegger’s language-style opens the building of a bridge beyond that of a means-end production. It becomes a locale. Through this process, sparing and preserving becomes the way of dwelling.

Heidegger was writing of his bridge in Germany in the mid-twentieth century. To apply Heidegger’s theories of building as dwelling to an actual bridge in the twenty-first century is a venture I would like to pursue at this point in the discussion. There is a story in this. The sky was darkening one evening in early November 2009 as we walked along the Quayside of River Tyne in the North East of England. Diffused lights from once derelict warehouses revealed silhouettes of café life in this regenerated city space. Before us we could see an impressive tilting arch across the inky-blue of the dome-like sky. It was, we soon discovered, the NewcastleGateshead Millennium Bridge, flaring with an iridescent green presence. In Heidegger’s terms what were we witnessing? A masterful technological construction—surely? The bridge’s 126 metre span was opening the River Tyne to the sky, and the dual banks to each other, bringing together the two cities of Newcastle and Gateshead in one relational space, and, in Heidegger’s terms we were part of this gathering.

We walked across the curving pedestrian and cycling path of this award-winning construction by Wilkinson Eyre (design architects) and Gifford (structural engineers), with its cantilevered elliptical arch. We heard of its ability to open like a winking eye, the six hydraulic rams powered by electric motors initiating the rotational movement of 40 degrees to allow ships up to 25 metres tall to pass below, and we could only imagine its social, cultural, and economic potential. In its manifest technologies the bridge locates, opens to and serves the economic necessities of the cities Newcastle and Gateshead. In these necessities the river is no longer merely a river; it becomes unmistakably a port for commercial usage. However something else is being activated here. How do we find this something? How does it come to presence? For Heidegger this happens through *poiësis* as a *bringing-forth*. Heidegger shows how this cannot happen when our mechanistic thinking takes precedence in the labouring self as a demand for making form in the world, i.e. our need for mastery of technological, productionist thinking and making. He speaks of this problem when he writes, “So long as we represent technology as an instrument we remain held fast in the will to master it. We press on past the essence of technology” (Heidegger, 1977a: 33). Our labouring selves become slaves to the desire to master technology; we stare at it in an unthinking, instrumentalised way of subject-object separations. Heidegger urges us to seek technology’s essence, which as a process of *poiësis* or *bringing-forth* is nothing technological. Responding to the need to engage this essence, as a place “where Enframing reigns” Heidegger urges us to “think carefully about the words of Hölderlin” (28), “*But where the danger is, grows / The saving power also*”, and asks what these words mean. He is alerting us to seek something outside a productionist framework and beyond sublation through the Hegelian dialectic. His turn to Hölderlin can be heeded in our considerations of the technological feat of the Millennium Bridge to see what is being revealed there:

But might there not perhaps be a more primally granted revealing that could bring the saving power into its first shining forth in the midst of the danger, a revealing that in the technological age rather conceals than shows itself? (Heidegger, 1977a: 34).

Concealed by the wonders of technology and mechanisation for the labouring self, “the saving power” is calling to shine forth, to be unconcealed. Such disclosure brings to our recognition that “Bridges initiate in many ways” (1999a: 354). The bridge “lets the stream run its course and at the same time grant mortals their way, so that they may come and go from shore to shore” (354). There is recognition of temporal, spatial and life-world conditions here in the way building relates to human habitation in other than an over-technologised sense; the bridge opens a *locale* for dwelling. Heidegger explains this most clearly when he writes:

the bridge is a thing of its *own* kind; for it gathers the fourfold in *such* a way that it allows a *site* for it. But only something *that is itself a locale* can make a space for a site. The locale is not already there before the bridge is (1999a: 355-356; emphasis in original).

Relations between locale, space, place

Heidegger draws attention to the way a bridge exists as calling forth or gathering a locale. The bridge brings with it an essential unfolding of a bridging between danger and saving power. “The coming to presence of technology threatens revealing, threatens it with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering...” (1977a: 33). In such a condition all we would see of the Millennium Bridge would be its technological character as an instrumental

device constructed solely for human capital. Heidegger reveals an in-between site of danger and saving power at one and the same time—not an overcoming of one by the other. Thus he exhorts the “holding always before our eyes the extreme danger” (33) in “the essencing of technology” which is “Enframing...” (31). So there seems to be more in the bridge than first meets the eye.

Crucially Heidegger is speaking not of technology as it is commonly thought, but he is excavating the way a bridge reveals temporal and spatial conditions. One might consider for a moment the work of Edward Soja (1989, 1996) with his concerns for temporal, spatial and social beings. Through a politics of geography, Soja has conceptualised place in a way that has influenced other writers grappling with ways of bringing a more critical attitude to space and place. Jane Rendell (2006), for example, in considering the in-between conditions of site, place and space through architecture, art and the built environment draws from Soja to open what she calls a “critical spatial practice” to processes of social critique. But, unlike Soja, Heidegger seeks to get behind such questions of space, site and things in the world; to dismantle our assumptions about them as matter and form and our relationships to them. He seeks to problematise the givenness of things by engaging a questioning way. “Questioning is a knowing search for beings in their thatness and whatness” (Heidegger, 1999e: 45). These fundamental questions he interrogates as a way of thinking in his major work *Being and Time* (1927; see Heidegger, 1999e).

It is clear by now that Heidegger’s work is not about social critique although his project reveals moves of spatial and temporal practice by the way he excavates the living nature of *Dasein*. He shows how the bridge gathers in that it “brings stream and bank and land into each other’s neighborhood” (1999a: 354). Extending from Heidegger’s thinking into the practices of two cities, we can bring a questioning attitude to the urban centres of Newcastle and Gateshead. They were once separated as urban centres with historical focus on heavy industry, and are being brought together today in one relational space. Their names have merged as NewcastleGateshead. However what are we learning here?

Heidegger gestures towards *Dasein* and dwelling in the way a bridge gathers a locale. NewcastleGateshead may be such a locale. Is there now an opening for a relational Being as a pedagogical possibility in the everyday world? Taking these questions towards political society, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) speak of conditions of radical undecidability “constitutive of a political society” (Laclau cited in Bishop, 2004: 72, note 56), and if we relate this to the bridge as a locale for gathering we might find that a similar undecidability exists. In this recognition we keep to the fore the danger and the saving power in the antagonisms and the agonistic struggles for revised relations, and always the lack of reconciliation of difference characterising public space.

***Dasein* and the work setting up a world**

As he does with *Dasein* in terms of our coherence of Being-in-the-world, Heidegger excavates the bridge’s gathering potential when he looks at the ways bridges “initiate”:

Always and ever differently the bridge initiates the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to the banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side. ... the bridge gathers, as a passage that crosses ... (Heidegger, 1999a: 354).

In the gathering of a passage the bridge reveals banks, sky, river as a way of being in and with the locale. Heidegger takes us beyond “representation” as “the character of subjective perception” (1977b: 131) to see “the one who—in company with itself—gathered towards presencing, by that which opens itself”. We are taken beyond the Western world’s customary way of thinking about things in a representational mode and representing them “as an unknown X to which perceptible properties are attached” (1999a: 355). Heidegger writes about this in respect of the work of art in his seminal essay, *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1999b), showing that the work does not refer to another category in the world as a sign or symbol does; it represents neither matter nor form to be valued by labour. He asks, “What does the work, as work, set up?” and answers, “Towering up within itself, the work opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force” (1999b: 169; emphasis in original). Something other than usefulness in labouring terms is being set up here.

Heidegger speaks of the working through of truth in the work of art as something ontologically prior to the act of correspondence. Thus there is always a condition of possibility at work rather than a representation or correspondence in the artwork as work. The work has a worklessness about it as it is not representing a meaning of or about something else, beyond its gathering presence—be it a work of art, architecture, music, poetry, bridges, building or Being. The work does not stand in for something else; it has its own “work-being” as a gathering presence, and is, according to Heidegger, always ready-to-hand to set up a world (1999b: 170).

Following this line of thought, the NewcastleGateshead Millennium Bridge does not represent something else; it is already a locale in itself with a “work-being”, not a symbol or a sign corresponding to something else in the world. It is, as Heidegger says, “a thing of its *own* kind; for it gathers the fourfold in *such* a way that it allows a *site* for it” (1999a: 355; emphasis in original). In gathering it is opening or setting up a world. The concept of *gathering*, as used here by Heidegger, derives from the Ancient Greeks, where “in order to fulfill his essence, Greek man must gather (*legein*) and save (*sözein*), catch up and preserve, what opens itself in its openness and he must remain exposed (*alëtheuein*) to all its sundering confusions” (1977b: 131). Thus Heidegger is taking us to an openness of being in the world and initiating the materiality of things (such as artworks and bridges) into new possibilities of gathering together the fourfold, earth, sky, divinities and mortals. He is dislodging previous philosophical traditions about our selves and the world as separate entities as he opens our understanding of *Dasein* in its everydayness of the world.

When Heidegger brings our attention to the locality of building, and the relation of ourselves within that space, there is a temporal and spatial quality. As we were walking along the Newcastle Quayside on that November evening and looking across to The Sage Gateshead, the new arts and music centre, the bridge was opening the space to us and we were part of its locale. The locale was coming into being through the bridge’s construction and the bridge’s construction was being revealed by the locale:

When we think ... about the relation between locale and space, but also about the relation of man and space, a light falls on the essence of the things that are locales and that we call buildings (Heidegger, 1999a: 359).

As we walked across the NewcastleGateshead Millennium Bridge and entered The Sage, so a relationship between our mortal-ness, place and space was possible. In this sense there was

a “distinctive letting-dwell” in this bridge as a building (Heidegger, 1999a: 360), with *technē* at work as in the Ancient Greeks concept of *technē* as “producing, in terms of letting-appear” (361) and *poiēsis* as a revealing or bringing forth (1977a: 29, 34). With capability for dwelling we were capable of building, and with building as dwelling we could see “*the basic character of Being*” (362; emphasis in original) in selves, others and the physical spaces. Thus there was a revealing of *Dasein* in this everyday moment of time.

A genealogy of Newcastle and Gateshead as relational sites

The genealogical story of Newcastle and Gateshead reveals that, since the mid-1970s, public policies for redevelopment were opening these cities as sites for the possibility of revitalisation through aestheticising of city spaces. Following the post-War decline in heavy industries sections of Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead had become largely derelict, places of economic and social deprivation marked by urban decay. With the advent of job losses people departed. Domestic and public spaces, warehouses and commercial entities were emptied of life. New ways of thinking were needed if new ways of dwelling were to become possible. The councils of both cities devised policies for cultural investment to bring Newcastle and Gateshead together and reformulate them as a cultural capital, rebranding them as NewcastleGateshead. Decade by decade new people arrived as previous residents returned. With new interest in urban spaces as places of building and dwelling creative investments were breathing new work and life into the locale.

The arched Millennium Bridge now opens to the giant, shell-like surface of The Sage Gateshead whose architectural design, it can be said, ensures a sheltering of music-making. The vast stainless steel roof acts to enclose the spaces beneath bringing music as a way of thinking to the recently depressed urban spaces of Gateshead. For existing and new performers and audiences The Sage, designed by Norman Foster with two performance auditoriums, rehearsal, hospitality and music education spaces, was letting music be present through creative and educative performances as a pedagogical way of being.² It could be said there was a gathering of *poiēsis* in the revealing of music.

David Whetstone (2009) outlines the renaissance of the cities of Newcastle and Gateshead by giving an account of a selection of new ventures of culture-building to highlight the renaissance of these urban spaces since the 1970s. In image and text Whetstone reveals the palimpsest of these two cities excavating the ways heavy industry was shaping the landscape and at the same time blighting it with toxic industrial pollution. Here we can recall *The Question Concerning Technology* (1977a) and Heidegger’s deep criticisms of modern industry, in terms of “expediting ... always itself directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense. The coal ... is stockpiled; that is, it is on call...” (1977a: 15); and further, “Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. ... We call it a standing-reserve [*Bestand*]” (1977a: 17). In the Tyneside processes of standing-reserve there was a profound separation from the locale as dwelling.

When in Newcastle and Gateshead the industries started contracting people became further disenfranchised and buildings gradually became deserted and derelict. “In twenty years, from the early 1980s, the proportion of the workforce employed in mining, shipbuilding, steel and engineering fell from 50% to 3%” (Whetstone, 2009: 10). The cities that had grown through heavy industry, and had suffered a separation from Earth through those same industries,

were now suffering further forms of separation and subsequent decay. It was in 1974 that the newly established Gateshead Council was bringing “a new wave of council leaders determined that Gateshead would prosper” (10). Our interest here is in what sort of prospering. In 2000 a partnership between the once separated Councils of Newcastle and Gateshead brought the two cities together with a renaming as NewcastleGateshead and so began the cities’ rebuilding. No doubt the new Council’s aim was an instrumentalised move for economic growth with culture and creative enterprise becoming the new standing-reserve. In meeting the needs of a contemporary world the cities looked to the arts to reignite the locale; and of the arts Heidegger writes:

Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primally, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving power, may awaken and found anew our look into that which grants and our trust in it? (1977a: 35).

Whetstone (4-5) outlines some highlights of arts building from the 1970s through to the unprecedented investment in cultural construction in the first decade of the twenty-first century. If there was a beginning to the renaissance it may be the Royal Shakespeare Company’s selection of NewcastleGateshead as its northern home in 1977. Confidence in the arts then led to a 20 month and 9 million pound refurbishment of Newcastle Theatre Royal, and a significant commission for a landmark sculpture by Anthony Gormley. *Angel of the North*, erected in Gateshead in 1998, was soon attracting contentious social comment and worldwide media attention. Public art was opening the locale to new conversations circulating discursively in public and private spheres. In 2000, the NewcastleGateshead Millennium Bridge was lifted into place by one of the world’s largest floating cranes, the Asian Hercules II; and in 2002 The Baltic, Gateshead’s new venue for contemporary art opened, as did Britain’s largest commercial art gallery, the Biscuit Factory in Newcastle. Then The Sage Gateshead was opening as a world-leading music and education centre, and in 2005, 1,700 people volunteered to gather naked at locations in Newcastle and Gateshead quaysides for the photographer Spencer Tunick, using the mass naked human form as a way of activating the revitalised urban spaces as places in which to dwell. A palimpsest of time, place and human habitation was appearing.

It seems that new ways of thinking and living in urban spaces were changing the cities from places of non-dwelling to sites of regenerated dwelling with public spaces becoming social spaces. Northeastern England saw also some remarkable ecological changes with the return of otters to the formerly heavily degraded rivers. Thus there was a letting-be of Earth. In Heidegger’s way of thinking here was building, dwelling and gathering. In 2006 Dance City opened, as did Northern Stage, a European Centre for Performing Arts, and in 2008 the newly formed, national organisation, Creativity, Culture & Education was based at NewcastleGateshead. And it was there, in Dance City, that we gathered for the World Creativity Summit in November 2009, bringing the locale and its thinking into our ways of imagining the future for the arts in education. There was a letting-be in the pedagogical acts of thinking through the arts (see further in Grierson, 2009). The danger, it should be noted, is always that such practices might prefigure a transcendental stockpiling of cultural energy as a new form of standing-reserve for later use. It depends on the levels of camouflage.

Implications of building and dwelling for critical and relational pedagogy

There is an implication for critical and relational pedagogy in this story of NewcastleGateshead. Although told only in brief here, there is enough to show the way a city redevelops itself

through culture-building as an act of creating aesthetic works as “work-being[s]” through which to dwell. There is a way of flourishing here, a way of making creativity workable in public, private and ecological spaces. The processes of building are enlivening aesthetic relations as locales. These relations are evident clearly through Heidegger’s writing in that he speaks of building as a way of thinking, being, relating and feeling at home in a place (*Wohnen*) (Krell, 1999: 344-345). Thus Heidegger brings Being into proximity with relational thinking, and here lies the implication for pedagogy when we open pedagogy to its critical potential of revealing *Dasein*.

Heidegger is quite clear that his way of writing is a way of thinking that is itself a way of dwelling, when he says, “But that thinking itself belongs to dwelling in the same sense as building, although in a different way, may perhaps be attested to by the course of thought here attempted” (1999a: 362). Thus his writing performs a pedagogical procedure, one that opens thought to its relational potential.

The cases of building as dwelling in the NewcastleGateshead examples are working as aesthetic initiations towards some sort of disclosure as a critical and relational pedagogy in action. By seeing buildings, bridges, art and cultural productions, and their initiations in urban spaces, as locales that open up the “work-being” of aesthetic relations we may understand our way of Being in the world. This way shows the working of critical and relational pedagogy as an activating site of encounter, engagement and disclosedness. It does not obfuscate the agonistic struggles that characterise the indeterminate terrain of public encounters in the cultural landscape.

Concluding thoughts: “catching sight of what comes to presence in technology”

Heidegger’s questioning of the forgetting of the question of Being in Western metaphysics opens up the Western world’s constructions of causality for further critical engagement. For Heidegger, any questions to do with truth, reality and existence in Western thought are already infused with deeply entrenched metaphysical pre-suppositions. He returns to this again and again through his writings to expose fundamental flaws of transcendental idealism, technological determinism, and the closures of teleological thinking and being. Hence his opening of existence to questions of ontological difference and his questioning approach to time as the horizon of ontology. Bridging Heidegger’s writings through his two key essays, *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1999a) and *The Question Concerning Technology* (1977a), this paper started with a statement from Krell referencing Heidegger’s differentiation between technologised thinking of objects and the object as building activating dwelling. And it is through excavating the etymology of *bauen*, to build, with the loss of its proper meaning, to dwell, that Heidegger seeks a way of overcoming a spiritual bankruptcy evident in our over-rationalised times, a way of reclaiming the being of Being.

Heidegger urges us to ponder our relationship to technology, “through our catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological. So long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain held fast in the will to master it” (1977a: 32). This urging to go beyond the instrumental in our relationship with technology bridges Heidegger’s writing across his key two texts discussed here, *The Question Concerning Technology* (1977a) and *Building Dwelling Thinking* (1999a), with focus on the bridge as a locale.

In the culture-building of NewcastleGateshead there is an activation of the city as *Nachbar*, neighbour (Heidegger, 1999a: 349). Newcastle has opened to Gateshead and Gateshead to Newcastle, “the *Nachgebauer*, the near-dweller, he who dwells nearby” (349), giving “a clue as to how we have to think about the dwelling it signifies” (349). For Heidegger, “thinking is a deed. ... For thinking in its saying merely brings the unspoken word of Being to language” (1999f: 263). Through the examples of NewcastleGateshead’s renaissance as urban spaces there has been an exploration of Heidegger’s questioning way of thinking, “What is it to dwell? How does building belong to dwelling?” (1999a: 347); and in addressing these questions there has been an excavation of further questions to do with our relationships to technology. Finally we are reminded of Heidegger’s call to us:

Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it (1977a: 35).

There lies our challenge; the excavations have application to our everyday existence, our thinking, languaging and enacting. This is where the pedagogical implications of the discussion lie. In working through Heidegger’s questioning of deterministic, propositional ways of thinking the world, this discussion has set forth a pedagogical way of being in the world. Through engaging with the bridge as a locale for dwelling, there are implications for activating a critical consciousness in public space by overcoming the obfuscations of questions of what it means to be and to dwell. Heidegger thus reveals pedagogical practices of place-making in the everyday-ness of space and time. This is where the truth of Being or disclosedness happens.

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Notes

1. This account of the German tradition of aesthetics is derived from Hegel's Aesthetics by Stephen Houlgate in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Houlgate provides a full exposition on Hegel's ideal beauty, art and aesthetics.
2. For further information about The Sage Gateshead see *About The Sage Gateshead, Introduction*. Retrieved January 9, 2010, from <http://www.thesagegateshead.org/about/>