

Activating Aesthetics: Working with Heidegger and Bourdieu for engaged pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

This article seeks to investigate art in public urban space via a process of activating aesthetics as a way of enhancing pedagogies of engagement. It does this firstly by addressing the question of aesthetics in Enlightenment and twentieth-century frames; then it seeks to understand how artworks may be approached ontologically and epistemologically. The discussion works with the philosophical lenses of two different thinkers: Heidegger, in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' and 'The Origin of the Work of Art', and Marxist sociologist, Bourdieu with his work on a theory of practice and habitus. It asks how art may work in the meaning-making processes of place and the human subject in terms of ontological difference (Heidegger) and dispositional capital (Bourdieu). In bringing these different organising principles of interpretation to specific works of art, the discussion draws from locational research undertaken in Newcastle/Gateshead and Melbourne.

KEYWORDS

urban, art, aesthetics, engaged pedagogy, place, being, Heidegger, Bourdieu

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Introduction: Propositions and Positions

This article considers aesthetics and the relations between aesthetics, urban place and the human subject with art as the primary focus. It envisages the potential for a summary of aesthetic theory. It offers a proposition that artworks in public spaces may activate a form of aesthetics that speaks as a form of pedagogy. This activation may open deeper ontological questions regarding historicity of being, which in turn may open to a fundamental ontology of difference. Alongside this ontological position, the discussion posits an epistemological approach to artworks as cultural productions in public space understood via a metaphysical process of presence. This discussion is curious to see how these different approaches may work together, and how the possibility of engaged pedagogy may situate a politics of difference, and thereby an understanding of difference, by virtue of the two vastly different interpretive procedures.

By drawing from Heidegger's texts, 'Building Dwelling Thinking' (Heidegger, 1999a) and 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (Heidegger, 1999b) and Bourdieu's interest in *habitus* through a theory of practice (1977/1972, Bourdieu, 1990/1980), the discussion relays between Heidegger and Bourdieu to see if in fact those two different positions may contribute in discursive fashion to meaning-making processes of place and the human subject. The research is drawn from site visits to Newcastle/ Gateshead (Millennium Bridge), Melbourne (McInnery),¹ and Old Melbourne Gaol precinct (Boyce).²



Figure 1. Millennium Bridge over River Tyne, Newcastle/Gateshead. Photographer: Nicholas Gresson 2010

Starting Place: The Bridge

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. The bridge expressly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge. ... it brings stream and bank and land into each other’s neighbourhood. The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream. ... bridges initiate in many ways. (Heidegger, 1999a, p. 354)

Heidegger is concerned with what things, bridges, buildings, art works ‘do’ in the world rather than what they ‘are’ or how they may be appreciated via aesthetic knowledge or an aesthetic attitude. In ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’ Heidegger asks, ‘What is it to dwell? How does building belong to dwelling?’ (Heidegger, 1999a, p. 347), addressing these questions by investigating the bridge in terms of its capacity for building and gathering ‘as a passage that crosses’ (p. 354).

A notion of Heidegger’s ‘gathering’ became clear in the process of walking along the frozen pavements of Tyneside in Newcastle/Gateshead one winter’s evening. Behind me was the Tyne Bridge and Robert Stephenson’s High Level Bridge, and ahead was a giant arch lighting up the evening sky. Water and sky came together as the iridescent LED saturation of changing colours carved an arc through the gathering darkness. At the time, I did not have foreknowledge of the technological design of the world’s first and only ‘tilting arc’, the Gateshead Millennium Bridge with its 126-m span,³ the brainchild of Wilkinson Eyre Architects and Gifford engineers. Although captivated by the changing lights against a darkening sky, I was not engaged with the functionality of the cantilevered elliptical arch opening like a ‘winking eye’ to allow ships up to 25 m above water level to pass beneath. Later, this technological process became clear by witnessing the capabilities of six hydraulic rams powering the electric motors to set in motion the bridge’s rotational movement of 40°. Not until it returned to a horizontal equilibrium could foot and cycle traffic cross the River Tyne once more (See Figure 1).

The bridge with its LED lighting was certainly technological, yet there was something more than an overt technological feat here. A gathering was taking place here, in a way that was opening the place to me and me to the place. Of Heidegger, Krell (1999c) had written, 'To the thing as technological component and as scientific object Heidegger opposes the thing as the place where the truth of Being, disclosedness, happens' (p. 344). What, actually, was Heidegger meaning here?

So began the research project of *activating urban aesthetics*: the search to find different ways of interpreting and understanding aesthetics via artworks in urban spaces as a pedagogical procedure. Each research site offered specific artworks through which to trial and extend the investigations of how art may *work* to activate a form of engaged pedagogy. For Heidegger, this activation was necessary to redress a failure in the human and natural sciences to understand and respond to the call of being human in the world. How did Heidegger's *initiating* and *gathering* work in this context?

How Aesthetic Things 'Gather'

It is proper to every gathering that the gatherers assemble to coordinate their efforts to the sheltering; only when they have gathered together with that end in view do they begin to gather. (Heidegger, Logos, cited in Krell, 1999d, frontispiece)

Heidegger raises a series of questions, leading to a discussion of perceptions of place and ontology; in other words, he was questioning what it might mean to gather or share place as a 'summons into being'. His is an ontological, not epistemological enterprise. He is concerned with 'being in the world' not 'knowing about' the world. This research set out to understand the aesthetic components of artworks in urban spaces, but working with Heidegger soon presented a problem with 'aesthetics' as a way of accessing and analysing objects and artefacts. Then, by working with Bourdieu, aesthetics came into alignment with the politics of power in social structures. Both were dismantling analytical aesthetics, but in different ways.

This discussion focuses on the Gateshead Millennium Bridge, and artworks by McInnery, *Journey's Seed* (McInnery, 2005) and Boyce, *We are Shipwrecked and Landlocked* (Boyce, 2008), to draw Heidegger's philosophical project alongside theories of Bourdieu: an unlikely coupling. Bourdieu's materialist account from a Marxist lineage offers an understanding of what he calls *habitus*, as a site of embodied dispositions conditioned and reproduced by symbolic and institutional systems to produce cultural capital in the realm of practice. Bourdieu occupies a significantly different political position from that of Heidegger as clarified in Bourdieu's writing on Heidegger's political ontology (Bourdieu, 1991). While distanced from Heidegger, Bourdieu also acknowledges a debt to Heidegger by drawing from the philosophical concept of Heidegger's *Dasein*, as 'being-there' in the world, to develop his sociological position of *habitus*. Bourdieu's materialist account of the dispositions of knowledge, his *habitus*, will be addressed further in this paper, in relation to Boyce's work installed at the Old Melbourne Gaol Courtyard. This discussion investigates, through Bourdieu, the capacity of artworks to activate generative relations of production in the webs of cultural practice as situated knowledge. In this, the artwork operates as a field of cultural production, within which and from which a pedagogue may produce and reproduce knowledge of place, time and being. Alongside this approach, through Heidegger there is the project of setting the work of art to work in the world. In this the pedagogue may work with the artwork in its situated surroundings to activate place, time and being as a summons to being.

As the discussion works between Bourdieu's and Heidegger's texts, and applies their texts to specific artworks and locations in the twenty-first century, there is in train an interpretive process in a field of social and philosophical forces different from the cultural and intellectual fields within which the original texts were situated. The times are different, the places are different and the intellectual purposes are different: the differences of these institutional and intellectual mechanisms must be acknowledged as a hermeneutical process. Bourdieu himself wrote of the institutional

practices of specific times and the social field that gives rise to the production of philosophical discourses.

Heidegger's account seeks an ontological historicity of art and being. For Heidegger, historicity is understood through time as temporality. Heidegger's temporality is not that of Aristotle's linear time whereby passing moments move from past, into future, through 'now-time' always privileging the linear present. Neither is Heidegger focusing on eternal time as in the 'naturalistic' theism of transcendental thought, nor as in Hegel's thesis on the teleological progression of the human spirit. For Heidegger, time is earthly and anticipatory living towards the finitude of death. In other words, human existence is 'always already' situated in its time of being. An anticipatory *Dasein* throws itself towards its future by seizing hold of the present as 'having-been'.⁴ Time is finite. Things in themselves are finite, not appearances or representations of something else in the world. By dismantling dominant Western metaphysical systems of substance, Heidegger situates artworks not as aesthetic objects—made intelligible only through human perceptions of consciousness (as in Hegel), or as social forces of production (as in Bourdieu)—but as events of *disclosure* of the world in us and us in the world. Artworks in their own time enact a kind of revealing process. They reveal a human and community historical sense of what matters to it now: this is an ontological sense, but different from Hegel's systematic ontology of the object and human consciousness with its teleological imposition of history.

By setting aesthetics to work in the world via Heidegger's ontological account, there may be an activation of questions to do with relations between place and being that may act as a form of pedagogical procedure for learning about living at the fundamental level of being human. Alongside this approach, is it possible to identify ways that the practices of art as practices of cultural production in the social world may articulate a *habitus* of dispositions for the human subject to live as a social being? How can a discussion relay across an ontological account and a materialist epistemological account in the one discursive space? Must the project of dismantling aesthetics occur first and foremost in light of Heidegger's enterprise of putting art *to work* as an event of disclosure, and Bourdieu's account of art as symbolic capital? What capacity do artworks have to open the potential for pedagogical possibilities through understanding aesthetics in these differing ways?

Aesthetics: A Brief Exposition

It was during the Enlightenment years that German philosopher, Baumgarten (1714–62),⁵ coined the term *aesthetics*, deriving it from Greek *aisthesis* perception. For Baumgarten *aesthetics* existed in the science of *aisthêta* (matters accessed via senses, i.e. non-facts) compared to *noêma* (matters accessed through logical thought process, i.e. facts). The privileging of *aisthêta* did not, however, divorce aesthetics from logical reasoning in the realm of contemplating one's relation to 'the beautiful': there was an emotional aspect to the logical reasoning. Baumgarten saw aesthetics as a kind of science, a rational category of thought pertaining to sensory cognition and art as occupying a place in both sensory and intellectual terms within such cognition.

In the work of Kant (*Critique of Judgement*, 1790), there is a natural purposive or teleological system of knowledge from God, and within this system is the existence of ultimate beauty. The goal of art must be beauty, all judgements of beauty being subjective with an ideal consensus through pleasure, which *ought* to be derived from purposive experience. Dickie (1997, p. 22) sums up Kant's theory of beauty:

Kant divides the discussion of his theory of beauty into four parts, each of which treats a major concept. ... (1) disinterestedness, (2) universality, (3) necessity, and (4) the form of purpose. The theory may be summarized in a sentence: A judgement of beauty is a disinterested, universal, and necessary judgement concerning the pleasure that everyone *ought* to derive from the experience of a form of purpose.

Tracing aesthetics from Kant to Schopenhauer, aesthetics departs from theories of taste as a form of purpose, and enters the realm of 'aesthetic contemplation' as an objective site. Human beings become 'subjects of knowledge' with capacities for aesthetic consciousness as Schopenhauer argued in *The World as Will and Idea* (1883). That Schopenhauer explicitly excluded unpleasant or nauseating objects from the aesthetic consciousness shows that he held to the metaphysical project of substance. The Platonic Ideal of beauty was conceived as a site of contemplation accessible via cognition in a will-less state of contemplation and in the service of the greater (cosmic) Will. In other words, a will-less contemplation of appearances became a site of aesthetic value. For Schopenhauer, attention became somehow distanced and free of the interruptions of our desire, our will freed from our desire.

Hegel proposed a comprehensive aesthetic theory in terms of his progression of the human spirit, whereby 'all dialectical thought-paths lead to the Absolute Idea and to the knowledge of it which is itself' (Findlay, 1977, p. vii). Hegel's universal theory of beauty in the art object belongs to the human spirit coursing through history, as a teleological self-realisation. '[T]he object represented becomes the property of pure self-consciousness ...' (Hegel, 1977/1807, p. 19). As Kant proposed a purposive aesthetic experience, so Hegel's aesthetic theory, which was presented in a series of lectures and compiled by one of Hegel's students, Heinrich Gustav Hotho, positioned the content of art in concert with beauty as the most profound access to what is real for human consciousness—the embodiment of spirit. For Hegel, aesthetics concerns experiencing beauty in art rather than beauty in nature. Through the absolute spirit of art, religion and philosophy, the mind may contemplate the reality of life; the art object manifests 'idea', which holds an essential nature as the embodiment of thought itself. Human form in art holds the capacity for embodying the highest ideal of human nature, mind, reason and spirit. If art has a purpose it is not one of representation of nature or of belief, nor is it one of decoration; rather, it is to provide a source of contemplation of the highest spiritual ideal to which the human mind may aspire and through which the mind may find self-understanding. However, the great classical forms of ancient Greece, which embodied this ideal, have become effete. In this, Hegel utters the end of art, as it was known, the end of absolute spirit in the classical human form, the end of art's defining cultural role.

The twentieth century ushers in processes of engaging, questioning and displacing these aesthetic theories and dispositions. It is important to recognise that such understandings of aesthetics are not transplanted by other theories; rather, the lineages trace and thread through subsequent polemics on art and aesthetics. For example, lineages of Kant's disinterestedness in the 'aesthetic attitude' are evident in theories proposed by Edward Bullough (arguing dispassionate detachment) and Jerome Stolnitz (isolating an object from any hint of a practical attitude). The 'aesthetic attitude' has been much disputed by Dickie (1964), who also entered into debate with Beardsley, disputing Beardsley's theory of 'aesthetic experience',⁶ which Beardsley proposed as an alternative to the aesthetic attitude. Seeking to distinguish aesthetic objects from other things, and establishing a series of classificatory criteria and exclusions, Beardsley claimed that the criteria of distinctness, perceptibility and perceptual properties must be met if the end result of aesthetic experience is to be achieved. In *Aesthetics* (1958) Beardsley proposes that focus, intensity and unity (coherence, completeness) must be held in common by all who experience an object aesthetically, and this has nothing to do with artist's intentions, which were excluded from his classificatory criteria. Thus, resolve, equilibrium and order become essential elements in his highly structuralist and instrumentalised account of aesthetic experience.

Heidegger's Project

Just as these polemical theories engaged and questioned their antecedent theories and philosophical positions, so Heidegger both engaged with and displaced a Hegelian position on aesthetics, which had in its turn, engaged the project of German Idealism following Kant. Heidegger would displace the aesthetic attitude and aesthetic experience, focusing on a fundamental critique

of phenomena in the world such as the work of art, and more particularly the human subject as a site of presence. For Heidegger, drawing from Husserl, the ‘founder’ of phenomenology, this meant dismantling the subject from within; in other words, a refusal of metaphysics. This necessitated a rethinking of phenomenology as an instrumentalised process of the human subject experiencing and knowing objects ‘out there’ in the world. Heidegger questions the deepest levels of knowing as intentional beings. He moves away from appearance (phenomenon) in the Kantian tradition (a thing, such as art, as object of consciousness) and towards understanding the object (or thing) in itself (noumenon) through the ontology of difference. For Heidegger to experience an object as appearance (how it appears to one’s conscious mind), per Hegel, is derivative or second hand. He is seeking something other than mere appearance, something that has been concealed by the philosophical project of metaphysics—both in the way consciousness is assumed and in the history of philosophy as a system of *logos*.

Truth, *alêtheia*, to Heidegger is ‘unconcealment’. Here, Heidegger is engaging with Hegel and the idea of art giving access to the human spirit or truth. In dismantling metaphysics, there is a radical questioning of appearances as sanctioned by humanist thinking, which Heidegger discusses in his ‘Letter on Humanism’ (Heidegger, 1999c). It logically follows that with the dismantling of appearances in the world, concepts of aesthetic attitude and aesthetic experience cease to exist as something to be intelligibly grasped and analysed via a systematic logic in political and social philosophy. Heidegger (1977) cautions against ‘our sheer aesthetic-mindedness’ (p. 35), which attitude divorces the need to ‘guard and preserve the coming to presence of art’ (p. 35).

The above begs the question, where does this leave the art object as a ‘thing’ in the world, and how does one speak of an experience of art in a way other than through an aesthetic framework? With the dismantling of aesthetic experiences and responses from the evaluative arsenal of art, the positioning of art and one’s experience of it becomes foreseeable in another way.

Heidegger’s project is ontological—he investigates phenomena that exist in the world, including Being (*Dasein*) and the question of Being as existence (which he asks in *Being and Time*, 1927/1962). Heidegger’s entire project is the meaning of Being, the ontological question of beings—as art, technology and human beings—and being (living) in the world. In his 1936s lecture, which became the essay ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’ (Heidegger, 1999b) Heidegger discusses the being of art. But Hegel’s position that, ‘art is, and remains for us, on the side of its highest destiny, a thing of the past’ (Hegel, 1993/1886, p. 13) is challenged by Heidegger. For Heidegger shows how art’s potential as a thing in the world is to act as a form of *disclosure* in its time of being. For Heidegger, the concept of time holds a crucial place in his thesis on Being; *as Hegel sees progressive time, Heidegger interrupts time*.

Krell explains how Heidegger shows that ‘revelation belongs to every work of art: the work erects a *world*, which in turn opens a space for man and things’ (Krell, 1999b, p. 141, emphasis in original). For Heidegger art is a setting forth or becoming of truth, *not truth as an entity*, but as a revelation of the ‘world’ or ‘earth’. Heidegger’s ‘world’ is the everyday horizon of our existence; and ‘earth’, as ‘creative strife’, is that which appears in the poems, ‘Germania’ and ‘The Rhine’ by German poet, Friedrich Hölderlin, which poems Heidegger lectured on at Freiburg University in 1934–1935. Hölderlin’s poetic debt to Homer may be read in *Homer’s Hymn* number 30, ‘Gaia! Allmother will I sing! Revered/ Firmgrounded nourisher of everything on earth ...’ (Homer, cited in Krell, 1999b, p. 142). Heidegger’s debt to Hölderlin may be evidenced in the position of earth as affording protection and nourishment: ‘In a sense all artwork and all thinking are for [Heidegger] participations in the creative strife of world and earth: they reveal beings and let them come to radiant appearance, but only by cultivating and safeguarding their provenance ...’ (Krell, 1999b, p. 142).

Thus, Heidegger is not approaching art in terms of a Kantian universal judgement and purpose: the art object is not a source of contemplation or of disinterested aesthetic judgement. Heidegger dismantles aesthetics in the classical meaning of analytical aesthetics, which eclipses art’s ontology,

and he puts the inherent capacities of the thing called art *to work* in his ontological project of 'unconcealment'. This 'unconcealment' is 'presencing' in a way that is different from the Aristotelian priority of Being as presence (*Anwesenheit*). Heidegger is not, however, arguing from an anti-Being or anti-aesthetic position; he does not set up one thesis against another thesis to find a synthesis. Rather, working with an ontological difference, Heidegger is dismantling, from within, Western philosophy's ontological position fundamental to the meta-physics of presence. Heidegger's ontology is situated in difference, an ontological difference to be exact. He does not position 'this entity' as different from 'that entity', as an observable and comparative difference of objective entities whose self-contained identities are already present or known. Heidegger's ontological difference is a concept of identity that is constituted *in difference*, in other words in the ever-changing sets of relations in which it finds itself.

Heidegger is not going to brook Hegelian self-actualising processes or progressive consciousness, nor is he working with art to substantiate Kantian judgements of taste. Art is not seeking to achieve 'beauty' as a Platonic Ideal form, nor is it available merely for its emblematic function of identity formation. Heidegger's art is impliedly working in and towards its potential as a temporal and spatial form of *disclosure* of place and being.⁷ The concept of disclosure can be brought into alliance with Heidegger's work on the notion of *building* as a form of *dwelling*, which he addresses in his essay, 'Building Dwelling Thinking' (Heidegger, 1999a). As shown above, with the bridge, Heidegger attends to the relation between building and dwelling, and the kind of thinking and being that can arise within this relation: this, the ontological position of difference. Heidegger takes thinking of 'bridge' from 'a mere bridge and then afterward a symbol ... in the sense that it expresses something that strictly speaking does not belong to it' to a bridge that '*gathers* to itself in *its own way* earth and sky, divinities and mortals' (Heidegger, 1999a, p. 355, emphasis in original). The former bridge is 'represented as an unknown X to which perceptible properties are attached' (p. 355). This is what Heidegger is dismantling.

If, as Heidegger posits, there is a relation between building and dwelling, then is it possible for artworks—and bridges—to construct a kind of condition about one's relation to place? Such a question follows another logic, one that is different from that of an aesthetic attitude or experience of art, artefact or bridge, as an appearance in the world or representation of an entity in the world. The question opens to the suggestion that an artwork—as with a bridge—works in its event-ness as a meaning-making strategy in the temporality of Being, opening to the creative strife of earth. For Heidegger this event-ness works as a form of disclosure of the 'being' of the artwork (its ontology), not as an appearance or a representation of some external entity that may be made intelligible by our consciousness; nor to be understood via any aesthetic judgement, attitude or experience. If an artwork is *set to work* in time and place, then is it possible for this to have any pedagogical affect?

Heidegger calls for openness to the present locale as the temporality of Being. As Charles Guignon (2006) wrote, 'What is needed, then, is a way of recovering a sense of openness of the possible and of our own responsibility as individuals in articulating and bringing to realisation the worldly contexts in which we find ourselves' (p. 30). Pedagogical positions start to become apparent. The artwork is working to disclose the locale in which it is situated, and itself as a locale—'The bridge is a locale' said Heidegger (1999a, p. 357)—and in that locale the human being may be awakened to the 'creative strife' of 'earth'. In this space learning may occur if, and only if, the site of struggle is acknowledged: learning about life, self and earth as the creative struggle for meaning-making as a way of letting truth work through the language, thought and work of art.

Journey's Seed

How does the artwork *work* in the public realm? In 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (1999b), Heidegger's methodology sets the questions of art, work and truth to work through his hermeneutical circles of question and example. 'The Origin of the Work of Art' went through several incarnations, from its birth as a public lecture in Freiburg in 1935, then presented in Zurich in 1936,

expanded later that year and presented again in three sections in Freiburg and reworked for publication in 1950 and 1960. Questions on the 'thing' called art grew from the earlier attention to the essence of art in terms of truth and being, with artist and artwork each being a source of the other. In his process of questioning Heidegger asks, 'What does the work, as work, set up?' In its setting, he argues, the artwork is more than its 'object-being' when it 'opens up a *world* and keeps it abidingly in force' (Heidegger, 1999b, p. 169, emphasis in original). For Heidegger, there is another way of learning, another pedagogy beyond the rational scientific mode of making appearances intelligible via cognition or consciousness. How may this be set to work in works of art in public space?

The public artwork of artist, McInnery, *Journey's Seed* (2005)⁸ is located at Box Hill in the City of Whitehorse approximately 13 km from the centre of the City of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. *Journey's Seed* comprises two polished and spun, stainless steel, sculptural forms situated in a space between a tramline and a busy street of this outer transit suburb. The site beside the tram terminus is a space of gathering, moving, crossing paths, stopping, talking, negotiating and navigating daily journeys; it is essentially cosmopolitan, metropolitan. A descriptive account tells of the reflective surfaces lending a floating quality, a lightness and rhythm, to what are in reality solid forms (Figure 2).

Considering the artwork through Heidegger's ontological enterprise, the polished surfaces of the artwork are acting as an event, opening up or disclosing the world of the artwork. There is an activating process at play between the artwork and its surroundings. Each is working to disclose the other, not to explain or to call for explanation. Not only are these activations occurring in the physical space of the sculptures, but also in the informing narratives of the work, in that the artist gathered stories from residents of Whitehorse 'about their journeys and sense of place and space' (Architects for Peace, 2011). Those stories are also contingent on difference, narratives of ontological difference, activating the site of 'creative strife' as the working through of 'truth' in this space. The artist crafted his materials through the inscriptions and the tools (*equipment*) used to inscribe, mould



Figure 2. *Journey's Seed* by McInnery, Box Hill Melbourne. VicHealth Art and Environment Scheme, City of Whitehorse. Photographer: Nicholas Gresson 2005

and form. Heidegger speaks of a *readiness-to-hand* in materials. They exist in concert with the act of making. In other words, they are working together, 'worlding the world': the artist, the tools and the equipment. It is not a question of an artist's mastery over matter: the equipment has a 'kind of being', a 'readiness to hand' (Heidegger 1927/1962, p. 98). The historicity of the materials, the 'equipmentality' works with the artist to let something new appear in the 'work-being' of the mirror-like forms and inscribed surfaces.

The work brings the locale, the tension between 'world' and 'earth', into being through its *technē*, conceived by the Greeks as 'producing, in terms of letting appear ... which brings something made, as something present, among the things that are already present' (Heidegger, 1999a; p. 361). Trees, trams, signs, lights, shops and shoppers are becoming present in the shiny metal surfaces as the forms fold and unfold in a 'letting appear' process: this the creative strife of world and earth. Heidegger (1999a), in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' speaks of the 'fourfold' occurring by dwelling in *earth, sky, mortals and divinities*. Does this include the urban space? Or must it be a 'natural' earth location of farm or countryside? Here is an often asked question relating to Heidegger's project: is he drawing from the nationalistic *Volk*, in essence, seeking a purity beyond a technological world as a return to a foundational concept of the German spirit? (Young, 1997).

In *The Political Ontology of Heidegger* (1991) Bourdieu suggests that an understanding of Heidegger's work comes from reconstructing the logic of the broader political and social forces of the Weimar Republic in early twentieth-century Europe. Beyond adopting any partisan position on Heidegger's philosophical or political genealogy with regard to the rise of the German Socialist party and Nazism, Bourdieu neither condemns nor redeems Heidegger. From this reading, one can adopt a clear understanding of the way texts are produced and the way their language orients itself in and through specific fields of social and political forces, with time and place both enacting forms of production.

As Julian Young (2001) puts it, citing Heidegger:

The artwork, then, 'sets up' a world, brings it out of inconspicuousness and into salience, places it 'on display'. But it does not, says Heidegger, just do that. The setting up is not 'bare placing'. Rather, the work 'consecrates' its world, invests it with 'dignity and splendour', allows it to stand forth 'as holy' (*Poetry, Language, Thought*, p. 44). (Young, p. 38)

The viewers or passers-by, shoppers or commuters are as much a part of the urban place and the artwork as is the artist, the equipment and *Journey's Seed* itself. All together they disclose the spatial and temporal coordinates of their locale. It is here that the activation of *building* as *dwelling* takes place. Heidegger distinguishes between the 'work-being' and 'object-being' of artworks (1999b, p. 166). Beyond the codifications of the art industry and the artwork's commissioned value as a piece of public sculpture (a cultural production interpretation), *Journey's Seed* is set to work in 'the work-being of the work ... by way of the work's workly nature', in which there is a 'revealing' at work (Heidegger, 1999b, p. 165). There the working through of truth, *aletheia* happens: 'the truth of beings has set itself to work' (p. 165).

Thus the artwork occupies its site in an active ontology of difference disclosing its differential historicity of inception, making and future existence as a finite present. There is nothing passive here, nothing romantic and nothing disinterested. This is far removed from a Kantian universalised and necessarily purposive form of aesthetic judgement or Schopenhauer's aesthetic contemplation. Forgetfulness of *aletheia* has meant that for too long Western philosophical systems have forgotten what it means 'to be'. In the later, 'Origin of the Work of Art' what Heidegger calls the 'thingly character of the thing' and 'the workly character of the work' becomes apparent, and there may be a possibility of remembering, not as memory, but as giving attention to being itself—*Being as it is lived in its experience of time*. Here, lies a call for remembering (through disclosure) the fundamental finiteness of Being in its differential ontology.

As Krell (1999c) reminds us, Heidegger shows that ‘to think about building and dwelling appears to advance thought on the meaning of “Being”’ (p. 345). Importantly, beyond aesthetic judgements and analysis of aesthetics as moral worth, this account activates an understanding of being human, in difference, in the world, and it is here, in the politics of difference, I find the pedagogical potential of Heidegger’s project.

Bourdieu, Boyce and *Habitus*

How can Heidegger’s ‘letting-dwell’ process draw alongside the concept of *habitus* as central to Bourdieu’s project? Or is this an impossibility? French sociologist, Bourdieu proposed *habitus* as a generative set of dispositions in the inscribing of social attitudes and values. Such habits or competencies are transmitted in the home and through education, the dominant habits being transmitted by the dominant social class. This account, from the lineage of Norbert Elias and Max Weber, situates a system of schemas whereby certain practices are produced and reproduced as ‘a system of lasting and transposable dispositions’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). These dispositions are acquired via the conscious and unconscious processes of living in social environments and reproducing their values and practices. This includes aesthetics, which for Bourdieu is not accessed via the Kantian judgement of taste, but rather it is taste in cultural products and habits as produced, reproduced and made legitimate by a society’s ruling classes: taste as a social construction (Bourdieu, 1986/1979).

Bourdieu was speaking of the class-based dispositions of symbolic or cultural capital that become embodied in one’s life, times and institutional practices in such a way that their historical precedents are not readily available. They become apparent in the lived realities, practices, languages, laws and rules—and aesthetic values—of social institutions that amplify class-based distinctions. Bourdieu’s *habitus* is ‘[t]he strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with the unforeseen and ever-changing situations’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18). Thus, human beings are active agents having effects upon the world of appearance, and the world in which these agents act is primarily one of economic and social conditions. Symbolic power relations are at work to compound cultural dispositions in institutions and individuals in a correlation of culture and social class. Such dispositions are reproducible through social practices. Thus, the public sphere for Bourdieu is a space of struggle to defend one’s interests and positions through dominations of power, which are determining inclusions as symbolic capital and exclusions as a form of symbolic violence. In spite of a distancing from Heidegger, the site of struggle in Bourdieu’s public space does contain traces of Heidegger’s creative strife of earth and world, situated in the ‘being-there’ of *Dasein*.

Bourdieu does not seek to disturb the metaphysics of substance any more than Heidegger wants to consider cultural capital or dispositional dominance within the *socius*. Their lineages are different: one is ontological, the other epistemological. Bourdieu’s ‘epistemic reflexivity’ is an epistemological project claiming a collective and objective framework in the sociology of knowledge.

We are Shipwrecked and Landlocked

Boyce’s work, combining environmental and engineering geometries, is known for the mournful qualities it can evoke through references to empty urban parks and the inversion of outside into inside spaces. In 2008, Boyce was invited by John Kaldor to be the international artist in Australia in the Kaldor Public Art Projects. The institutional endorsement came from RMIT University providing the backing of resources and value recognition. Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* as a set of dispositions was evident through the workings of cultural institutions reproducing a dominant formation of elite value.

The constructional stage of installing *We are Shipwrecked and Landlocked* lasted a week in mid-October 2008, during which time there was an institutionally endorsed and funded roll-up of the recreational surface of artificial grass, which covered the heritage grounds of the Old Melbourne Gaol. This was followed by the digging of rectangular holes and placement of concrete footings at no more than 8 cm deep, to protect the heritage footings of the Gaol Courtyard. Finally, there was the erection of three aluminium trees, fabricated off-site in Sydney and trucked down to Melbourne. Here was the construction of an artwork on a grand scale, akin to an engineering project in its technological necessities. Yet, the work was activating an aesthetic holding power with the trees' three to four m high geometries standing in contra-distinction to the worn bluestone of the adjacent Gaol. The trees were painted white on-site, and around them a fence of geometric design, painted black off-site, reflected the vocabulary of the tree structures and of a steel grating set into the ground—a drain to nowhere. Equidistant in each of three corners of the courtyard sat three, wire-mesh, rubbish bins, with copper tubing spray-painted yellow and draped through the fence to be left coiled on the ground near one of the trees suggesting a nonchalant emptiness. The final constructional act of building was to deliver and spread truckloads of granulated sand to emulate the unused, clay surface of the 'forgotten site' that had attracted the imagination of Boyce earlier in the year, prior to the university laying the artificial grass. The act of artifice was complete (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Location of *We are Shipwrecked and Landlocked* by Boyce. Old Melbourne Gaol, RMIT Alumni Courtyard, Melbourne. Photographer: Nicholas Gresson 2008

22 October 2008, saw the launch of *We are Shipwrecked and Landlocked* at an invitation event where, in Bourdieu's terms, the élite of art's social, cultural, institutional and intellectual worlds gathered to produce and reproduce their conditions of practice. The ensuing speeches, champagne and social discourse in the windswept locale gave witness to a relational field of forces: academic, art, media and business worlds coalesced in a dynamic matrix of material and aesthetic dispositions. This was a field of shared taste for an already endorsed artwork serving to reproduce a particular aesthetic value. In this constructed world of appearances, made intelligible by transferrable dispositions and reproducible values, the socius was being inscribed by the symbolic forces of historical and political structures of *habitus*. The art world as an institution of society, writ large, was upholding its own values, and legitimating its own role in the socius. Here, the élite, educated classes were producing and reproducing their élite values through shared symbolic practices. In Bourdieu's terms, the élite values of cultural capital were inherently aesthetic, inherently violent, imposing their dominations upon the world.

Heidegger and Bourdieu in Application

The discussion is showing something of how the accounts of German philosopher, Heidegger, and French cultural sociologist, Bourdieu, provide two different interpretive procedures of art and aesthetics in urban space. The difference between the two is at the most fundamental level of metaphysics, to do with the human subject, and the relations of subjects and objects in the world. Bourdieu, as a structural sociologist coming from a Marxist tradition, works with objects and human subjects as social agents reinforcing underlying structures, with class as the organising principle of labour and capital. Bourdieu never pretends to dismantle the human subject as a pre-conditioned being or to displace the metaphysical world of appearances.

For Bourdieu, aesthetics is a matter of reproducible taste as élite value, conditioned and legitimated by class power in the banking and exchange of cultural capital. This process is implicitly operating in and through institutional agency, embedded in, and reproducing, the normative structures of society. On the other hand, Heidegger dismantles the preconditioned, metaphysics of presence in his account of the human subject and the world of things, displacing aesthetics along with rational accounts of appearances and *a priori* being.

Each account offers a way of recognising aesthetics and the struggle of being human in the world. Beyond, within, or in spite of, the structural circularity of social practices, the work of art as discussed with reference to the Millennium Bridge, McInnery and Boyce enacts a form of building as dwelling: this, an activating force at work as a Heideggerean site of disclosure. The artworks—and bridge—in their social and cultural sites of anchorage disclose the symbolic and cultural conditions of their 'work- being' as Heidegger put it, as they set to work the critical disputes characterising globalisation in terms of Bourdieu's reproducible dispositions. Within the differentiating processes of social space comprising the urban *habitus*, while remembering that Heidegger rejects the humanist tradition for its basis in metaphysics and its forgetting of being, 'we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are *dwellers*' (Heidegger, 1999a, p. 350, emphasis in original).

Pedagogical Gatherings as a Conclusion

The geometries of the Boyce trees enacted a strange disclosure of the locale that was otherwise overlooked too easily. As with the Millennium Bridge and *Journey's Seed*, there was a finite gathering as locale was brought into presence via an activation of questioning the meaning of aesthetics. Heidegger (1999a) would call this a summons to being: 'Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that *calls* mortals into their dwelling' (p. 363, emphasis in original). Different approaches to talking about art as an activating practice by Heidegger and Bourdieu show how the

work of art may open ontological, epistemological, cultural and political questions to do with being human in the world. The ontological force of Heidegger's enterprise meets the epistemological force of Bourdieu's. Both are political, but one is political in the sense of dismantling the politics of metaphysics, and the other is political in its way of exemplifying materialist norms within such politics.

Each enterprise when brought to the work of art activates questions about aesthetics, and through those questioning attitudes pedagogies of engagement may be possible. Perhaps, along with Bourdieu's *habitus*, Heidegger's ontological historicity could be 'abidingly in force' here. It is my belief that this relief of two significant thinkers activates pedagogy in the stratifications of history, cultural practices and philosophical logics of difference. The aim here is not to pit one philosophical enterprise against the other, but to see them 'dwell' in coexistence of difference; that is the politics within which this discussion seeks to work. Understanding the dominance of metaphysics within customary presence in which aesthetics finds a comfortable home, and displacing such dominance to find an 'otherwise' activation for objects or things in the world is, in itself, a pedagogy of earnest engagement.

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Notes

1. McInnery is an urban artist lecturing in public art at the School of Art, RMIT University and is undertaking a PhD with the RMIT School of Architecture and Design. He lives in Melbourne, and is a member of Architects for Peace.
2. Boyce was educated at Glasgow School of Art, graduating with MA in 1997, and lives in Scotland. He won the 2011 Turner Art Prize.
3. The bridge was completed in 2001. It won the 2002 Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stirling Prize.
4. See Heidegger *Being and Time* (1927/1962).
5. Baumgarten introduced the term 'aesthetics' in his *Meditationes Philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema* (1735) [Philosophical meditations pertaining to some matters concerning poetry].
6. See Beardsley (1958, 1969 and 1982), Dickie (1965, 1974 and 1987).
7. See further discussion of Heidegger and the work of art in Grierson (2008).
8. *Journey's Seed* was commissioned by VicHealth. Architects for Peace, Retrieved 25 September 2014 from <http://studio-space.blogspot.com/2005/07/journeys-seed.html>.

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