

## “Where Eyes Become the Sunlight”: Roman Fountains in Martin Heidegger and Richard Wilbur

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### *Abstract*

For the most part, interpreters of Martin Heidegger’s “The Origin of the Work of Art” have neglected his appropriation of C. F. Meyer’s “The Roman Fountain,” yet the poem deserves attention because its final description of water as it “streams and rests” provides a motif which Heidegger uses to work out his understanding of the relationship between “world” and “earth.” Richard Wilbur uses similar language to make a similar point in his own poem about Roman fountains, “A Baroque Wall-Fountain at the Villa Sciarra.” Juxtaposing Wilbur’s depictions of moving and resting water with Heidegger’s brings out a latent implication in Heidegger’s use of the imagery, the possibility that the moving and resting interplay will result in enhanced understanding.<sup>1</sup>

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The nature of poetry...is the founding of truth...everything with which man is endowed must...be drawn up from the closed ground and expressly set up... All creation, because it is such a drawing up, is a drawing, as of water from a spring.

-Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art”<sup>2</sup>

λέγει αὐτῷ Κύριε, οὔτε ἄντλημα ἔχεις καὶ τὸ φρέαρ ἐστὶν  
βαθύ· πόθεν οὖν ἔχεις τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν;

-John 4:11 (Nestle Greek text)<sup>3</sup>

### *Introduction*

Near the end of the poem “A Baroque Wall-Fountain in the Villa Sciarra” Richard Wilbur describes heaven as “That land.../ Where eyes become the sunlight”<sup>4</sup> (56 and 58). The phrase conjoins two insights crucial to an

adequate understanding of the poem. First: it presupposes that successful human knowing involves a necessary holism of the human perceiver with that which is perceived; the eyes will only fully understand sunlight when they *become* sunlight—a claim which seems counter-intuitive, even peculiar.<sup>5</sup> Second (and less peculiar): it acknowledges that this hoped-for fulfillment of knowing remains incomplete in the life which human beings experience “under the sun” (to borrow a relevant biblical phrase). Given Wilbur’s Christian theological commitments, the poem effectively glosses 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known.”<sup>6</sup> The difference between “now” and “then” for Wilbur, as well as for Paul, includes (at least) a desire for fullness and immediacy of knowing which is thwarted by human fallenness and finitude. In other words, these texts presuppose (1) that human beings are meant to know, (2) that their knowing in “this present age” is inevitably limited, and (3) that awareness of this limitation implies the possibility (perhaps difficult to achieve) of progressively better understanding, even “now.”<sup>7</sup> Moreover, both texts anticipate fullness<sup>8</sup> of understanding in a future consummation.

Curious as the juxtaposition may seem, I want to suggest that a similar awareness of the tension between knowing and not-knowing, also based in an account of human finitude, informs the epistemological themes of Martin Heidegger’s essay “The Origin of the Work of Art,” so that reading the two works inter-textually will clarify both. In that essay, Heidegger elaborates characteristics of the tension with his account of truth as disclosure and the closely related account of the relationship between “world” and “earth.”<sup>9</sup> As one way of expressing these ideas, Heidegger borrows the image of water “stream[ing] and rest[ing]” from a poem by C. F. Meyer. Wilbur’s poem twice makes use of a similar pairing. He describes the figures of fauns in the wall-fountain of his title as “at rest in fulness of desire,” registering a kind of restlessness in tension with their repose. He contrasts this fountain with two rather different fountains in St. Peter’s Square, in which the water is “Struggling aloft until it seems at rest.” Despite the substantial differences between the fountains, they have in common their making present of this tension-with-rest, and precisely this element of shared significance makes Wilbur’s point, as we shall see.<sup>10</sup>

In a preliminary way we may say that both Heidegger and Wilbur recognize that works of art bring to expression those clusters of assumptions, beliefs, prejudices, and habits of thought—models of the way things are—which allow cultures and communities to make sense of the

world and their place in it.<sup>11</sup> Both Heidegger and Wilbur realize that such models are incomplete, contingent,<sup>12</sup> and therefore subject to correction—thus allowing, among other things, for what Heidegger calls “a greater degree of being.” The “greater degree of being” may take the form of a “fusion of horizons.” By “fusion of horizons” (a phrase made familiar and clarified by Heidegger’s student and colleague, Hans-Georg Gadamer) I mean an event of understanding which occurs when representatives of more than one world (in the sense which Heidegger uses and which I will explain more fully below) open themselves (and thus their world) in sincere conversation with representatives of another world and are thus able to assimilate insights from that other world, with the result that the borders of that world (so to speak) become more expansive. For Heidegger, the contingency of a world is a function of his phenomenological practice, so that his account is non-teleological. Wilbur’s account contrasts with Heidegger’s because Wilbur contextualizes contingency with reference to Christian orthodoxy; his account is thus both theological and teleological. By considering the texts together, however, I hope to show the usefulness of Heidegger’s description of human experience for a theologically explicit account of that experience such as Wilbur’s.<sup>13</sup> Wilbur also resembles Heidegger in presupposing the interpretive participation of a viewer (or audience or reader) in the event of meaning which, on Heidegger’s understanding, characterizes works of art.<sup>14</sup>

As a means of focusing my reading of Heidegger, I will pay special attention to an example he provides of a successful work of art, the poem by Meyer. Meyer’s poem, like Wilbur’s, describes a fountain in a public park in Rome.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, Meyer and Wilbur use similar images in their descriptions of fountains. Since Meyer’s imagery gives shape to parts of Heidegger’s argument (and, more broadly, since the images are common to the tradition which all three writers share), Heidegger also shares images with Wilbur. In contrast with the other examples he mentions (Van Gogh’s painting of peasant shoes; and the Greek temple at Paestum), for which he offers at least some explanatory comment, Heidegger provides very little direction with respect to what readers ought to discern in Meyer’s poem. (This lack of direction may explain why very few critics have given any attention to the poem as one of Heidegger’s examples.) He introduces it simply by saying that “the view that [a work of art] is a copy is confirmed in the best possible way by a work of the kind presented in C. F. Meyer’s poem ‘Roman Fountain.’” Heidegger continues by quoting the entire poem:

The jet ascends and falling fills

The marble basin circling round;  
 This, veiling itself over, spills  
 Into a second basin's ground.  
 The second in such plenty lives,  
 Its bubbling flood a third invests,  
 And each at once receives and gives  
 And streams and rests. (37)<sup>16</sup>

He then comments, "This is neither a poetic painting of a fountain actually present<sup>17</sup> nor a reproduction of the general essence of a Roman fountain. Yet truth is put into the work" (37-38). Towards the end of the essay Heidegger makes the comment which I have already used as an epigraph: "The nature of poetry... is the founding of truth" (75). The continuation of that passage suggests the beginnings of a reason for Heidegger's appreciation of Meyer's poem; the poet draws truth out into the open in something like the way that a person draws water from a well or spring: "All creation, because it is such a drawing up, is a drawing, as of water from a spring" (76).<sup>18</sup> Heidegger uses Meyer's controlling image because it expresses the core of his thought in "Origin," his assertion that a work of art brings truth to presence. Before turning more directly to Meyer's poem (and then to Wilbur's), therefore, it will be useful to lay out some of the key ideas from Heidegger's essay.

### *Verification and Perspective*

Heidegger's assertion—that works of art bring truth to presence—applies to works of art an account of truth as disclosure which preoccupied Heidegger in a number of his writings.<sup>19</sup> In order to clarify why and how truth matters in "Origin," it will be necessary to keep in mind that Heidegger's account of truth is epistemological<sup>20</sup> and phenomenological<sup>21</sup> rather than metaphysical. He expresses himself somewhat broadly, so that at times he seems to be opposing a correspondence account of truth,<sup>22</sup> but this impression is misleading. His target, more precisely, is verificationism; that is, he *denies* the doctrine that a proposition only has meaning if its correspondence to reality can be verified. On the contrary, Heidegger wants his readers to remember that truth occurs first for human beings as unanalyzed holistic insight.<sup>23</sup> To submit such an insight to analysis in order to test its factuality may clarify the insight in part, but will also be likely to falsify it by selecting for attention just those measures of any particular state of affairs which are suited to the examiner's values; that is, the

expectation of or search for a particular kind of evidence will determine what the observer is able (or likely) to notice.<sup>24</sup>

According to Heidegger, then, an overemphasis on verifiability renders (the experience of) truth static and one-dimensional. Heidegger argues, on the contrary, that human awareness of truth is perspectival.<sup>25</sup> He illustrates with reference to human experience of the weight of a stone and of color:

If we try to lay hold of [a] stone's heaviness in another way [other than by feeling its heaviness], by placing the stone on a balance, we merely bring the heaviness into the form of a calculated weight. This perhaps very precise determination of the stone remains a number, but the weight's burden has escaped us. Color shines and wants only to shine. When we analyze it in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. (47)

This is to say that the scientific analysis of material reality, revealing as it undoubtedly is in its proper place, nevertheless also conceals. Because it focuses our perception in just one way, tacitly discouraging alternative foci, a verificationist account of things risks distorting our perception with respect to other possible accounts. Again, Heidegger doesn't deny the usefulness of knowing a precisely calculated weight; rather, he wants us human beings to remain alert to other modes of knowing and to the tendency for one mode of knowing to obscure another.

Heidegger's account of perspective implies that human knowing is dynamic. By calling knowing dynamic, I mean that the strength of certainty (or confidence) which human beings experience with respect to what we know, our central (or peripheral) awareness of bits of what we know

(depth of ingression), and the relative richness of our knowing are generally in flux. New information, or a reminder of forgotten information, may change our levels of confidence or the relative centrality of some point of knowledge. This implies the possibility that an insight from another era of our own tradition or from another culture will correct or enhance our understanding.<sup>26</sup> The potential viability of more than one world implies further that two (or more) worlds might interact in such a way that each is enriched because of its encounter with the other(s). (For Gadamer this potential allows for a "fusion of horizons," and Wilbur's "Baroque Wall-Fountain," I will argue, allows

two different worlds to encounter each other in just this way.)

In an account of Heidegger's "On the Way to Language,"<sup>27</sup> Mark Wrathall considers the differing ways that gold might be valued in different worlds; the example makes it readily apparent that either world might benefit from a consideration of the other and that the worlds are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For Heidegger, as Wrathall explains, "the essence of a thing" is *not* "the essential property that makes the thing what it is." Rather, "the essence of a thing" is "whatever leads us to recognize an essential property or concept as essential." Human beings learn (or come into) this "whatever" by learning to be at home in a "world." Like the stone mentioned above, "gold...has a colour and a weight and a texture and a shape, but also all sorts of other properties like being good for making bracelets, gleaming in a way that seems divine, being buried in the sand of a riverbed, etc." Wrathall asks, "Which of all these properties are essential to the piece of gold, and which are merely accidental to its being?" He then explains:

When we decide what any particular object is, and thus decide what its essential properties are, we do so by selecting out from the infinite properties it has some subset that is most important. To do this, we need to have a prior sense for what matters to us and concerns us—we need, in other words, to be disposed to the world in a particular way so that something will appear relevant and important while other things will seem trivial.... (92)<sup>28</sup>

Different domains and worlds will consequently have different Heideggerian essences, and part of inhabiting a world is being moved by the essence proper to the world.... For Heidegger, which properties are essential will depend on how the Heideggerian essence has oriented us to the world, and thus what is essential about a thing can change historically because different ages or cultures might be 'essenced' differently. For example, one culture might be moved to find things important to the degree that they approach God by being like Him. Another age or culture might find the true being of a thing in what allows it to be turned into a resource, flexibly and efficiently on call for use. When someone disposed to the world in the first way encounters gold, she will take as essential its God-like properties—its incorruptibility, its divine sheen [she may use gold to adorn a cathedral]. When someone disposed to the world in the second way encounters gold, she will take the essential property to be whatever it is about it that allows us to most flexibly and efficiently use it as a

resource. These it turns out, are the properties that physics and chemistry focus on: its atomic structure [she may use gold in specialized circuitry]. (93)

*Truth as Disclosure*

Wrathall mentions being “disposed to the world in a particular way” and “inhabiting a world.” In the essay “...Poetically Man Dwells...” Heidegger considers a poem by Hölderlin to explain that human beings are taught to inhabit particular worlds by the poets who make those worlds present.<sup>29</sup> The claim there is closely related to part of his argument in “Origin,” the assertion that a work makes a world present. For Heidegger the presencing of a world in a work of art (such as a fountain or a poem) is not merely a matter of recording. Rather, to some significant degree, the work creatively renders a world. Even a work of art which seems simply to represent actual (physical) artifacts, such as one of Van Gogh’s depictions of peasant shoes, fails for the observer *as a work of art* if she attempts to determine its meaning with reference to how faithfully it renders a particular pair of peasant shoes. Heidegger makes the point by responding to one of these paintings. “As long as we only imagine a pair of shoes in general, or simply look at the empty unused shoes as they merely stand there in the picture,” then we will miss the truth of the shoes. “From Van Gogh’s painting we cannot even tell where these shoes stand.... There are not even clods of soil from the fields or the field-path sticking to them, which would at least hint at their use” (33), so that in at least a couple of senses the painting fails the correctness test. Nevertheless, the painting makes Heidegger as observer aware of much more than the shoes alone:

From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind.

On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates<sup>30</sup> the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment [the shoes] is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the

sudden menace of death. This equipment belongs to the *earth*, and it is protected in the *world* of the peasant woman. From out of this protected belonging the equipment itself rises to its resting-within-itself.

*But perhaps it is only in the picture that we notice all this about the shoes.* The peasant woman, on the other hand, simply wears them. (33-34; emphasis added)

By means of this passage Heidegger offers his own experience of Van Gogh's painting as an indication that works of art require participant audiences in order to *mean*. He also distinguishes between the shoes as *equipment* (the peasant woman's perspective, most properly satisfied when she can take the shoes for granted) and the perspective opened by the painting, which "let[s] us know what the shoes are in truth" (35). The peasant woman's perspective encourages closure: the shoes either serve their purpose or they don't. In contrast, the perspective opened by the painting, on Heidegger's account, discloses the *world* of the peasant woman; it occasions the viewer's reflectively open *insight*; it lets the shoes be what they are as part of a world. The work is *not* mimetic if we mean by the term that it accurately portrays the particular equipmental thing which it portrays, but it *is* mimetic in that it occasions the viewer's reflection concerning the ways in which the world it evokes *is*. (This difference gets at why Heidegger can say that Meyer's poem "is a copy"—mimetic in the sense that it evokes the way things are—but deny that it is "a poetic painting of a fountain actually present"—mimetic in the limiting sense that it accurately portrays a particular thing.)

The passage thus informs a summary account of Heidegger's notion of truth as unconcealedness (or disclosure). With respect to truth, Heidegger says that "Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth. This entity emerges into the unconcealedness of its being" (36; his emphasis). As he does elsewhere, Heidegger bases his notion of truth here on a quasi-etymological account of Greek ἀλήθεια, which he explains as the manifestation (or bringing to presence) of that which in itself remains concealed—truth is disclosure.<sup>31</sup> Understood as disclosure, truth is the limited, contingent, dialectical manifestation of things as they may be known by finite and situated human beings.<sup>32</sup> Applying this definition of truth, Heidegger characterizes a work of art as a work which provides an occasion of disclosure: "If there occurs in the work a disclosure of particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work" (36) or as he puts it later, "Art is the setting-into-truth of work" (77). In the peasant woman's forgetful use of the shoes, they are merely equipmental, but by occasioning the viewer's insight into the *world* of the peasant



woman, the painting of the shoes becomes (or for that moment is<sup>33</sup>) a work of art.

So Heidegger relates his explanation of truth to the difference between world and earth, describing the disclosure enabled or occasioned by a work of art as the setting up of a world: “To be a work means to set up a world” (44). “The work *as work* sets up a world... To work-being there belongs the setting up of a world” (45; emphasis added). In this essay Heidegger contrasts “world” with “earth.”<sup>34</sup> “In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth.” Fundamentally, a “world” is that which is disclosed to a particular person (or community) within a particular cultural place and time; “earth” includes that which is undisclosed. Heidegger’s explanation follows directly from the distinction quoted above between the felt burden of the stone (which remains a mystery) and its calculated weight (which only partially discloses what the stone is): “Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate into it” (47). The point is this: on Heidegger’s understanding in “Origin,” a work of art is a human work which occasions and enables a viewer’s awareness of the manifold richness of a “world” *and* keeps the viewer aware of the corresponding hiddenness of “earth.” It establishes a “world” even as it manifests the impenetrable mystery of “earth.”<sup>35</sup> These are the considerations Heidegger has in view when he says specifically of Meyer’s poem that “truth is put into the work” (38).

### *Meyer’s “The Roman Fountain” in Heidegger*

In other words, Meyer’s “Roman Fountain” counts as *art* for Heidegger because it discloses a world without presuming closure. It apprehends (or intuitively<sup>36</sup>) “the particular being” of the fountain as well as the essence of fountains without presuming that it comprehends (or owns) either. More important for Heidegger, however, is that in representing these things it also represents how disclosure occurs; as Gover puts it, Heidegger chooses this poem for its representation of “not an other being, not a universal, but the clearing in which beings come to presence” (149). The fountain poem puts the mystery in front of us. This explanation clarifies why Heidegger can say both that the work is a copy (that is, mimetic), and yet that it is not about “a fountain actually present” (37). What matters for Heidegger is not identifying a particular fountain on the basis of the poem’s description, but the way the fountain, as it is brought to presence in the poem (and like the peasant shoes) occasions insight and thereby generates thought.

Several terms and phrases in the poem resonate<sup>37</sup> with Heidegger's account of truth as disclosure. Among phrases in the poem which would have caught Heidegger's interest, one is certainly "veiling itself" (*sich verschleiern*). Throughout his writings Heidegger uses a number of terms to indicate the hiddenness that accompanies disclosure. In their index to *Being and Time*, for example, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson include *verschleiern* (along with *verbüllen* and *einbüllen*) as words which Heidegger typically uses to designate this "veiling." Heidegger uses the compound *Sich-verschleiern* ("self-veiling") as early as *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. The phrase in Meyer suitably describes the light curtain of water that would fall from the rim of a gently flowing fountain, partly obscuring the edge of the basin it flows over; it also expresses in Heidegger's lexicon the veiled nature of earth. A passage from later in "Origin" makes these connections explicit:

The earth appears openly cleared as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is by nature undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up. All things of earth, and the earth itself as a whole, *flow together* into a reciprocal accord. But this *confluence*<sup>38</sup> is not a blurring of their outlines. *Here there flows the stream, restful* within itself, of the setting of bounds, which delimits everything present within its presence. (47; emphasis added)

Like Meyer's fountain, "veil[ed]" by its own "stream[ing]" (lines 3 and 8), the veiled earth vitally, restfully flows in its nourishing strife with world.

Art matters because it lets beings be. The particular fountain (a work of architectural art) matters, as does the poem which lets it be what it is, because the fullness of being of one thing contributes to the fullness of being of everything else. We might say that art brings more truth to light (or allows more truth to come to light), and this coming to light is the character of the beautiful in art:

Thus in the work it is truth, not only something true, that is at work.<sup>39</sup> The picture that shows the peasant shoes, the poem that says the Roman fountain, do not just make manifest what this isolated being as such is—if indeed they manifest anything at all; rather, they make unconcealedness as such happen in regard to what is as a whole. The more simply and authentically the shoes are engrossed in their nature, the more plainly and purely the

fountain is engrossed in its nature—the more directly and engagingly do all beings attain to a greater degree of being along with them. That is how self-concealing being is illuminated. Light of this kind joins its shining to and into the work. This shining, joined in the work, is the beautiful. (56)

The fountain's contribution to "all beings attain[ing] to a greater degree of being"<sup>40</sup> points towards another phrase likely to have caught Heidegger's interest in Meyer's poem. According to line five, the second basin, as *sie wird zu reich*, ("as it gets too rich"<sup>41</sup>) overflows. The fullness of being, the

"greater degree of being," can be expressed in Heidegger as richness of being; as he asserts later, "The reality of the work has become not only clearer for us in the light of its work-being, but also essentially richer" (71).

Perhaps the most important section of Meyer's poem for Heidegger's appropriation is the dynamic interplay of giving and receiving and streaming and resting in the last two lines. The form of the German verb, *gibt* ("it gives;" Meyer uses the word in lines five and seven<sup>42</sup>), evokes one of Heidegger's specialized terms, *es gibt*. The expression means roughly "it is" or "there is," but with a suggestion in Heidegger's usage that what *is* gives itself in manifestation for thinking.<sup>43</sup> This giving of being implies its converse, the withholding of disclosure in concealment. Pursuing both that which is given to thought and that which is withheld amounts to the "feast of thought" which Heidegger mentions in "Origin" (18).<sup>44</sup> Meyer's "receives" may have suggested to Heidegger the participation of the thinker in this feast, since one feature of Heidegger's account of the work of art (noted above) is the importance of an audience, the "preserver" who reads the poem or stands in front of the painting and is open to being fed by either, as it were.

The reciprocity of giving and receiving in Meyer's poem mirrors the reciprocity of streaming and resting, which brings us back to the imagery with which I opened. At a number of points throughout the essay, Heidegger recalls from the poem the image of calmly flowing water<sup>45</sup> to picture the "repose" of the "strife" between earth and world, hiddenness and disclosure. For Heidegger, in other words, rest is not a matter of stasis but of balance—the balance of give and take, the accord of freedom with boundaries, as we have seen him assert: "All things of earth, and the earth itself as a whole, flow together in reciprocal accord.... Here there flows

the stream *restful* within itself, of the setting of bounds, which delimits everything present within its presence” (47; emphasis added). He goes on to consider the nature of this rest, somewhat surprisingly insisting that it accords with strife:

But in the essential features just mentioned... we have indicated in the work rather a happening and in no sense a repose, for what is rest if not the opposite of motion? It is at any rate not an opposite that excludes motion from itself, but rather includes it. Only what is in motion can rest.... Where rest includes motion, there can exist a repose which is an inner concentration of motion, hence a highest state of agitation, assuming that the mode of motion requires such a rest. Now the repose of the work that rests is a repose of this sort. (48)

The noun “repose” here, *Ruhe*, (like *es gibt*) has a specialized meaning for Heidegger. It denotes the tensive unity of world and earth<sup>46</sup> which is the unity of manifestation (that prior unity on which, he argues, verificationist accounts of truth depend): “The repose of the work that rests in itself thus has its presencing in the intimacy of striving.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, precisely the making present of this striving characterizes works of art. “From this repose of the work we can first see what is at work in the work” (50). Heidegger’s description recalls ancient accounts of the strife between chaos (“earth”) and cosmos (“world”) if we understand that it is the artist (rather than a divine being) who presents us with a cosmos delivered out of chaos through strife: poetically man dwells—that is, the poet provides the safe haven of a world in which some group of humans can feel at home, though this world is always at risk, since earth is breaking out all over.

### *Wilbur’s Fountains*

Something very like Heidegger’s tensive repose comes to expression in Richard Wilbur’s poem “A Baroque Wall-Fountain in the Villa Sciarra.” Not surprisingly, Wilbur’s descriptions of the play of water resemble Meyer’s at several points. Meyer notices the way water looks like a veil; Wilbur compares the look of water with a “scrim” and “gauze” and “mesh.” Meyer notices the central “jet”<sup>48</sup> in his fountain; Wilbur likewise notices the “rising” of “the main jet” in two of the fountains he considers. The water in Meyer’s fountain descends by an arrangement of three basins, and the fountain of Wilbur’s title has a generally similar struc-

ture. I am more interested, however, in an important difference. Meyer's description is brief and very general—it could describe any of numerous fountains, and Heidegger's use of it is correspondingly general. He seems most struck by Meyer's compressed representation—in the phrase *strömt und ruht*—of the fundamental structure in the way earth comes to expression in worlds. The greater particularity of Wilbur's description provides a clearer illustration of the potential competition between worlds, including the possibility that the encounter will produce a more expansive world—a world characterized by what Heidegger calls a greater degree of being—by means of a fusion of horizons.

Despite Wilbur's title, his poem actually describes two (kinds of) fountains in order to compare them—and it compares them in order to compare the distinctive worlds they represent. Part of his point is that neither “world” made present by the fountains fully manifests “earth” (to apply Heidegger's terms). The first fountain, the wall-fountain of his title, makes present a world modeled on classical mythology<sup>49</sup> which favors embodiment, including pursuit of physical pleasure: it depicts a family of fauns, emphasizing details which recall a traditional association of fauns with sensuality. For example, the fifth stanza notes the “sparkling flesh” of the female faun who is “[i]n a saecular ecstasy” (19-20). The poem also emphasizes the downward tendency of the fountain's water, which “braids down” (4) and “spills” (7). The flow of the fountain is a “ragged, loose / Collapse” (11-12).<sup>50</sup> This downward directedness determines the posture of the female faun, whose “blinded smile” is “[b]ent on the sand floor.” The overall suggestion is that the fauns represent the sensual, earthly nature of human beings, even what Christian theology identifies as their fallenness. The question asked in the seventh stanza prompts the conventional evaluation: “since this all / Is pleasure, flash, and waterfall, / Must it not be too simple?” (26-28; the last clause acknowledges that this fountain leaves something undisclosed).

The question precedes another which introduces a rather different world-disclosure: “Are we not / More intricately expressed in the plain fountains that Maderna set / Before St. Peter's...?” (28-31). This question overtly indicates that the fountains represent worlds; the speaker assumes that “we” are “expressed” in them. As Heidegger would notice, each fountain in Wilbur's poem makes present a world. The question presupposes, though tentatively, that the better part of human beings is in their spiritual natures, pictured in the upward movement of the water in the fountains before St. Peter's, emphasized here in contrast with the downward flow characterizing the wall-fountain: “the main jet / Struggl[es]

aloft.../ In the act of rising” (31-33); it is “borne up” (35) so that it is “high” (36). “Struggling aloft” evokes the asceticism of strict religious practice, in contrast with the indulgently “effortless descent” of water in the first fountain (12). The St. Peter’s fountains also differ from the wall-fountain in their non-figural simplicity, which suits their counter-sensual import. This section, like the first, leads up to a question which seems to presume the superiority of soul over body in human beings: “If that is what men are / Or should be; if those water-saints [the fountains before St. Peter’s] display / The pattern of our areté, / What of these showered fauns...?” (41-44). An obvious answer would be that if those fountains display saints, then the fauns display sinners (implicit in the hint of the fall already mentioned), so that the contrast between the downward-trending sensuality of the fauns and the upward-striving rectitude of the non-figural fountains tempts us to adopt the obvious answer. The poem resists this obvious answer, however, and Wilbur unsettles convention with an alternative. What of these fauns? “They are *at rest* in fullness of desire / For what is given” (46-47; emphasis added).

This “rest in fullness of desire” recalls the streaming and resting in Meyer’s fountain and Heidegger’s appropriation of the motif. Instructively, it also echoes part of Wilbur’s description of the St. Peter’s fountains, in each of which the main jet “[s]truggl[es] aloft until it seems *at rest*” (31-32). In other words, despite obvious differences, both the baroque fountain and the fountains in St. Peter’s Square characterize human virtue as a balance between striving and resting, a holistic tensive repose. In the closing section of the poem Wilbur associates this balance with the example of St. Francis who, without sacrificing devotion, fully accepted creaturely embodiment as demonstrated by his delight in the physical creation and his general refusal to withdraw from physical discomfort (the poem alludes to his lying “in sister snow...[f]reezing and praising,” 52 and 54). The speaker in Wilbur’s poem suggests that Francis “might have seen in” the fauns of the wall-fountain “[n]o trifle, but a shade of bliss,” that is, an anticipatory picture of heaven, here characterized as “a land of tolerable flowers” (54 and 56). The goal of human *desire*, in other words, is a state of being which tolerates—rejoices in—flowers.<sup>51</sup> Fullness of life is the goal towards which “all hungers leap”—the hungers of physical desire as well as the hungers manifest in ascetic practice—and towards which “all pleasures pass” (59-60).<sup>52</sup> This is that “state...where eyes become the sunlight,” where human intelligence at last fully corresponds with the intelligibility of the cosmos. Although Wilbur here goes beyond Heidegger, his point nevertheless corroborates by implication Heidegger’s premise that knowing in the present life will always be partial; every disclosure

will involve a corresponding concealment.

Wilbur's immediate concern, like Heidegger's, is for human living here and now. The central issue in Wilbur is that the contrasting worlds made present in the different fountains are not mutually exclusive. In Heidegger's terms each fountain discloses a world but also, because of the evident incompleteness of its disclosure, reveals the persisting hiddenness of earth—and awareness of this hiddenness drives the human restlessness-seeking-repose which is brought to presence and perceived in art.<sup>53</sup> Awareness that one's own knowledge is limited invites humility towards the other, whose world understanding has the potential to improve one's own understanding. Thus Wilbur's poem helps us to see an implication of Heidegger's thought which Heidegger does not develop in "Origin": when competing descriptions of "earth" (alternative "worlds") encounter each other, the result may be a fusion of horizons beneficial to both as an increase in being.

### Notes

1 I am grateful to my colleague John Wingard for helping me improve this paper in several respects.

2 I cite "The Origin of the Work of Art" from *Poetry, Language, Thought*, as translated by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971): 17-87; this passage comes from 75-76. I have also been aware of the translation by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes in *Off the Beaten Track* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Andrew J. Mitchell has pointed out that in "A Dialogue on Language," the word which Peter D. Hertz translates as "source," carries the idea of "the source as spring (*die Quelle*), the activity of which Heidegger names as the action of grace, *das Quellen*, a welling up. A spring is not a beginning, but a transition, it is not water out of nothing, but the site where that water crosses a threshold of below to above and springs up between earth and sky" ("The Exposure of Grace: Dimensionality in Late Heidegger," *Research in Phenomenology* 40 (2010): 309-330, 321). See Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language" in *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 46-47.

3 The cluster of images I am considering in this essay derives from both classical and biblical sources. Jesus' encounter with a Samaritan woman in John 4 evokes an entire network of references throughout the Hebrew Bible. The best known is probably Psalm 23:2 [Vulgate 21:2], "He leads me beside still waters," and I notice Psalm 42:2 [Vulgate 41:2] below. Something of the range of possible implications is suggested by Isaiah 41:17-18:

When the poor and needy seek water, / and there is none, / and their tongue is parched with thirst, / I the Lord will answer them; / I the God of Israel will not forsake them. / I will open rivers on the bare heights, / and fountains in the

midst of the valleys. / I will make the wilderness a pool of water, / and the dry land springs of water. (Unless otherwise indicated, I quote the English Standard Version throughout.)

Both Martin Heidegger and Richard Wilbur, whose works I am interpreting here, would have been aware of biblical as well as classical uses of the motif.

4 Unless otherwise indicated I quote Wilbur's poems from *Collected Poems 1943-2004* (Orlando: Harcourt, 2004), citing by title and line number.

5 Wilbur is closer to affirming a "contact" theory of perception than to affirming a "mediation" theory as these terms are used by Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor, who develop Heidegger's notions in their *Retrieving Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). They acknowledge similarities between their approach and "naïve realism," and their understanding has affinities with "common sense realism" and "direct realism."

6 This is the Authorized Version.

7 This is explicit in Wilbur's poem, and it seems self-evident that 1 Corinthians as a whole calls for improved understanding to be manifested in improved practice..

8 Fullness, not completeness. Within a Christian theological understanding only God knows everything.

9 Briefly, a "world" for Heidegger is a (human) description of the way things are, whereas "earth" is everything-that-is. Because human beings are limited, historical, cultural beings, any "world" (understood, again, as a description) will be incomplete, temporary, and very probably mistaken or misleading at some points. I elaborate below.

10 Using a similar image, Wilbur describes angels as "moving / And staying like white water" in "Love Calls Us to the Things of This World" (12-13), where his interest is in the possibility of "invisible attributes...clearly perceived" (I borrow this language from Romans 1:19-20). The ideas recall 1 Corinthians 13:12, quoted above.

11 In using "model" here I am particularly aware of C. S. Lewis' *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964). What Lewis means by "model" is roughly analogous with what Heidegger means by "world." Both are aware of the notion of "worldview" (*weltanschauung*), though Heidegger generally avoids the term in pursuit of his usual strategy of repristinating traditional concepts. This is to say that when considering Heidegger's notion of "world," we should probably be aware of the notion of "worldview" as context but reject the word as a synonym.

12 By "contingent" I mean that it is dependent on the conditions which shaped its construction (including human fallibility, cultural assumptions, etc.).

13 Although Heidegger works at articulating a non-theistic philosophy, the contours of his thought concerning "hiddenness" (which I will consider below) were influenced by his study of Luther's understanding of the "hiddenness of God." One implication is that in some cases, at least, his insights may readily be "at home" within theism. See especially Benjamin D. Crowe, "On the Track of the Fugitive Gods: Heidegger, Luther, Hölderlin," *The Journal of Religion* 87.2 (April 2007): 185-205. See also Crowe, *Heidegger's Religious Origins: Destruction and Authenticity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Crowe, *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religion: Realism and Cultural Criticism* (Bloomington-



ton: Indiana University Press, 2008); and Ben Vedder, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Religion: From God to the Gods* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007).

14 Hans-Georg Gadamer comments that for Heidegger “the Being of the artwork...holds its truth within itself in such a fashion that this truth is available in no other way but in the work. For the beholder or receiver, ‘essence’ corresponds to tarrying alongside the work” (*Heidegger's Ways* 74).

15 Meyer's poem probably describes a fountain in the Villa Borghese. Despite his title, Wilbur's poem actually describes three fountains, one in the Villa Sciarra and a pair at St. Peter's Square. I provide further detail below.

16 K. Gover quotes the original in a note:

Aufsteigt der Strahl und fallend giesst  
Er voll der Marmorschale Rund,  
Die, sich verschleiern, überfließt  
In einer zweiten Schale Grund;  
Die zweite gibt, sie wird zu reich,  
Der dritten wallend ihre Flut,  
Und jede nimmt und gibt zugleich  
Und strömt und ruht.

See “The Overlooked Work of Art in ‘The Origin of the Work of Art,’” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 48.2, Issue 190 (June 2008): 143-153; 147, n. 13. I owe a general debt to Gover's article, which provides the only developed account of Heidegger's use of the poem that I have discovered. For Heidegger's essay as a whole I have found the following especially helpful: Hubert L. Dreyfus, “Heidegger's Ontology of Art,” in Dreyfus and Mark A. Wrathall, eds., *A Companion to Heidegger* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, 2007), 407-419; Charles Guignon, “Meaning in the Work of Art: A Hermeneutic Perspective,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 27 (2003): 25-44; and Guignon, “Truth as Disclosure: Art, Language, History,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 28, Supplement (1989): 105-120. 17 Heidegger is not necessarily denying that Meyer's poem is about a particular fountain; instead, he is directing attention to something else, as I will explain below. According to Gover, Meyer's “sister reports that the poem was probably based on a fountain in the Villa Borghese that Meyer saw on a trip to Italy” (144; Gover, note 6, cites Kurt Oppert, “Das Dinggedicht. Eine Kunstform bei Mörike, Meyer und Rilke,” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 4 (1926): 747-83). Meyer's description might fit either the frequently photographed seahorse fountain (pictured here as of 7/13/15: <http://www.rome.net/villa-borghese>) or a simpler oval fountain (pictured here as of 7/13/15: <http://www.chasingtheunexpected.com/2012/11/villa-borghese-embodiment-the-beauty-of-romes-parks/>).

18 It is useful here to notice Heidegger's (and probably Meyer's) awareness of a long tradition. Like Latin *fons*, the German word for “fountain” (*brunnen*) might also be translated as “spring” or “well” depending on context, and Heidegger makes use of all three possibilities throughout the essay. Moreover, given his study of the philosophical tradition as well

as of Reformation theology, Heidegger would have been aware of the Latin tag *ad fontes*, particularly in an essay concerned with origins (but we may notice that the word for origin which Heidegger uses in his title, *ursprung*, is not usually associated with wells or fountains, though it does occasionally appear as a synonym for *quelle*, spring, understood as the origin of a stream). The phrase *ad fontes* comes from the Vulgate of Psalm 41:2 (42:2 in most modern translations): *Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus*. (“Just as the stag longs for the sources of the water, so my soul longs for you, God”). Renaissance humanists used the verse to encourage the study of classical texts, and Reformation theologians similarly used the verse to encourage the foundation of doctrine on direct study of biblical texts.

Gadamer assesses the philosophical and philological potentials of the traditional phrase in Appendix V of *Truth and Method*:

As a *philosophical* metaphor it is of Platonic and Neoplatonic origin. The dominant image is that of the springing up of pure and fresh water from invisible depths.... As a *philological* term the concept of fons was first introduced in the age of humanism, but there it does not primarily refer to the concept that we know from the study of sources; rather, the maxim “ad fontes,” the return to the sources, is to be understood as a reference to the original undistorted truth of the classical authors. (2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed., trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, New York: Crossroad, 1989, 502)

Although Heidegger does not use the phrase *ad fontes* in “Origins,” the tradition associated with the tag informs his essay.

19 In addition to “The Origin of the Work of Art” see especially *Being and Time* §44; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* §18; “On the Essence of Truth” in *Basic Writings* (most directly relevant for “Origin,” in my judgment); and *The Essence of Truth: Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*. See also Mark A. Wrathall’s *Heidegger and Unconcealment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) and William B. Macomber’s *The Anatomy of Disillusion* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967).

20 That is, he is interested in how we human beings know what we know and what counts as knowing.

21 That is, he deliberately sets aside metaphysical explanation and seeks to describe the way things appear from the point of view of a historically situated and conditioned human observer.

22 For example, he uses Thomas’s Aristotelian formula, *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*, as a summary of the position he wants to correct, but for Thomas the assertion arguably has more to do with metaphysical realism than verifiability. In my judgment, Heidegger, like Thomas, is some version of a metaphysical realist; this seems evident in the relationship he describes between “world” and “earth.”

23 Dreyfus and Taylor work out some of the implications of this holism in *Retrieving Realism*. In “actualized knowledge [the perceiving subject] becomes one with its object” (18; in this summary, holism overcomes subject/object dualism). Wilbur’s description of heaven, “That land.../ Where eyes become the sunlight,” expresses a similar holism.

24 The parallel difficulty involved in attempting literal translation offers a relatively straightforward illustration of the issue. For example, “lord” is often an appropriate translation of occurrences of the Greek noun κύριος in the New Testament, but how should it be translated when it is used by the Samaritan woman whom Jesus meets in the fourth chapter of John’s gospel? When Jesus tells her (bafflingly) that, if she had asked him, he would have given her living water, she replies “κύριε, you don’t have a bucket.” To translate with “lord” here is likely to suggest to English readers either a curiously exaggerated respect on the woman’s part for the stranger she has just met or an unexplained prescience concerning his identity; if we could discuss it with him, Heidegger might point out that translating “lord” would conceal (or falsify) what’s actually happening at this point in the narrative. The solution which presents itself is the fact that the Greek term can also be translated as the courtesy expression, “sir,” and English translators tend to make this choice in John 4:11. However, Heidegger would want us to notice that we also lose something with this translation: if we hear the word as only the common expression “sir,” we may be missing an irony carried by the ambiguous possibilities in the word κύριος. Perhaps the evangelist means for us readers to recognize that, though the woman merely intends common courtesy, she speaks more truly than she knows, since the man she addresses really is the one Christians acknowledge as “Lord.” (For the sake of clarity, I am not attempting to deal with the likelihood that Jesus spoke to the woman in Aramaic. The story as we have it is told in Greek.) Part of the point here is that a speaker “at home” with κοινή Greek would not need all this explanation but would (or at least could) experience the polyvalence of the word with an immediacy impossible to readers for whom Greek is a matter of study. On Heidegger’s account, a verificationist account of truth faces a similar difficulty. By focusing attention on the verifiable or quantifiable or measurable attributes of a thing (the accidents of a substance, the form given to matter, and so on), such theories indeed reveal the truth of things, but only part of the truth (in something like the way consulting a Greek dictionary might tell us the usual meanings of κύριος). Moreover, because they tend to look for *the* meaning of a thing, such theories tend to eliminate (or dampen) the play of polyvalence in favor of univocity.

25 Simon Blackburn defines “perspectivism” as “The view that all truth is truth from or within a particular perspective” (in *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford: OUP, 1994). Since Heidegger’s account is consciously phenomenological, it is correspondingly agnostic with respect to the possibility of a non-relative (absolute) knowledge of truth.

26 This recognition is an important feature of Gadamer’s argument in *Truth and Method*. See also Lewis, *The Discarded Image*, especially 216-223.

27 I am quoting from chapter 8, “Language,” in Wrathall’s *How to Read Heidegger* (New York: Norton, 2005), 88-97 (hereafter cited parenthetically). I have also found helpful chapter 7, “Truth and Art,” on “The Origin of the Work of Art” (71-87).

28 In describing the “Baroque Wall-Fountain” Wilbur expresses conventional responses to the figures in that fountain with the words “simple” and “trifle.” The context makes clear that these assessments represent only one possible “world,” and part of the point of the

poem is to call for a re-evaluation of the way things are based on the encounter between two worlds which the poem realizes. In other words, Wilbur's poem illustrates the same relationship between worlds which Wrathall is explaining.

29 I have used the translation in Hofstadter, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 211-229.

30 This surprising verb choice gets at the heart of the issue: the meaning of the painting amounts to a vibration or oscillation, a living give-and-take, between the artist, the work, and its viewer (whom Heidegger calls a "preserver"). A little later in the essay, Heidegger will introduce the tensive stability of the "strife" between "earth" and "world." That more fundamental "vibration" is foreshadowed here. (On the notion of "oscillation" in Heidegger, see Wrathall, *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 137ff.) Gadamer makes a similar point in "On the Truth of the Word" when he mentions "the way that the word sways and plays itself out" (*The Gadamer Reader*, ed. Richard E. Palmer, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007: 132-155; the quotation comes from 152).

31 Compare "On the Essence of Ground": "Propositional truth is rooted in a more *originary* truth (unconcealment), in the pre-predicative manifestness of *beings*" (103).

32 I hope elsewhere to provide a fuller account; here I only want to summarize the most relevant features of Heidegger's illustration for my immediate purposes. It should be noted, however, that Heidegger's "dialectic," though influenced by Hegel's, is immanent and non-teleological; it emphasizes the perpetual resistance of reality to final comprehension.

33 One implication of Heidegger's essay is that a work of art may cease to be a work of art when it ceases to inform an audience; the measure of art is neither permanence nor universality.

34 Prior to "Origin" Heidegger uses "world" without specifying its relation to "earth." In his introduction to "Origin" (published as "The Truth of the Work of Art" in *Heidegger's Ways*, 95-109), Gadamer recognizes Heidegger's addition of "earth" to his account of truth as "the startling new conceptuality" which caused a "real sensation" when the lectures were first presented. "The new and startling thing was that this concept of the world now found a counterconcept in the 'earth'" (99). Heidegger further developed his account of these counterconcepts in "On the Essence of Ground," written in 1928 (included in *Pathmarks*, 97-135).

35 For the theological underpinnings of Heidegger's treatment of hiddenness and mystery, see again Crowe, "On the Track of the Fugitive Gods." An important biblical text for this tradition is 2 Corinthians 3:18 (which G. C. Berkouwer discusses alongside 1 Corinthians 13:12): "[In 2 Corinthians 3:18] Paul... writes: 'we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of God, are transformed into the same image.'... *There is now an unveiling, an unconcealment...*" (*Man: The Image of God*, tr. Dirk W. Jellema, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962, 110; emphasis added). Heidegger also uses the image of unveiling, as we will see below.

36 Choosing the right term is tricky with Heidegger; "intuition" occurs in William McNeill's translation of "On the Essence of Ground" where it refers to an understanding that

is both “pre-predicative” and derivative on a prior manifestation of being (see *Pathmarks* 102-105). My use of “intuitions” intends the “pre-predicative” aspect of disclosure.

37 I use the word “resonate” here to suggest something like Heidegger’s use of “vibrate” noted above—that is, as a reminder that Heidegger’s account of understanding involves a perpetual give-and-take as being offers itself and withdraws and the human interpreter appropriates and (mis)represents and is corrected by further offering and withdrawal in the circulation of knowledge.

38 As the context reminds us, “confluence” is “flowing together.” Heidegger uses the word again at the end of his “Epilogue,” where he summarizes the key features of his argument: “Truth is the unconcealedness of that which is as something that is. . . . In the way in which, for the world determined by the West, that which is, is as the real, there is concealed a particular confluence of beauty with truth” (81; compare Wallace Stevens’ phrase, “the fluent mundo.”)

39 The contrast between “truth” and “something true” registers the difference between the openness to being of truth as disclosure and the closure presumed in a verificationist account. (Compare Wallace Stevens’ “On the Road Home.”) To put it another way, openness to “truth” permits a both/and dynamic “vibration” (or oscillation) rather than requiring the closure of an either/or determinacy. The both/and allows greater fullness of being.

40 On this increase of being, see Gadamer, “On the Truth of the Word,” in Richard E. Palmer, ed., *The Gadamer Reader* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 152.

41 I adopt this phrasing from a prose translation of Meyer’s poem by my colleague Tom Neiles. Neiles’ translation of “reich” replaces Hofstadter’s “plenty” with the cognate “rich.”

42 Hofstadter only employs the normal English translation, “gives,” in line seven, though his translation of line five implies the giving.

43 In *Being and Time* §44 he associates the term with presuppositions and, in particular, the truth we expect to find: “The truth which has been presupposed, or the ‘there is’ [*es gibt*] by which its Being is to be defined, has that kind of Being—or meaning of Being—which belongs to Dasein itself” (271). Mark Wrathall remarks that Heidegger uses the term “to talk about things that are, but lack the stability and presence that metaphysics took as definitive of being. Something can be ‘given,’ that is, play a role in the disclosure of the world, without ‘being,’ that is, having stable presence” (*Heidegger and Unconcealment*, 144).

44 More precisely, “the feast of thought” is the inevitable “moving in a circle” of the effort to understand what art is (one version of the hermeneutic circle in Heidegger), but I understand this effort as one example of the dynamic pattern of disclosure in Heidegger’s thought.

45 There is an analogue in the familiar “still waters” of Psalm 23:2; the phrase might also be translated “waters of rest.”

46 The last word of Meyer’s poem, *ruht*, is a form of the cognate verb. On the importance of *Ruhe*, see Andrew Mitchell, “Praxis and *Gelassenheit*: The ‘Practice’ of the Limit,” in François Raffoul and David Pettigrew, eds., *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy* (Albany:

State University of New York Press, 2002): 317-338. Mitchell explains:

The term *Ruhe* is a term of art for Heidegger around this time.... In “The Origin of the Work of Art,” the work of art *rests* in the unity of Earth and World. “This is the unity we seek when we ponder the self-subsistence of the work and try to express in words this closed, unitary repose of self-support...” (GA 5, 34; PLT 48). Heidegger cautions against taking *Ruhe* here to be any absence of movement. “It is at any rate not an opposite that excludes motion from itself, but rather includes it.... Where rest includes motion, there can exist a repose which is an inner concentration of motion, hence, a highest state of agitation, assuming that the mode of motion requires such a rest” (GA 5; PLT 57-58; trans. mod.). Rest, then, is a tense repose...

Mitchell goes on to indicate two ways Heidegger uses *Ruhe* in “Ἀρχιβασιή,” the dialogue by Heidegger on which Mitchell is focusing: “(1) *Ruhe* holds together those ‘opposites’ that belong together” and “(2) *Ruhe* is not the absence of motion.” Thus “Rest itself is no mere not-doing, and the essence of the human is not merely work. The human must ‘also reside...somewhere in the *Ruhe*’ (GA 77, 70). The *Ruhe* is the residence between yes and no, the tensed opening of truth” (336, n. 45). As Mitchell’s article makes clear, Heidegger’s “repose” is related to Heidegger’s “dwelling.” Compare Gadamer: “The silence of the Chinese vase, the stillness and puzzling peace [*Ruhe*] which comes toward you from every really persuasive artistic construction, testifies that (speaking with Heidegger) truth has here been ‘set to work’” (“On the Truth of the Word,” 154).

47 The proximity of “rest” and “striving” in the English translation calls to mind Hebrews 4:11, “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest,” from a context which helpfully glosses the anticipatory awareness of Wilbur’s “Baroque Wall-Fountain.”

48 This is Hofstadter’s translation of *strahl*, usually translated “beam.” Nevertheless, the central image is the same as that indicated by Wilbur’s “jet.”

49 Several features of the fountain reveal that it is, more precisely, a work of Christian syncretism. For the moment I am focusing on the more overt details of the description.

50 For the sake of brevity I bypass a number of ambiguities by means of which Wilbur requires his readers to consider conventional views and simultaneously begins to undermine those views, preparing readers for the adjustment of perspective which the poem pursues; I plan to provide a fuller account in a separate essay.

51 I take Wilbur’s “tolerable” as litotes for “appreciated.”

52 The phrasing recalls something like Romantic *sehnsucht*; I hope to develop this notion elsewhere.

53 Both Heidegger and Wilbur would acknowledge the Augustinian flavor of the restlessness which interests them. Augustine opened his *Confessions* with the recognition, “you [God] have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” These are the closing words of the first paragraph of Henry Chadwick’s translation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Chadwick notes an echo of Plotinus, who considers that “the soul finds rest only in the One” (3, n. 1). Heidegger, of course, wants to separate the insight into human behavior from the theistic context.