

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE END OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE LEAP OF THOUGHT

Epoch by epoch a particular existentiell understanding of the Being of what-is has ruled the day and seemingly the future as well by presenting itself as the final answer to what things are. Meanwhile, the existential condition for the possibility of the changing understanding of Being has receded further and further into the background. Heidegger thinks that, finally, in the present age, the self-withdrawal of Being will drive us to see its role. In my interpretation, this should mean both that the role of cultural practices recedes further and further from our grasp as Dasein--timeliness loses touch with Temporality-- and that the practices themselves cease having the unifying, revelatory role that they once had. The Time of Being is out of joint.

In this last chapter I trace out the impact of the Temporality of Being. To prove my point, I do not need to give a detailed account of the history of Being but rather only touch upon the "high" (and low) points of the two major epochs of Being which follow the Greeks.<sup>1</sup> Here the role of the cultural practices in disclosing the Being of what-is shows itself most clearly. Changes within each epoch are variations on the opening theme.

In the first and second sections of this chapter I examine the history of Being from the time it left Greece to its end in Nietzsche and the nihilism of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Section 7.3 examines technology as a way of disclosing Being which follows upon the heels of nihilism, and section 7.4 explores Heidegger's hope for a leap of thought that

would give Being a new beginning as radical as that which started metaphysics on its path. The last section offers some reflections on Heidegger's philosophy.

### 7.1 The Modern Epoch

The philosophy of Plato and Aristotle proves to be the end of Greek thought, but, true to the nature of Dasein's finitude, it is "an end that at the same time indirectly prepares the possibility of the modern age" (QCT 143/103). The paradigm of knowledge as a "knowing that" and our forgetfulness of our dependency on Being launches metaphysics into a history that reaches its denouement in contemporary nihilism and the technological domination of what-is.

We need not go into the details of this history up to the modern epoch, which is our subject in this section, but we should chart its course through major peaks and valleys. Each of the three epochs in the history of Being has a peak and then is leveled off by the trivialization of the Anyone.<sup>3</sup> According to Heidegger, the Roman world assimilated Greek philosophy and its terminology by transforming both according to their own understanding of Being. The rootlessness of the history of metaphysics begins with this "translation of Greek experience into a different way of thinking" since Roman philosophy no longer grew directly out of the Greek culture in which metaphysics arose (OWA 23/8). Roman philosophy marks the degeneration of the first epoch in the Temporal way that Being is given.

Heidegger places particular emphasis on two examples of such a translation of Greek thought into Roman experience. The Greek term `hupokeimenon' becomes the

Latin `subiectum,' and `theoria' becomes `contemplatio.' Heidegger argues that, while `hupokeimenon' meant the ground of the thing lying before us, directing the Greeks to Being, the Latin `subiectum' (later spelled `subjectum') points toward actuality in a simple, factual sense, directing the Romans and the whole history of metaphysics to what-is as present-at-hand. Claiming that `theoria' indicated the highest form of Dasein for the Greeks, "a reverent paying heed to the unconcealment of what presences," Heidegger claims that the Latin `contemplatio' suggests a "looking at that sunders and compartmentalizes," one which partitions things into separate individuals present-at-hand (QCT 164-66/48-50). The implications of these translations are not completely foreign to Greek thinking; otherwise, the transplanted philosophy would never have had enough internal nourishment to take hold in Roman soil at all. Instead, Plato's notion of "looking at" the idea and Aristotle's conviction about the "whatness" of Being prepare the path of thinking.

The Middle Ages span the Christian epoch of Being. In his discussions of the history of Being, Heidegger focuses on its peregrination from Greece to Italy and then across the map of Europe in the Middle Ages and modern era. Hence, he neglects the other crucial source of Western civilization and the medieval worldview: the Middle East where the Judeo-Christian tradition began. His few remarks on the subject suggest that he thinks this tradition's essential content finds its expression in the philosophy of Plato. For example, he says that the "Christian-ecclesiastical and theological interpretation of the world" takes its hierarchy of what-is from "the Jewish-Hellenistic world," a hierarchy whose "fundamental structure was established and given its ground through Plato at the beginning of Western metaphysics" (QCT 64/221).

The essential content of Christianity, viewed in this debatable way, is its metaphysical manifestation. Certainly theology bears the indelible mark of Plato, but the Christian understanding of Being is not identical with Plato's either in its philosophical expression or its way of dealing with things. Heidegger tacitly recognizes this, however, by presenting the Middle Ages as a distinct epoch in the history of Being. What-is is grounded not in the impersonal realm of Platonic ideas but in a creator God. Cultural practices reveal what-is not as phusis--things coming forth and showing themselves in the clearing--but as God's creation. The work of art that manifests this understanding of Being is not the temple gathering earth and sky, mortals and gods, but the cathedral showing that God watches over every facet of earthly life and directing us to the world beyond.

Plato's metaphysics and medieval Christianity share the view that a "suprasensible" realm gives order and significance to this world, but the Christians view this realm as the divine mind of the Creator. In the Middle Ages what-is is arranged in a hierarchy and assigned a specific rank not by phusis but by God. Truth is still correspondence, rather than unconcealedness, but this correspondence is not between ideas in our mind and objects "out there" but between these objects and the rational, pre-conceived plan in God's mind. It is this pattern that sets up the possibilities for understanding what-is and dealing with it accordingly. Augustine recognized that we are a question for ourselves, as Heidegger thought, but he has faith that God supplies the answer which determines both our Being and that of everything else which is. The question of Being was raised anew at the beginning of the Christian epoch, but it was

promptly answered. At the other end of the epoch, this answer was leveled and trivialized in scholasticism.

At the beginning of the modern epoch, our relationship to God changes, but this notion of a rationally pre-conceived plan is taken over and transformed--"repeated"--by the next stage in the history of Being. Now human reason "makes itself predominate and even sets itself up as absolute" (IM 193/147). Descartes's philosophy marks "the decisive beginning of the foundation of metaphysics in the modern age," and "his thought remains the ground for all subsequent thought" (N4 101/147).

With Descartes's search for a "fundamentum absolutum inconcussum"--an absolutely unshakable foundation, philosophy begins an inward turn that seals its fate. Freeing ourselves from our obligations as God's creature, we look to ourselves as the ground for our beliefs. The ideal of certainty about our salvation, which was based on knowledge of a being other than ourselves, becomes the ideal of certainty about ourselves and our own explicit knowledge. In fact, the medieval certainty of salvation was not based on explicit knowledge at all but rather on the security of the religious rituals and routines of daily life in the Middle Ages, many of which took place in the shadow of the cathedral.

Heidegger comments that the claim to an absolutely unshakable foundation for thinking originates in that emancipation of man in which he frees himself from obligation to Christian revelational truth and Church doctrine to a legislating for himself that takes its stand upon itself." We, not God, are responsible for our knowledge, and we "take a stand upon" it by evaluating and criticizing it. Dasein's transcendence as a "standing toward" Being undergoes a radical change. Now "self-liberating man himself posits what

is obligatory," and, because of this, what is obligatory "can henceforth be variously defined" (QCT 148/107).

The notion of self-legislated obligation sets in motion the series of successive proposals and counterproposals in the history of metaphysics from Descartes to Nietzsche. "The consciously posited binding appears in many guises and disguises." Looking at this history from the viewpoint of the imposed obligation, Heidegger lists the forms that the binding has taken: human reason and its law in the Enlightenment, the real which is ordered by human reason in Positivism, social progress, nationalism, and the victory of the proletariat (N4 99/145). Creativity, once the mark of God, becomes our prerogative and "finally passes over into business enterprise" (QCT 64/220). Eventually we lose any sense of obligation, and nihilism comes to reign. We will examine this concluding stage in more detail in the next section.

What makes the modern era so distinctive? Why should these various notions of human-centered obligation follow in the wake of Descartes's demand for rational self-certainty and eventually trail off into the nihilism which puts an end to philosophy after its 2500 year history? Heidegger suggests we would be "thinking crassly," or much too simplistically, if we concluded that the crucial development happens when dominion over what-is passes from God to man and that its final stage arrives when Nietzsche announces that "God is dead" and puts man in the place of God. Rather Heidegger thinks the place of God as the creator and preserver of what-is is vacated at the end of the Middle Ages and remains empty. Just as the Greek understanding of Being as phusis was replaced by Roman actuality, now "another metaphysical place can loom on the horizon"

as a very different sort of grounding of what-is (QCT 99f./255). This is the place of the subject.

A new epoch within metaphysics arises with Descartes's dictum "I think, therefore I am" and his subsequent grounding of the security of both God and what-is on our thoughts about them. "All consciousness of things and what-is as a whole is referred back to the self-consciousness of the human subject as the unshakable ground of all certainty . . . . The reality of the real is representedness through and for the subject." Perhaps taking his clue from the French Revolution, Kant sees human thought as constructing its reality. Nietzsche's doctrine simply carries out Descartes' insight in the most radical way (N4 86/129). The subject becomes the one who not only represents its reality but makes the real in general what it is as a product of the will to power. For Nietzsche, unlike for Descartes and Kant, reality is no given text which we interpret or no way things are in themselves, but rather only an interpretation of the "motley whirl of the senses" which increases our power.<sup>4</sup>

The essence of human being changes when we become "subject"; what we take ourselves to be changes. For Heidegger, the change is illustrated in a fundamental change in philosophical vocabulary. When the language of Being builds a new house, new words come to be spoken. Just as the change from theoria to contemplatio marked the transformation from the Greek to the Roman and subsequent medieval period, a dramatic change in the Latin terms `subjectum' and `objectum' marked the transition from the medieval to the modern period.

`Subjectum,' as noted above, had been the Roman word for the Greek `hupokeimenon,' indicating literally that which is thrown `sub' or `under' a thing. This

"substance" is the enduring actuality of a thing which "supports" its changing properties. Hence, the term `subjectum' could apply to any thing, that is, to animals and rocks as well as individual humans. On the other hand, the term `objectum' was first used to talk about the images we "throw against" our mind when we think of a unicorn, God, a scene from childhood, etc. Hence, Descartes, following the older usage, could speak of the "objective reality" of an idea and mean only its reality as a "picture" of something "outside" of it.

But, starting with Descartes, the terms begin to undergo a fundamental reversal of significance. `Subject' becomes a term applicable only to human beings and "no longer serves as a name and concept for animals, plants, and minerals" (N4 119/168). `Subjects' are those things which have the ability to mentally represent other things, and `objects' now are those things "outside" of us. Eventually ideas no longer have intrinsic "objective reality" but instead are only our subjective representations. They are "objective" only if there is an "object" outside of us which they represent to us and to which they correspond. Correlatively, objects take on reality for us in so far as they are known.

The shift in the significance of these words indicates the shift in the grounding of what-is. "What-is as a whole is now taken in such a way that it is in being and only in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and set forth. . . . The Being of what-is is sought and found in the representedness of the latter" (QCT 129f./89f.). Cartesian certainty is achieved precisely by the two-fold duplication of reflective consciousness: we are present to the object in re-presenting it, which is the way it presents itself to us. Subject and object are known in the representation.

The certainty of the modern epoch is not the certainty manifest in the know-how that deals with everyday things or in religious devotion. It is self-conscious knowledge.

The subject is the "ego cogito," the "I think," not the "I do" of the early Greeks or the "I obey" of the medieval Christians. The knowledge of the latter two sorts of "I's" might have been judged by what they made or did. In the modern epoch reflective knowledge becomes the only knowledge entitled to the name. All else is habit or faith. Method becomes all important in philosophy because the way we evaluate the validity of our knowledge is by validating the way we arrived at it. The impulse behind Plato's philosophy finally has its full effect.

The exclusive attention on our conscious knowledge both responds to and sets up a new way of dealing with objects. It is no coincidence that modern science emerges at the same time as the metaphysical horizon of subjectivity. Heidegger argues that, once our reason sets itself up as the judge of what-is, "the Being of what-is inevitably becomes thinkable in terms of pure mathematical thought." Mathematical thought in general prepares what-is to be eventually "mastered by mathematically structured technology which is something essentially different than every other hitherto known use of tools" (IM 193f./147f.). Heidegger argues that technology is not just the set of novel techniques for accomplishing particular purposes but rather a way of revealing what-is. As such, it is the ground and motive force for modern, numerically-oriented science, not a by-product of it. This is true not just because scientists use items of technology in their investigations but because this way of dealing with things makes possible modern science as such.

Mathematics itself, or even the importance given it, is, of course, not a new development. Plato supposedly required knowledge of mathematics as the ticket into the gate of the Academy. Heidegger argues that mathematics is not just the science of numbers but from the beginning of metaphysics has played a crucial role as the realm of

what we can know "in advance" (WIT 73/73). This could mean the "logos" of the cultural clearing, the "know how" of skills, the ideas letting us know beauty, goodness, etc., or the certainty of salvation. But what is new in the modern epoch is that the "in advance" comes to refer to explicit conscious knowledge of objects in advance of actual experience. Heidegger comments: "Only where thinking thinks itself is it absolutely mathematical, that is, a taking cognizance of that which we already have" (WIT 104/104). Self-conscious reflection about the principles that govern our universe, in particular the things present-at-hand that appear to such conscious reflection, is the hallmark of science and the key to prediction. For example, Newton's three laws are a product of "thought thinking itself," not just consciousness of sense experience, and yet they provide a means of prediction that no experience could.

Heidegger argues that modern natural science turns nature into an object "by way of a mathematical projection." He credits Galileo with taking the primary step in this direction (BPP 321/457) and Newton with achieving the "first systematic and creative culmination of modern thought" (WIT 76/77). Both thinkers provided us with explicit formulations of mathematical laws which predicted in advance the behavior of things within the world regarded as present-at-hand objects.

Heidegger remarks that, even when ancient and medieval science used numbers, measurement, observation, and instruments, it did so in a very different way than modern science does.

For in all this, that which is decisive about the experiment is missing. Experiment begins with the laying down of the law as a basis. To set up an experiment means to represent

or consciously conceive the conditions under which a specific series of motions can be made susceptible of being followed in its necessary progression, that is, of being controlled in advance by calculation (QCT 121/81).

To be able to predict what will happen is to be able to control what will happen and take it over in our self-legislated obligation. Roger Bacon and other medieval scientists observed nature but they did not try to tie it to their own leading-strings, as Kant would have had them do.<sup>5</sup>

The modern age does not, however, spring up sui generis, completely unconnected to its past. Heidegger suggests that Galileo, like the philosophers, "repeats" the Greek understanding of Being. He takes over their reflective understanding of what-is through the concepts of motion, space, time, and matter but does not merely re-use them (BPP 321/457). He "appropriates anew" by making a "counterclaim" against the sedimented shell of the bygone world.<sup>6</sup> Aristotle and Galileo were both concerned about "motion" but understood it in very different ways. For example, according to the Greek notion of proportion, one could only compare quantities of things of the same nature, such as the proportion of the distances covered by two objects in uniform motion for the same period of time or the proportion of two times when the distances covered are the same. Thus the notion of velocity was not a popular concept amongst the Greek scientists of motion since it is the proportion of distance to time and requires comparing measurements of two unlike things.<sup>7</sup>

The Greek tendency to compare only like to like suggests that understanding the Being of what-is as phusis keeps things distinct according to their type or common

nature, for example, proportioning distance to distance, time to time. We saw this view articulated philosophically by Plato and Aristotle. But with Descartes and Galileo, everything becomes comparable because everything becomes reducible to the common denominator of number. Now, if Heidegger is right, we ought to find that what-is has already begun to show up in the cultural practices as reducible to a common denominator of number. Changes in the economy such as the increasing use of money, the vanishing of the barter system, etc., suggest that this is indeed the case.

The development of a money-based economy is especially interesting since the Greeks are sometimes credited with the invention of currency or at least with its development and institutionalization. Here, too, one might say that the modern world "repeats" the ancient, drawing again on its possibilities but transforming them in an important way. Money had fallen out of use in the Dark Ages, but as medieval feudalism broke down, money came to play a more and more prominent role. One no longer just traded for the type of item that one wanted, for example, trading two surplus pigs for a cow. Goods were translated into money and then the money was re-translated into goods.<sup>8</sup> Eventually no type of usable item (and perhaps no personal character or behavior) remained sacrosanct to the domination of number in the form of money. Unlike Marx, however, for Heidegger what is important is not the nature of the medium of exchange or the role it comes to play, but rather the calculable commonality of what-is that it represents.

## 7.2 Nietzsche and The End of Philosophy

Heidegger comments:

With Nietzsche's metaphysics, philosophy is completed.

That means: it has gone through the sphere of prefigured possibilities. Completed metaphysics, which is the ground for the planetary manner of thinking, gives the scaffolding for an order of the earth that will supposedly endure for a long time. The order no longer needs philosophy because philosophy is already its foundation. But with the end of philosophy, thinking is not also at its end but in transition to another beginning (EP 95f./79).

In the contemporary world, Heidegger goes on to say, philosophy devolved into anthropology and metaphysics became parceled out into the particular sciences of physics, biology, and psychology. Philosophy "passes away" in metaphysics (EP 99/82f.).<sup>9</sup> The fate of philosophy is not bemoaned. Heidegger regards the development of philosophy into the sciences as its legitimate completion (TB 58/64). Furthermore, the understanding of Being underlying the sciences, like the sciences themselves, can be transplanted to other cultures. Hence, the Western understanding of Being spreads itself throughout the earth and becomes a "planetary manner of thinking." But an important task for thinking looms large in the background of this frenetic conquest of the world.

There are a number of issues that need to be examined before we can understand Heidegger's points or his recommendation for the future. We will begin by looking at his claim that metaphysics is at an end because it has run out of "prefigured possibilities." Philosophy confronts its end--its death--outside the "sphere" of these "prefigured

possibilities." This claim complements Heidegger's notion that the possibilities of metaphysics are laid out by Greek thought. He argues that Plato's thinking remains decisive for the history of metaphysics even though that thought has undergone fundamental transformations in its "repetition" by later philosophers. Thus, "metaphysics is Platonism." Nietzsche himself characterizes his philosophy as a "reversed Platonism," and Heidegger argues that philosophy enters its last stage or "outermost possibility" with this "reversal" or "turn around," which was already "in play" in the thought of Marx (TB 57/63).<sup>10</sup> However, a reversed Platonism is still Platonism.

It would be hard to see how the "possibilities" of metaphysics can "run out" if we think of them simply as the various metaphysical systems that have been proposed in the last 2500 years. Couldn't philosophers go on inventing new theories? However, besides the fact that Heidegger thinks that such theories are grounded in concrete ways of looking at things, his notion of these possibilities is much more fundamental.<sup>11</sup> Different metaphysical systems can realize the same possibility, which is one reason why Heidegger's claim that Nietzsche was the last metaphysician is not refuted by the philosophies of Husserl, Whitehead, et al., in the twentieth century. He would regard their metaphysical systems as re-actualizing possibilities already instantiated by, say, the systems of Descartes and Leibniz. He thinks that there are no new fundamental possibilities for metaphysics after Nietzsche "reversed" it. The possibilities of metaphysics are not individual theories but alternative views of the ultimate grounding of the Being of what-is. And, we must remember, a metaphysical theory is rooted in the background practices of a culture so that these fundamental possibilities reflect

fundamentally different ways of dealing with things and understanding ourselves and therefore cannot be just invented ad hoc.

Heidegger refers to the "turning around" of metaphysics, but, in this case, we might more appropriately imagine the reversal as a "turning outside in."<sup>12</sup> Heidegger suggests an either/or: either we take a disclosure of what-is as a measure for our own being, as did the ancient Greeks and medieval Christians, or we take our understanding of ourselves as the measure for everything else that is, as we have done in the modern epoch (N4 151/204). In these possibilities of metaphysics, a different region of what-is, a different type of being, is the model for what-is in general (N2 197/462). In neither case is the role of Being in determining the nature of what-is acknowledged. Indeed Heidegger thinks that "Being itself necessarily remains unthought in metaphysics" and that its neglect as "nothing" that matters makes the history of metaphysics the history of nihilism (N4 211/350), as we shall see more clearly in this section.

Metaphysics actually divides into three basic possibilities matching the three major epochs of the history of Being. The Greeks thought that the Being of what-is was revealed by a source outside of us such as phusis, logos, or the Idea of the Good. The modern epoch looks inward to us as the legislator of the Being of what-is. The epoch Middle Ages represents a crossbred transition with one foot in the past and one in the future. In that epoch, the Being of what-is was posited by something outside of us, but yet this mode of what-is, God, was similar us, that is, a person, a thinker, a creator.

The particular metaphysical systems proposed by thinkers in ancient Greece and medieval Christendom may have differed in many respects, but, in contrast to the modern epoch, "never does the Being of what-is consist here in the fact that it is placed in the

realm of man's knowing and of his having disposal, and that it is in being only in this way" (QCT 130/90). Not only is this orientation toward knowledge, Heidegger thinks that it is the inevitable outcome of originally understanding ourselves in terms of the equipment we use. Plato prepares the way for what comes when he takes Being as the beingness of what-is and understands this as the eidos, aspect or view, by which we know things as what they are (QCT 130/90). "Knowing that" becomes the source of the criterion by which we attribute Being to what-is. We were pointed on the way down this path when we understood ourselves in terms of the "what" character of our equipment yet "forgot" the actual practice of using it.

In his essay "The Word of Nietzsche," Heidegger explains this change in philosophy by examining the changing relationship between the "suprasensible" and "sensible" world. Though this Nietzschean way of putting the point may be rather misleading, in the modern epoch the terms have come to label the elements of one of the distinctions which Heidegger finds to be basic to metaphysics: the distinction between the Being of what-is and what-is. Living in the Anyone, we touch, see, hear, taste, and smell particular things with their particular sensible characteristics, but it takes a special kind of apprehension to understand the Being of what-is as a whole. This distinction between the aestheton and the noeton, between perceiving objects and apprehending the Being of what-is, which founds metaphysics in Parmenides is obliterated in Nietzsche (QCT 54/209). There is no longer anything there--no immutable "what"--to apprehend over and above what we sense. What you see is what you get. As a result the distinction between existence and essence, between that a thing is and what it is, disappears (EP 70/476).

Nietzsche's dictum "God is dead" expresses the insight that, in the modern world, "the suprasensible world is without effective power. It bestows no life." Without this gift of life, metaphysics is at an end. The Being of what-is no longer shows up as demanding our attention and response. If the suprasensible world loses its obligatory and vitalizing power, then "nothing more remains to which man can cling and by which he can orient himself." Twenty-five hundred years after Parmenides we no longer find it necessary to think and say what-is. In Nietzsche's image we have unchained ourselves from the sun--Plato's sun--and are straying through an infinite nothing (QCT 61/217). The suprasensible or metaphysical realm no longer casts an "authoritative light. The whole field of vision has been wiped away. The whole of what-is as such, the sea, has been drunk by man" (QCT 107/261). This authoritative light invited humans to look at what-is as a whole, and the vision of what-is and our attempt to capture it adequately set the path for Western culture's history for 2500 years.

But why cannot metaphysics continue in light of the beam cast by us, no longer the sun shining upon us but rather a miner's helmet providing our own source of light directed outward? Why does metaphysics start down the path to its end when we look to ourselves for the binding power? If we are to understand why Heidegger thinks that philosophy reaches an impasse and cannot turn back to the convictions of its past, his explanation of Nietzsche's impact on philosophy is crucial. Nietzsche's "word" tells philosophy that it cannot go home again. And, we must remember, Nietzsche does not create nihilism but rather only has insight into what has been happening in the culture in the preceding century. Ultimately, it is a change in our understanding of Being, in how we deal with things, each other, and ourselves, that seals the fate of philosophy.

Here is the fundamental question along with Heidegger's answer: "What is happening to Being in the age of the dominion, now beginning, of the unconditional will to power? Being has been transformed into a value" (QCT 102/258). According to Nietzsche, how things show themselves to us and how we deal with them are both determined by our will to power. Even the simple properties we attribute to objects, such as the desert people's categorization of colors or the Eskimo's distinction of seven (or two dozen) kinds of snow, are a result of the will to power striving to gain control over the world and, in doing so, to further itself. What something is and even that something is, that is, its essence and its existence, depend on the needs of the will to power. As Heidegger insists, Plato prepared the way for this view by regarding Being as idea and the highest idea as agathon or, as Heidegger has it, "what makes suitable" or "what befits" what-is and makes it possible (N4 165/221).

Heidegger describes the modern conception of value as "the objectification of needs as goals." "Being" is regarded as one such value, and truth is another. Believing that something is or that it is in a certain way is a means to power. This view has its place in an understanding which conceives of the world and our understanding of what-is as a "picture" that we represent to ourselves. For Nietzsche we only become conscious of things when such representation has "utility" for the will to power.<sup>13</sup>

Since for Heidegger Being and truth are so closely conjoined, looking at his comments on Nietzsche's conception of the latter helps here. Heidegger argues that for Nietzsche truth means neither the unconcealment of what-is, nor the correspondence between idea and thing, nor even the certainty of mental representation. Rather "truth is a condition posited in the essence of the will to power, namely the condition of the

preservation of power. Truth is, as this condition, a value" (QCT 84/240). There is no such thing as "the truth" in our ordinary sense; no ultimate way things are. Nothing is "there" to correspond to our ideas, and therefore nothing for our light to illuminate. There are only interpretations of reality, but "nothing" is being interpreted, no ultimate text. In Heidegger's way of looking at Nietzsche's philosophy, we kill God because we "do away with that-which-is in the sense that it is in itself" (QCT 107/262).<sup>14</sup> The notion of truth is simply a prejudice, an error we cannot live without.<sup>15</sup> Truth now becomes a means of controlling what-is in order to use it according to our needs. In Nietzsche's version, truth "makes secure the standing reserve" (QCT 85/240); it secures what-is as stuff to be molded to our own purposes. This sort of truth is a necessary condition of the will to power in turn securing and maintaining itself (QCT 102f./258).

As an authentic thinker, Nietzsche brings this understanding of Being into focus, showing the culture the path it has already gone down in the Industrial Revolution and the political and social changes that herald the modern world. Nietzsche's verdict that "God is dead" is a recognition of the lack of force of the suprasensible world, that is, of Ideas, God, Reason, or any ideal or goal makes the world a whole or binds us beyond the momentary attempt to secure the will to power. But, even more important for the fate of philosophy, Nietzsche sees the belief in any binding obligation as simply a prejudice. Our belief in the rule of Ideas, God, Reason, etc., is simply a tool of the will to power. This self-deception increases our power under certain circumstances, but we will be disabused of our illusion when the will to power finds it too limiting. Thus, "The suprasensible is transformed into an unstable product of the sensory" (QCT 53f./209). No longer does the suprasensible determine the character of what we experience but just the opposite. This is

the essence of Nietzsche's reversal of Platonism and, with it, the whole metaphysical tradition.

Now it is easier to see why Heidegger thinks that with Marx and Nietzsche philosophy in the modern epoch devolves into anthropology and the particular sciences of physics, biology, and psychology. "Philosophy" is simply the promulgation or examination of people's quaint beliefs and customs, and hence it becomes viewed as anthropology. We happen to have certain beliefs and go to great lengths to rationalize them in the name of justification.<sup>16</sup> Philosophy of nature becomes physics and biology, and epistemology becomes psychology. But both have their ultimate grounding in metaphysics as anthropology. Because we have drunk up the "sea" of what-is, all the other investigations of what-is, that is, of natural, living, and human beings, are just elaborations of our own "constructs."<sup>17</sup>

An excellent example of this view can be found in a comment by W. V. Quine on the proper role of epistemology: "Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence a natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz. a physical human subject. This subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input--certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies, for instance--and in the fullness of time the subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history."<sup>18</sup> In this view, every kind of science only systematizes these "inputs" and "outputs," and hence everything-which-is is a human "construct."

However, metaphysics does not simply vanish, and it does not escape its earlier foundation in the unconcealment of Being. The sciences are founded on a metaphysical

view of Being, and metaphysics is still "practiced" in philosophy proper. Analytic philosophy's attempt to develop a metalanguage is, Heidegger says, a metaphysical pursuit (OWL 58/160). He regards existentialism and symbolic logic as the "most effective exponents" of the "unchecked power of modern thinking" (EGT 81f./226), perhaps because with them what one chooses or what one thinks does not matter as long as it "works" according to consciously constructed rules. But philosophy no longer leads the way in focusing a unitary, holistic understanding of Being; this role seems to have passed to science and technology since we look to them to tell us what things are and how to relate to them. The media have become the oracle of this scientific, technological view of things.

Heidegger argues that, when Being is degraded into a mere value posited by the will to power, it is "despoiled of the dignity of its essence." Indeed this essence becomes "sealed off" from us and we from the revelation of the Being of what-is (QCT 103/258). We turn away from Being and cease "standing toward" it in our very Being because we have convinced ourselves that there is "nothing" there to see--nothing "there" at all. Thinking in terms of values is a "radical killing" because it "not only strikes down what-is as such in its being in itself, but it does away utterly with Being" (QCT 108/263). With this, the last stage of philosophy has arrived. Heidegger argues that since "through Nietzsche metaphysics has in a certain sense divested itself of its own essential possibility, other possibilities can no longer appear" (QCT 53/209). Our essential possibility was to be open to a disclosure of Being, but, when we ourselves turn away, the possibilities of Being can no longer show themselves.

Both Heidegger and Nietzsche see the history of philosophy as the history of nihilism, but for Nietzsche this is a process of the highest values "devaluing" themselves. The value of truth posited in the supposedly suprasensible realm eventually leads us to see that this realm is itself a fiction created by the sensory realm. But then this sensory world, long given value only in relation to the suprasensible world's goals of salvation, goodness, and beauty, now is left without any intrinsic transcendentally-grounded value and hence appears, in comparison, to be valueless. This, according to Nietzsche, is the essence of nihilism. He, on the other hand, thinks that the sensory realm has value only insofar as it maintains and furthers the will to power. We can overcome nihilism by positing value in the world through our will to power. Nietzsche may think his philosophy transcends nihilism, but Heidegger thinks that viewing what-is in terms of posited values is only a final form of nihilism.<sup>19</sup>

Heidegger describes the history of metaphysics as a process of Nothing "befalling Being and its truth," and, for him, this is the history of nihilism. Nihilism does not just suddenly come into Being in the nineteenth century, and this is not only because the cultural practices were nihilistic even before Nietzsche recognized them as such. For Heidegger "metaphysics as the history of the truth of what-is as such is, in its essence, nihilism" (QCT 109/264).

This way of looking at the history of philosophy sees it as a continuous stream but one carried further and further away from its origins. Parmenides and Plato may seem light years away from Nietzsche, but we can traverse the distance if we keep in mind the crucial conduit: the father of modern philosophy, Descartes. Like Parmenides, Descartes may seem to exhort us to "both say and think what-is." Yet how different Parmenides'

advice really is.<sup>20</sup> For Parmenides, the apprehending of what-is "belongs to Being because it is demanded and determined by Being" (QCT 130f./90). In Heidegger's view we receive what-is as a gift from Being that welcomes us in our stay. The gift is given to our hands, our bodies, our senses, as much as to our thought. It shows itself in how we depend on and deal with things in our world. But when what-is shows itself to Plato as eidos, as outward appearance and type to be known, the stage is set for the world to become a picture. It becomes something to be represented, not a home to be lived in. Viewing the world as idea breaks our connection with the background practices that let us deal with things and leaves those practices looking arbitrary and irrational. What counts, and what makes us human, is what can be said, represented, made into a rule, not the inexpressible, the lived, the performed.

Heidegger argues that Nietzsche stands under the sway of Descartes's metaphysics "in a way that no other modern thinker does" (N4 103/149). There are obvious differences, of course. For Descartes consciousness is conscious of a reality beyond itself which it must try to understand. For Nietzsche, "making conscious is a necessary instrument of the willing that wills from out of the will to power," but no Being remains to be gauged by this consciousness. By the end of the nineteenth century, we objectify things not just by being conscious of them, as in the Cartesian subject/object dichotomy, but by taking them into our plans, determining what they are and how they will be used. We no longer "exist" our historical situation but rather are conscious of an ideal of progress and social order that we should impose on it and ceaselessly analyze our situation in order to change it (QCT 101/257). But for both Descartes and Nietzsche, however, the gauge of reality is within ourselves. The doom of the modern epoch,

however, is sealed not so much by our usurpation of the binding power for ourselves as by our identification of ourselves with our subjectivity which, for Heidegger, is only the tip of the iceberg of Dasein. Once we make the decision for Being a matter of consciously picking between alternatives, we have no grounds for adopting one stance rather than another and end up seemingly trapped in our own prejudices.

Here I have pictured Nietzsche as the last gasp of traditional metaphysics, but Heidegger's account of his philosophy and the relation of his own philosophy to Nietzsche's is much more subtle and ambiguous than I have so far suggested. Like the era of technology which it "foreruns," Nietzsche's philosophy is "Janus-headed." It not only points back to the course that the history of metaphysics has traversed, it points forward to Heidegger's own existential account of that metaphysics. Heidegger sometimes pictures Nietzsche's notion of the eternal return of the same in terms that are reminiscent of his own account of the moment of insight, the moment in which a creative historical decision--a crisis--repeats the past and projects a new future (N2 154/415). For Heidegger, the "same" which repeats itself is the "same" matter for thought which provoked the pre-Socratics. Heidegger interprets Nietzsche's call for a "reevaluation of all values" as a demand for a reevaluation of what-is as a whole required by "the watershed of an epoch become weightless and searching for a new center of gravity. It is the authentic crisis" (N2 159/421). In this view the doctrine of the eternal return of the same is both the fulfillment of nihilism and the crisis which will impel us beyond the metaphysics of presence. Whether we can find the new center of gravity for which Heidegger calls remains an open question.

### 7.3 The Danger of Technology

Heidegger thinks that one of the pernicious aspects of the concluding stage of metaphysics is that philosophy becomes cut off from its task. If our apprehension of Being is regarded as error and prejudice, then it is no longer cultivated or pursued. Rather it is avoided, scorned, dismissed as arbitrary and misguided. Such indeed is the state of metaphysics in the contemporary world. Yet Heidegger does not think that the history of Being is necessarily at an end, only one manifestation of it: metaphysics or Being revealed as presence. This Appropriation of Being and Time has gone through its "prefigured possibilities," but the end of the metaphysics of presence is the "beginning of a serious concern with the `Appropriation': `God is dead'" (N4 5/34). This is true, however, only in so far as thinking still exists at all, and Heidegger fears that Dasein has quit thinking.

We stand between the last epoch of the metaphysics of presence and Heidegger's hoped for but not assured transformation of Being in the Appropriation. This stage is called the "enframing" (TB 53/56f.).<sup>21</sup> Enframing is a challenging forth which challenges what-is to produce, to be present and available. The understanding of what-is as will to power develops into an understanding of it as "standing reserve," undifferentiated "stuff" that is on hand for our purposes.<sup>22</sup> This is the way of revealing what-is of technology.

Enframing as the epoch of technology is also "Janus-headed": "It could be understood as a continuation of the will to power, thus as an extreme formation of Being. However, at the same time it is the first form of the Appropriation itself" (TB 53/57). Enframing is characterized by the self-legislated positing of the Being of what-is which

marks the extreme stage of metaphysics as the will to power. But, on the other hand, the thrust of this apprehension of Being is to deny that there is any such thing as the Being of what-is as a whole, and hence with it we move beyond metaphysics and toward the Appropriation.

The term 'technology' is ordinarily used to refer to the collection of devices and machines which we put to use to accomplish our purposes, but Heidegger is viewing technology as the background of cultural practices which makes such machines possible. Enframing is the "essence" of technology in the sense that it is the name for technology as a way of revealing what-is (QCT 29/33). Technology reveals nature "as the chief storehouse of the standing energy reserve" (QCT 21/25). In Heidegger's image, nature becomes "a gigantic gasoline station" for modern industry (DOT 50/20). Not just nature but all the domains of what-is including we ourselves can be put to use for our purposes: "Everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there so that it may be on call for a further ordering" (QCT 17/20). Even unemployed people become "human resources" standing in line at the local unemployment office.

The machinery which we usually call "technology" is a means to this end of "further ordering" along with bureaucracies, governmental and corporate planning in general, and educational institutions. Thinking itself in the contemporary age is largely devoted to planning, investigating, and organizing on the basis of given conditions and specific purposes. Not only the physical sciences but the sciences of social organization look for definite results if not in the short-term future then in the long run (DOT 46/14).

Heidegger's most memorable discussion of the difference between the earlier and contemporary ways of relating to things calls upon specific examples: the windmill and

the old bridge in contrast to the hydroelectric plant on the Rhine, the secluded sawmill in the Black Forest in contrast to coal mines, the peasant in his fields subject to the blessings and cursings of nature in contrast to the "mechanized food industry" (QCT 5-16/10-20). The old-fashioned windmill extracts energy from the wind, but its sails are dependent on the wind's blowing and cannot store energy for windless times. The hydroelectric plant changes the river itself, turning it into a power supplier while the centuries old bridge across the Rhine adapts human purposes to the river, not vice versa. The river remained a river, perhaps coming to light for the first time as what we understand a river to be with its currents, banks, and floods, and people acknowledged it as such in their practices. In its old role, the bridge was a "thing thinging." Nowadays even when the river is regarded as part of a pleasing landscape rather than untapped power, it is so, says Heidegger, only "as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the tourist industry" (QCT 16/20). The field that the peasant plows appeared in a different way when working the land meant taking care of it, not "challenging" or "setting upon" it to make it produce when, where, and what we want with irrigation, cloud seeding, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and human-bred plant strains.

Heidegger argues that technology as a way of destining presents a particular "danger" for us that none of the earlier epochs in the history of Being did. Given contemporary views of technology, we might too quickly and easily conclude that for Heidegger, too, the "danger" of technology lies in our inability to control our own machinery and devices and their side-effects. Nuclear power plants run amuck, acid rain, and "the greenhouse effect" are good examples of the threats posed by our modern

techniques. In light of Heidegger's remarks quoted above, it may seem as if he is suggesting that the danger of technology arises from our attempt to impose our own will on things which have their own Being, for example, plutonium and the atmosphere. That is, when we try to bend the nature of things to our own ends, when we ignore their nature and try to make them be what we wish them to be, then we place ourselves at a serious risk and could even destroy all life on the planet with the push of a technological--or an aerosol spray--button. What danger could be more extreme?

According to this view, technology would do itself in because of our failure to grasp the way things "really are" and the way the interrelationships of the world really work.<sup>23</sup> But Heidegger thinks that his own position transcends the traditional notion of innate, permanent essences on which this argument is based, and his argument is in fact much more complex. He argues instead that what is dangerous is not technology as devices but the essence of technology, not the machines but the way of revealing what-is out of which they arose. As Heidegger comments, "The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology" (QCT 28/32). In fact he seems to think that we will be successful in mastering the things around us and mustering them for our purposes. He says: "If the taming of atomic energy is successful, and it will be successful, then a totally new era of technical development will begin" (DOT 51/21).

But precisely when technology as machinery is most successful, technology as a way of revealing is most dangerous. The danger has two aspects (QCT 26f./30f.). First, the more successful we are at turning things around us into standing reserve, the more we come to regard ourselves as just one more resource to be put to use for the ends we

pursue. Hence the more we lose track of ourselves as Dasein, the being which is open to a revelation of Being. We model ourselves on the dominant machine and become computers, programmed for tasks, taking input and giving output.

Second, "where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing" (QCT 27/31). Enframing lets what-is appear only as standing reserve, and it blocks off other possible appearances of the Being of what-is. For example, the technological orientation lets the divine show itself only as causa efficiens, as the cause which starts the universe going, not as the holy and mysterious (QCT 26/30). Even if we did not "forget" ourselves as Dasein, we would find no other possibility of Being to disclose because none is "there."

The latter aspect of the danger of technology is the more crucial one. In other epochs we may have become more and more convinced that we were essentially the rational animal or the favorite creature of God as the epoch wore on and we were more and more successful at explicitly explaining the world according to our understanding of Being. Hence, then, too, our understanding of ourselves may have been dominated by one conception arising out of a particular understanding of Being. As these earlier epochs "wore down," however, and the understanding of Being became more and more leveled off and trivialized by life in the Anyone, the particular dominant understanding prepared the way for a new one. Plato's ideas prepared the way for the Christian God, and the creator God prepared the way for the self-legislating reign of human beings. As we earlier noted, Heidegger puts it: "That which has the character of destining moves, in itself, at any given time, toward a special moment that sends it into another destining, in

which, however, it is not simply submerged and lost" (QCT 37/37f.). This special moment is the moment of insight.<sup>24</sup>

But Heidegger argues that the understanding of Being which views what-is as standing reserve prepares no path beyond itself and indeed closes off paths. Any way of destining holds some danger of being Dasein's last, since each can be a trap if Dasein's creative insight does not see through it, but enframing as a way of destining is the "extreme danger" (QCT 28/31). It is a destining which blocks destining. With all-that-is leveled off into standing reserve, there is nothing left about which to have a conflict of interpretations, nothing to provoke a reading and responding. Things are whatever we make them be.

Why is this so? Heidegger's answers remain abstract. We can give some concrete significance to his claim by considering how the phenomenon of the Anyone has changed in the modern world and why it would block off new possibilities of understanding Being. Compared to the ancient, medieval, and early modern worlds, there is one overwhelmingly obvious difference in the cultural practices embodying the understanding of Being in the contemporary era. The change is the effect of the Industrial revolution. In earlier ages, an understanding of how to deal with particular things was easily transferable. Just watching a blacksmith or a potter at work might give one the sense that one could do the job, too, though a long period of apprenticeship might be required to get the details right. But at least the "how it works" aspect was clear enough just from one's own everyday experience with fires and malleable material.

Today, however, we seem to be in a situation where, as James Burke says, "never have so many known so little about so much."<sup>25</sup> Our lack of understanding arises from a

change in our relationship to the tools we use. For example, in the Middle Ages, water-power was important, but it manifested itself in the action of the stream on the waterwheel of the mill, something everyone could understand just by putting his or her hand in the flowing water. But at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, simple water-power pushing against boards was replaced by steam-power and complicated mechanical engineering. Its makers understood how a steam engine worked, but how many of the people riding on it did?<sup>26</sup> Today with atomic energy and computers, or even just electricity, the situation is much more extreme. Our hands and heads no longer understand how the things work with which we deal almost every hour of every day. Some of us genuinely understand one thing, some another, but many of us do not even try. To compensate for this lack of primordial understanding, the Anyone fills in everyone's gaps with assurances about "what one does."<sup>27</sup> Things can hardly reveal different possibilities of Being when we do not know what they are to begin with. They can hardly show themselves in new ways in our practices when our practices do not reveal their Being, only their uses.

Perhaps this feature of life in a technological society also accounts for the cultural transferability of the technological understanding of what-is. Just as our lack of "directedness" cuts us off from future, new possibilities, our lack of "connectedness" with our past cuts us off from our heritage. The understanding of ourselves as legislating our own binding obligations arose as a "repetition" of the notion of God's binding legislation, and our Western notion of God is similarly dependent on Plato's notion of a binding suprasensory realm. While for Heidegger it is true that we never could have arrived at our technological understanding without the preparation of the preceding epochs, especially

the immediately preceding notion of things as objects of knowledge, once the technological understanding is in place it seems to cut itself off from its roots. To make the metaphor more exact, it pulls itself up by its roots, puts them in a bag, and sets off around the world seeking new places to take hold. No ability to deal with things as eidos or as God's creation is required to learn how to use a computer or install a phone system so other cultures can adopt our technology in a way that they never did adopt our philosophy. "The end of philosophy indicates: the beginning of world civilization based upon Western European thinking" (TB 59/65).

Why does the radical change in technology come about? One answer proposed is that modern science has caused it. Mathematical, predictive science has given us the means to understand the fundamental principles of nature on which technological devices are based. In this view, the uniqueness of science to Western culture would account for its development of technology. But Heidegger points out that the development of modern science depends as much on the use of particular technological devices in experiments as particular devices depend on advances in scientific theory (QCT 14/17f. and 21f./25). Anyway, the alternative view would still have to account for the development of science. Heidegger explains the development of modern technology as a manifestation of a particular epoch in the history of Being. Both modern science and the development of particular devices are grounded in technology as a way of revealing. True to his notion of the unconcealment of the Being of what-is, Heidegger argues that technology as a way of revealing begins long before we explicitly recognize it as such and well before modern science is explicitly conceptualized (QCT 22/25). There is no answer to the "why," only a retrospective illusion of a necessary sequence.

When we say that the danger of technology as a way of revealing is that it may block any new way of revealing, we are not talking simply about its blocking of an explicit recognition of a new appearance of what-is. Rather, before such a recognition can happen, Being must unconceal itself in a new way, and this is what the essence of technology blocks. Huxley's Brave New World paints a striking picture of a world conquered by not just technological devices but by technology as a way of revealing. The danger has won out. Referring to Huxley's novel, D. Z. Phillips makes an interesting point in regard to Tolstoy's The Death of Ivan Ilyich which connects with our overall theme: "The values that Huxley depicts as dominating people's lives, utility, the intensity of transient sensations, usefulness, functionalism, when they are as pervasive as he makes them, exclude the possibility of the considerations which surround Ivan's change of attitude in the face of death."<sup>28</sup> For Heidegger, what is needed is considerably more than a change of attitude. It is authentic Being toward death and Being's gift of new life.

#### 7.4 The Leap of Thought

Though the danger of technology threatens Dasein's special way of Being, Heidegger has faith in two lines from Hölderlin's hymn "Patmos":

But where danger is, grows

The saving power also.

He reflects on the significance of these lines in regard to what the danger of technology is and what must happen for us to save ourselves from it in the turn of thought which "leaps" beyond metaphysics (QCT 28/32 and 42/41). In relationship to the saving power,

Heidegger's own thinking plays two different but related roles: that of helping to turn the danger into the saving power and that of assisting the saving power in its task of "turning" thought around.

The danger and the saving power are not two different things. Heidegger argues that "the selfsame danger is, when it is as the danger, the saving power" (QCT 42/41). We need to make two points here. First, since the danger is the essence of technology as a way of revealing, the saving power, too, must come from the very essence of this way of revealing. The distinctive feature of the unconcealing of technology is that it drives out all other ways of revealing and gets us evermore tightly in its grip. How can this also save us? Heidegger points out that the essence of technology has an ambiguous meaning. On the one hand, it is the challenging which blocks off other possibilities of Being, but on the other it is a granting that lets us endure as the being that discloses Being. Challenging is a way revealing, just as the binding powers of the other epochs of Being were, and thus Being must show up in a certain way. Being's power over us is demonstrated by the way that we are captured by an understanding of Being, but this same power could grant us another understanding of Being at any time.

Thus technology's very domination of us eventually lets us see it as what it is, viz., a force beyond our control. We may prefer to see technology as only a means to the ends that we choose, but then we only disguise the danger of the self-destruction of the revealing power of Being. The saving power of this danger is that the rampant growth of the technological orientation, and its attendant physical danger, compel us to see through our reassuring disguise and recognize that technology's momentum is controlling us and

our choices, not the other way around. When we recognize what it is to be dependent on a revelation of Being, we become more open to a new revelation.

The second point about Heidegger's comment concerns what it means for the danger to be "as the danger." He elaborates: "When the danger is as the danger, then its essence explicitly comes to pass" (QCT 43/42). The danger is technology, but it only is as the danger when we see it for what it is; we must understand it as way of revealing and not simply a means to an end or a particular activity (QCT 4/10).<sup>29</sup> Authentic insight into the contemporary unconcealment of what-is brings the danger explicitly to pass and lets us recognize it for what it is. The thinking that does this is no longer metaphysical in the traditional way. It is Heidegger's own thinking.

Heidegger seems to see his own work as standing in the same relation to the technological understanding of Being as Nietzsche's thought stands to nihilism at the end of metaphysics. His work brings this Janus-headed revelation of Being into focus in the same way that Nietzsche brings into focus the whole of traditional metaphysics as it reaches its end. And Heidegger is still traditional enough to believe that the truth shall set us free. He "questions concerning technology" in order that we may enter into a "free relationship to technology" by opening up our Dasein to the essence of technology and understanding its way of Being (QCT 3/9). To know what we are doing is to be freed from its compulsion and to become open for other possibilities of Being. He suggests that the verb meaning 'to save' itself suggests to loosen, to free, to take under one's care. Hence, the "saving" power is what frees us from the compulsion of technology by changing our relation of care to it.

Assuming that our relationship to technology as a way of revealing will change when we understand what it is, what will happen to our dealings with the actual machines and devices of technology? Heidegger thinks that this will change, too. He thinks that we can continue to "use technological devices, and yet with proper use also keep ourselves free of them, that we may let go of them at any time." Evidently, letting go of technological devices does not mean doing without them since Heidegger acknowledges we all find them indispensable. But, sounding surprisingly optimistic, he claims that understanding our predicament will make our relationship to them "wonderfully simple and relaxed" (DOT 53f./24f.).

Neither of these manifestations of the saving power so far described is, however, the crucial one. If we are going to escape the pernicious effects of technology as a way of revealing, we need a power that goes beyond just our authentic recognition of our current understanding of Being. We need in fact a radically new understanding of Being. What is needed, and what our recognition prepares us for, is a "readiness for the decisive issue" of the essential forces of the age. Heidegger argues that only when we grasp in advance the essence of the age will we simultaneously experience what is questionable in it. This questioning is "that which radically carries forward and constrains a creating into the future . . . and lets the transformation of man become a necessity springing forth from Being itself" (QCT 137/97). The ultimate saving power is not Dasein's insight into what-is but the Appropriation which sends us into a radically new understanding of ourselves and the things around us. Only this new understanding of Being will really change our relationship to technology.

In this context, the saving power is "the granting" that sends us into a new way of revealing (QCT 32/36). The language of Heidegger's discussion of this issue is tortuous and obscure because he speaks from the viewpoint after the phenomenological turn when we are looking at Dasein from the perspective of Being, not Being from the perspective of Dasein as in the early works. Now "insight into what-is" is the name for "the Appropriation of the turn in Being," not, as he so often used it before, the "glance" which we throw out from ourselves to what-is.<sup>30</sup> Now "everything has turned about" (QCT 46/44).

This "insight" is the "in-flashing" of the truth of Being, the lightning flash which lets the Being of what-is show up in new ways (QCT 45/43).<sup>31</sup> This first happens not in how the philosopher, for example, thinks about things but in how things show up in our cultural practices. In this flash, the danger itself turns around, and the clearing of Being suddenly lights itself up (QCT 44/43). As Heidegger describes it, in this sort of insight we are the ones caught sight of by Being, not the other way around (QCT 47/45). The culture "reads" and responds to the insight already reached. Thus seen, we arrive within the "essence of nearness" where once again, as with the Greek temple, the "thing things" and the "world worlds" (QCT 49/46f.).<sup>32</sup> We will find ourselves caught up in a new understanding of Being. Authentic Dasein can then bring this understanding into focus, arranging its letters into words which in turn can provoke a "reading" from the culture.

When will this turn about of the danger happen, why and how? The "when" is as indeterminable as the moment of insight when we recognize what has happened to us.

The lightning flash may already have happened, casting a shadow in our world.

Heidegger reflects:

Perhaps we stand already in the shadow cast ahead by the advent of this turning. When and how it will appropriate itself after the manner of destiny no one knows. Nor is it necessary that we know. Knowledge of this kind would even be most ruinous to man because his essence is to be the one who waits, the one who attends upon the coming to essence of Being in that he guards it in thinking. Only when man as the shepherd of Being attends upon the truth of Being can he expect an advent of Being's destiny . . . (QCT 41f./40f.).

As the shepherd to this advent of Being, we do not direct it along, but we do encourage it to come. For example, Heidegger suggests that the saving power can grow: "How can this happen? Here and now and in the little things, that we may foster the saving power in its increase. This includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger" (QCT 33/37). Perhaps the "little things" which increase the saving power are not so much a matter of "relaxing" our relation to technological devices as holding fast to those practices from earlier epochs which still linger on despite the growing dominance of technology.<sup>33</sup>

As we saw in Chapter Five, the epochs of Being are not discrete; they overlap and intermingle. The farmers in the secluded valleys in Germany may still share an understanding of Being that is not too different from that of their ancestors in the Middle Ages. One way of fostering the saving power might be to go and live in a hut in the Black Forest, as Heidegger himself did. Unfortunately, technology was already wiping out these

practices even before Heidegger died. He lived to see television antennas sprouting from those huts,<sup>34</sup> and the mass media are one of the strongest forces homogenizing the technological understanding of Being throughout the world.

Heidegger's own efforts to further the saving power were concentrated on the task that he saw as a preparation for the turn around of the danger: bringing the danger explicitly to light. To him this required more than just bringing into focus the current technological understanding. The whole metaphysical tradition comprehending Being as presence has to be grasped because we are now at a point where we must leap beyond it. Heidegger's philosophical predecessors only had to "repeat" the preceding epoch to prepare for the next variation on the theme of presence, but he wishes to prepare us to leave this sinking ship altogether. Heidegger's preparatory thinking traces the history of Being in order to create a space--a playroom or one free from the stranglehold of technology--in which the Appropriation may propel us into a leap as rich with possibilities as that of the ancient Greeks.

This review of the metaphysical tradition is the "step back" from the thinking that represents things, whether as eidōs, object, or standing reserve, and the step toward the thinking that responds to the call of Being.<sup>35</sup> But the review cannot provide a preview of what is to come. We cannot predict what is to come from a knowledge of the past, nor derive the next stage of destining from the last as Hegel tried to do. Heidegger thinks that we would be caught up in historicism if we tried to do so (EGT 17/326). In our case, an attempt to work out a picture of the future would simply be another manifestation of the calculating representation of our technological age. In contrast, Heidegger simply admits

that "we do not know what possibilities the destiny of Western history holds in store for our people" (QCT 56/212).

The end of philosophy, its last possibility, may return us to the "first possibility for thinking . . . a possibility from which the thinking of philosophy would have to start out, but which as philosophy it could nevertheless not experience and adopt" (TB 59/65). How shall we think of this possibility now? The Greeks seem to have had both an insight into the existential relationship between the practices and the things that show up in them and a particular existentiell insight into what the "really real" things are. Points that came up in the seminar discussion of the essay "Time and Being" help to clarify the difference between the two kinds of thinking necessary for a return to this sort of possibility.

The thinking which essentially belongs to the openness of Being is, on the one hand, the thinking which distinguishes man. In terms of Being and Time it can be called understanding thinking.

This thinking is what is distinctively characteristic of Dasein as the being which understands Being.

On the other hand, thinking is interpretive thinking, the thinking which thinks the relation of Being and thinking and the question of Being in general.

Interpretive thinking addresses the issue of the relationship between the culture and its conception of what-is, and it is what Heidegger carried out in his various works. In this sense, his philosophy "repeats" that first possibility of the Greeks. However, he adds:

It remains questionable whether interpretation can be what is characteristic of thinking at all when it is a matter of truly taking up the question of Being. The task for thinking is that of freeing itself and keeping itself free for what is to be thought in order to receive its determination from that (TB 35/38).

Heidegger suggests that interpretive thinking can only carry us so far. It helps to free us from a fixation on one understanding of Being, but it cannot build a bridge to a new existentiell understanding of Being. There is a chasm that can only be gotten across in a leap, and the impetus must come from the beckoning of Being itself, not from our own desire to cross the gulf.

Even in the late 1940's Heidegger acknowledged that "The thinking that hazards a few steps in Being and Time has even today not advanced beyond that publication. But perhaps in the meantime it has in one respect come further into its own matter." If his thinking has "advanced" at all, it has been by going down the path he initially laid out for the de-structuring of the history of metaphysics, and hence it has come more explicitly into its own territory. Heidegger continues:

However, as long as philosophy merely busies itself with continually obstructing the possibility of letting itself into the matter for thinking, namely the truth of Being, it stands safely beyond any danger of shattering against the hardness of the matter. Thus to "philosophize" about being shattered

is separated by a chasm from a thinking that is shattered  
(LH 222f./343).

In the first sentence Heidegger probably does not refer to his own work but rather the work of the philosophers who further enframing. But ironically what he is doing could well be characterized as "philosophizing about being shattered." Reflecting about what it is to be shattered, as he did when he contemplated Dasein "shattering itself against death" (385), is very different from actually being shattered or breaking though the Anyone to achieve a world-transforming insight. Or, as Heidegger put it in Being and Time, merely expecting death is less primordial than forerunning it, i.e. running forward into it and disclosing the possibilities at our culture's horizon (337).

If our time remains destitute, it is "not only because God is dead, but because mortals are hardly aware and capable even of their own mortality." They "have not come into ownership of their own nature."<sup>36</sup> Heidegger is aware of the existential nature of this mortality, but that does not mean that he can be the forerunner of the advent of the Appropriation. Existentiell thinking in this line is, obviously, very hard to come by, and it is liable to error when it ventures beyond its limits. Attending to the truth of Being, looking for the advent of the destiny of Being, is evidently not an easy task. When a student inquires where thinking about Being receives its directive, Heidegger replies:

. . . to the appeal of Being there also belongs the early  
uncovered having-been (aletheia, logos, phusis) as well as  
the veiled advent of what announces itself in the possible  
turn around of the oblivion of Being (in keeping with its  
way to be). The responding must take into consideration all

of this on the strength of long concentration and in constant testing of its hearing if it is to hear an appeal of Being. But precisely here the response may hear wrongly. In this thinking, the chance of going astray is the greatest.<sup>37</sup>

Such thinking can go wrong precisely because we are to attend to a revelation of Being, not invent one ourselves. What is the way to be towards which we are heading? Are the practices even now revealing a new way of Being? What lies beyond our technological stance towards the world? Clearly, the answer to these questions is not easy to determine, and some of our suggestions may be mistaken guesses, not genuine insight.

Through his thinking, Heidegger hopes to prepare for the genuine insight into a transformed Being. He suggests that "a thinking which thinks about the possible advent of world" will perhaps help, "in the humblest and inconspicuous ways, such an advent to reach the opened-up realm of man's way to be."<sup>38</sup> The thinking of a forerunner is always provisional.<sup>39</sup> In acknowledging the truth of this claim in regard to his own work, Heidegger denies any insincere modesty and argues that this provisional character of thought is bound up with the finitude of thinking and the finitude of what is to be thought, that is, with both the finitude of Dasein and the finitude of Being (TB 35/38).

The leap must spring from our own cultural past, which is one reason why Heidegger believes that interpretive thinking about the history of metaphysics is a necessary preparation for it. Despite his famous conversational remark about the affinity between his own thought and Zen Buddhism, in an interview Heidegger said:

. . . a turn can be prepared only in the same place in the world where the modern technological world originated,

and it cannot happen because of the takeover by Zen Buddhism or any other Eastern experience of the world. There is a need for a rethinking which is to be carried out with the help of the European tradition and of a new appropriation of that tradition. Thinking itself can be transformed only by a thinking which has the same origin and calling.<sup>40</sup>

Heidegger expressed the same point some years earlier at the end of the essay "The Principle of Identity." He said: "Only when we thoughtfully turn toward what has already been thought, will we be turned for what is still to be thought" (ID 41/106). The comment succinctly indicates the relationship between the understanding of Being that has been and the turn which leaps forward into the abyss of the Appropriation.

At the appropriate moment of insight, thinking will cease questioning Being and become a simple saying (QCT 182/66). This saying will not necessarily be expressed in words or be anything like the philosophical thinking that has been the vehicle for the moment of insight for the last 2500 years. Indeed Heidegger acknowledged that "the history of Being as what is to be thought is at an end for the thinking that enters the Appropriation even if metaphysics should continue to exist, something which can not be determined" (TB 41f./44f.). If something that can significantly be called "metaphysics" does continue to exist, namely an unconcealment of Being with a history and a destiny, it will not appear as a history of "what is to be thought," that is, as philosophy.

Heidegger himself suggested that the new unconcealment of Being will take place in art.<sup>41</sup> Philosophy as thinking expressed in the words of the languages of Western

culture, in subject-predicate sentences joined with the copula, may be necessarily limited to the metaphysics of presence with its permanent entities and enduring properties. Art, on the other hand, reached its supreme height as the revelation of Being in the Greek temple which founded the first leap of thought, a revealing both simple and manifold with possibilities. Now that we are at the other extreme end of philosophy perhaps art will take on that role again (QCT 34f./38f.). What this art will be like and when it will appear remain unknown.

### 7.5 Perspective

With our picture of Heidegger's vision of the Temporal movement of the history of Being and its engine, philosophy, complete, we are in a position to reflect on the way we have come. For our review I want to highlight two of Heidegger's central claims: that Being unconceals itself and that it does so in a Temporal way.

Perhaps the most initially puzzling of Heidegger's claims, and one whose implications we can now more clearly see, is the notion that Being reveals itself to us in different ways, ways which are more or less prominent in different periods of our history. Without granting him this idea, his philosophy cannot get off the ground. But, of course, this idea is likely to provoke common sense to complain, look, a thing either is in some specific way or it isn't. What it is cannot change unless the particular characteristics of the thing change. And such changes are indeed just changes in particular properties, not "isness" and certainly not something brought about by a mysterious thing like "Being" acting behind the scenes to manipulate our history.

But I hope that it is clear by now that, despite Heidegger's own language, Being is not any kind of thing, least of all one with consciousness or intentionality. To say that Being reveals what-is or that Being reveals itself to us is to say no more than that Being is revealed, and, to speak in Heideggerese, there is nothing behind the scenes doing the revealing. When we get beyond the language and take Heidegger's own admonitions seriously, he is saying no more than that, suddenly, things show up in a new way. And that the new way is not a matter of particular properties or forms but rather a way of Being.

We might initially illustrate this idea with common examples from psychology which do depend on discovering new properties or forms. Think of the pattern of lines which shifts from depicting a pretty young woman to reveal an old crone, or the black and white undulations which shift from a vase to mirror-image profiles. Such shifts take place with a shift in context and attention. Given a clue or our own particular interests, we can see a thing--in this case patterns of black and white lines or solids--in different ways.

Even though these examples are a matter of seeing different types of things, and therefore do not exactly fit the Being that Heidegger is talking about, their dependence on context provides the crucial analogy. For Heidegger, the shift in cultural context is what results in a new way of looking at the Being of things. Now educated common sense may say that what really is in these examples is just a pattern of lines or black and white shapes, and that the rest is just our subjectivity. And, similarly, on the level of culture and how we take things, that facts are facts and all else is just a subjective overlay that we should try to avoid, not wallow in as Heidegger does.

Yet what are the "things in themselves"? To say a "pattern" of lines or "black" and "white" shapes is already to overlay the "facts" with a grid of human "subjectivity." We are immediately confronted with the old philosophical Scylla and Charybdis of realism and idealism, between which Heidegger tries to steer a narrow and careful path. Being is independent of us, since things cannot be in just anyway; for example, either things are amenable to certain kinds of mathematical treatment or they are not, as we can see in the different objects of Newtonian and quantum physics. And yet Being is dependent on us since we create the context of concern in which things can show themselves in one way or another. At the intersection of what things can be and the context in which such ways of Being matter, at the intersection of Being and Dasein, lies what things are.

Rather than speaking of Heidegger's "Topology of Being," as Otto Pöggeler does, we might speak of his "topography of Being," his map depicting the relationship between natural and man-made objects. His verdict on the relationship seems no more alarming than insisting that, to go back to an earlier example, land is fertile or water is potable yet that they are so only in relationship to us. Either they are or they are not (in varying degrees, of course), but we create the context of concern in which growing crops and drinking water matters, that is, in which there is such a thing as fertility and potability.

However, as I have spelled out in detail in the last three chapters, there is more to Heidegger's idea of the relation between Being and the cultural practices than this. The example of a land's fertility indicates the general relation between Being and what-is, but not the historicity of the Being of what-is. The history of Being, according to Heidegger, unfolds in a continuous manner and one which has been taken up and furthered by our

culture's distinctive works of poetry, art, statesmanship, and philosophy. If the term "topology" suggests that the topography has a history which makes it what it is, now this term assumes its appropriateness.

As I have tried to show, Heidegger's thesis that philosophy responds to the revelation of what-is in the cultural practices is most plausible when we stick to the three major epochs in the history of Being: the ancient, the medieval, and the modern. I have also gone some way toward making intelligible the various sub-stages in the ancient period by showing what it might mean for Being to reveal itself as chreon, phusis, aletheia, and idea. But what does it mean to say that Being reveals itself as perceptio, or the transcendental making possible of objects, or the dialectical mediation of Absolute Spirit? Describing the cultural context for the visions of Marx and Nietzsche seems relatively easy, but for the variations in the sequence from Descartes, to Kant, to Hegel, it is much more difficult.

Heidegger's account of the history of philosophy has often been criticized on two fronts. First, the historical accuracy of his own account of what earlier philosophers are saying has been roundly and perhaps, given the modern context of discussion, for the most part fairly criticized. But these criticisms are not so telling when we understand what Heidegger is doing. When Heidegger remarks that Kant deserves a grade of 'F' for his historical comprehension of Plato and Aristotle (WICT 77/72), he is not attributing an 'A' to himself, and therefore we cannot turn the remark against him. For him the more important test is not "historical comprehension" in some modern, textbook sense. It is the question of whether, as he says about Kant, a thinker "creatively transforms" the thought

that he inherits. According to Heidegger, Kant was the "one and only" philosopher who creatively transformed Plato's notion of idea.

Heidegger himself "creatively transforms" his predecessors' ideas by interpreting them through his own philosophical vision while at the same time attempting to leap beyond the metaphysics which forgets Being and sees only things. Has Heidegger succeeded in doing this? Perhaps only time will tell, as it did for Kant. But, in the meantime, we can only apply the criteria of hermeneutics to what is in itself a hermeneutical account. Is Heidegger's vision of the history of philosophy illuminating, enabling us to see things we would not otherwise? Is it comprehensive, giving us a useful synthetic picture of something that would otherwise remain fragmented and disparate? Is his account complete, accounting for all of the significant features of the history of philosophy?

Heidegger's account of the beginning of philosophy, for example, once we cut through the jargon and get to the content, is as helpful and plausible as anyone's, though perhaps this is not saying much since, as he himself insists, the "why" of this beginning remains a mystery. Indeed the most intriguing issue which arises out of and remains unsettled in my discussion of Heidegger is the relationship between the finitude of Being and the finitude of Dasein in regard to philosophy's grounding in the practices of Western culture. To go back to the images used in the Introduction, the issue is not just the relationship between the riverbed and the river but, to mix metaphors, about the relation between the soil in which the tree of philosophy grows and the river, both riverbed and water, which vivifies the soil so that the tree may grow on its banks.

Even with this mystery at its root, Heidegger offers us something that very few other historians of philosophy do: an account of philosophy's place in Western culture which both preserves its "objectivity," although in critical form, and maintains its relevance.

But now the second major criticism comes into play. Is the insight gained by his account of the history of philosophy worth the jargon? The reader must already be well aware that the major task in the interpretation of Heidegger's work is the uncovering of the view behind the novel language. Even in the context of Heidegger's thought, as we saw, the vocabulary of "das Ereignis" does not really disclose new entities and, if it does tell us new things, it seems that it could have done so without resorting to the new terminology. This appearance may be illusory to some degree, since, once we understand it, this vocabulary does point out certain "relations and connections" that we might not notice otherwise. As Heidegger himself insists, language can lead us to see connections that we could not glimpse without it. And this objection hardly gives Heidegger the credit that we are willing to extend to other creators. Should we complain that Aristotle or Kant or Wittgenstein could have made his points much more simply? True, Heidegger is much more inclined than these philosophers to multiply jargon beyond necessity. But, if we now can translate Heidegger's thoughts into more intelligible language, this does not mean that he or we could have had the thoughts without his language. We may only now be able to see the "fallen" manifestation of his thought in our age.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> As I noted at the beginning of Chapter Six, I do not intend to present Heidegger's complete version of the history of Being. To prove my point it is not even necessary to discuss Heidegger's account of all the major philosophers between Aristotle and Nietzsche. I discuss the philosophers whose thought most clearly announces new themes regarding the Being of what-is, not those whose philosophy works out variations upon these themes within a major epoch. Thus, for instance, for my purposes I need only discuss Descartes and not Leibniz, Kant -- as I already did in 5.1 -- and not Schelling or Fichte.

<sup>2</sup> It would be illuminating to trace how the history of Being shows up in the creations of other authentic Dasein besides philosophers, but I will not examine art, poetry, etc., here. As an example of the sort of thing I have in mind one might explore the development of medieval art as it "repeated" the themes and edifices of Roman art. Roman images and styles were avoided for centuries, but suddenly we find again the carefully constructed buildings, arches, and facades of Roman architecture in the rebirth of art in the Romanesque architecture of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the repetition, however, these "possibilities" are adapted to specifically Christian themes and have a new position, place, and function. The rider on horseback, for example, is no longer the emperor in the public square demonstrating the power of the Roman empire but the knight or Christ himself on the church doorway going off to do battle for the faith. Constantine's Arch becomes the arch of the altar front. (These examples were suggested to me by a talk by Dr. Linda Seidel at a NEH-sponsored institute on medieval culture at Santa Clara University, June 26, 1986.)

<sup>3</sup> One might trace these peaks and valleys of the epochs of Being in the common

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understanding of Being in the Anyone. In regard to this it is interesting to note that, for example, our common view of our own history has followed along the track of the metaphysical history. In the running-down of the Roman world, the medieval world, and the modern world, people in general have felt that history -- and time -- was "running out" of possibilities and that humankind was doomed. In the two earlier worlds, hope was revived and possibilities renewed in the same period as the peaking of the new Temporal revelation of Being. Heidegger hopes for the same sort of revival after the current depression of Being.

<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966) p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Kant's comments in the Critique of Pure Reason, p. 20. See B xiii.

<sup>6</sup> As we saw in footnote 187 in section 3.6, Heidegger's term is 'Widerruf,' and its connotative connections are important.

<sup>7</sup> G. J. Whitrow, The Natural History of Time, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Arendt comments in passing that medieval economic theory placed money under the Roman law category of "consumptibles," in contrast to "fungibles," because it did not conceive of money as a yardstick to measure all property. See The Human Condition, p. 69, especially footnote 76.

<sup>9</sup> Heidegger's phrase 'geht . . . zugrunde' suggests both the 'going under' of death and reaching a ground. With our new understanding of death, we can see that the verbal connection indicates a connection in ideas.

<sup>10</sup> As we noted earlier in the discussion of death, Heidegger's term 'äusserst' is

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translated as 'outermost.' The "reversal" or "turn around" here is the "Umkehrung."

<sup>11</sup> See Heidegger's discussion of the "essence of fundamental metaphysical positions" in Section 25 in Nietzsche Volume Two 184-197/448-462. There he mentions as fundamental the positions of Plato, medieval theology, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel.

<sup>12</sup> Heidegger's term is 'Umkehrung.'

<sup>13</sup> See Nietzsche, The Will to Power, translated by W. Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, edited by W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 263, aphorism 474.

<sup>14</sup> In context Heidegger's comment can be taken as a reference to Nietzsche's rejection of a Kantian noumenal realm, but this does not mean that his own conception of "what is in itself" is Kantian.

<sup>15</sup> See Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Section 4, p. 11. Though catchy, Nietzsche's way of putting his point is misleading. Without "truth" in the traditional sense there is no "error" either.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Nietzsche's account of Kant's notion of a priori knowledge in Beyond Good and Evil, Sections 4-11, pp. 11-19.

<sup>17</sup> See QCT 27/30f.

<sup>18</sup> W. V. Quine, "Epistemology Naturalized," Ontological Relativity and Other Essays (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 82f.

<sup>19</sup> For discussion of the significance of this point for contemporary discussions of teaching "values," see Hubert L. Dreyfus' "Knowledge and Human Values: A Genealogy of Nihilism," Teachers College Record, Vol. 82, No. 3 (Spring, 1981).

<sup>20</sup> Heidegger also argues that Protagoras, with his dictum that we are the measure

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of all things, is just as different. See N4 96-97/141-142.

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger's term is 'Ge-stell.' The term means 'frame' and ordinarily refers to a rack or an apparatus such as a bookstand. But Heidegger's special meaning plays off the verb 'stellen,' or 'to set upon' or 'to challenge,' and its derivative forms 'herstellen' and 'darstellen,' or 'to produce' and 'to present.'

<sup>22</sup> Heidegger's term is 'Bestand.'

<sup>23</sup> One sentence in the English translation of "Die Frage nach der Technik" may seem to support this view. It indicates that Heidegger says that technology "puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such" (QCT 14/18767). If the demand is "unreasonable," this suggests that we are trying to make nature into something it cannot be. However, the notion that things have innate, permanent essences is part of the central core of the traditional metaphysics, and Heidegger's own thinking supposedly transcends this.

Heidegger's sentence actually reads: "Das in der modernen Technik waltende Entbergen ist ein Herausfordern, das an die Natur das Ansinnen stellt, Energie zu liefern, die als solche herausgefördert und gespeichert werden kann." 'Ansinnen' simply means 'demand,' and there is no accompanying adjective indicating that the demand is 'unreasonable' in the usual sense. If, as the translator may think, Heidegger is invoking the etymological connotation of 'A-sinnen,' the sort of "unreasonableness" or "non-sense" involved here is really the lack of 'Sinn' in Heidegger's technical sense, that is, the absence of a grounding in the meaning of Being. See Heidegger's comment about the "meaninglessness" of the contemporary era in the "Word of Nietzsche" in QCT 54/209.

<sup>24</sup> Heidegger's term in the preceding sentence is 'Augenblick.'

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<sup>25</sup> A comment by Burke in "Yesterday, Tomorrow, and You," the last episode of his BBC-produced television series "Connections," which examines the history of technology.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. I paraphrase one of Burke's examples and comments.

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger suggests that, because communication takes place in words, we can come to understand something without a primordial involvement in what the discourse is about. Consequently, our understanding of the network of Being can become "undetermined, detached and empty," producing "a growing groundlessness of that which was primordially articulated" (268f./370f.).

<sup>28</sup> D. Z. Phillips, "Moral Presuppositions and Literary Criticism," Through a Darkening Glass (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1982), p. 63.

<sup>29</sup> The term 'explicitly' translates Heidegger's 'eigens.' His point draws on the etymological connections between 'eigens' and 'Eigentlichkeit' or 'authenticity.'

<sup>30</sup> Playing off his use of 'Augenblick' for the moment of insight, Heidegger's term here is 'Blick.'

<sup>31</sup> Now the verbal play brings in 'Einblick' and 'Einblitz.'

<sup>32</sup> The "thinging" of cross and crown mentioned in footnote six of section 6.1 take us at least through the Middle Ages and the rise of the nation-state, but unfortunately in the modern age the times at which things "thing" have become fewer and farther between, and perhaps things have ceased "thinging" all together. Things no longer "thing" because, with the rise of philosophy, the primary task of articulating the Being of what-is began to shift to thinking, and things "have never yet been able to appear at all to thinking as things." Things may have ceased "thinging" in the modern world, but in his

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essay "The Question Concerning Technology" Heidegger holds out hope that they will "thing" again. When they do, nearing will near again, bringing together future, past, and present in a new way. Meanwhile, the explosion of the atom bomb "is only the grossest of all gross confirmations of the long-since-accomplished annihilation of the thing." See "The Thing" in PLT 170-71/162-63.

<sup>33</sup> I am indebted to Hubert Dreyfus for this suggestion.

<sup>34</sup> See his "Address at Messkirch," July 22, 1961. I am also indebted to Hubert Dreyfus for this example.

<sup>35</sup> "The Thing" in PLT 181/174.

<sup>36</sup> "What Are Poets For?" in PLT 96/274.

<sup>37</sup> "The Thing" in PLT 184/176f.

<sup>38</sup> "The Thing" in PLT 185/178.

<sup>39</sup> Heidegger can again indulge in a bit of wordplay with "Vorläufer" (forerunner) and "vorläufig" (provisional).

<sup>40</sup> "Only a God can save us: Der Spiegel's interview with Martin Heidegger," translated by Maria Alter and John Caputo, Philosophy Today, Vol. XX (Winter 1976), p. 281.

<sup>41</sup> Since the lecture from which these remarks are taken was delivered to the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts in a series on "The Arts in the Technological Age," Heidegger's hope may have been tailored to his audience.