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ANCHOR: What is an outline?

1. Although the question seems posed in a straight enough fashion we find it bouncing gently away – towards the content outlined, rather than the outline itself. The concept of outline evades firm description of what it is beyond the dictionary definition (itself only a summary, or...an outline). Instead, we find outline to be what it *isn't* i.e. what it 'outlines'. Like a shape without details the essence of outline remains at the limit: within and without. To look for outlines we out-line, yet we fall through the middle when we seek to outline it. Such a circular question needs form to give content, but this is really only found when things are run round...
2. On the basis the universal should emerge from the singular we look to find larger meanings in the specificity of the act. Given the impossibly circular task to 'outline the outline' each contribution also occurred in a roundabout way. Presented with an outline in the form of a question, each artist, writer, curator etc. provided content in response to: what is an outline? Like the child who draws lines around the things they simply know to be there (rather than just what it is they can see) the content outlined is itself only an outline. This meant the move towards outline is the movement around – the act of outlining.
3. A truly round question is one where the essence tells us the type to which it belongs. Accordingly, outline begins with: the line. Lines can be found, or they can be made - meaning some are created through a point that moves. The point's shift in position leaves a trace of its passage in the form of a line. Such traces are ambiguous – they point out, point towards, indicate or even outline a number of interpretations, all strange and unwieldy. Following the trail of an argument might reveal the place where it began (what on earth is an outline?), yet maybe the point of such tasks is to keep us falling behind...making sure we always need starting again.
4. Progression of the point towards a shape without details? In following the line towards outlining an answer we stumble across a contour laid in our path: a ripple in the taut fabric of (non) sense appears. The line that would, 'disrupt the flatness of the surface, subtly inflecting itself into space, disappearing behind its own horizon' sounds like a suitable candidate to lead us astray. Contour is the line's potential for creating space - carving larger units such circular questions seem well destined to need. In following the contour we aim past the description first gone around, seeking the parts that cannot be seen.
5. With the topology now altered the question shines in a way the summary definition would always disguise. Pliny's *Naturalis Historiae* claims contour to, 'fold back and so enclose the object as to give assurance of the parts behind, thus clearly suggesting even what it conceals'. This provides a shape to any Being flatly given, useful for

those wanting other ways round. The Greeks, whom Pliny outlined, had the word meta for 'out over beyond' or 'away over something'. So we seek the outline of outline as a meta-outline, which is far beyond the description first gone around.

6. Looking out over the contour of contour we see Heidegger, and the outline of Being he carefully provides. We are told the line around Being begins with the Greeks, meaning Being as physis, 'the emerging-abiding sway'. This oscillation is the mode of appearance of Being as unfolding: holding and persisting as appearance, physis is Being 'emerging'. The philosophical move has many more uses: it provides us an outline of things long since talked to, round or about (primeval god *Physis* seldom 'reappears'). So, while such meta-physical lines of enquiry might lose sensible queries, they also provide paths from 'out there' to back-here...
7. A misplaced understanding? Physis is the Greek Being which has been lost in the West – replaced over time by Being as *eidos* or 'idea'. Heidegger describes the move from one to the other on the basis of how things appear. Yet appearance can mean two different things...here. Considered in terms of a space, physis is a conquering: standing right here it creates a space for itself. Appearing as idea, Being merely steps forth from a space which is already prepared. What does the movement between them imply? One could say it simply gives us, 'an outline and measures the space that has been opened up'.
8. The understanding of Being? If we say the difference within Being is the play within language we mean Heidegger is contrasting the verb *aufreißen* (to rip open) with the noun *Aufriß* – outline, diagram, architectural projection or perspective view. The comprehension of Being as one interpretation stepping forth from another allows the sense of the question to almost appear. Yet this metaphysical mode lets too much light through, hiding the anchor to the real in which we belong. We return to seek outlines via the act of outlining, acquiring the meaning of our question here and not 'there'.
9. Is it going round making work? Specifically art work? Staying with Heidegger and the Being of beings we say a work of art constitutes a, 'happening of truth at work' in the work. Truth on this (circular) account means nature of the true, recollected in the Greek word *aletheia*, the unconcealedness of beings. The unconcealed truth stands in relation to how it is shown as concealed, meaning work as a 'rift-design' bringing the opposition of earth and world into their common...outline. Yet the artwork as work, 'sets itself back into itself' so our question loses more room, and must carry on with its circular way.
10. Enquiring around we get deflected again – the line slips outside itself to push us over the plane. Folding back the question of how to outline the outline a contour is formed, and with it all sense rolls away. Yet from over the horizon of what was seemingly given we return with a sketch: ideas which are found in the space of a book. In this circular fashion we arrive back at our notion – knowing the essence or truth to outline is found by...outlining. Works of art don't re-present outlines but outline themselves as works that *are* – pure presentification. Drawing a line around the Being which each simply knows to be there.