

## Article

# Heidegger, Heterotopic Dwelling and Prehistoric Art: An Initial Indication of a Field of Research <sup>†</sup>

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<sup>†</sup> This paper draws on and develops themes in a number of my publications. Please see my References for details.

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**Abstract:** This paper begins to develop an interpretation of European cave art based on Martin Heidegger's account of artistic production and 'dwelling' so as to indicate a potentially rich area for future research. The paper will also draw on Foucault's account of heterotopic space and will engage with one of the key researchers on the archaeology of cave art, Randall White. The role of a work of art for Heidegger is to hold open a world. Art enables a decision to be made by a group regarding how things are going to matter for, and to, them as dwellers in their world. Works of art, on Heidegger's account, put up for decision what will count as the highest values (the gods) for a group while determining what will prove essential for human dwelling in a world. With reference to Foucault, it will be suggested that caves are a good candidate for a heterotopic space. Caves are uncanny, numinous spaces and because of this, I suggest, they enable human beings to produce art as a world-opening event. I suggest that there is something significant about human experience in caves and I attempt to make a connection between heterotopic space, dwelling, and the art of the last Ice Age in Europe in order to point towards a novel field of research: dwelling and prehistoric art.

**Keywords:** phenomenology; dwelling; cave; heterotopia; art; uncanny; anxiety; numinous; liminal; underscape

## 1. Introduction

In 1899, the French prehistorian Émile Rivière discovered a stone lamp in a cave at La Mouthe in the Dordogne Département of France. The cave itself—an important site with respect to both the history of archaeology and to the understanding of Palaeolithic art, containing both engravings and a small number of paintings—had been discovered in 1895 when a local farmer began to clear away debris from a small rock shelter that he was intent on utilising (Clottes 2008, p. 128; Lewis-Williams 2002, pp. 32–33). During this process, he revealed a tunnel behind the accumulated debris that blocked up the shelter. This proved too much of a temptation to four local boys who, after entering the tunnel, discovered an image of a bison. At this time, the antiquity of parietal art (images engraved or painted on walls or ceilings) was still highly controversial. The idea that Palaeolithic Stone Age peoples possessed of only 'savage minds' could produce art that rivalled the works of modern greats was deeply troubling to many. Twenty years had passed since Don Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola's daughter Maria's discovery of the parietal art in the cave of Altamira and forty years had passed since the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. Despite both of these facts, it was still possible to deny the antiquity of Upper Palaeolithic art.

By 1902, things had changed<sup>1</sup>. That year saw the publication of a piece by Émile Cartailhac, partly entitled *Mea culpa d'un sceptique*, which, despite coming too late for De Sautuola, who had died in 1888, sought to extend 'justice' to him by making public 'reparation' for his (Cartailhac's) 'error' in denying the antiquity of the art at Altamira (Bahn 1988, p. 22). This event had been precipitated by the publication in 1901 of Louis Capitan's and Abbé Henri Breuil's drawings of images from another cave in the Dordogne, Les Combarelles (itself discovered in 1901). The evidence for the antiquity of Palaeolithic art had become so compelling that Cartailhac and the other sceptics could no longer maintain their position reasonably: they had to acknowledge its true antiquity and they had to come to terms with this revelation in an intellectually satisfying way. Lewis-Williams compares this cognitive revolution in archaeology to that of the shift from a geocentric to heliocentric view of the solar system in astronomy (Lewis-Williams 2002, p. 32). *The prehistoric human mind was capable of producing art*<sup>2</sup>.

In this paper, I will begin to suggest an interpretation of European cave art based on the work of Martin Heidegger, in particular his account of artistic production, and I will make some use of Foucault's account of heterotopic space along the way. Part of the rationale of this paper is to point in a direction that research in this area might go, and that is, away from thinking about 'minds' and towards thinking about 'being-there' (Dasein) or 'dwelling' in past worlds of practical concern. The role of a work of art, for Heidegger, is to open up a world. Despite the fact that Heidegger, in the first version of his 'Origin of the Work of Art', denied that there is a prehistory of art (Tonner 2014, p. 122), and focused instead on later epochs, this paper will suggest that prehistoric 'art' enabled a decision to be made by a group regarding how things were going to matter for, and to, them as dwellers in their worlds, much as how later works did for later dwellers in more recent historical worlds. Works of art, on Heidegger's account, put up for decision what will count as the highest values (the gods) for a group, while determining what will prove essential for dwelling in a world. Drawing on Foucault's account of 'different spaces', it will be argued that caves are a good candidate for a very early example of what he described as heterotopic spaces. Caves are uncanny, numinous spaces and because of this, I suggest, they enable human beings to produce art as a world-opening event. This paper suggests that there is something significant about human experience in caves and attempts to make the connection between heterotopic space, dwelling and art, with reference to (but not necessarily limited to) the art of the last Ice Age in Europe.

## 2. Heidegger on Art

Following White, perhaps the best starting point in a discussion of prehistoric art is to note that when the term 'art' occurs it should be read minimally, in the first instance, to designate only 'meaningful objects shaped by human hands' that emerge from a particular 'cultural logic' (White 1992; 2003, pp. 10, 29). This has the dual benefit of minimizing our theoretical commitment at the outset, while also providing a good way in to Heidegger's account of art<sup>3</sup>. For Heidegger, "art" is a socio-historical practice and it is out of this practice that individual works of art, artists and audiences emerge. For Heidegger, when a work of art is created, a historical world or cultural context is created

<sup>1</sup> The discovery of La Mouthe played a significant part in the acceptance of the antiquity of this art not least because it contained images of long extinct fauna covered by layers of sediment that contained Palaeolithic tools and animal bones (White 2003, pp. 45–46).

<sup>2</sup> It is still possible to frame discussion of European Ice Age art (circa 40,000 to 12,000 years ago) in terms of the appearance of the "modern mind": as witness The British Museum's special exhibition *Ice Age Art: Arrival of the Modern Mind* (7 February 2013 to 26 May 2013) and the accompanying book by Jill Cook.

<sup>3</sup> If art is conceived as aesthetics (*aisthēsis*, *Ästhetik*: a human leisure activity), then art will be transformed into an object that exists solely for subjective apprehension and consumption. Such 'works' have ceased to 'work' in Heidegger's sense (Heidegger 1971, p. 41; Dronsfield 2010). Heidegger is interested in works of art as 'events' that bring 'worlds' into being: a work of art is an event that opens up a historical world for a historical people. Works of art belong in the *agora*: they are public truth events (Heidegger 1971, p. 40; Young 2001, p. 19). "Aesthetics", like "metaphysics", is something that Heidegger argues must be overcome. Overcoming aesthetics enables a return to that more Greek sense of art as *technē* (Dronsfield 2010, p. 129).

or, more precisely, ‘opened up’ for a community. Heidegger’s short piece from 1969 ‘Art and Space’ is instructive in this regard. In this piece Heidegger’s focus is the relationship between sculpture and space. Here, Heidegger affirms that art is the setting to work of ‘truth’ (*aletheia*), where truth means the unconcealment of being (Heidegger 2009, p. 307)<sup>4</sup>. The ‘space of art’, if I can put it this way, has the character of ‘clearing away’, which means ‘to clear out (*roden*), to make the wilderness open. [Such] clearing-away brings forth what is free, [and that is] the open for humans’ settling and dwelling’ ((Heidegger 2009, p. 307). Square brackets: my additions). In other words, art clears a space for human dwelling to take place within a particular locale.

The socio-historic activity of making works of art involves a clearing-away that amounts to a freeing up of places for human dwelling or habitation. The individual work of art, be it a representational work or any other form of art, has the function of enabling a particular locale to be appropriated by a group as their dwelling place. It is through such activities that groups define themselves, their locales, and their values. Place, on this account, receives its character from the making-space constitutive of art. Through this constitution of place, regions become opened up for groups in such a way that the region ‘gathers things into their belongingness’ (Heidegger 2009, p. 308). For this reason, art is at the heart of world-making (or meaning-making) for Heidegger. As Heidegger will say, art belongs to appropriation (*Ereignis*).

It is through art that everything whatsoever that can be encountered in a human world first finds its place and character. Focussing on sculpture, Heidegger says:

Sculpture ... the embodiment of places which, opening and preserving a region, hold something free gathered around them, granting a stay to each thing, and a dwelling to humans in the midst of things ... Sculpture: an embodying bringing-into-work of places, and with them an opening of regions of possible dwelling for humans, of possible tarrying of things that surround and concern humans. Sculpture: the embodiment of the truth of being in its work of instituting places’. (Heidegger 2009, pp. 308–9)

This quote really outlines the kind of phenomenological analysis that Heidegger is engaging in. The act of creating a sculpture involves an investment on the part of the agent that allows beings to come to presence for them in such a way that they can be appropriated and ‘fixed’/‘set into’ a figure. The sculpture ‘works’ by instituting places: sculptures enable places to ‘show up’ or ‘be cleared’ for a group to dwell in. At the same time, sculptures ‘grant’ things a meaning (their “stay” as what they are) that can be appropriated by dwellers. The ‘truth of being’, the transcendental background that enables things to appear meaningfully for an agent or group, is embodied or materialised in the work. Place, the site for dwelling, is involved in this: the dwelling place forms part of this transcendental ground. Place participates in the meaningfulness of things for an agent or group. The hermeneutic totality of this set of relationships is dwelling.

‘Locality’ itself, on this account, is nothing less than the combined ‘play of places’ (Heidegger 2009, p. 308). Given Heidegger’s account of sculpture, we might get an insight into Abbé Breuil’s excitement, occasioned by receipt of a telegram from Count Henri Bégouën that read ‘The Magdalenians modelled in clay!’ (Lewis-Williams 2002, p. 35). Understood from the perspective of dwelling (see (Tonner 2018) for a discussion of the ‘dwelling perspective’), what this revelation testifies to is an event, associated with the Magdalenian archaeological culture, where a specific world was opened up. The sculpture (in this case, of bison) instituted a place (the cave within the context of the lives of a group). It also gathered together a set of meanings (of bison, of clay, of caves, of agents, of the seasons and so on) in

<sup>4</sup> Recall, being is the ‘meaning and ground’ of beings (Heidegger 1962, p. 59). Being is a transcendental-horizonal structure: it provides for the appearance of beings. By virtue of Dasein’s pre-theoretical understanding of being the meaning and ground of beings can be sought by way of phenomenological interpretation (Heidegger 1962, p. 61).

such a way that each of these could occur/become present *as* what they were for the group (the clay as a medium for sculpture, for example<sup>5</sup>).

An art work, on Heidegger's account, is an event that enshrines the 'meaning of being' (the way that things can become meaningfully present) that constitutes a historical community<sup>6</sup>. Sculpting an animal enables that animal to emerge *as* meaningful *as* what it 'is' (*as* threatening, *as* sacred, *as* prey and so on. From an archaeological perspective, the likelihood of the animal appearing *as* prey for a group, for example, will be evidenced by the presence and abundance of its remains in a state of predation and consumption by humans). This occurs in terms of the dwelling place of a group of humans who have simultaneously cleared or appropriated an environment *as* a place to dwell. This process is grounded in the care (*Sorge*) structure of Dasein: as care, Dasein is enabled to care for others, including animal others, and objects in their environment. The meaning that the animal, the place and the humans have come to presence in this essentially relational context (Heidegger will later speak of a 'mirroring' relationship between elements of 'the fourfold' where the meaning of each term is 'mirrored' in the other). What the animal 'is' for the group (what it *counts* for; what it *means*) emerges in and is 'fixed' or set into the sculptural work. Consider here White's account of the Aivilik Inuit carver<sup>7</sup>.

Discussing the ethnographic work of Edmund Carpenter in the 1950s, White reminds us that a landscape can appear very differently to individuals who have different relationships to it. For Carpenter, the arctic environment was barren and 'hard on man', whereas for the Inuit, this same landscape was revealed very differently:

Of course, what appeared to me as a monotonous land was, to the Aivilik, varied, filled with meaningful reference points . . . By and large these are not actual objects or points, but *relationships*: relationships between, say, contour, type of snow, wind, salt, air, ice crack. I can best explain this with an illustration: two hunters casually followed a trail which I simply could not see, even when I bent close to scrutinize it; they did not kneel to examine it, but stood back, examining it at a distance. (*Eskimo Realities*, (Carpenter 1973, p. 21): quoted in (White 2003, p. 26). Italics: my emphasis)

Heidegger and phenomenological thinkers attempt to describe these kinds of relationships in terms of their relation to agents. For example, the threatening animal or threatening weather front is threatening only because it is taken that way (seen *as* threatening) by an agent or group of agents. What would enhance Carpenter's account here is a discussion of the relationships he mentions as relationships to the Aivilik within their environment. In other words, what did the 'snow, air or ice crack' *mean* to them and how did that meaning affect them? Giving a phenomenological account of these relationships would utilise all the available (ethnographic) evidence (including evidence of these relationships as revealed to the phenomenologist and recounted in description or by auto-ethnographic writing) in order to try and flesh them out. It is these kinds of relationships (presented as possibilities) that Heidegger believes are crystallised in artistic production. These relationships give a particular dwelling place (along with the beings encountered within it) its character and this character is reflected in the work of art.

Significant here is Carpenter's account of the Inuit experience of time and space. According to Carpenter, the Inuit's conception of space and time is a unity (this is reflected in the Inuit word

<sup>5</sup> For an extended discussion of the use of phenomenology in archaeology, see (Tonner 2018) and references therein.

<sup>6</sup> Heidegger argues for a more profound 'essence of truth' *qua* world-disclosure that precedes and makes conceptual truth possible (Sheehan 2003, pp. 106–11). The ancient Greek word for truth *aletheia*, (unconcealedness) captures Heidegger's sense of truth. On his account, knowing a being in its 'truth' is to know that being as what 'it is' (in its being) within a context, for a group of dwellers (see Wartenberg 2001, p. 150).

<sup>7</sup> Naturally, more or less contemporary Inuit carvers are not Ice Age artists. This should be borne in mind. Nevertheless, taking them as an example should help to elucidate aspects of Heidegger's thinking about art, while serving as a possible analogue for certain aspects of Ice Age art.

*tima*, which means, “here-now” (White 2003, p. 27)) and of each situation as a ‘dynamic process’. This resonates with Heidegger’s view that space and time form a unity that is delivered over to historical agents by way of the giving characteristic of appropriation (*Ereignis*). He says: ‘There is only giving in the sense of extending which opens up time-space’ (Heidegger 1972, p. 16). Time-space (*Zeit-Raum*) is, to paraphrase Dahlstrom (2013, p. 218), the ‘when and where’ of the history of the ways in which things can become meaningful to a historically-situated group of embedded and embodied agents. In fact, the very character of these agents (who and what they ‘are’) is decided only within time-space. Without ground or foundation itself, neither objective nor subjective, time-space grounds the ‘t/here’ (the ‘Da’, the ‘there’ in being-there-here-now) as a site where something is to be decided<sup>8</sup>. What is to be decided, for Heidegger, is the ‘fate and destiny’ of a world: and that is a decision over how things are going to matter within it. Time-space is ‘the site of the grounding of the truth of historical being’ (Dahlstrom 2013, p. 218).

Heidegger’s view would be that the relationships intimated by Carpenter that characterise the Aivilik world are materialized in their works of art. In fact, they are decided in the spatio-temporal moment of the creation of art objects. Art doesn’t just emerge from a cultural landscape; it has a role in producing it or enabling it to ‘happen’ in the first place. The act of sculpting enables the settling of the land. Sculpting is an act of domestication that enables the land to emerge as a safe place to live: it enables a wilderness to become habitable for dwelling. Heidegger deliberately speaks of audiences as ‘preservers’: they have to maintain this set of relationships that are materialised in works through their acts. If they don’t, their world will end.

For Heidegger, and following Dreyfus, a “great” work of art is a ‘cultural paradigm’. Such paradigms inaugurate the history of a community. Cultural paradigms work by focusing and directing the lives of individuals and they put up for decision the highest values of a group, *what is to count as holy and what unholy* (Heidegger 1971, p. 43). Art works do this by defining and determining how the beings that agents can meet in their experience can ‘show up’, phenomenologically, as meaningful to them. Works of art, for Heidegger, include all manner of world-defining events, such as the building of a temple (Dreyfus 1993; Young 2001, p. 18) and, as I suggest here, the painting of a cave. Art, on Heidegger’s account, is essentially an origin and works of art reveal what ordinarily remains out of sight to agents, namely, their world.

Artists, on Heidegger’s account, are not motivated by ‘fame’ and they are not affected by ‘disregard’ either. Not only that, Heidegger presents an account of their works that sees them as withdrawn from both ‘public’ and ‘private’ consumption in a modern sense. That is, for Heidegger, works of art are not to be understood as ‘objects’ that can be held up for ‘subjects’ to be seen and consumed as an object of aesthetic appreciation. In fact, Heidegger’s view is that works of art do not ‘belong to man’ at all (Heidegger 2006, p. 28). Rather, the function and importance of a work of art is to form a ‘site of decision’. This site is, on his account, restricted to what he calls ‘rare ones’. These individuals are ‘poets’ and ‘thinkers’. Poets articulate the truth of the *Dasein* (being-there-here-now) of the people in their group/world. Thinkers elucidate the way in which things can become meaningful for a group on the basis of how the world was opened up by the poet (Taminiaux 1994, p. 5). For Heidegger, such agents are taken to partake in an act of originary meaning making in and for a group. It is this act that makes these agents what they are within a context. The social function and role that these poets and thinkers take on might be that of the “shaman” or “big man”, but Heidegger’s point is that their activity is presupposed if we say that the group inhabited a meaningful world with meaningful objects ‘shaped by human hands’.

In so far, as a work of art continues to “work” in Heidegger’s sense, it continues to hold ‘open the open region of the world’ (Heidegger 1993, p. 170; Tonner 2014). Just because of this, a work of art

<sup>8</sup> Recall the problematic of phenomenology that the ground of anything must not resemble or presuppose what it grounds. Time-space is the spatial-temporal emergence of the site of the meaning and ground of beings.



can preserve the space of communal questioning that puts up for decision how things are going to matter for those who dwell in that world. Art puts up for decision for a group what will become their highest values (the gods), while at the same time pursuing what will prove to be essential for human dwelling (the meaning(s) of life) in their world. A Heideggerian account would argue that Ice Age ‘art’ opened up a ‘hunter-gatherer world’ in the same way that medieval ‘art’ opened up a medieval world (see Tonner 2010, 2014). After Heidegger, art history *is* world history because reading a work of art can reveal the way in which things are/were meaningful to/for a historically-situated people (see Tonner 2014). When taken as a cultural paradigm, Heidegger’s account of art enables just about anything to count as “art” so long as the work, construct or event in question, *holds open the open region of the world*.

### 3. Cave Art

Cave painting is the second ‘Rorschach blot’, after Neanderthal burial, dogging palaeoanthropology (Coolidge and Wynn 2009, p. 191)<sup>9</sup>. It has long been held that shortly after their appearance in Europe, anatomically modern human beings (the Crô-Magnons) entered deep caves and produced art. It was held that the original inhabitants of Europe, the Neanderthals, weren’t artists. Now, however, there is a growing body of evidence that suggests that cave art in Iberia is older than 64.8 thousand years ago and so predates that arrival of anatomically modern humans by at least 20 thousand years. Neanderthals, it seems, were artists after all (Hoffman et al. 2018; Appenzeller 2018). Nevertheless, cave art in Europe was produced to around 14,000 years before present (13 thousand years ago in uncalibrated radiocarbon terms) (Mellars 2009, pp. 213–14) long after the disappearance of Neanderthals. This long period of human prehistory marked by the steady cultural appropriation of caves is unique. Outside Europe caves were mostly avoided. In Europe, over one hundred (so far discovered) separate painted caves, occurring in southern France and northern Spain, seem to have been visited, but only on rare occasions. Given that both Neanderthals and ‘Crô-Magnons’ were artists I do not distinguish in what follows between them as species of human. Instead, I refer to ‘human’, ‘humans’ and ‘Dasein’ inclusively<sup>10</sup>.

In connection to Ice Age art, as White puts it, with regard to both locale and work: ‘No single characterization of the cave environment is adequate and no single interpretation of cave painting will suffice’ (White 2003, p. 58). Approaching cave art from a perspective influenced by Heidegger holds out the possibility to archaeology of an understanding of agency and world that can contribute to an understanding of cave art but that does not seek to extrapolate a grand narrative. Instances of artistic production are understood as events of meaning-making and world-opening: what meaning is made and what world opened remains speculative. Going beyond the broadly functional-ontological claim that it was a hunter-gatherer world that was opened toward an ontic account of that world as shamanic will remain problematic and inconclusive.

What I would like to suggest here is that we can think of caves as heterotopias<sup>11</sup>. Caves are heterotopic, uncanny (not necessarily frightening), numinous spaces and because of this, I suggest, they enable human beings to produce art as a world-opening event. This does not prevent other spaces

<sup>9</sup> Conkey (1999) provides a useful history of the interpretation of European Palaeolithic art. See also (Conkey 1987; Davis 1986; Dutton et al. 1987; Moro-Adabia and Gonzales-Morales 2008; White 1992). I do not intend to provide a comprehensive survey like Conkey’s here. It is possible to take a virtual tour of the cave of Lascaux here: <http://archeologie.culture.fr/lascaux/en>. Information on the cave of Chauvet is available here: <http://www.experienceardeche.com/page/the-chauvet-cave/56>. And a virtual tour is available here: <http://archeologie.culture.fr/chaufvet/en>. The chronology of Upper Palaeolithic Cave Art has recently been challenged by Pettitt, Bahn and Züchner. They challenge the antiquity of Chauvet (which has been ascribed the date range of ca. 32–26 thousand years ago) arguing instead that most of the art present in Chauvet is Solutrean-Magdalenian in age (see Pettitt et al. 2009). This is significant since, if true, it would place the date of this important cave whose content has considerable implications for our understanding of ‘the origins of art, Upper Paleolithic behaviour ... and ... the emergence of ‘modern’ cognition’ (Pettitt et al. 2009, p. 239) much later than has been suggested by the Chauvet team. Taking this interpretative discussion further should involve and engagement with both Cook (2013) and Pettitt (2016).

<sup>10</sup> See (Tonner 2018) for a discussion of some of the issues involved in this shift toward inclusivity.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of heterotopic cave space, see (Tonner 2018). For an early archaeological exploration of heterotopias, see (Tilley 1991).

from functioning as heterotopias, but it does suggest that there is something significant about human experience in caves. Let me try to make the connection between heterotopic space and Heidegger's account of Dasein and dwelling more explicit.

One feature of heterotopic spaces is that they enable the 'contestation' of the relationships that operate within and characterize a group/society/culture. Heidegger's point would be that such spaces also enable the originary setting up of these relationships themselves. It is these relationships and networks of relations that enable agent's projects to take on the shapes that they do within any particular cultural and historical context. Now, according to Heidegger, a central constitutive feature of Dasein is being-towards-death: death, on this account, is understood as the annihilation of an agent's individual projects (Moran 2000, p. 24). Heidegger's account of anxiety is bound up with his account of being-towards-death. Anxiety is ultimately about Dasein's being-in-the-world, its basic state. Anxiety is about death. Anxiety lets a Dasein encounter the fact that there is a contingency or groundlessness to its existence and so enables their familiarity with their everyday world to be seen to be contingent. This experience of anxiety is a structural dimension of Dasein as being-there. Where and when there is Dasein, there is anxiety and anxiety, because of its revelation of contingency or groundlessness, discloses existential possibilities that are there for appropriation into one's existence. In other words, because an agent or group of agents is revealed to be contingent, so too are their projects. This enables a decision to be made as to what projects to appropriate for the agent or the group. The disclosure of these possibilities of existence discloses a world to a Dasein or group of Daseins as a relational network (Heidegger 1962; Moran 2000, p. 241). Anxiety enables individual and communal self-interpretation to take place and it is these interpretations that enact a rule or set of rules to live by.

In essence, the experience of anxiety reveals Dasein's essential 'homelessness' in the world. The world is revealed as something uncanny (*unheimlich*) and it is the unsettling nature of such experiences that explains the general human tendency to 'turn away' from (perhaps through ritualization or some other means) the things that provoke them. Such experiences can be disruptive to established social norms and require management. The experience of anxiety reveals that human existence or dwelling is bound up with the world in an appropriative co-constituting relationship of practical coping (*Sorge*) (Higginbottom and Tonner 2010). This co-performative relationship generates cultural worlds. Dasein co-insides with and co-instantiates its world but Dasein is not wholly 'at home' in it: because of this, Dasein needs to create cultural worlds to live in. These worlds then enable Dasein to act deceptively as if it were wholly at home in the world and, in echo of Husserl, as if these worlds were somehow independent of it and did not rely on its constituting activity.

My suggestion here is that appropriated aspects of the natural environment can be considered heterotopias and could function to manage such experiences in the remote past. Recall here the features of heterotopias identified by Foucault. They are diverse in form but are a constant of 'every human group' and they have precise operations but these can change. They enable the juxtaposition of incompatible emplacements within a society and they open heterochronias: temporally discontinuous places; places of all times (museums) and places of transitory time (annual festival sites). Heterotopias presuppose systems whereby they are opened and closed and such places are isolated but enterable: they function in relation to the remaining spaces of the group (Foucault 1998, pp. 179–84).

Events of anxiety are revelatory in the sense that they disclose the contingent and constituted nature of human cultural worlds. Because they are potentially disruptive, such events need to be attended to in order to enable agents to re-territorialise on 'homely', well-known, mundane and securely established possibilities for self-interpretation and living (Moran 2000, p. 241). For these reasons, a carefully stage-managed heterotopic experience, such as might have gone on in the painted caves, whether in the act of painting or otherwise, might very well reinvigorate established cultural norms. As Lefebvre suggested, the function of the cave in the cultural landscape of the group might just have been to 'be known to 'be' there' even when an experience in or of it was not on the immediate

horizon (Lefebvre 1991, p. 254)<sup>12</sup>. Knowledge that there were these sites, even if there wasn't explicit knowledge of exactly what was in them or what went on in them, could have served to reinforce cultural norms. That is, decorated caves could have functioned as heterotopic places (perhaps among other places) for prehistoric communities.

The phenomenological claim is that caves participated in the emergence of the meaning of things in a rich and vibrant 'this world'. That they and their artworks 'first [gave] to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves' ((Heidegger 1971, p. 43). Square bracket: my addition) amounts to the claim that caves were part of the manifold of the disclosure of beings that occurred in acts of originary meaning-making for prehistoric peoples. That heterotopic cave space had this effect may partly account for their role in the production of world-opening art. Caves enabled art to occur as a bringing forth of worlds. All of this is grounded in Dasein's being as care.

Before we built heterotopias like museums and cathedrals, we constituted them through art and through other productive activities in the natural environment. Caves might be paradigms of such spaces, but prehistoric heterotopias might also include waterfalls, cliff tops and rock shelters amongst other potential candidates. What is important is the relationship of these spaces to possible experience. Heterotopic spaces are uncanny. They provoke the realisation that a place must be 'cleared' in order to function as a home, as a dwelling place and artistic practice is central to this process. When it occurs in a cave, then the opening of worlds occurred in heterotopic space. Recalling the focal function of art the claim that prehistoric cave paintings focused and directed the lives of individuals in a group can be made without having to suggest that each individual in the group had to go and visit the works to see them for themselves (following Lefebvre (1991)). We also do not have to commit to an overarching narrative of shamanism or the like to uphold this phenomenological claim. In order for these works to have had an effect on the group, it might have been enough to know that they were there. Knowledge of the production of and presence of cave art could well have created and maintained a heterotopic, liminal underworld-landscape or "underscape", even if this underscape were only to be explored by the few.

#### 4. The 'Work' of Art

The 'work' of a work of art is to open up or disclose a world. Truth (*aletheia*) is composed in a work of art for Heidegger in the intimacy of its creation and it is for this reason that all art is essentially poetry<sup>13</sup>. Poetry is what Heidegger calls 'projective saying'. It is an original naming of things. In artistic composition, the meaning of being constitutive of an age or of a group is 'materialised'. Art (as disclosure; *aletheia*) establishes what Heidegger called the 'meaning of being' in *Being and Time*. When a work of art 'speaks' to an audience (Heidegger's 'preservers'), these agents are wrested out of an ordinary or mundane experience and engaged in a 'truth event', which is the event of world disclosure. This is, the 'work character' of the work of art and each individual work does this in its own way, in terms of the world that it opens.

Resistance to human appropriation and control is 'concealment' on Heidegger's account and it is just this resistance to total control by humans that can be set into an art work. Works of art, prehistoric or modern, maintain within them the historical contingency and precariousness of human worlds. This is what Heidegger is getting at when he discusses the 'strife between world and earth', or between unconcealment and concealment, in his work on art (Tonner 2010, 2014). As an unfolding historical event of meaning-making, the meaning of works of art cannot be fully determined.

The production of art in caves can be interpreted as a projective/clearing event that enabled a world, a historically-negotiated and contingent relational network of interpretative meanings, to

<sup>12</sup> 'What is the *raison d'être* of Lascaux's frescoes ... ? The answer is that these paintings were made not to be seen, but merely to 'be'—and so that they might be known to 'be' there' (Lefebvre 1991, p. 254).

<sup>13</sup> '[t]ruth, as ... clearing and concealing ... happens in being composed' (Heidegger 1993, p. 197).



emerge for a group of dwellers. Such events are necessary for events of self-interpretation to happen. They enable the multitude of ‘things’ in the surrounding environment (animals, objects, ‘others’ and events) to be appropriated into the life of a group. The now famous example that Heidegger discusses is Van Gogh’s *Pair of Shoes*<sup>14</sup>. This painting is said to disclose a pair of shoes in their use for their owner, in their reliability and sturdiness, in their worn-in durability and material resistance to bodily movement. Heidegger will say of this work that ‘Van Gogh’s painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is in truth*’ ((Heidegger 1993, p. 161). Italics in the original). By displacing an audience into the place of the event of the disclosure of this truth, the ‘work’ of the work of art is happening: it is an event where truth (*aletheia*, unconcealment) itself discloses the being of the shoes and opens up or brings forth the world of their use by their owner, who Heidegger takes to be a peasant woman (Heidegger 1971, pp. 44–45; Tonner 2014): ‘From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toil-some tread of the worker stares forth . . . This equipment [the shoes] belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman’ ((Heidegger 1993, pp. 159–60). Italics in the original; square brackets: my addition. See also (Tonner 2011, 2014).

A ‘world’ is a context of significance: it is that open space wherein the owner of these shoes conducts their daily activities. It is where they dwell. When a viewer looks at the represented shoes in their worn-in state, these shoes ‘refer to’ or ‘point at’ other aspects of the woman’s embodied-embedded life as her life unfolds in her environing world that are not represented: how she goes about her daily business of sowing plants, how she is aware of the subtle changes in the weather, and how such changes will impact her life (Wartenberg 2001, p. 152). The world of the peasant woman is disclosed to the agents who preserve the work as a hermeneutic totality. The non-represented features ‘brought to presence’ for viewers of a work require of them some prior knowledge of the worlds intimated in representation. In prehistoric art, these non-represented features brought to presence or ‘gathered’ for viewers, both in the present and in the past, might be ‘the hunt’, relations of power and exchange, kinship or religion, but all of these features must, in the past, assume existential familiarity with such a world, and in the present, they must be evidenced by archaeological research. Within the context of Palaeolithic representation, there is a sense in which we might want to think of the animals depicted, while they are encountered within worlds, to nevertheless be somewhat on the side of the ‘earth’ or concealment in Heidegger’s sense, since they resist attempts to be wholly incorporated or appropriated into worldly frames of meaning. Perhaps this fact accounts in part for the infrequency of representations of prey animals at this time. Perhaps, prey species were less resistant to incorporation into human frames of meaning, precisely because of their status *as* prey. Consider in this regard the *frieze of horses* depicted in Chauvet (Ardèche, France)<sup>15</sup>.

For his part, Randall White has suggested that the frieze is not a scene depicting horse behaviour within the context of a particular group of horses active at the same time within the same spatial context. On his view, what seems to be represented on this panel in Chauvet is, from left to right, a ‘calmly walking horse; a second horse . . . in an aggressive posture with its ears flatted backward; a third . . . in a relaxed posture . . . with its ears up and oriented forward . . . [and] . . . a fourth, alert . . . [and open mouthed] . . . suggesting vocalization or snorting . . . [and that] . . . seems to be a pony’ ((White 2003, p. 79). Square brackets: my additions).

White’s suggestion is that this panel may in fact represent the ‘same horse in four different behaviours or life-phases’ or it might represent the ‘postures themselves’ without attempting to represent one animal (White 2003, p. 79). Both of these possibilities would be representations of something autonomous, something beyond human control, a collection of ‘forces’, something resistant to human domination (the earth, unconcealment, becoming), but that are nevertheless related to human activities within a landscape (hunting, for example, or religious practices). Whether in the domain

<sup>14</sup> This painting can be viewed here: <https://www.vincentvangogh.org/a-pair-of-shoes.jsp>.

<sup>15</sup> The frieze can be viewed here: <http://www.experienceardeche.com/page/the-chauvet-cave/56>.

of observable behaviours, or in terms of the ‘becoming of a horse’, or in terms of the ‘constellation of forces’ constitutive of the identity of a behavioural posture (such as snorting, neighing or squealing). White speculates that it might in fact be ‘time’ that is the primary concern of this scene in Chauvet, rather than a particular narrative and for this reason his reading suggests an ethnographic parallel with Inuit logic of representation<sup>16</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary: whatever the narrative content revealed in a prehistoric work of art, it is suggested here that their role was to hold open a hunter-gatherer world (Heidegger 1993, p. 170). Works of art preserve the space of questioning wherein what was once inchoate, located in the background practices of a group (their ‘know-how’), becomes taken as intrinsically mysterious and worthy of question. Art enables a ‘decision’ to be made by a group regarding how things are going to matter for and to them as dwellers in their world. Works of art put up for decision what will count as the highest values (the gods) for a group, while determining what will prove essential for human dwelling in a world (Tonner 2014, p. 125). Daseins enable the ‘wilderness’, including the animals that inhabit it and that are represented in their art, to become meaningful to them in terms of their projects/lives.

The ‘work’ of artworks is to open a historical world. In so doing, works of art define and determine how objects, animals and agents are going to ‘appear’ within that opened world. I have argued here that prehistoric works of art can be interpreted in this way. If this claim is entertained, it will point towards a novel approach to such art, an approach that will develop some of the insights of Heidegger’s thought. Heidegger’s position is a form of phenomenological holism and the challenge of approaching prehistoric art from a perspective of dwelling inspired by a reading of his works is to begin to flesh out the more abstract phenomenological dimensions of experience (the “categories” of earth and sky, gods and mortals) in the present, in terms of their application to the past, in a manner more grounded in the archaeological record than I could attempt here.

Works of art, on Heidegger’s account, put up for decision what will count as the highest values, “the gods”, for a group, while also determining what will prove essential for human dwelling in a world. Much more remains to be said on these matters in order to illuminate the archaeological and artistic records of human becoming.

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<sup>16</sup> Ambrose (2006) argues that Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical aesthetics offers the ‘necessary conceptual resources in order to begin to restore ... [a] ... necessary radical graphic “holism” to prehistoric art’ (Ambrose 2006, p. 140). Starting from the insights offered by Lorblanchet (who develops an account of prehistoric art as a primeval magma wherein living and imaginary beings merge and from which they emerge) and Anati (who suggests that prehistoric art is a form of writing in a ‘primary language’ that, when decoded, will serve as a basis for universal history) Ambrose argues that a ‘unified plane of composition’ (the ‘plane’ upon which a work of art is created or formed, subdivided into technical [materials] and aesthetic [sensations] planes) evolved in prehistory that allowed prehistoric artists to develop ‘styles’ of figuration that could migrate or transgress ‘from one organism or creature to another’ (Ambrose 2006, p. 138). Prehistoric art challenges representationalist paradigms of art, since it renders ‘sensible within the visual fabric what representationalist modes of seeing regard as “invisible”’; namely, ‘certain intensities of life—affects, energies, rhythms, and forces’ (Ambrose 2006, p. 140; Deleuze and Guattari 1994, pp. 191–99). Deleuze understands the ‘capture of forces’ as an attempt to ‘render visible forces that are not themselves visible’ (Deleuze 2003, p. 56). For Deleuze and Guattari, forces produce identity in all its forms. For them, Smith and Protevi suggest, ‘constellations of constitutive forces ... can be abstracted from bodies and states of affairs’. While science explores how these forces are concretised in a particular body or states of affairs philosophy explores them by mapping ‘the range of connections a thing is capable of’ (Smith and Protevi 2013). These are its ‘becomings’ or ‘affects’. For Deleuze and Guattari, forces are an essential part of a world. Developing this line of thought in connection to Deleuze and Heidegger should involve a reading of Grosz (2008) and Sholtz (2015) and should engage with the archaeological debates in Alberti et al. (2016) and Jones and Cochrane (2018).

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