



Dwelling in ‘A Hidden Life’: Heidegger’s concept of the Fourfold in Malick’s film

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the major theme of Terrence Malick’s film, *A Hidden Life*, is the ‘unknown’ resistance – or act of disobedience – perpetrated by Franz Jägerstätter right after Germany invaded Austrian territory in World War II. Nonetheless, this essay aims to uncover what could be called as the ‘hidden aspect’ of the main characters hidden life, in other words, the ‘authentic dwelling’ of the Jägerstätter family, enunciated by the notion of ‘ownedness’ (Eigentlichkeit). In order to properly develop this approach to Malick’s film, I consider Heidegger’s concept of the ‘Fourfold’ and its many related philosophical notions exposed in his later works. Primarily, I present a brief synopsis of the film and introduce the main aspects of the way in which the life in the countryside is represented by Malick, showing the daily routine of the characters in the village of Sankt Radegund. These known – but not quite perceived – elements, which one could argue are usually neglected in a philosophical research, are in fact my starting point on the outlining of Heidegger’s thinking. Secondly, taking into account the philosopher’s arguments exposed in the texts, *The Question Concerning Technology*, *The Thing*, and *...Poetically Man Dwells...*, I propose a connection between the notions of ‘thingness’ and ‘measure-taking’ as our guide into the Heideggerian path. Finally, as it is put forward both the key concepts and the film’s most important characteristics, I shortly explore other works of Heidegger such as *Building Dwelling Thinking* and the *Bremen Lectures*, in relation to the aforementioned texts, with the purpose of better exposing the ideas enunciated by the film in direct correspondence with his concept of Fourfold, and in conclusion, its relevance to our contemporary way of dealing with beings (entities).

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Initial Remarks

In 1938 the Nazi Germany annexed Austria as its territory, throughout Austrian lands circulated a plebiscite in which “foreign Germans” could express their opinion on voting against or in favor of the annexation [*Anschluss*]. This was also the case in Sankt Radegund, a small village located in Upper Austria, a northwestern state in which the main protagonist of Terrence Malick’s film lived with his family, his wife Franziska Schwaninger (Fani) and their two daughters. Thus, the film is based on the true story of Franz Jägerstätter, the one who voted ‘no’, portraying his daily life, his “silent” opposition to Nazism, the reactions of friends and neighbors, and his subsequent punishment. The film’s atmosphere starts from a calm and tranquil feeling, represented by the imagery of rural life, to a somewhat unvoiced tenseness shown in Jägerstätter search for answers on how to simply remain in his “original place”. An abrupt rupture to the daily life routine is only apparent in the Jägerstätter family, the rest of the residents seem to maintain their affairs without any disturbances, however, “reconquering” such tranquility requires the unquestioned allegiance to the Nazi party. The main character does not want, in any case, to betray himself, i.e. his beliefs, on what appears to be a respect towards one individual freedom. We could say it’s even more than that, the acceptance of the other ownness, the capacity to own oneself, without having to give up his ideas, body and soul to the State.

This theme, ownership of the “self”, is not only much studied in Philosophy in general – particularly on political philosophy and ethics – but one could say, it is also found along Heidegger’s work, both in *Sein und Zeit* (SZ) as well as in his later writings. This claim can be sustained, on the first part, if we recall the author’s description of *Dasein*’s (being-there) capacity for authenticity [*Eigentlichkeit*], this concept is primarily intrinsically connected with other two ideas, inauthenticity and the They [*das Man*], and secondly with the very notion of possibility [*Möglichkeit*]. These are not hierarchically organized concepts, in manner of importance nor primacy, they attest the idea of “simultaneity” in Heidegger’s philosophy, one is already inauthentic in “a” world, as being part of – but not properly **the** – They. As he states, “With *Dasein*’s

lostness in the “they”, that factual potentiality-for-Being which is closest to it [...] has already been decided upon.” (HEIDEGGER, 2008a, p. 312). At the same time, we already have the possibility of being authentic, that is to say, we “are” already (in a way) authentic, given the fact that we are also our own possibilities of being as expressed in the analytic of *Dasein*.² “The ‘essence’ [“Wesen”] of this entity [Dasein] lies in its “to be” [Zu-sein]. [...] *The ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its existence.*” (HEIDEGGER, 2008a, p. 67).

However, we have to attain ourselves to it (authenticity), “turning away” from, or rather, “going through” *das Man*, being in a proper way of being. As noted by Varga and Guignon,

The word we translate as ‘authenticity’ is actually a neologism invented by Heidegger, the word *Eigentlichkeit*, which comes from an ordinary term, *eigentlich*, meaning ‘really’ or ‘truly’, but is built on the stem *eigen*, meaning ‘own’ or ‘proper’. So the word might be more literally translated as ‘ownedness’, or ‘being owned’, or even ‘being one’s own’, implying the idea of owning up to and owning what one is and does. (VARGA, GUIGNON, 2020, p. 6-7).

Hence, the probable unconscious idea of Franz, can be seen as one of the notions – given its differences – present in Heidegger’s first major work (SZ). Nonetheless, instead of developing here the much already explored themes found in *Being and Time*, my aim is to set ourselves in the direction of the second part of the aforementioned claim, that this matter is also recurrent in his later works. Much will change in the philosopher’s thinking throughout his life, the turn (*Kehre*) will mark his abandonment of the transcendental horizon of *Dasein*³ and consequent embracement of the truth (or history) of Being. In any case, what interests us here, is his new manner of dealing with the subject of ownedness, within which it is directly related to other notions, such as uncovering, knowing and “staying” in our “place”, the location of mortals. These elements of Heideggerian thought are properly developed in the author’s texts of the 1950’s, and it is through them that our philosophical arguments begin. Rather than going straight down to the thinking “business”, we are going to take the initial approach of elucidating the most relevant (to us) aspects of the film.

² *Being and Time*, Part one, Division one. Macquarrie and Robinson’s edition, 2008.

³ *Contributions to Philosophy [Beitrage zur Philosophie]* (1936-38).



From Sankt Radegund To Thinking

In one of the first scenes in the film, Fani is remembering how life was “back then”, before the events that started in 1938, a recollection of images tells the recent story of the family, from the arrival of Franz on his motorcycle and her “best dress”, to the reaping of fields and children’s play. She talks about simplicity, happiness and love, those are not only her feelings but also what the viewer perceives, we get a sense of tranquility from the simple images of rural work, small gatherings and community lifestyle, all of this changes very rapidly once Franz is “asked” to undergo military training. After getting back from the first military draft, Franz just wants to continue living his regular life but that won’t be possible, giving the fact that almost every capable man is obliged to fight for the German army. However, Franz does not intend to willingly accept the considered ‘honor’ of fighting beside Nazis, therefore his way of life is threatened and the film enters into a sad and somewhat dark atmosphere. A person and a family that “knew” their place in the world are now forced to “unroot” themselves, to embrace a “higher purpose” that does not care for any relations they had with everyone and everything around them, this violent noise of war is contrasted by Franz silent opposition.

The main character is certainly not a revolutionary (in the historical sense), he is not someone looking for an organized form of resistance, nor is he someone that simply accepts the imposition of fascist rhetoric. Franz was someone that simply said no, someone that endured as long as he lived, the disdain from old friends and neighbors, the constant pressure of someone hurting his family, and the threats and actions of others towards their small food production. Fani, on the other hand, didn’t even have a saying on the matter (officially), however, Franz is constantly conflicted and both discuss the issue

many times, which makes her also actually present in her husband's opposition, standing together with Franz, either in person when they could see each other, or by exchanging letters with him. What both of them had in common, was their urgent defense to remain in the already dispositioned relation to things and world, they did not want to change their environment, in other words, something was already present in their lives, one could say they felt a sense of proper belonging. Those two aspects, (1) the already relation to things and (2) the sense of belonging, are worth developing now that we have established the ground (i.e., the film) for our questions.

Although both aspects are interconnected, the first one is only going to be briefly addressed so that we can understand Heidegger's philosophical perspective towards the notion of how "things" (and the world) present themselves and are always already disclosed to us in one way or another. As for the second one, we'll take our time in developing more explicitly the thinking surrounding it, as the question of ownedness and belonging to a "place" are the central problems in this work. Accordingly, in his 1949⁴ essay entitled, *The Question Concerning Technology*, the philosopher of the black forest takes on the task to question technology, more specifically, to uncover its essence. As a first result he arrives at the notion of Enframing (or Positionality) [*Gestell*], which as he articulates, "[...] means the gathering together of the setting-upon that sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the actual, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve." (HEIDEGGER, 2008b, p. 325). Even though this passage might seem a little complicated, it becomes easier to grasp once we understand the author's intentions here, he wants to discover the notion of how being (*Sein*) reveals itself to us. The question of how being **occurs** is in fact, **the** problem Heidegger is most interested in⁵, from his early works until the end of his life.

Being, understood as the how every and each being (entity) [*Seiendes*] "presences" (is), has a particular "mode" of presenting itself to us, that is, it is in its "nature" the constant movement of closing and disclosing itself. In other words, it does

⁴ Officially published in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 1954.

⁵ For reference on this, see Thomas Sheehan's Facticity and Ereignis in *Interpreting Heidegger* (2011), p. 43-44.

not matter (at least for now), the **how** we, as *Dasein*, “see” or deal with our world – our relations to things and others, but precisely the fact that there is always a **way** in which we will interact with our surroundings. This “way” is exactly given by the mode of revealing, the mode of being disclosing itself, following Heidegger, “Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens.” (HEIDEGGER, 2008b, p. 319). Whereas we do not need to pursue the arguments regarding the truth of being in order to get my point across, it is clear that technology, as a mode of revealing, discloses (or unconceals) in a certain way in which we “respond” to its disclosing, this mode (way) is, in fact, *Gestell*. This constitutes the “type” of unconcealment, but how do we “deal” with entities given to us in this manner? For Heidegger, ours is the age of technology, epoch of Enframing, thus, we cannot simply decide to “look” at an entity – nature for instance, as any different from other relations we already have with everything else, it’s more complicated.

Getting back to the definition of *Gestell*, entities appear to us in a mode of ordering, where we see them as challenges, something to overcome or dominate, beings that must be properly stacked, standing there, ready for us when we need it, as reserved (HEIDEGGER, 2008b). Even if this definition may be assumed as “positive”, from a modern human being’s standpoint, i.e., considering the “fictional” perspective of an “unlimited” supply for our species to continue thriving, Heidegger’s position is extremely critical. Not to technology itself, but to the way in which we deal with it, resulting in a calculative thinking that does not even consider the very being of other entities, including other *Dasein*. If we do not attain ourselves to the question of being, the results can be catastrophic, we may end up losing the very (positive) possibility shown by *Gestell* itself, namely the capacity for “change”. During the history of being – the movement of (un)concealment – things weren’t always presented as a matter of “conquering”, therefore, if being “changed” its disclosedness (at least once), we may have a chance to intervene in this capability, as the only ones who can interact with being itself.⁶

⁶ *Being and Time*, p. 32, §4.



The Place For Mortals

After the brief explanation about how our relation to entities and being “operates”, and the definition of the already present disposition of our time as *Gestell*, we can start our investigation on the second aspect enunciated before. In his texts from the 1950’s, Heidegger is committed to give ourselves (a) new perspective(s) on the “actual” interaction between *Dasein* and world, consequently, between being(s) and being(s). By accompanying Heidegger through his essay, *The Thing*, we see that the thinker criticizes the primacy of science on telling us “how things really are”, “Science always encounters only what *its* kind of representation has admitted beforehand as an object possible for science. [...] The thingness of the thing remains concealed, forgotten.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 168). Therefore, science presupposes the thing it analyzes as an object, thus, already in the realm of “subject-object”, which is one of the conceptions already dealt with back in *Being and Time*⁷. The thingness of the thing, i.e., its very “characteristic” that makes it a thing, has to appear, the thing in itself as it is already present, not in any kind of “theorizing”. In order to do this, we have to “understand” our connection to all that is “relatable” (can be in a relation to us). How can this “understanding” occur? For Heidegger, the answer starts from the notion of “nearness”.

To be near things, is not a relation of mathematical distances, when talking about the supposedly proximity of things – for instance the television’s capability of bringing images and sounds from all over the world – the author describes, “Yet the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance. [...] What is this uniformity in which everything is neither far nor near – is, as it were, without distance?” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 164). What could be seen as a shortness of distance between human and thing (e.g. a smartphone), is in fact the total erasure of distance, thus it cannot be nearer, nor farther, the “category” of distance does not apply. The path taken by Heidegger in the text, is a very common approach of his, he goes directly to what is already within distance (or near), to

⁷ *Dasein* as being-in-the-world is in a way *a priori* to any posterior accounts of reality.



understand how can nearness appear⁸. Accordingly, he starts his investigation from a thing, in this case, a jug. As we have already set the stage for his arguments, we are now going to show his idea that a proper relation to the thing is what opens up the possibilities to bring **it**, – and as a consequence, world – near. The appropriate way in dealing with a thing, is going to be related to four different aspects of the thing itself, rather, there are four “elements” that come together in the proper way of the thing.

By letting the jug show its proper character, instead of introducing scientific methods into the presencing of the jug, Heidegger tells us that its “void” (not the scientific one), “Holds by taking what is poured in. It holds by keeping and retaining what it took in. The void holds in a twofold manner: taking and keeping. [...] The twofold of the void rests on the outpouring. In the outpouring, the holding is authentically how it is.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 169). Thus, the outpouring is different from a simple pouring out (a liquid), it is the very characteristic of the jug that the “holding void” gathers as a giving, which in turn is exactly “where” the jug is, in its giving. As he continues, “We call the gathering of the twofold holding into the outpouring, [...] the poured gift. The jug’s jug-character consists in the poured gift of the pouring out. Even the empty jug retains its nature by virtue of the poured gift [...]” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 170). This notion of outpouring as a gift, thus poured gift as the proper way of the thing, is then realized as the same “kind” of gift present in nature, “In the spring the rock dwells, and in the rock dwells the dark slumber of the earth, which receives the rain and dew of the sky. In the water of the spring dwells the marriage of sky and earth. [...] In the gift of water [...] sky and earth dwell.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 170).

The dwelling of sky and earth is what constitutes their “getting-together” in one, that is, once it rains, the earth is as water, and water is as earth. This is also true in the case of the jug, in the gift of pouring out which pours water, again, sky (e.g. rain into

⁸ A very similar approach is found in the essay, *What is Metaphysics?* (1929), where instead of talking “about” Metaphysics, he introduces a metaphysical problem and then questions from within.



river) and earth (e.g. clay into jug) are together. These are the first two elements, which are now in the open, that constitutes the thing itself properly “responded” by us, the next two are directly interconnect as well as the four elements themselves. As Heidegger states, “The gift of the pouring out is drink for mortals. It quenches their thirst. It refreshes their leisure.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 170), therefore, mortals are now in direct relation to, not the jug as an object, but rather, with the thing itself, where earth, sky, and now mortals are in one. The same goes when the jug is “for” libation, not only earth, sky and mortals stand together, also the gods themselves, “The gift of outpouring as libation is the authentic gift.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 170). Finally, the four elements are together in one as the proper way in which the thing presences (is), as a fourfold. “In the gift of the outpouring, mortals and divinities each dwell in their different ways. Earth and sky dwell in the gift of the outpouring. In the gift of the outpouring earth and sky, divinities and mortals dwell *together all at once.*” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 171).

Starting from things, their proper way of “showing” themselves in connection with our capability of proper “seeing” them, we arrived at a much more complex and meaningful comprehension, an actual relation to the thing itself. In it, we can argue that we are now much **closer** to the thing and as a consequence, also closer to gods, earth, mortals and sky. “The thing things. In thinging, it stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals. Staying, the thing brings the four, in their remoteness, near to one another. This bringing-near is nearing. Nearing is the presencing of nearness.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 175). We have, then, arrived at a much richer conclusion than previously expected, satisfying both our understanding of things and its interaction with us, as well as our capacity of going beyond prevailing disclosedness, reaching much nearer to a new “dimensional opening” of our proper being. Within the fourfold, we seem to have this incredible capacity to “presence” (be) within other entities, in such a way that allows us to be as one, and yet different, each in its own way. In, *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger gives us a definition of this fourfold, “Earth is the serving bearer, [...] The sky is the vaulting path of the sun, [...] The divinities are the beckoning messengers of the godhead. [...] The mortals are the human beings. [...] The

simple oneness of the four we call *the fourfold*. Mortals are in the fourfold by *dwelling*.” (HEIDEGGER, 2008c, p. 351-352)

One should ask now, how are we capable of reaching out to that nearness? How can we, as entities, “know” accurately our place within the fourfold? How can we keep the thingness of the thing in its thingness instead of “ripping it apart” or “slandering” into a kind of standing-reserve? How do we... dwell? In Heidegger’s essay, *...Poetically Man Dwells...*, we see some very similar notions coming together to “handle” some not so explicit ideas proposed in *The Thing*, one in particular is the answer to all of the recently posed questions. Before getting to that final moment, we must address the path to the answer, which in our case is through one of the conclusions we got so far, the “dimensional opening”. Once within the fourfold, we can be “in contact” with this dimension, which in fact is our proper dimension, not in a sci-fi or esoteric way, but the proper dimension of our own. When questioning the poetic dwelling of humans, the author introduces a poem by Hölderlin⁹, where he gives us some directions to how are the relations “inside” the fourfold. “Hölderlin asks: “May, if life is sheer toil, a man Lift his eyes and say: so I too wish to be?” Only in the realm of sheer toil does man toil for “merits.” [...] But at the same time, in this realm, man is allowed to look up, out of it, through it, toward the divinities.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971b, p. 218). What the philosopher is pointing out here, is that on earth, where the human is, he/she can “look up” and find himself “below” the sky, this is specifically a kind of understanding on where we “belong”.

While we “interact” with the skies by glancing at it, we still remain on the ground, earth, where we inhabit, between one and the other. We can now notice that an authentic relation to the thing opens up the possibility for a proper dwelling of humans, which in turn constitutes this dimensional relationship to every other aspect of our lives. As Heidegger continues,

“This between is measured out for the dwelling of man. We now call the span thus meted out the **dimension**. This dimension does not arise from the fact that sky and earth are turned toward one another. Rather, their facing each

⁹ Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin (1770 –1843). German poet and philosopher.



other itself depends on the dimension. [...] According to Hölderlin's words, man spans the dimension by **measuring** himself against the heavenly¹⁰. Man does not undertake this spanning just now and then; rather, man is man at all only in such spanning. This is why he can indeed block this spanning, trim it, and disfigure it, but he can never evade it." (HEIDEGGER, 1971b, p. 218, emphasis added).

In this moment, it is not only indicated the notion of dimension but also the idea of "measure", this somewhat scientific vocabulary is not at all related to science. As we have seen before, a scientific approach does not have the capacity to deal with the properly "real" (or "actual") and we as humans in the age of *Gestell*, have a very difficult time in expropriating ourselves from the conceptions of science. These two new concepts, are of the same kind as nearness, which also appeared to be "physical" (from physics), the dimension is in fact not measurable in a mathematical sense, however it does deal with a certain notion of measure. Therefore, "The godhead is the "measure" with which man measures out his dwelling, his stay on the earth beneath the sky." (HEIDEGGER, 1971b, p. 219), our "measurement" is not done by calculation, but a much simpler conception, the godhead, which appeared before, and now constitutes our "looking up" and "knowing thy place". This notion of a capacity for taking a measure is what make us able to "see" where we belong within the fourfold, it constitutes the authentic dwelling of mortals, "Measure-taking gauges the between, which brings the two, heaven and earth, to one another." (HEIDEGGER, 1971b, p. 219). Still, there are two other elements present in the measure-taking, the mortal which is the one who **does** the measure and godhead (gods, divinities), which is the **metric** of this measurement.

Back To Sankt Radegund

As is usual after a long journey, we may want to rest in the remote village of Sankt Radegund once again, this time we must take into consideration the entire thinking path wandered until now. We can start by recalling the Jägerstätter's routine, in each activity: the cutting of hay; the tendering of animals; or even sauntering in the fields, each seemingly done in a non-destructive or exaggerated form. The family did not have intentions of dominance towards the fields or "local market", there was no apparent competition to justify a constant increase in production and/or profit. Thereby,

¹⁰ Refereeing to this passage of the poem: "Not unhappily measures himself Against the godhead. Is God unknown?".

one could claim that their relation to the things, animals and world (in general) were both of “inner” and “outer” awareness, implying a sense of belonging **within** the/a world, dismantling this supposed separation (internal-external) “artificially” presupposed by technological science. In fact, this is what Heidegger calls the very definition of world when referring to the fourfold, “None of the four insists on its own separate particularity. Rather, each is expropriated, within their mutual appropriation, into its own being. This expropriative appropriating is the mirror-play of the fourfold. [...] This appropriating mirror-play [...] we call world.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, 177).

The conception of “mirror-play”, can be easily understood as the effect of “seeing” ourselves in each of the fourfold elements, what in fact constitutes the oneness of it. Once we are expropriated as mortals, we let ourselves be appropriated by the other elements, they themselves are appropriate and expropriated as well. Consequently, this notion seems to arise from the film, in the figure of the Jägerstätter family, they do not need an explanation, a theorizing, in order to deal with world. As Heidegger states, “As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world’s nature, and falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 177). Thus, in worlding, the onefold presences as a fourfold which is constituted by the aforementioned components, moreover, the thing – as we saw in the figure of a jug¹¹ – has in its character the capacity to “hold it all together”, as affirmed by Heidegger, “Nearness essences insofar as the thing things. The thing things the world. Thinging is the nearing that holds the world as world in nearness.” (HEIDEGGER, 2012, p. 23). However, that is not the case in the epoch of technology, we are already “given” *Gestell*, as one has to remember was not the case in the pre-capitalist era of early 1930’s Austria.

Nonetheless, is the argument here just a reactionary move to “go back as things were before”? Is it enough to simply “live” as the Jägerstätters did? Although certainly we can appreciate a better relationship to the world in Malick’s film, it is not the case (for the late Heidegger) to simply “be”. The way in which we “are”, must be

¹¹ It doesn’t have to be what science considers an object: “But tree and pond, too, brook and hill, are things, each in its own way. [...] Only what cojoins itself out of world becomes a thing.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 180).

properly thought of, a dedication to the meditative thinking of our time can enable us the “transition to mortality”, “Rational living beings must first *become* mortals.” (HEIDEGGER, 1971a, p. 176). This implies that it may not be enough to “be a Jägerstätter”, granting they have a better way to approach life, they might still have to become mortals, yet we could argue that their way of living is indeed closer to worlding. However, if we were to take any other family at Sankt Radegund as an example, we could easily point out how many went on the path of destruction and technological errors. It is not enough to “be” in the right epoch (assuming it was a “better” epoch in the first place), our inhabiting must be a dwelling, “Mortals dwell in that they save the earth [...] To save properly means to set something free into its own essence. [...] Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it [...]”. (HEIDEGGER, 2008c, p. 352). Accordingly, to “save” earth within the fourfold (humans’ dwelling) is also to save us, sky and gods, to let things be free to its ownness, finally, to let human beings be their own (being), in a word, ownedness.

Final Remarks

Malick’s imagery contained in, *A Hidden Life*, especially the initial collection of landscapes and simplicity of routine country life, exacerbates precisely the very word “contain”, its capacity to enunciate the philosophical questions proposed in this essay is proof of how art (in this case, cinema) can reveal to us, the “truth”¹². Whether or not, Heidegger’s thinking “fits” Malick’s film, is not a question worthy of our time, the very notion of “fitting in” enunciates a certain type of recipient that is mathematically measured and understood by its “function”, that is, to contain. As we have seen throughout the text, the thing must be as its own being, as an opening to the fourfold, the same goes for the film, we do not need it to be theorized, explained, or dominated, we simply let it “open up” to the questioning. Therefore,

Malick's films may not offer us the metaphysical comfort of a safe and secure place in the cosmos, but they do make us aware of the importance of this desire. They are neither more nor less important than academic philosophy, yet in addressing how the world is made – how we, in dwelling, make and remake the world – they may have achieved some of the very things that

¹² Idea found in *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1977) [*Der Ursprung der Kunstwerkes* (1935-1936)].

Malick sought to accomplish so many years ago as an undergrad. (WOESSNER, 2011, p. 156).

Malick himself was a student of philosophy, an undergraduate of Harvard, where he pursued the trail of Heidegger's path, "[...] especially of the concept of horizon – a sense of the boundedness of the world in which one lives – the subject of Malick's undergraduate honors thesis." (STIVERS, 2012, p. 8). Although the connection is clearly relevant, the goal here is to show that a film is able to awaken in us the necessity for another "thinking", a thinking that takes into account the lessons of the past and moves forward, towards a much "simpler" and yet richer connection to the world. The results found in the (very) late Heidegger, barely surfaced in this work, may give us the directions on how to properly deal with the current problems we are facing today, from global warming and exponentially increasing inequality, to the very extinction of humans, at least as we know it, as ideas such as "uploading consciousness" and "conquering mars" appear to still "fancy" the minds of the not-yet-mortals (us). Following a Heideggerian way of thinking, the answers lie before us, hidden, in the concealment of being (*Sein*), we must be aware of the "things" (proper entities) surrounding us, better yet, not on "our surroundings" but within us, as we are one in the oneness of the fourfold.

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