

*The Question
Concerning Technology*

∞ and Other Essays ∞

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

Translated and with an Introduction by
WILLIAM LOVITT

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Those on the faculty and staff at California State University, Sacramento, who have helped and supported me in my work on this volume are too numerous to be acknowledged each individually, but I am particularly grateful to my colleague in German, Professor Olaf K. Perfler, for hours of intense conversation in which many secrets of the German idiom were revealed to me.

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WILLIAM LOVITT

Preface

The essays in this book were taken with Heidegger's permission from three different volumes of his works: *Die Technik und die Kehre* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1962); *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1952); and *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Günther Neske, 1954). "The Question Concerning Technology" is contained in both *Die Technik und die Kehre* and *Vorträge und Aufsätze*.

In *Die Technik und die Kehre* the following prefatory note appears regarding the two essays, "The Question Concerning Technology" ("Die Frage nach der Technik") and "The Turning" ("Die Kehre"):

Under the title "Insight into That Which Is," the author gave, on December 1, 1949, in the Club at Bremen, four lectures, which were repeated without alterations in the spring of 1950 (March 25 and 26) at Bühlerhöhe. The titles were "The Thing ["Das Ding"], "Enframing" ["Das Gestell"], "The Danger" ["Die Gefahr"], "The Turning" ["Die Kehre"].*

The first lecture was given in an expanded version on June 6, 1950, before the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts. (See *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 1954, pp. 163 ff.)†

* Throughout the translations in this volume parenthetical elements interpolated by me are shown in brackets, while those present in the author's original text are given in parentheses.

† "The Thing" has been published in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 165-186.

The second lecture was given on November 18, 1955, also in an expanded version, under the title "The Question Concerning Technology," in the series entitled "The Arts in the Technological Age." (See *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 1954, pp. 13 ff.). The present volume repeats this text unaltered.

The third lecture remains still unpublished.

The fourth lecture, "The Turning," is published here for the first time according to the first unaltered version.

At the end of *Holzwege* Heidegger makes the following observations concerning "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead'" ("Nietzsches Wort 'Gott ist tot'") and "The Age of the World Picture ("Die Zeit des Weltbildes"):

"The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead'": The major portions were delivered repeatedly in 1943 for small groups. The content is based upon the Nietzsche lectures that were given between 1936 and 1940 during five semesters at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau. These set themselves the task of understanding Nietzsche's thinking as the consummation of Western metaphysics from out of Being.

"The Age of the World Picture": The lecture was given on June 9, 1938, under the title "The Establishing by Metaphysics of the Modern World Picture," as the last of a series that was arranged by the Society for Aesthetics, Natural Philosophy, and Medicine at Freiburg im Breisgau, and which had as its theme the establishing of the modern world picture. The appendixes were written at the same time but were not delivered.

Of all the essays in *Holzwege* Heidegger remarks:

In the intervening time these pieces have been repeatedly revised and, in some places, clarified. In each case the level of reflection and the structure have remained, and so also, together with these, has the changing use of language.

And at the end of *Vorträge und Aufsätze* Heidegger gives the following notes:

"The Question Concerning Technology" ["Die Frage nach der Technik"]: Lecture held on November 18, 1955, in the main auditorium of the Technische Hochschule, Munich, in the series "The Arts in the Technological Age," arranged by the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts under the leadership of President Emil Preetorius; published in volume III of the *Yearbook of the Academy* (ed. Clemens Graf Podewils), R. Oldenbourg, Munich, 1954, pp. 70 ff.

"Science and Reflection" ["Wissenschaft und Besinnung"]: Lecture, in its present version given in August, 1954, before a small group, in preparation for the above-mentioned conference in Munich.
WILLIAM LOVITT

Sacramento, California

Introduction

To read Heidegger is to set out on an adventure. The essays in this volume—intriguing, challenging, and often baffling the reader—call him always to abandon all superficial scanning and to enter wholeheartedly into the serious pursuit of thinking.

Every philosopher demands to be read in his own terms. This is especially true of Heidegger. One must not come to him with ready-made labels, although these are very often given. Thus Heidegger is not an “existentialist.” He is not concerned centrally or exclusively with man. Rather he is centrally concerned with the relation between man and Being, with man as the *openness* to which and in which Being presences and is known. Heidegger is not a “determinist.” He does not believe that man’s actions are completely controlled by forces outside him or that man has no effective freedom. To Heidegger man’s life does indeed lie under a destining sent from out of Being. But to him that destining can itself call forth a self-orienting response of man that is real and is a true expression of human freedom. Again, Heidegger is not a “mystic.” He does not describe or advocate the experiencing of any sort of oneness with an absolute or infinite. For him both man *and* Being are finite, and their relationship never dissolves in sheer oneness. Hence absolute, infinite, or the One can appear to him only as abstractions of man’s thinking, and not as realities of essential power.

Heidegger is not a "primitive" or a "romantic." He is not one who seeks escape from the burdens and responsibilities of contemporary life into serenity, either through the re-creating of some idyllic past or through the exalting of some simple experience. Finally, Heidegger is not a foe of technology and science. He neither disdains nor rejects them as though they were only destructive of human life.

The roots of Heidegger's thinking lie deep in the Western philosophical tradition. Yet that thinking is unique in many of its aspects, in its language and in its literary expression. In the development of his thought Heidegger has been taught chiefly by the Greeks, by German idealism, by phenomenology, and by the scholastic theological tradition. These and other elements have been fused by his genius of sensitivity and intellect into very individual philosophical expression.

In approaching Heidegger's work the reader must ask not only what he says, but how he says it. For here form and content are inextricably united. The perceptive reader will find at hand in the literary form of each one of these essays many keys to unlock its meaning. He will also find the content of each continually shaping for itself forms admirably suited to its particular expression.

For Heidegger true thinking is never an activity performed in abstraction from reality. It is never man's ordering of abstractions simply in terms of logical connections. Genuine thinking is, rather, man's most essential manner of being man. Rigorously demanding and but rarely attained, it manifests the relation between man and Being. In true thinking man is used by Being, which needs man as the *openness* that provides the measure and the bounds for Being's manifesting of itself in whatever is. Man in thinking is called upon to lend a helping hand to Being. Indeed, Heidegger can refer to thinking as handcraft. As such, thinking is man's fundamental responding to whatever offers itself to him. Informed by recollection, it brings forth into awareness and efficacy whatever is presented to it to know. It is the caretaking hand that receives and holds and shapes everything that truly comes to be and to be known. Through that receiving and shaping of whatever is present, thinking, as belonging to

and needed by Being, cooperates in the handing out of limits and the setting of bounds.

Here Being is in no sense to be thought of as an entity of some sort. Nor is it to be simply identified with any element or aspect or totality of the reality that we ordinarily know. Rather Being is the Being of whatever is. Ruling in whatever is, yet transcending and governing the latter in the particularity of its presencing, Being may perhaps best be said to be the ongoing manner in which everything that is, presences; i.e., it is the manner in which, in the lastingness of time, everything encounters man and comes to appearance through the openness that man provides. Hence for Heidegger Being is the very opposite of an abstraction fashioned by human thought. Rather it is "what is given to thinking to think." True thinking should not concern itself with some arcane and hidden meaning, but with "something lying near, that which lies nearest," which, in virtue of that very nearness, man's thinking can readily fail to notice at all (WN 111).^{*} Being rules in whatever is—in the particular and in the far-ranging complexity of the whole—thereby constantly approaching and concerning man. "In the 'is,' " spoken of anything real whatever, " 'Being' is uttered" (T 46).

Being manifests itself continually anew. In keeping with this, thinking can never be for Heidegger a closed system. Rather it is the traveling of a road. Each thinker goes along a way that is peculiarly his own. In a fundamental sense it is the way and not the individual that assembles what is thought, that provides bounds and lets everything stand in relation to everything else.

Heidegger's writings exemplify this centrality of the *way* for

^{*} The five essays in this volume are referred to in the Introduction and in the footnotes with the following symbols:

QT: "The Question Concerning Technology"

T: "The Turning"

WN: "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead' "

AWP: "The Age of the World Picture"

SR: "Science and Reflection"

The abbreviation "Pr. Iden." refers to the essay "The Principle of Identity," in Heidegger's *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 23 ff. In all quotations from this work slight modifications of the translation have been made. "Sem" refers to the unpublished transcript of the "Séminaire tenu au Thor en septembre 1969 par le Professeur Martin Heidegger."

him. Characteristically he writes essays, excursions of thought. Each of the five essays in the present volume is of this nature. The five center around the theme of technology and the modern age, yet in reading each of them we travel a particular path. Each is distinctive and self-contained, and must be read in and for itself. In each, innumerable details of word and phrase and structure at once both arise from and reveal what Heidegger is saying.

Heidegger is primarily a teacher. He does not wish to travel alone and then report what he has seen, nor does he wish to go as a guide merely pointing out objects along the road. He wishes the reader to accompany him on the way, to participate with him, and even to begin to build his own way through thinking, and not merely to hear about what it is or should be.

Being approaches and concerns us in whatever is, yet Being characteristically conceals itself even in so doing. Hence thinking cannot readily find it out. The way through thinking to that place where man can open himself to the ruling of Being is difficult. It leads often through unfamiliar and even perilous country. We modern men are far from that open clearing. We are trapped and blinded by a mode of thought that insists on grasping reality through imposed conceptual structures. We cannot and will not come to that place where we can let what is, *be*. We do not perceive that the way by which true thinking proceeds can itself prove to be the source of that unity which we, often frenziedly, strive after in our philosophy, in our science, and in every aspect of our activity.

In order to prepare us truly to think, Heidegger, in keeping with the best speculative tradition, often carries us beyond our facile conceiving to seek the ground of our thinking. But he does more. He confronts us repeatedly with an abyss. For he strives to induce us to leap to new ground, to think in fresh ways. Hence, again and again, as we travel with him through these essays some precipice will confront us. One must often clamber through dark sayings and scale absurdities if one would follow on these paths. This is a daunting prospect. Yet Heidegger has hope for those who go with him. For the ground he seeks to achieve belongs fundamentally to man as man. Hence he calls each of us who reads to come and find it out.

Heidegger's writing is intrinsically sequential, always moving in some particular direction. Therefore one must discover meaning as one moves forward. One must experience the turnings of these paths just where they happen. No element can properly be excerpted and considered in isolation, and none can properly be left out of account; for each element plays its part in the forward movement. Words and sentences must always be read in context if one hopes to apprehend the meaning that they bear.

In this building forward of thinking there is always a pattern. Sometimes it is closely and intricately woven, as in "The Turning." Sometimes, as in "The Question Concerning Technology" or "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead,'" it is far-ranging, involving long, complex discussions whose interconnections can be hard to discern. At times bewilderment may seize even the thoughtful reader. Yet he must remember that, on each particular path, Heidegger himself never loses his way and never forgets in what direction he is going. He never abandons the sequence of his themes, never forgets what he has previously said, and never forsakes the pattern of his work. Everything fits, often with great precision, into that pattern. For Heidegger is always working out of the wholeness provided by the delimiting way pursued.

Heidegger must build and is content to build finitely. However intricate the relationships to be expressed, however manifold the given meaning, he must set forth one facet at a time. There is tremendous rigor in his work. Therefore he makes great demands on those who follow him. Yet the reader who perseveres may hope to experience the excitement of discovery as he finds himself intimately engaged in the pursuit of thinking.

Because Heidegger is eager that the reader should follow him and sensible that the way is hard, again and again he speaks so as to evoke a response that will carry his companion forward. Often at some key point he will ask a question, seeking to force the reader to come to grips with what is being said, to think, to reply, and then to listen for an answer that will send the discussion forward: "Does this mean that man, for better or worse, is helplessly delivered over to technology?" (T 37). "In what does the essence of modern science lie?" (AWP 117). "What is hap-

pening to Being?" (WN 104). When we come upon such questions we must listen alertly. A question may be answered in an immediately ensuing sentence, or its answer may emerge only after an involved exposition. But an answer will come. And it will be important to the whole discussion.

Sometimes Heidegger speaks with sharp emphasis, to indicate that a point *must* be heard: "never can it be sufficiently stressed . . ." (SR 160), "a confrontation with Christendom is absolutely not in any way . . ." (WN 64), "never does the Being of that which is consist . . ." (AWP 130). Such words demand our closest attention.

Again, Heidegger has many devices for catching the reader up and jolting him from his habitual frame of mind. "But where have we strayed to?" he will ask, after a sequence of thought has drawn to an expected conclusion (QT 12). Or he will interject some sharp assertion: "for centuries we have acted as though the doctrine of the four causes had fallen from heaven as a truth as clear as daylight" (QT 6)—and he thereby calls in question our unconsidered assumptions. At one point he will echo what we are thinking, only to amplify it with a word that moves it into another dimension: Yes, the instrumental definition of technology is "correct"; it is "indeed so uncannily correct"—and the word "uncanny," even if forgotten, hangs over the portrayal of the skeletal power into whose domain we look in words that eventually follow (QT 5, 19 ff.). At another point he will thrust at the foundations of our thinking with a quick reversal of thought, hoping to dislodge us and bring us to new ground: "Modern physics is called mathematical because, in a remarkable way, it makes use of a quite specific mathematics. But it can proceed mathematically in this way only because, in a deeper sense, it is already itself mathematical" (AWP 118)—and we are compelled to ask, What is he saying with this puzzling assertion?

Sometimes such thrusts are all but beyond our comprehension: "The essence of technology is by no means anything technological" (QT 4); "Physics as physics can make no assertions about physics" (SR 176). Such words may even, when heard superficially, sound like mere cleverness or arrogant nonsense. More seriously confronted, such statements may fairly halt the reader in dismay and exasperation. "I know this man must be

wrong," he may protest, "if he says that the essence of technology has nothing to do with technology. He can't be saying that. But what is he saying? I am willing to do as I was asked, to follow, to question, to build a way. But what can I do with an opaque statement like that? 'The essence of technology is by no means anything technological!'" Yet in such opaque statements the meaning of the way is often most deeply lodged. Again the reader has been forced to ask, to look for the ranges of meaning within seemingly familiar words. Never should it be thought that at such junctures Heidegger is merely playing with words. For him, rather, language plays with us. The swiftly turned phrase is not a roadblock. It is another, if enigmatic, signpost. It is a statement opaque only by reason of fullness, intended to guide the reader forward in search of the meaning that it bodies forth.

Access to the way to which Heidegger wishes to introduce us, the way to thinking and to a free relationship with Being, lies through language. For thinking is man's according with and responding to Being, and "language is the primal dimension" in which that responsive corresponding takes place (T 41).

Heidegger has a poet's ear for language and often writes in a poetic way. For him the proper function of words is not to stand for, to signify. Rather, words point to something beyond themselves. They are translucent bearers of meaning. To name a thing is to summon it, to call it toward one. Heidegger's words are rich in connotation. Once inclined to invent words to carry needed meanings, he has more recently become concerned with the rehabilitation of language, with the restoring of its original, now obliterated force.

Repeatedly he tells us of the ancient and fundamental meanings of words, carefully setting forth nuances or tracing historical changes that took place as thought passed from one language to another. Our word "technology," we learn, rests back upon the Greek *technē*. Our "cause," from the Latin *causa*, translates the Greek *aition*, which has a very different meaning. "Essence," "theory," "reflection," the "real"—word after word is searched out to its roots and defined and used according to its latent meanings. In all this Heidegger is of course no mere antiquarian.

He has said that language is the house of Being. The reciprocal relation between Being and man is fulfilled through language. Hence to seek out what language *is*, through discovering what was spoken in it when it first arose and what has been and can be heard in it thereafter, is in fact to seek out that relationship. It is to endeavor to place oneself where the utterance of Being may be heard and expressed.

Heidegger chooses—he himself might say “discovers”—words that are as expressive as possible. Often he defines them with great precision. Sometimes he points out facets of meaning that are clearly present in a German word, as in *verschulden* (to be responsible or indebted), *wirken* (to work or bring about), or *besinnen* (to reflect; from *sinnen*, to scent out or sense) QT 7; SR 159, 180). Sometimes he presses a word forward to encompass new meanings that he hears within it, as with *Bestand* (stock, now become standing-reserve), or *Gestell* (frame, now become Enframing), or *Geschick* (fate, now become the self-adaptive destining of Being) (QT 17, 19, 24; T 37–38).

Heidegger's use of words is very often peculiar to himself. It is characteristically demanding and often strange to our thought. The words that meet us in his essays are not intended to mystify his readers or to attract devotees who will facilely repeat esoteric speech. Yet Heidegger is acutely aware that his words may well be seized upon and used in just such ways: we must, he says, keep from “hastily recasting the language of the thinker in the coin of a terminology,” immediately repeating some new and impressive word “instead of devoting all our efforts to thinking through what has been said.”¹

Since words are in no sense abstractions, but rather show the Being of that of which they speak, Heidegger can and does employ them variously so as to bring out particular aspects of their meaning at particular points. But he uses them consistently according to his understanding of the meaning that they carry; and nuances that fall away at any given time nevertheless always remain alive and must be continually heard. We must read Heidegger's definitions and study his ways of using words with care. For these alone, and not our own preconceptions and ingrained notions of meaning, will tell us what words like “truth”

1. “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics,” in *Identity and Difference*, pp. 73–74.

or “essence” or “technology” or “metaphysics” are conveying here.

In this situation the non-German reader is of course at a peculiar disadvantage. A translator is inexorably forced to choose among many aspects of connotation for word upon word and to recast sentence after sentence into a very different mold. Parallel words and even rather lengthy phrases have sometimes been used here to render single German words in order to display adequately their breadth of meaning. Every attempt has been made to maintain consistency in the translation of given words and to mirror as faithfully as possible the inner emphases of construction resident in the German text. Yet despite all such efforts, the evocative power of the original word, as often of the original stress and turn of phrase, can scarcely be preserved for the English-speaking reader. In these essays, footnotes and citations of the original German have been provided to help the reader at crucial points. The essays have been translated with care, and it is hoped that much of Heidegger's meaning lies within these pages, even though the fullness of the original German must be lacking. It goes without saying that anyone who wishes to know Heidegger's work well must read and study the German text.

When all this has been said, it must be added that the first problem of the reader of this English volume is apt to lie, not in the fact that he is reading Heidegger in translation, but in the fact that in reading Heidegger he is encountering words that he must learn to let come to him with fresh meaning. Definition and context remain to give considerable aid. Moreover, even in the language of translation the expressiveness of many of Heidegger's words can reach us with genuine power. If we can learn, with whatever difficulty, to think truth as unconcealment or essence as the manner in which something endures in coming to presence; if we can let words like “technology” or “destining” or “danger” sound with the meaning Heidegger intends, then something of that power will be present for us.

Very often Heidegger uses words that point to realities or relations beyond those of which they immediately speak. On occasion a pair of words will be found, each of which, if we are truly listening, more or less clearly suggests and reenforces the other. Words like “unconcealing” and “concealing,” “pres-

encing" and "withdrawing," are intended variously to act in this way. More importantly, such words, like many others, also have a two-wayness that permits them to point at once to Being and to man. Thus "presencing" and "revealing" speak simultaneously of a moving into presence or unconcealment and of one toward whom that movement takes place, while "concealing" and "withdrawing" tell of a movement away and remind of one who is being deprived of that which might be present or revealed.

Often this breadth of expressiveness possessed by Heidegger's language can help the attentive reader to make his way through difficult passages. In "The Turning," for example, throughout the especially difficult sequence in which we are told of what comes to pass in the turning of the danger that is the essence of technology, almost no overt allusion is made to the role of man (T 41-47). That role is set forth in the opening pages of the essay (pp. 36-41), but it could easily be let slip from view as the reader follows the intricate discussion. Throughout that very discussion, however, a whole series of words—"light," "in-flashing," "glance," "insight"—appears. And these can serve to remind one of a lighting up that both shines forth and is seen. These words speak specifically of what happens in the turning within Being itself. But they also sustain for us, if but hiddenly, the memory of man's necessary involvement in what is coming to pass, until the human role is again taken up and brought forward (T 47).

Heidegger makes particular use of prepositions and adverbs, standing either alone or as components of verbs, to speak thus of fundamental relations, even when those relations themselves are not under discussion. Such words as "into," "from out of," "toward," "forth," "out," and "hither" will be met with frequently in these pages. They should be carefully noted, for they can embody with peculiar force the apprehension of reality out of which Heidegger is speaking.

Poet that he is, Heidegger often speaks the same words again and again and again. Repetition gives emphasis. A word introduced at one point and then taken up only later into full discussion gains in richness through that early introduction, for its presence threads all but unnoticed through the pattern of intervening thought. The same phrases are used now, then used again;

yet they are not really the same. The later phrase is always fuller in meaning by reason of all that has been said since its words were first spoken. This cumulative power of repetition can be seen strikingly when Heidegger returns at the close of an essay to words and themes that sound toward its beginning (cf. T, WN). Such words speak with new eloquence when we find them thus at the conclusion of an arduous path.

Above all, the reader must not grow deaf to Heidegger's words; he must not let their continual repetition or their appearance in all but identical phrases lull him into gliding effortlessly on, oblivious to the subtle shifts and gatherings of meaning that are constantly taking place.

A number of terms that we have used thus far point to fundamental characteristics in Heidegger's thinking that must become integral to one's own outlook if one would enter into and gain some understanding of his work. We have spoken of the "way" that "assembles" and relates things to one another. We have alluded to "wholeness," to "pattern," to the expressing of facets of thought in finite "sequence." We have discussed the "two-wayness" of particular words, and the "richness of connotation" inherent in Heidegger's language generally. All these are but particular manifestations of a thinking that is essentially inclusive and essentially rooted in the discerning of relations. On the ground where Heidegger moves, reality does not appear as composed of discrete elements or aspects that are linked by cause and effect connections. For Heidegger thinking is not primarily deductive, although he often shows himself to be a master at elucidating the implications of a statement or thought. For him the primary question to be asked is always *how* and never *why*. His is descriptive and evocative thinking, in the sense that it tells us of what *is* and of what is taking place, and seeks to bring it before us. The reality described is manifold. Aspects impinge upon one another. Movements and interactions are what must fundamentally be recounted.

But these interrelations always involve some intricate unity. The inherence of something in something else or the manifestation in the present of what has long been present, the sameness of various and even opposite manifestations or the oneness of

subtly diverse occurrences—such things are here to be met with at every turn.

Once more the reader may be tempted to say, “What nonsense!” One should be wary, however, of leaping hastily to any such conclusion. So pervasively does unitive, relational thinking inform every aspect of Heidegger’s work that one who dismissed such thinking out of hand would risk extinguishing for himself any hope of understanding what Heidegger is saying. The reader must in fact become so alert to inclusive complexities of thought that he will be sensitive to their presence even when they do not manifestly appear.

Heidegger, as is typical of him, is concerned in the essays before us with the understanding of Western history and Western thought. We ordinarily think of the modern age, “the age of science and technology,” as one that began a few centuries ago and that is unquestionably new. Heidegger too can speak of a new departure in the modern age; yet for him to say this is to point at the same time to the coming into overt expression of a tendency whose true origin lies decisively if hiddenly in Greek antiquity.

The fundamental Greek experience of reality was, Heidegger believes, one in which men were immediately responsive to whatever was presencing to them. They openly received whatever spontaneously met them (AWP 131).

For the Greeks the coming into the “present” out of the “not-present” was *poisēsis* (QT 10). This “bringing forth” was manifest first of all in *physis*, that presencing wherein the bursting-forth arose from within the thing itself. *Technē* was also a form of this bringing forth, but one in which the bursting-forth lay not in the thing itself but in another. In *technē*, through art and handcraft, man participated in conjunction with other contributing elements—with “matter,” “aspect,” and “circumscribing bounds”—in the bringing forth of a thing into being (QT 7-8). Moreover the arts of the mind were called *technē* also (QT 13).

Greek man openly received and made known that which offered itself to him. Yet nevertheless he tended in the face of the onrush of the revealing of Being in all that met him to seek to master it. It is just this tendency toward mastery that shows itself in Greek philosophy. Philosophy sprang from the funda-

mental Greek experience of reality. The philosopher wondered at the presencing of things and, wondering, fixed upon them. (That, Heidegger remarks, is why Thales tumbled into a well! [Sem 11]). The philosopher sought to grasp and consider reality, to discover whatever might be permanent within it, so as to know what it truly was. But precisely in so doing he distanced himself from Being, which was manifesting itself in the presencing of all particular beings. For in his seeking, he reached out not simply to receive with openness, but also to control. Here, to Heidegger’s thinking, lies the real origin of the modern technological age. *Technē* was a skilled and thorough knowing that disclosed, that was, as such, a mode of bringing forth into presencing, a mode of revealing. Philosophy, as a thinking that considered reality and therewith made it manifest in its Being, was *technē* also in its own way. In the Western tradition, the metaphysical thinking born of that philosophy carried forward the expression of *technē* into modern times.

Heidegger finds Christian theology to be wholly dominated by metaphysics during the centuries after the beginning of the Christian era. In the medieval period men were preoccupied with the question of how they might be in right relationship with God, how they might be assured of salvation, i.e., how they might find enduring security. At the close of that period the overt theological undergirding of these questions fell away, but the quest for security remained. Man needed a new basis for his self-assurance, his assurance of rightness. The work of Descartes, itself an expression of the shift in men’s outlook that had already taken place, set forth that basis in philosophical terms (WN 88–90).

In the *ego cogito [ergo] sum* of Descartes, man found his self-certainty *within himself*. Man’s thinking (*cogitare*), which Heidegger says was also a “driving together” (*co-agitare*), was found to contain within itself the needed sureness. Man could *represent* reality to himself, that is, he could set it up over against himself, as it *appeared* to him, as an *object* of thought. In so doing, he felt assured at once of his own existence and of the existence of the reality thus conceived (AWP 131).

It is in this that Heidegger sees the focal point for the beginning of the modern age. The tendency present in metaphysics from its inception here begins to come to fulfillment. Man, once

concerned to discover and decisively to behold the truly real, now finds himself certain of himself; and he takes himself, in that self-certainty, to be more and more the determining center of reality.

This stance of man in the midst of all that is bespeaks the fact that man has become "subject." The phenomenon of the "subject" is itself not new. It was present among the Greeks. But there subject, *hypokeimenon*, that-which-lies-before (for the Greeks, that which looms up, e.g., an island or mountain), meant the reality that confronted man in the power of its presence (cf. Sem. 7). With Descartes at the beginning of the modern period, this meaning of *hypokeimenon*, subject, was decisively transformed.

Descartes fixed his attention not on a reality beyond himself, but precisely on that which was present *as* and *within* his own consciousness. At this point human self-consciousness became subject *par excellence*, and everything that had the character of subject—of that-which-lies-before—came to find the locus and manner of its being precisely in that self-consciousness, i.e., in the unity of thinking and being that was established by Descartes in his *ego cogito [ergo] sum*, through which man was continually seeking to make himself secure. Here man became what he has been increasingly throughout our period. He became subject, the self-conscious shaper and guarantor of all that comes to him from beyond himself (AWP 147 ff.).

Modern science is for Heidegger a work of man as subject in this sense. Modern man as scientist, through the prescribed procedures of experiment, inquires of nature to learn more and more about it. But in so doing he does not relate himself to nature as the Greek related himself to the multitudinous presencing of everything that met him spontaneously at every turn. He does not relate to nature in the openness of immediate response. For the scientist's "nature" is in fact, Heidegger says, a human construction. Science strikingly manifests the way in which modern man as subject *represents* reality. The modern scientist does not let things presence as they are in themselves. He arrests them, objectifies them, sets them over against himself, precisely by representing them to himself in a particular way. Modern theory, Heidegger says, is an "entrapping and securing refining

of the real" (SR 167). Reality as "nature" is represented as a manifold of cause and effect coherences. So represented, nature becomes amenable to experiment. But this does not happen simply because nature intrinsically *is* of this character; rather it happens, Heidegger avers, specifically because man himself *represents* nature as of this character and then grasps and investigates it according to methods that, not surprisingly, fit perfectly the reality so conceived.

Here, science (*Wissenschaft*) means any discipline or branch of knowledge. In speaking of science, Heidegger can refer as often to the discipline of history, with its representing of historical events as causal sequences, as he does to physics and its related disciplines with their respective ways of representing nature.

The intricate system of techniques and apparatus that we call modern technology belongs essentially to this same realm. In it contemporary man's inveterate drive to master whatever confronts him is plain for all to see. Technology treats everything with "objectivity." The modern technologist is regularly expected, and expects himself, to be able to impose order on all data, to "process" every sort of entity, nonhuman and human alike, and to devise solutions for every kind of problem. He is forever getting things under control.

Heidegger's portrayal of the beginnings of the modern age and of its characteristic phenomena often so sharply stresses the self-exalting and restrictive role of man that his thinking can seem not unlike that of those who unconditionally condemn "Cartesian abstraction" and decry the pernicious tendency of science and technology to cut man off from vital awareness of the real (AWP 118 ff., SR 169 ff.). But for Heidegger that simple stress never stands alone. Its seeming simplicity in fact masks a concomitant hidden truth that actually belies any such simplicity. *Always* for Heidegger—even when he most vividly describes how man as subject has brought the modern age into being and how he now shapes and dominates its phenomena—the primal relationship between man and Being lies as near at hand and demands as much to be taken into account as it does when he speaks of the ancient Greeks and of their immediate responsiveness to the ruling of Being in whatever was presencing

to them. However extensively Heidegger may speak about man, his thinking and his doing, he never loses sight of the truth that "in the 'is' of everything that is, 'Being' is uttered."

Modern technology, like ancient *technē*, from which it springs—and like science and metaphysics, which are essentially one with it—is a mode of revealing. Being, through its manner of ruling in all that is, is manifesting itself within it.

That which has come to fruition in Descartes and in all of us, his modern successors, not only took its rise long before in a temporal sense. It also took its rise long in advance from beyond man (QT 14). For in its fulfillment Heidegger sees the holding-sway of a "destining" or "sending forth" of Being, that has come upon man and molded him and his world (QT 24).

In the time of the Greeks the philosophers did not simply impose categories like *idea* upon reality so as to make it accessible to themselves in the way they wished. Rather, that which everywhere met them in its Being so offered itself as to call forth their thought in just those ways. In the same manner, in the modern "Cartesian" scientific age man does not merely impose his own construction upon reality. He does indeed represent reality to himself, refusing to let things emerge as they are. He does forever catch reality up in a conceptual system and find that he must fix it thus before he can see it at all. But man does this *both* as his own work *and* because the revealing now holding sway at once in all that is and in himself brings it about that he should do so. This simultaneous juxtaposing of the destining of Being and the doing of man is absolutely fundamental for Heidegger's thinking.

We ordinarily understand modern technology as having arisen subsequently to science and as subordinate to it. We consider it to be a phenomenon brought about through scientific advance. Heidegger points out that, on the contrary, modern science and machine technology are mutually dependent upon one another. More importantly, technology, in its essence, precedes and is more fundamental than science. This is no mere statement concerning chronological priority, for the "essence of technology" is the very mode of Being's revealing of itself that is holding sway in all phenomena of the modern age. Man's arrogation to himself of the role of subject in philosophy; his objectifying of

nature, life, and history in dealing with them in the sciences; and his calculating and cataloguing and disposing of all manner of things through machine technology—all these alike are expressions of that essence and of that revealing. Technology, so understood, is in no sense an instrument of man's making or in his control. It is rather that phenomenon, ruled from out of Being itself, that is centrally determining all of Western history.

Modern technology in its essence is a "challenging revealing." It involves a contending with everything that is. For it "sets upon" everything, imposing upon it a demand that seizes and requisitions it for use. Under the dominion of this challenging revealing, nothing is allowed to appear as it is in itself.

The rule of such a way of revealing is seen when *man* becomes subject, when from out of his consciousness he assumes dominion over everything outside himself, when he represents and objectifies and, in objectifying, begins to take control over everything. It comes to its fulfillment when, as is increasingly the case in our time, things are not even regarded as objects, because their only important quality has become their readiness for use. Today all things are being swept together into a vast network in which their only meaning lies in their being available to serve some end that will itself also be directed toward getting everything under control. Heidegger calls this fundamentally undifferentiated supply of the available the "standing-reserve" (QT 17).

The ordering of everything as standing-reserve, like objectifying itself, is once more a manifestation of a destining. It is first of all the bringing to fruition of a way of appearing that is given to everything that is, from out of Being itself. But as such, it does not, of course, take place simply outside of or apart from man. The same destining that gives this mode of appearing to whatever is also rules in him, provoking him to order everything in just this way, as standing-reserve. The challenging claim that now summons man forth, that "gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve," Heidegger calls *das Ge-stell* (Enframing) (QT 19). As "Enframing," that claim ceaselessly brings both men and things to take their places in the stark configuration that is being wrought out through ordering for use.

This challenging summons, ruling in modern technology, is

a mode of Being's revealing of itself. Yet in it, also, Being withdraws, so that the summons that thus "enframes" is all but devoid of Being as empowering to be. Compelled by its claim, ordered and orderer alike are denuded. All that is and man himself are gripped in a structuring that exhibits a mere skeleton of their Being, of the way in which they intrinsically are. In all this the essence of technology rules.

The dominion of Enframing as the essence of modern technology and the concomitant presence of the standing-reserve are most clearly seen in the realm of machine technology, where no object has significance in itself and where the "orderability" of everything, from energy and statistics to machines and persons, is all-important. It can be found also, Heidegger says, in the sphere of science, namely, in modern physics. There again, the object, otherwise the hallmark of the sciences, has disappeared. In its stead the relation between subject and object comes to the fore and "becomes a standing-reserve" to be controlled (SR 173).

In metaphysics too the rule of the essence of technology appears. Perhaps rather surprisingly, Heidegger finds in Nietzsche the culmination of the movement of modern metaphysics begun in Descartes and carried forward by subsequent thinkers. Standing within the modern metaphysical outlook, Nietzsche, in asking concerning the reality of the real, found the will to be fundamentally determinative. The self-consciousness of the subject, which Descartes established as normative, is raised in Nietzsche to full metaphysical expression. Self-consciousness is here the self-consciousness of the will willing itself. The will to power, fundamental for Nietzsche, is no mere human willing. It is the mode of Being now ruling in everything that is, which must find accomplishment through man (WN 96-97).

In striving ever forward in and to greater power, the will to power must—indeed in the most extreme manner—act in the very way that Heidegger finds characteristic of metaphysical thinking as such. In positing for itself the preservation-enhancement conditions of life that attend its own necessary advance, the will to power cannot and does not receive what comes to it and leave it to its spontaneously flowing presencing. Rather it must arrest it, delimit it, make it into a constant reserve, into that on the basis of which it itself moves forward (WN 83 ff.).

The establishing of the conditions necessary for the will to power's willing of itself is thought of by Nietzsche as value-positing.

Nietzsche designates as "nihilism" the devaluing of the transcendent values imposed on man by traditional metaphysical thinking; and he calls "completed nihilism" the "revaluing," accomplished in his own thinking, that at once guards against a slipping back into those former values and provides an affirmative basis for the positing of new values. For Heidegger, Nietzsche actually displays in his "completed nihilism" a yet more extreme form of nihilism whose character he does not himself suspect. Despite his desire to overcome metaphysics, Nietzsche stands squarely in the metaphysical tradition, for he continues to think in terms of valuing. He can indeed take Being to be a value, a condition posited in the will to power for its own preservation and enhancement. The Being of everything, far from being a revealing presencing to be freely received, becomes a determinative aim in view that must lead always to some further end. Here self-consciousness—which as subject sets itself and everything present to it before itself, that it may make itself secure—comes, in the mode of the will to power, to take disposal, in its value-positing, even over Being.

It is just this thinking that is for Heidegger in the highest degree "nihilistic." In it Being has been degraded into a value (cf. WN 102-104); Being cannot be Being; i.e., the power of everything whatever to presence directly in its Being has been destroyed by a thinking that would find every aspect and characteristic of reality to be at the disposal and service of the final expression of the subjectness of the subject as self-securing self-consciousness—the will to power. Nietzsche's anticipated "overman," embodying in himself the determining power once supposed to lie in the realm of transcendent values, would actualize this subjectness.

In this way Heidegger sees in Nietzsche's philosophy the completion and consummation of metaphysics, and that must mean also the consummation of the essence of technology. Nietzsche's overman might be said to be technological man *par excellence*. The name "overman" does not designate an individual. Rather it names that humanity which, as modern humanity, is now be-

ginning to enter upon the consummation of the modern age (cf. WN 96). Overman would consciously will and would have dominion and disposal over all things as the one fully manifesting the will to power.

Once again the thinking that degrades Being and in effect destroys it as Being is not a merely human doing. Indeed, Heidegger sees in the fact that Nietzsche's work, for all its bold newness, only brings to culmination tendencies present in metaphysics from its beginning, striking evidence that the obstructing, yes, the very absence, of Being in its manifestation in Western thinking derives from Being itself. Precisely as with the challenging revealing of Enframing, the power that, even in his highest metaphysical thinking, thrusts man forward as value-positing and hence fundamentally as "ordering for use"—and that simultaneously brings it about that nothing that is can appear as it is in itself, and that man must conceive and determine everything in this controlling way—is the very destining of Being itself that is holding sway more and more pervasively in the modern age.

Heidegger sees every aspect of contemporary life, not only machine technology and science but also art, religion, and culture understood as the pursuit of the highest goods, as exhibiting clear marks of the ruling essence of technology that holds sway in the dominion of man as self-conscious, representing subject. Everywhere is to be found the juxtaposing of subject and object and the reliance on the experience and the evaluating judgment of the subject as decisive. The presencing of everything that is has been cut at its roots. Men speak, significantly enough, of a "world picture" or "world view." Only in the modern age could they speak so. For the phrase "world picture" means just this: that what is, in its entirety—i.e., the real in its every aspect and element—now is "taken in such a way that it first *is in being* and *only* is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth" (AWP 129–130, italics mine). Were contemporary man seriously to become aware of this character of his life and of his thinking, he might, with the modern physicist, well say, "It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself" (QT 27).

Such a judgment would, however, be a delusion. Man in fact "*can never* encounter only himself" (QT 27). For man is summoned, claimed, in the challenging revealing of Enframing even when he knows it not, even when he thinks himself most alone or most dreams of mastering his world. Man's obliviousness to that claim is itself a manifestation of the rule of Enframing. So completely has he been drawn into that dominion that he is actually cut off from awareness of his own essence. For he is estranged from Being even while Being, in the self-withdrawnness of its challenging self-revealing, is so encountering him that he is in fact being constrained to bring about the dominion of that revealing—i.e., is being claimed by it. For this reason, man does not know himself as the one who is being brought into relation to Being; that is, he does not know himself as man. Ruled in this way, man today, despite what seems true to him, *never* encounters himself, i.e., his essence.

Man needs above all in our age to know himself as the one who *is* so claimed. The challenging summons of Enframing "sends into a way of revealing" (QT 24). So long as man does not know this, he cannot know himself; nor can he know himself in relation to his world. As a consequence he becomes trapped in one of two attitudes, both equally vain: either he fancies that he can in fact master technology and can by technological means—by analyzing and calculating and ordering—control all aspects of his life; or he recoils at the inexorable and dehumanizing control that technology is gaining over him, rejects it as the work of the devil, and strives to discover for himself some other way of life apart from it. What man truly needs is to know the destining to which he belongs and to know it *as* a destining, as the disposing power that governs all phenomena in this technological age.

A destining of Being is never a blind fate that simply compels man from beyond himself. It is, rather, an opening way in which man is called upon to move to bring about that which is taking place. For man to know himself as the one so called upon is for him to be free. For Heidegger freedom is not a matter of man's willing or not willing particular things. Freedom is man's opening himself—his submitting himself in attentive awareness—to the

summons addressed to him and to the way on which he is already being sent. It is to apprehend and accept the dominion of Being already holding sway, and so to be "taken into a freeing claim" (QT 26).

The truth of modern man's situation must become known to him. This does not mean at all that man can be presented with some "truth" that, if it were once brought to his attention, he might then grasp, assent to, and act upon. For Heidegger such "truth," the corresponding of a statement with a situation, would be mere correctness. *Truth* is unconcealment. That is not to say that it is something immediately accessible. *Unconcealment is simultaneously concealment*. Unconcealment, truth, is never nakedly present to be immediately known. The truth of modern man's situation is a revealing that comes upon him, but it comes upon him veiled.

Enframing is a mode of revealing, a destining of Being. Yet precisely under its dominion nothing whatever, including man himself, appears as it intrinsically is; the truth of its Being remains concealed. Everything exists and appears as though it were of man's making.

Because Enframing, as a revealing of Being, rules in this way, it is a danger beyond any danger that man otherwise knows. The essence of Enframing, its manner of coming to presence, "is that setting-upon gathered into itself which entraps the truth of its own coming to presence with oblivion. This entrapping disguises itself, in that it develops into the setting in order of everything that presences as standing-reserve, establishes itself in the standing-reserve, and rules as the standing-reserve" (T 37-38). In this "oblivion" that blocks the self-manifesting of Being, man's danger lies. The danger is real that every other way of revealing will be driven out and that man will lose his true relation to himself and to all else. Language, the primal mode through which man may experience and think and know whatever is, in its Being, may be bereft of its power, to become only a mere instrument of information. And man may be divested of his true essence and become one who "manufactures himself" (Sem. 34; cf. QT 26 ff.). Man himself, through whom the ordering characteristic of Enframing takes place, may even be wholly sucked up into the standing-reserve and may come to exist not as the

"openness-for-Being" ("Da-sein"), but as a merely self-conscious being knowing himself only as an instrument ready for use.²

Yet this stark eventuality need not befall man. For Enframing necessarily and intrinsically rules not merely as danger but also as that which saves. These are not two discrete aspects of its holding sway. The danger "is the saving power" (T 42). Enframing is a revealing. It manifests first of all the withdrawnness of Being. It estranges man from Being. Yet it remains a revealing. In it Being is still confronting man. Therefore Enframing bears within itself simultaneously with its endangering of man that other possibility, that man will be delivered from his estrangement and that it will be granted to him to come into an essential relationship with Being, recollectingly to receive what is present to him in all that is and thoughtfully to guard it (QT 32 ff.).

In this twofoldness of Enframing as danger and saving power, and not in any merely human effort, lies the possibility that technology may be overcome. This does not mean that technology will be done away with. It means, rather, that technology will be surmounted from within itself, in such a way as to be restored to and fulfilled in its own essence. The unconcealment, the truth, concealed in the rule of technology will flash forth in that very concealing. Being will reveal itself in the very ongoing of technology, precisely in that flashing. But not without man. For man is needed for this as for every revealing of Being. Man must come to that place where, through language, through thinking, this revealing may come to pass. Yet man cannot bring it about, and he cannot know when it will take place (T 39, 41-42).

What comes to pass happens suddenly. Heidegger speaks of it as a "turning." It is a turning within Enframing, within the essence of technology as the danger. It is the entrapping of the truth of Being in oblivion, i.e., in concealment. The truth, the unconcealment, of Being, is, in the very instant of its revealing,

2. In a letter to Professor J. Glenn Gray (October 10, 1972) concerning this work, Heidegger states: "Everything that I have attempted is misunderstood without the turning from 'consciousness' into the 'openness-for-Being' that was being prepared in *Being and Time*." ("Ohne die in *Sein und Zeit* sich anbahnende Wendung vom 'Bewusstsein' in das 'Da-sein' wird alles, was ich versuchte, missverstanden.") Heidegger has emphatically expressed his preference for "openness" and his disapprobation of "there" as a translation of *da* in *Dasein*.

caught up in concealing. Yet the revealing of the truth of Being is concealed *as revealing*. Hence, "when this *entrapping-with-oblivion* does come expressly to pass, then oblivion as such turns in and abides"; that is, concealment is *revealed as concealment* (T 43)—for it conceals that which is itself simultaneously shown as *being* concealed.

Here Enframing, a destining of Being that denies to everything its Being, becomes simultaneously that which saves, that which bestows Being. For in it the truth of Being, Being's own unconcealment, turns about and enters into whatever is (cf. T 41).

In this "turning," Being reveals itself solely from out of itself; yet it necessarily does so in such a way as to reach man. For without man, Being cannot come freely into the open, as the Being of what is. This turning about of concealing and unconcealing, which so closely involves Being and man, is a granted gift.

The sudden flashing of the truth of Being into once truthless Being, which comes to pass in the essence of technology, in Enframing, is an "entering flashing look," is "insight into that which is"—i.e., into Being itself (T 46). This is no human looking, no human seeing. Quite to the contrary, it is Being's disclosing of itself. In it men are the ones beheld in their essence, *so that they behold* (cf. T 47). Heidegger uses for that in-flashing which is the self-revealing turning within Being itself the word *Ereignis*. It is a disclosing bringing to pass, a "bringing to sight that brings into its own" (T 45, 38 n. 4). Taking place within Being, it returns Being to itself—here, restoring the essence of technology to itself as a revealing—and it simultaneously brings man, glimpsed in his essence, to glimpse the revealing given appropriately to *him*.

This disclosing brings itself to pass always uniquely. Being and man belong together. The disclosing here named is the fulfilling of that relation. It brings man and Being into their own in entrusting them to one another. It is a "letting belong together" of man and Being (Pr. Iden. 39).

Enframing and the "disclosing that brings into its own" are in truth one. Heidegger can speak of Enframing as the "photographic negative" of that disclosing (Sem. 42). In enframing, Being and man confront each other, but they meet in estrangement. In the unique disclosing that brings them into their own,

they meet in the very same relationship; but now, *instead of and yet within* the skeletal darkness of Enframing, there flashes *also* the light of that disclosing which brings them to belong together, which grants them what is truly their own.

Here there can be disclosed to modern man something beyond what was known to the Greeks. The Greeks knew the togetherness of man and Being. But now, in our age, it can be possible to "glimpse a first oppressing flash" of the disclosing bringing-to-pass that brings man and Being into a constellation that is new and newly known (Pr. Iden. 38). In Enframing, precisely in its character as "the mutual challenge of man and Being to enter upon the calculating of the calculable," that newness of relationship appears (Pr. Iden. 40). When we catch sight of the turning in the essence of Enframing, we do not simply catch sight of the belonging together of man and Being. We do more: "We witness a *belonging* together of man and Being in which the *letting belong first determines* the manner of the 'together' and its unity" (Pr. Iden. 38, second italics mine). Within and beyond the looming presence of modern technology there dawns the possibility of a fuller relationship between man and Being—and hence between man and all that is—than there has ever been.

In looking upon the present, our thinking can hope to see, over and beyond the immediate, evident situation of man, the relation of Being and man "from out of that which gives them to belong to one another, from out of the disclosing bringing-to-pass that brings them into their own" (Pr. Iden. 40). Such thinking is completely different from the sort of instantaneous calculating on which we more and more rely. It is a thinking within the sphere of tradition, a learning through what has been thought. As such, it is freed by tradition from being a mere thinking back, to become a thinking forward that is totally removed from planning, ordering, and setting up for use.

It has sometimes been said that Heidegger exhibits in his philosophical work extreme arrogance. True, he does not, like Descartes, put forth his thinking as possessed of the compelling certainty of self-evident truth; nor does he, like Hegel, believe himself capable of surveying and expressing the truth about all human history and all reality. But does he not consider himself

to have insight into reality such as none before him has ever had? It is a fact that his thinking is confined to Western history and Western thought. But within that scope does he not, as in his treatment of Nietzsche, believe himself able on the basis of that insight to think that which is "unthought" in the thought of others, to discover the true meaning that those before him could not themselves see? He does. Yet is this arrogance, or is there insight here?

Surely Heidegger himself would say that whatever insight he has is not of his own discovering but comes to him from out of reality itself. Clearly he continually feels himself summoned to respond to the revealing that comes to him and to call others to the same path. Deeply conscious as he is of his place within a tradition, Heidegger doubtless regards what seems to some like the proud reinterpreting of others' work as being, rather, the discovery in that work of far more meaning than those before him who accomplished it were given to see. Certainly, although Heidegger speaks with assurance of his insight, and though it ranges far, he also holds it to be but a glimpse, a beginning, an entering of modern man upon a thinking that, in its own time, may be granted to see far more clearly and to see anew (cf. WN 55–56). In his philosophical work he has moved forward and ever forward, not bound by any given formulation of his thought. To Heidegger true thinking always remains a revealing, and he must follow where that revealing leads. The openness of his thinking shows itself fittingly enough in the fact that each of the essays in this volume ends, not with a declarative statement of what is incontrovertibly true, but with actual questions or with a pointing to some way or reality needed beyond what is now known. Each essay, whole though it be in itself, remains a part of an unfinished *way*. Where Descartes built glass palaces inviolable and Hegel a mansion finished for all time, Heidegger builds, as it were, sandcastles, ready to be reshaped or swept away in the next responsive on-working of thought.

Heidegger has written:

At the close of a lecture called "The Question Concerning Technology," given some time ago, I said: "Questioning is the piety of thinking." "Piety" is meant here in the ancient sense: obedient, or

submissive, and in this case submitting to what thinking has to think about. One of the exciting experiences of thinking is that at times it does not fully comprehend the new insights it has just gained, and does not properly see them through. Such, too, is the case with the sentence just cited that questioning is the piety of thinking. The lecture ending with that sentence was already in the ambience of the realization that the true stance of thinking cannot be to put questions, but must be to listen to that which our questioning vouchsafes—and all questioning begins to be a questioning only in virtue of pursuing its quest for essential Being.³

This is Heidegger's own way and his quest. This is the intriguing adventure to which he summons us in the essays that follow. Has he glimpsed truth that might lighten our stricken age? To judge of that we must pursue with him the paths of his own thinking.

3. "The Nature of Language," in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 72.

Part I



The Question Concerning Technology

In what follows we shall be *questioning* concerning technology. Questioning builds a way. We would be advised, therefore, above all to pay heed to the way, and not to fix our attention on isolated sentences and topics. The way is a way of thinking. All ways of thinking, more or less perceptibly, lead through language in a manner that is extraordinary. We shall be questioning concerning *technology*, and in so doing we should like to prepare a free relationship to it. The relationship will be free if it opens our human existence to the essence of technology.¹ When we

1. "Essence" is the traditional translation of the German noun *Wesen*. One of Heidegger's principal aims in this essay is to seek the true meaning of essence through or by way of the "correct" meaning. He will later show that *Wesen* does not simply mean *what* something is, but that it means, further, the way in which something pursues its course, the way in which it remains through time as what it is. Heidegger writes elsewhere that the noun *Wesen* does not mean *quidditas* originally, but rather "enduring as presence" (*das Währen als Gegenwart*). (See *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim [New York: Doubleday, 1961], p. 59.) *Wesen* as a noun derives from the verb *wesen*, which is seldom used as such in modern German. The verb survives primarily in inflected forms of the verb *sein* (to be) and in such words as the adjective *anwesend* (present). The old verbal forms from which *wesen* stems meant to tarry or dwell. Heidegger repeatedly identifies *wesen* as "the same as *währen* [to last or endure]." (See p. 30 below and SR 161.) As a verb, *wesen* will usually be translated

can respond to this essence, we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds.

Technology is not equivalent to the essence of technology. When we are seeking the essence of "tree," we have to become aware that That which pervades every tree, as tree, is not itself a tree that can be encountered among all the other trees.

Likewise, the essence of technology is by no means anything technological. Thus we shall never experience our relationship to the essence of technology so long as we merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it. Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it,² to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology.

According to ancient doctrine, the essence of a thing is considered to be *what* the thing is. We ask the question concerning technology when we ask what it is. Everyone knows the two statements that answer our question. One says: Technology is a means to an end. The other says: Technology is a human activity. The two definitions of technology belong together. For to posit ends and procure and utilize the means to them is a human activity. The manufacture and utilization of equipment, tools, and machines, the manufactured and used things themselves, and the needs and ends that they serve, all belong to what tech-

here with "to come to presence," a rendering wherein the meaning "endure" should be strongly heard. Occasionally it will be translated "to essence," and its gerund will be rendered with "essencing." The noun *Wesen* will regularly be translated "essence" until Heidegger's explanatory discussion is reached. Thereafter, in this and the succeeding essays, it will often be translated with "coming to presence." In relation to all these renderings, the reader should bear in mind a point that is of fundamental importance to Heidegger, namely, that the root of *wesen*, with its meaning "to dwell," provides one integral component in the meaning of the verb *sein* (to be). (Cf. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 59.)

2. "Conception" here translates the noun *Vorstellung*. Elsewhere in this volume, *Vorstellung* will usually be translated by "representation," and its related verb *vorstellen* by "to represent." Both "conception" and "representation" should suggest a placing or setting-up-before. Cf. the discussion of *Vorstellung* in AWP 131-132.

nology is. The whole complex of these contrivances is technology. Technology itself is a contrivance, or, in Latin, an *instrumentum*.³

The current conception of technology, according to which it is a means and a human activity, can therefore be called the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology.

Who would ever deny that it is correct? It is in obvious conformity with what we are envisioning when we talk about technology. The instrumental definition of technology is indeed so uncannily correct that it even holds for modern technology, of which, in other respects, we maintain with some justification that it is, in contrast to the older handwork technology, something completely different and therefore new. Even the power plant with its turbines and generators is a man-made means to an end established by man. Even the jet aircraft and the high-frequency apparatus are means to ends. A radar station is of course less simple than a weather vane. To be sure, the construction of a high-frequency apparatus requires the interlocking of various processes of technical-industrial production. And certainly a sawmill in a secluded valley of the Black Forest is a primitive means compared with the hydroelectric plant in the Rhine River.

But this much remains correct: modern technology too is a means to an end. That is why the instrumental conception of technology conditions every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology. Everything depends on our manipulating technology in the proper manner as a means. We will, as we say, "get" technology "spiritually in hand." We will master it. The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control.

But suppose now that technology were no mere means, how would it stand with the will to master it? Yet we said, did we

3. *Instrumentum* signifies that which functions to heap or build up or to arrange. Heidegger here equates it with the noun *Einrichtung*, translated "contrivance," which can also mean arrangement, adjustment, furnishing, or equipment. In accordance with his dictum that the true must be sought by way of the correct, Heidegger here anticipates with his identification of technology as an *instrumentum* and an *Einrichtung* his later "true" characterization of technology in terms of setting-in-place, ordering, Enframing, and standing-reserve.

not, that the instrumental definition of technology is correct? To be sure. The correct always fixes upon something pertinent in whatever is under consideration. However, in order to be correct, this fixing by no means needs to uncover the thing in question in its essence. Only at the point where such an uncovering happens does the true come to pass.⁴ For that reason the merely correct is not yet the true. Only the true brings us into a free relationship with that which concerns us from out of its essence. Accordingly, the correct instrumental definition of technology still does not show us technology's essence. In order that we may arrive at this, or at least come close to it, we must seek the true by way of the correct. We must ask: What is the instrumental itself? Within what do such things as means and end belong? A means is that whereby something is effected and thus attained. Whatever has an effect as its consequence is called a cause. But not only that by means of which something else is effected is a cause. The end in keeping with which the kind of means to be used is determined is also considered a cause. Wherever ends are pursued and means are employed, wherever instrumentality reigns, there reigns causality.

For centuries philosophy has taught that there are four causes: (1) the *causa materialis*, the material, the matter out of which, for example, a silver chalice is made; (2) the *causa formalis*, the form, the shape into which the material enters; (3) the *causa finalis*, the end, for example, the sacrificial rite in relation to which the chalice required is determined as to its form and matter; (4) the *causa efficiens*, which brings about the effect that is the finished, actual chalice, in this instance, the silversmith. What technology is, when represented as a means, discloses itself when we trace instrumentality back to fourfold causality.

But suppose that causality, for its part, is veiled in darkness with respect to what it is? Certainly for centuries we have acted as though the doctrine of the four causes had fallen from heaven as a truth as clear as daylight. But it might be that the time has come to ask, Why are there just four causes? In relation to the aforementioned four, what does "cause" really mean? From

4. "Come to pass" translates *sich ereignet*. For a discussion of the fuller meaning of the verb *ereignen*, see T 38 n. 4, 45.

whence does it come that the causal *character* of the four causes is so unifiedly determined that they belong together?

So long as we do not allow ourselves to go into these questions, causality, and with it instrumentality, and with the latter the accepted definition of technology, remain obscure and groundless.

For a long time we have been accustomed to representing cause as that which brings something about. In this connection to bring about means to obtain results, effects. The *causa efficiens*, but one among the four causes, sets the standard for all causality. This goes so far that we no longer even count the *causa finalis*, telic finality, as causality. *Causa, casus*, belongs to the verb *cadere*, "to fall," and means that which brings it about that something falls out as a result in such and such a way. The doctrine of the four causes goes back to Aristotle. But everything that later ages seek in Greek thought under the conception and rubric "causality," in the realm of Greek thought and for Greek thought per se has simply nothing at all to do with bringing about and effecting. What we call cause [*Ursache*] and the Romans call *causa* is called *aition* by the Greeks, that to which something else is indebted [*das, was ein anderes verschuldet*].⁵ The four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else. An example can clarify this.

Silver is that out of which the silver chalice is made. As this matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, i.e., owes thanks to, the silver for that out of which it consists. But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to the silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or a ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidōs*) of chaliceness. Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

5. *Das, was ein anderes verschuldet* is a quite idomatic expression that here would mean to many German readers "that which is the cause of something else." The verb *verschulden* actually has a wide range of meanings—to be indebted, to owe, to be guilty, to be responsible for or to, to cause. Heidegger intends to awaken all these meanings and to have connotations of mutual interdependence sound throughout this passage.

But there remains yet a third that is above all responsible for the sacrificial vessel. It is that which in advance confines the chalice within the realm of consecration and bestowal.⁶ Through this the chalice is circumscribed as sacrificial vessel. Circumscribing gives bounds to the thing. With the bounds the thing does not stop; rather from out of them it begins to be what, after production, it will be. That which gives bounds, that which completes, in this sense is called in Greek *telos*, which is all too often translated as "aim" or "purpose," and so misinterpreted. The *telos* is responsible for what as matter and for what as aspect are together co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.

Finally there is a fourth participant in the responsibility for the finished sacrificial vessel's lying before us ready for use, i.e., the silversmith—but not at all because he, in working, brings about the finished sacrificial chalice as if it were the effect of a making; the silversmith is not a *causa efficiens*.

The Aristotelian doctrine neither knows the cause that is named by this term nor uses a Greek word that would correspond to it.

The silversmith considers carefully and gathers together the three aforementioned ways of being responsible and indebted. To consider carefully [*überlegen*] is in Greek *legein*, *logos*. *Legein* is rooted in *apophainesthai*, to bring forward into appearance. The silversmith is co-responsible as that from whence the sacrificial vessel's bringing forth and resting-in-self take and retain their first departure. The three previously mentioned ways of being responsible owe thanks to the pondering of the silversmith for the "that" and the "how" of their coming into appearance and into play for the production of the sacrificial vessel.

Thus four ways of being responsible hold sway in the sacrificial vessel that lies ready before us. They differ from one another, yet they belong together. What unites them from the beginning? In what does this playing in unison of the four ways of being

6. Literally, "confines into"—the German preposition *in* with the accusative. Heidegger often uses this construction in ways that are unusual in German, as they would be in English. It will ordinarily be translated here by "within" so as to distinguish it from "in" used to translate *in* with the dative.

responsible play? What is the source of the unity of the four causes? What, after all, does this owing and being responsible mean, thought as the Greeks thought it?

Today we are too easily inclined either to understand being responsible and being indebted moralistically as a lapse, or else to construe them in terms of effecting. In either case we bar to ourselves the way to the primal meaning of that which is later called causality. So long as this way is not opened up to us we shall also fail to see what instrumentality, which is based on causality, actually is.

In order to guard against such misinterpretations of being responsible and being indebted, let us clarify the four ways of being responsible in terms of that for which they are responsible. According to our example, they are responsible for the silver chalice's lying ready before us as a sacrificial vessel. Lying before and lying ready (*hypokeisthai*) characterize the presencing of something that presences. The four ways of being responsible bring something into appearance. They let it come forth into presencing [*An-wesen*].⁷ They set it free to that place and so start it on its way, namely, into its complete arrival. The principal characteristic of being responsible is this starting something on its way into arrival. It is in the sense of such a starting something on its way into arrival that being responsible is an occasioning or an inducing to go forward [*Ver-an-lassen*].⁸ On the

7. By writing *An-wesen*, Heidegger stresses the composition of the verb *anwesen*, translated as "to presence." The verb consists of *wesen* (literally, to continue or endure) with the prepositional prefix *an-* (at, to, toward). It is man who must receive presencing, man to whom it comes as enduring. Cf. *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 12.

8. *Ver-an-lassen* is Heidegger's writing of the verb *veranlassen* in noun form, now hyphenated to bring out its meaning. *Veranlassen* ordinarily means to occasion, to cause, to bring about, to call forth. Its use here relates back to the use of *anlassen* (to leave [something] on, to let loose, to set going), here translated "to start something on its way." *Anlassen* has just been similarly written as *an-lassen* so as to emphasize its composition from *lassen* (to let or leave) and *an* (to or toward). One of the functions of the German prefix *ver-* is to intensify the force of a verb. André Préau quotes Heidegger as saying: "*Ver-an-lassen* is more active than *an-lassen*." Cf. *The ver-*, as it were, pushes the latter toward a doing [*vers un faire*]." Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Essais et Conférences* (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 16 n.

basis of a look at what the Greeks experienced in being responsible, in *aitia*, we now give this verb “to occasion” a more inclusive meaning, so that it now is the name for the essence of causality thought as the Greeks thought it. The common and narrower meaning of “occasion” in contrast is nothing more than striking against and releasing, and means a kind of secondary cause within the whole of causality.

But in what, then, does the playing in unison of the four ways of occasioning play? They let what is not yet present arrive into presencing. Accordingly, they are unifiedly ruled over by a bringing that brings what presences into appearance. Plato tells us what this bringing is in a sentence from the *Symposium* (205b): *hē gar toi ek tou mē onton eis to on ionti hotōioun aitia pasa esti poiēsis*. “Every occasion for whatever passes over and goes forward into presencing from that which is not presencing is *poiēsis*, is bringing-forth [*Her-vor-bringen*].”⁹

It is of utmost importance that we think bringing-forth in its full scope and at the same time in the sense in which the Greeks thought it. Not only handcraft manufacture, not only artistic and poetical bringing into appearance and concrete imagery, is a bringing-forth, *poiēsis*. *Physis* also, the arising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth, *poiēsis*. *Physis* is indeed *poiēsis* in the highest sense. For what presences by means of *physis* has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself (*en heautōi*). In contrast, what is brought forth by the artisan or the artist, e.g.,

9. The full gamut of meaning for the verb *hervorbringen*, here functioning as a noun, includes to bring forth or produce, to generate or beget, to utter, to elicit. Heidegger intends that all of these nuances be heard. He hyphenates the word in order to emphasize its adverbial prefixes, *her-* (here or hither) and *vor-* (forward or forth). Heidegger elsewhere makes specific the meaning resident in *Her-vor-bringen* for him by utilizing those prefixes independently. Thus he says (translating literally), “Bringing-forth-hither brings hither out of concealment, forth into unconcealment” (cf. below, p. 11); and—after identifying working (*wirken*) and *her-vor-bringen*—he says that working must be understood as “bringing hither—into unconcealment, forth—into presencing” (SR 161). Because of the awkwardness of the English phrase “to bring forth hither,” it has not been possible to include in the translation of *her-vor-bringen* the nuance of meaning that *her-* provides.

the silver chalice, has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth not in itself, but in another (*en allōi*), in the craftsman or artist.

The modes of occasioning, the four causes, are at play, then, within bringing-forth. Through bringing-forth, the growing things of nature as well as whatever is completed through the crafts and the arts come at any given time to their appearance.

But how does bringing-forth happen, be it in nature or in handwork and art? What is the bringing-forth in which the fourfold way of occasioning plays? Occasioning has to do with the presencing [*Anwesen*] of that which at any given time comes to appearance in bringing-forth. Bringing-forth brings hither out of concealment forth into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [*das Entbergen*].¹⁰ The Greeks have the word

10. The verb *entbergen* (to reveal) and the allied noun *Entbergung* (revealing) are unique to Heidegger. Because of the exigencies of translation, *entbergen* must usually be translated with “revealing,” and the presence of *Entbergung*, which is rather infrequently used, has therefore regrettably been obscured for want of an appropriate English noun as alternative that would be sufficiently active in meaning. *Entbergen* and *Entbergung* are formed from the verb *bergen* and the verbal prefix *ent-*. *Bergen* means to rescue, to recover, to secure, to harbor, to conceal. *Ent-* is used in German verbs to connote in one way or another a change from an existing situation. It can mean “forth” or “out” or can connote a change that is the negating of a former condition. *Entbergen* connotes an opening out from protective concealing, a harboring forth. For a presentation of Heidegger’s central tenet that it is only as protected and preserved—and that means as enclosed and secure—that anything is set free to endure, to continue as that which it is, i.e., to be, see “Building Dwelling Thinking” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 149, and cf. p. 25 below.

Entbergen and *Entbergung* join a family of words all formed from *bergen*—*verbergen* (to conceal), *Verborgenheit* (concealment), *das Verborgene* (the concealed), *Unverborgenheit* (unconcealment), *das Unverborgene* (the unconcealed)—of which Heidegger makes frequent use. The lack of viable English words sufficiently numerous to permit a similar use of but one fundamental stem has made it necessary to obscure, through the use of “reveal,” the close relationship among all the words just mentioned. None of the English words used—“reveal,” “conceal,” “unconceal”—evinces with any adequacy the meaning resident in *bergen* itself; yet the reader should be constantly aware that the full range of connotation present in *bergen* sounds for Heidegger within all these, its derivatives.

alētheia for revealing. The Romans translate this with *veritas*. We say "truth" and usually understand it as the correctness of an idea.

But where have we strayed to? We are questioning concerning technology, and we have arrived now at *alētheia*, at revealing. What has the essence of technology to do with revealing? The answer: everything. For every bringing-forth is grounded in revealing. Bringing-forth, indeed, gathers within itself the four modes of occasioning—causality—and rules them throughout. Within its domain belong end and means, belongs instrumentality.¹¹ Instrumentality is considered to be the fundamental characteristic of technology. If we inquire, step by step, into what technology, represented as means, actually is, then we shall arrive at revealing. The possibility of all productive manufacturing lies in revealing.

Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing. If we give heed to this, then another whole realm for the essence of technology will open itself up to us. It is the realm of revealing, i.e., of truth.¹²

This prospect strikes us as strange. Indeed, it should do so, should do so as persistently as possible and with so much urgency that we will finally take seriously the simple question of what the name "technology" means. The word stems from the Greek. *Technikon* means that which belongs to *technē*. We must observe

11. Here and elsewhere "belongs within" translates the German *gehört in* with the accusative (literally, belongs into), an unusual usage that Heidegger often employs. The regular German construction is *gehört zu* (belongs to). With the use of "belongs into," Heidegger intends to suggest a relationship involving origin.

12. Heidegger here hyphenates the word *Wahrheit* (truth) so as to expose its stem, *wahr*. He points out elsewhere that words with this stem have a common derivation and underlying meaning (SR 165). Such words often show the connotations of attentive watchfulness and guarding that he here finds in their Greek cognates, *horaō*, *ōra*, e.g., *wahren* (to watch over and keep safe) and *bewahren* (to preserve). Hyphenating *Wahrheit* draws it overtly into this circle of meaning. It points to the fact that in truth, which is unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*), a safekeeping carries itself out. *Wahrheit* thus offers here a very close parallel to its companion noun *Entbergung* (revealing; literally, harboring forth), built on *bergen* (to rescue, to harbor, to conceal). See n. 10, above. For a further discussion of words built around *wahr*, see T 42, n. 9.

two things with respect to the meaning of this word. One is that *technē* is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *Technē* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiēsis*; it is something poetic.

The other point that we should observe with regard to *technē* is even more important. From earliest times until Plato the word *technē* is linked with the word *epistēmē*. Both words are names for knowing in the widest sense. They mean to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening up. As an opening up it is a revealing. Aristotle, in a discussion of special importance (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VI, chaps. 3 and 4), distinguishes between *epistēmē* and *technē* and indeed with respect to what and how they reveal. *Technē* is a mode of *alētheuein*. It reveals whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before us, whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another. Whoever builds a house or a ship or forges a sacrificial chalice reveals what is to be brought forth, according to the perspectives of the four modes of occasioning. This revealing gathers together in advance the aspect and the matter of ship or house, with a view to the finished thing envisioned as completed, and from this gathering determines the manner of its construction. Thus what is decisive in *technē* does not lie at all in making and manipulating nor in the using of means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing. It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *technē* is a bringing-forth.

Thus the clue to what the word *technē* means and to how the Greeks defined it leads us into the same context that opened itself to us when we pursued the question of what instrumentality as such in truth might be.

Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence [*West*] in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alētheia*, truth, happens.

In opposition to this definition of the essential domain of technology, one can object that it indeed holds for Greek thought and that at best it might apply to the techniques of the handcraftsman, but that it simply does not fit modern machine-powered technology. And it is precisely the latter and

it alone that is the disturbing thing, that moves us to ask the question concerning technology per se. It is said that modern technology is something incomparably different from all earlier technologies because it is based on modern physics as an exact science. Meanwhile we have come to understand more clearly that the reverse holds true as well: Modern physics, as experimental, is dependent upon technical apparatus and upon progress in the building of apparatus. The establishing of this mutual relationship between technology and physics is correct. But it remains a merely historiographical establishing of facts and says nothing about that in which this mutual relationship is grounded. The decisive question still remains: Of what essence is modern technology that it happens to think of putting exact science to use?

What is modern technology? It too is a revealing. Only when we allow our attention to rest on this fundamental characteristic does that which is new in modern technology show itself to us.

And yet the revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiēsis*. The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [*Herausfordern*],¹³ which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such. But does this not hold true for the old windmill as well? No. Its sails do indeed turn in the wind; they are left entirely to the wind's blowing. But the windmill does not unlock energy from the air currents in order to store it.

In contrast, a tract of land is challenged into the putting out of coal and ore. The earth now reveals itself as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit. The field that the peasant formerly cultivated and set in order [*bestellte*] appears differently than it did when to set in order still meant to take care of and

13. *Herausfordern* means to challenge, to call forth or summon to action, to demand positively, to provoke. It is composed of the verb *fordern* (to demand, to summon, to challenge) and the adverbial prefixes *her-* (hither) and *aus-* (out). The verb might be rendered very literally as "to demand out hither." The structural similarity between *herausfordern* and *her-vor-bringen* (to bring forth hither) is readily apparent. It serves of itself to point up the relation subsisting between the two modes of revealing of which the verbs speak—modes that, in the very distinctive ways peculiar to them, occasion a coming forth into unconcealment and presencing. See below, 29–30.

to maintain. The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field. In the sowing of the grain it places the seed in the keeping of the forces of growth and watches over its increase. But meanwhile even the cultivation of the field has come under the grip of another kind of setting-in-order, which *sets* upon [*stellt*] nature.¹⁴ It sets upon it in the sense of challenging it. Agriculture is now the mechanized food industry. Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore, ore to yield uranium, for example; uranium is set upon to yield atomic energy, which can be released either for destruction or for peaceful use.

This setting-upon that challenges forth the energies of nature is an expediting [*Fördern*], and in two ways. It expedites in that it unlocks and exposes. Yet that expediting is always itself directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense. The coal that has been hauled out in some mining district has not been supplied in order that it may simply be present somewhere or other. It is stockpiled; that is, it is on call, ready to deliver the sun's warmth that is stored in it. The sun's warmth is challenged forth for heat, which in turn is ordered to deliver steam whose pressure turns the wheels that keep a factory running.

14. The verb *stellen* (to place or set) has a wide variety of uses. It can mean to put in place, to order, to arrange, to furnish or supply, and, in a military context, to challenge or engage. Here Heidegger sees the connotations of *herausfordern* (to challenge, to call forth, to demand out hither) as fundamentally determinative of the meaning of *stellen*, and this remains true throughout his ensuing discussion. The translation of *stellen* with "to set upon" is intended to carry this meaning. The connotations of setting in place and of supplying that lie within the word *stellen* remain strongly present in Heidegger's repeated use of the verb hereafter, however, since the "setting-upon" of which it speaks is inherently a setting in place so as to supply. Where these latter meanings come decisively to the fore, *stellen* has been translated with "to set" or "to set up," or, rarely, with "to supply."

Stellen embraces the meanings of a whole family of verbs: *bestellen* (to order, command; to set in order), *vorstellen* (to represent), *sicherstellen* (to secure), *nachstellen* (to entrap), *verstellen* (to block or disguise), *herstellen* (to produce, to set here), *darstellen* (to present or exhibit), and so on. In these verbs the various nuances within *stellen* are reinforced and made specific. All these meanings are gathered together in Heidegger's unique use of the word that is pivotal for him, *Ge-stell* (Enframing). Cf. pp. 19 ff. See also the opening paragraph of "The Turning," pp. 36–37.

The hydroelectric plant is set into the current of the Rhine. It sets the Rhine to supplying its hydraulic pressure, which then sets the turbines turning. This turning sets those machines in motion whose thrust sets going the electric current for which the long-distance power station and its network of cables are set up to dispatch electricity.¹⁵ In the context of the interlocking processes pertaining to the orderly disposition of electrical energy, even the Rhine itself appears as something at our command. The hydroelectric plant is not built into the Rhine River as was the old wooden bridge that joined bank with bank for hundreds of years. Rather the river is dammed up into the power plant. What the river is now, namely, a water power supplier, derives from out of the essence of the power station. In order that we may even remotely consider the monstrousness that reigns here, let us ponder for a moment the contrast that speaks out of the two titles, "The Rhine" as dammed up into the *power works*, and "The Rhine" as uttered out of the *art work*, in Hölderlin's hymn by that name. But, it will be replied, the Rhine is still a river in the landscape, is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry.

The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. That challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew. Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are ways of revealing. But the revealing never simply comes to an end. Neither does it run off into the indeterminate. The revealing reveals to itself its own manifoldly interlocking paths, through regulating their course. This regulating itself is, for its part, everywhere secured. Regulating and securing even become the chief characteristics of the challenging revealing.

15. In these two sentences, in order to show something of the manner in which Heidegger gathers together a family of meanings, a series of *stellen* verbs—*stellen* (three times), *herstellen*, *bestellen*—have been translated with verbal expressions formed around "set." For the usual meanings of these verbs, see n. 14.

What kind of unconcealment is it, then, that is peculiar to that which comes to stand forth through this setting-upon that challenges? Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*].¹⁶ The word expresses here something more, and something more essential, than mere "stock." The name "standing-reserve" assumes the rank of an inclusive rubric. It designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the challenging revealing. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object.

Yet an airliner that stands on the runway is surely an object. Certainly. We can represent the machine so. But then it conceals itself as to what and how it is. Revealed, it stands on the taxi strip only as standing-reserve, inasmuch as it is ordered to ensure the possibility of transportation. For this it must be in its whole structure and in every one of its constituent parts, on call for duty, i.e., ready for takeoff. (Here it would be appropriate to discuss Hegel's definition of the machine as an autonomous tool. When applied to the tools of the craftsman, his characterization is correct. Characterized in this way, however, the machine is not thought at all from out of the essence of technology within which it belongs. Seen in terms of the standing-reserve, the machine is completely unautonomous, for it has its standing only from the ordering of the orderable.)

The fact that now, wherever we try to point to modern technology as the challenging revealing, the words "setting-upon," "ordering," "standing-reserve," obtrude and accumulate in a dry, monotonous, and therefore oppressive way, has its basis in what is now coming to utterance.

16. *Bestand* ordinarily denotes a store or supply as "standing by." It carries the connotation of the verb *bestehen* with its dual meaning of to last and to undergo. Heidegger uses the word to characterize the manner in which everything commanded into place and ordered according to the challenging demand ruling in modern technology presences as revealed. He wishes to stress here not the permanency, but the orderability and substitutability of objects. *Bestand* contrasts with *Gegenstand* (object; that which stands over against). Objects indeed lose their character as objects when they are caught up in the "standing-reserve." Cf. Introduction, p. xxix.

Who accomplishes the challenging setting-upon through which what we call the real is revealed as standing-reserve? Obviously, man. To what extent is man capable of such a revealing? Man can indeed conceive, fashion, and carry through this or that in one way or another. But man does not have control over unconcealment itself, in which at any given time the real shows itself or withdraws. The fact that the real has been showing itself in the light of Ideas ever since the time of Plato, Plato did not bring about. The thinker only responded to what addressed itself to him.

Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this ordering revealing happen. If man is challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve? The current talk about human resources, about the supply of patients for a clinic, gives evidence of this. The forester who, in the wood, measures the felled timber and to all appearances walks the same forest path in the same way as did his grandfather is today commanded by profit-making in the lumber industry, whether he knows it or not. He is made subordinate to the orderability of cellulose, which for its part is challenged forth by the need for paper, which is then delivered to newspapers and illustrated magazines. The latter, in their turn, set public opinion to swallowing what is printed, so that a set configuration of opinion becomes available on demand. Yet precisely because man is challenged more originally than are the energies of nature, i.e., into the process of ordering, he never is transformed into mere standing-reserve. Since man drives technology forward, he takes part in ordering as a way of revealing. But the unconcealment itself, within which ordering unfolds, is never a human handiwork, any more than is the realm through which man is already passing every time he as a subject relates to an object.

Where and how does this revealing happen if it is no mere handiwork of man? We need not look far. We need only apprehend in an unbiased way that which has already claimed man and has done so, so decisively that he can only be man at any given time as the one so claimed. Wherever man opens his eyes and ears, unlocks his heart, and gives himself over to meditating

and striving, shaping and working, entreating and thanking, he finds himself everywhere already brought into the unconcealed. The unconcealment of the unconcealed has already come to pass whenever it calls man forth into the modes of revealing allotted to him. When man, in his way, from within unconcealment reveals that which presences, he merely responds to the call of unconcealment even when he contradicts it. Thus when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing-reserve.

Modern technology as an ordering revealing is, then, no merely human doing. Therefore we must take that challenging that sets upon man to order the real as standing-reserve in accordance with the way in which it shows itself. That challenging gathers man into ordering. This gathering concentrates man upon ordering the real as standing-reserve.

That which primordially unfolds the mountains into mountain ranges and courses through them in their folded togetherness is the gathering that we call "Gebirg" [mountain chain].

That original gathering from which unfold the ways in which we have feelings of one kind or another we name "Gemüt" [disposition].

We now name that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve: "Ge-stell" [Enframing].¹⁷

We dare to use this word in a sense that has been thoroughly unfamiliar up to now.

17. The translation "Enframing" for *Ge-stell* is intended to suggest, through the use of the prefix "en-," something of the active meaning that Heidegger here gives to the German word. While following the discussion that now ensues, in which Enframing assumes a central role, the reader should be careful not to interpret the word as though it simply meant a framework of some sort. Instead he should constantly remember that Enframing is fundamentally a calling-forth. It is a "challenging claim," a demanding summons, that "gathers" so as to reveal. This claim *enframes* in that it assembles and orders. It puts into a framework or configuration everything that it summons forth, through an ordering for use that it is forever restructuring anew. Cf. Introduction, pp. xxix ff.

According to ordinary usage, the word *Gestell* [frame] means some kind of apparatus, e.g., a bookrack. *Gestell* is also the name for a skeleton. And the employment of the word *Ge-stell* [Enframing] that is now required of us seems equally eerie, not to speak of the arbitrariness with which words of a mature language are thus misused. Can anything be more strange? Surely not. Yet this strangeness is an old usage of thinking. And indeed thinkers accord with this usage precisely at the point where it is a matter of thinking that which is highest. We, late born, are no longer in a position to appreciate the significance of Plato's daring to use the word *eidōs* for that which in everything and in each particular thing endures as present. For *eidōs*, in the common speech, meant the outward aspect [*Ansicht*] that a visible thing offers to the physical eye. Plato exacts of this word, however, something utterly extraordinary: that it name what precisely is not and never will be perceivable with physical eyes. But even this is by no means the full extent of what is extraordinary here. For *idea* names not only the nonsensuous aspect of what is physically visible.¹⁸ Aspect (*idea*) names and is, also, that which constitutes the essence in the audible, the tasteable, the tactile, in everything that is in any way accessible. Compared with the demands that Plato makes on language and thought in this and other instances, the use of the word *Gestell* as the name for the essence of modern technology, which we now venture here, is almost harmless. Even so, the usage now required remains something exacting and is open to misinterpretation.

Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. Enframing means that way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological. On the other hand, all those things that are so familiar to us and are standard parts of an assembly, such as rods, pistons, and chassis, belong to the technological. The assembly itself, however, together with the aforementioned stockparts, falls within

18. Where *idea* is italicized it is not the English word but a transliteration of the Greek.

the sphere of technological activity; and this activity always merely responds to the challenge of Enframing, but it never comprises Enframing itself or brings it about.

The word *stellen* [to set upon] in the name *Ge-stell* [Enframing] not only means challenging. At the same time it should preserve the suggestion of another *Stellen* from which it stems, namely, that producing and presenting [*Her- und Dar-stellen*] which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into unconcealment. This producing that brings forth—e.g., the erecting of a statue in the temple precinct—and the challenging ordering now under consideration are indeed fundamentally different, and yet they remain related in their essence. Both are ways of revealing, of *alētheia*. In Enframing, that unconcealment comes to pass in conformity with which the work of modern technology reveals the real as standing-reserve. This work is therefore neither only a human activity nor a mere means within such activity. The merely instrumental, merely anthropological definition of technology is therefore in principle untenable. And it cannot be rounded out by being referred back to some metaphysical or religious explanation that undergirds it.

It remains true, nonetheless, that man in the technological age is, in a particularly striking way, challenged forth into revealing. That revealing concerns nature, above all, as the chief storehouse of the standing energy reserve. Accordingly, man's ordering attitude and behavior display themselves first in the rise of modern physics as an exact science. Modern science's way of representing pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces. Modern physics is not experimental physics because it applies apparatus to the questioning of nature. Rather the reverse is true. Because physics, indeed already as pure theory, sets nature up to exhibit itself as a coherence of forces calculable in advance, it therefore orders its experiments precisely for the purpose of asking whether and how nature reports itself when set up in this way.

But after all, mathematical physics arose almost two centuries before technology. How, then, could it have already been set upon by modern technology and placed in its service? The facts testify to the contrary. Surely technology got under way only

when it could be supported by exact physical science. Reckoned chronologically, this is correct. Thought historically, it does not hit upon the truth.

The modern physical theory of nature prepares the way first not simply for technology but for the essence of modern technology. For already in physics the challenging gathering-together into ordering revealing holds sway. But in it that gathering does not yet come expressly to appearance. Modern physics is the herald of Enframing, a herald whose origin is still unknown. The essence of modern technology has for a long time been concealing itself, even where power machinery has been invented, where electrical technology is in full swing, and where atomic technology is well under way.

All coming to presence, not only modern technology, keeps itself everywhere concealed to the last.¹⁹ Nevertheless, it remains, with respect to its holding sway, that which precedes all: the earliest. The Greek thinkers already knew of this when they said: That which is earlier with regard to the arising that holds sway becomes manifest to us men only later. That which is primally early shows itself only ultimately to men.²⁰ Therefore, in the realm of thinking, a painstaking effort to think through still more primally what was primally thought is not the absurd wish to revive what is past, but rather the sober readiness to be astounded before the coming of what is early.

Chronologically speaking, modern physical science begins in the seventeenth century. In contrast, machine-power technology develops only in the second half of the eighteenth century. But modern technology, which for chronological reckoning is the later, is, from the point of view of the essence holding sway within it, the historically earlier.

19. "Coming to presence" here translates the gerund *Wesende*, a verbal form that appears, in this volume, only in this essay. With the introduction into the discussion of "coming to presence" as an alternate translation of the noun *Wesen* (essence), subsequent to Heidegger's consideration of the meaning of essence below (pp. 30 ff.), occasionally the presence of *das Wesende* is regrettably but unavoidably obscured.

20. "That which is primally early" translates *die anfängliche Frühe*. For a discussion of that which "is to all present and absent beings . . . the earliest and most ancient at once"—i.e., *Ereignen, das Ereignis*—see "The Way to Language" in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 127.

If modern physics must resign itself ever increasingly to the fact that its realm of representation remains inscrutable and incapable of being visualized, this resignation is not dictated by any committee of researchers. It is challenged forth by the rule of Enframing, which demands that nature be orderable as standing-reserve. Hence physics, in all its retreating from the representation turned only toward objects that has alone been standard till recently, will never be able to renounce this one thing: that nature reports itself in some way or other that is identifiable through calculation and that it remains orderable as a system of information. This system is determined, then, out of a causality that has changed once again. Causality now displays neither the character of the occasioning that brings forth nor the nature of the *causa efficiens*, let alone that of the *causa formalis*. It seems as though causality is shrinking into a reporting—a reporting challenged forth—of standing-reserves that must be guaranteed either simultaneously or in sequence. To this shrinking would correspond the process of growing resignation that Heisenberg's lecture depicts in so impressive a manner.*

Because the essence of modern technology lies in Enframing, modern technology must employ exact physical science. Through its so doing, the deceptive illusion arises that modern technology is applied physical science. This illusion can maintain itself only so long as neither the essential origin of modern science nor indeed the essence of modern technology is adequately found out through questioning.

We are questioning concerning technology in order to bring to light our relationship to its essence. The essence of modern technology shows itself in what we call Enframing. But simply to point to this is still in no way to answer the question concerning technology, if to answer means to respond, in the sense of correspond, to the essence of what is being asked about.

Where do we find ourselves brought to, if now we think one step further regarding what Enframing itself actually is? It is nothing technological, nothing on the order of a machine. It is the way in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve.

* W. Heisenberg, "Das Naturbild in der heutigen Physik," in *Die Künste im technischen Zeitalter* (Munich, 1954), pp. 43 ff.

Again we ask: Does this revealing happen somewhere beyond all human doing? No. But neither does it happen exclusively in man, or decisively *through* man.

Enframing is the gathering together that belongs to that setting-upon which sets upon man and puts him in position to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve. As the one who is challenged forth in this way, man stands within the essential realm of Enframing. He can never take up a relationship to it only subsequently. Thus the question as to how we are to arrive at a relationship to the essence of technology, asked in this way, always comes too late. But never too late comes the question as to whether we actually experience ourselves as the ones whose activities everywhere, public and private, are challenged forth by Enframing. Above all, never too late comes the question as to whether and how we actually admit ourselves into that wherein Enframing itself comes to presence.

The essence of modern technology starts man upon the way of that revealing through which the real everywhere, more or less distinctly, becomes standing-reserve. "To start upon a way" means "to send" in our ordinary language. We shall call that sending-that-gathers [*versammelnde Schicken*] which first starts man upon a way of revealing, *destining* [*Geschick*].²¹ It is from out of this destining that the essence of all history [*Geschichte*] is determined. History is neither simply the object of written chronicle nor simply the fulfillment of human activity. That activity first becomes history as something destined.* And it is only the destining into objectifying representation that makes the historical accessible as an object for historiography, i.e., for a science, and on this basis makes possible the current equating of the historical with that which is chronicled.

Enframing, as a challenging-forth into ordering, sends into a way of revealing. Enframing is an ordaining of destining, as is

21. For a further presentation of the meaning resident in *Geschick* and the related verb *schicken*, cf. T 38 ff., and Introduction, pp. xxviii ff.

* See *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, 1930; 1st ed., 1943, pp. 16 ff. [English translation, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Existence and Being*, ed. Werner Brock (Chicago: Regnery, 1949), pp. 308 ff.]

every way of revealing. Bringing-forth, *poiēsis*, is also a destining in this sense.

Always the unconcealment of that which is²² goes upon a way of revealing. Always the destining of revealing holds complete sway over man. But that destining is never a fate that compels. For man becomes truly free only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destining and so becomes one who listens and hears [*Hörender*], and not one who is simply constrained to obey [*Höriger*].

The essence of freedom is *originally* not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing.

Freedom governs the open in the sense of the cleared and lighted up, i.e., of the revealed.²³ It is to the happening of revealing, i.e., of truth, that freedom stands in the closest and most intimate kinship. All revealing belongs within a harboring and a concealing. But that which frees—the mystery—is concealed and always concealing itself. All revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open. The freedom of the open consists neither in unfettered arbitrariness nor in the constraint of mere laws. Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way.

The essence of modern technology lies in Enframing. Enframing belongs within the destining of revealing. These sentences express something different from the talk that we hear more frequently, to the effect that technology is the fate of our age, where "fate" means the inevitableness of an unalterable course.

But when we consider the essence of technology, then we experience Enframing as a destining of revealing. In this way we are already sojourning within the open space of destining, a destining that in no way confines us to a stultified compulsion to push on blindly with technology or, what comes to the same

22. *dessen was ist*. On the peculiar significance of *das was ist* (that which is), see T 44 n. 12.

23. "The open" here translates *das Freie*, cognate with *Freiheit*, freedom. Unfortunately the repetitive stress of the German phrasing cannot be reproduced in English, since the basic meaning of *Freie*—open air, open space—is scarcely heard in the English "free."

thing, to rebel helplessly against it and curse it as the work of the devil. Quite to the contrary, when we once open ourselves expressly to the *essence* of technology, we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim.

The essence of technology lies in Enframing. Its holding sway belongs within destining. Since destining at any given time starts man on a way of revealing, man, thus under way, is continually approaching the brink of the possibility of pursuing and pushing forward nothing but what is revealed in ordering, and of deriving all his standards on this basis. Through this the other possibility is blocked, that man might be admitted more and sooner and ever more primally to the essence of that which is unconcealed and to its unconcealment, in order that he might experience as his essence his needed belonging to revealing.

Placed between these possibilities, man is endangered from out of destining. The destining of revealing is as such, in every one of its modes, and therefore necessarily, *danger*.

In whatever way the destining of revealing may hold sway, the unconcealment in which everything that is shows itself at any given time harbors the danger that man may quail at the unconcealed and may misinterpret it. Thus where everything that presences exhibits itself in the light of a cause-effect coherence, even God can, for representational thinking, lose all that is exalted and holy, the mysteriousness of his distance. In the light of causality, God can sink to the level of a cause, of *causa efficiens*. He then becomes, even in theology, the god of the philosophers, namely, of those who define the unconcealed and the concealed in terms of the causality of making, without ever considering the essential origin of this causality.

In a similar way the unconcealment in accordance with which nature presents itself as a calculable complex of the effects of forces can indeed permit correct determinations; but precisely through these successes the danger can remain that in the midst of all that is correct the true will withdraw.

The destining of revealing is in itself not just any danger, but danger as such.

Yet when destining reigns in the mode of Enframing, it is the supreme danger. This danger attests itself to us in two ways. As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as

object, but does so, rather, exclusively as standing-reserve, and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of the standing-reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. Meanwhile man, precisely as the one so threatened, exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise in turn to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself. Heisenberg has with complete correctness pointed out that the real must present itself to contemporary man in this way.* *In truth, however, precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself, i.e., his essence.* Man stands so decisively in attendance on the challenging-forth of Enframing that he does not apprehend Enframing as a claim, that he fails to see himself as the one spoken to, and hence also fails in every way to hear in what respect he ek-sists, from out of his essence, in the realm of an exhortation or address, and thus *can never* encounter only himself.

But Enframing does not simply endanger man in his relationship to himself and to everything that is. As a destining, it banishes man into that kind of revealing which is an ordering. Where this ordering holds sway, it drives out every other possibility of revealing. Above all, Enframing conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiēsis*, lets what presences come forth into appearance. As compared with that other revealing, the setting-upon that challenges forth thrusts man into a relation to that which is, that is at once antithetical and rigorously ordered. Where Enframing holds sway, regulating and securing of the standing-reserve mark all revealing. They no longer even let their own fundamental characteristic appear, namely, this revealing as such.

Thus the challenging Enframing not only conceals a former way of revealing, bringing-forth, but it conceals revealing itself and with it That wherein unconcealment, i.e., truth, comes to pass.

* "Das Naturbild," pp. 60 ff.

Enframing blocks the shining-forth and holding-sway of truth. The destining that sends into ordering is consequently the extreme danger. What is dangerous is not technology. There is no demony of technology, but rather there is the mystery of its essence. The essence of technology, as a destining of revealing, is the danger. The transformed meaning of the word "Enframing" will perhaps become somewhat more familiar to us now if we think Enframing in the sense of destining and danger.

The threat to man does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatus of technology. The actual threat has already affected man in his essence. The rule of Enframing threatens man with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth.

Thus, where Enframing reigns, there is *danger* in the highest sense.

*But where danger is, grows
The saving power also.*

Let us think carefully about these words of Hölderlin. What does it mean "to save"? Usually we think that it means only to seize hold of a thing threatened by ruin, in order to secure it in its former continuance. But the verb "to save" says more. "To save" is to fetch something home into its essence, in order to bring the essence for the first time into its genuine appearing. If the essence of technology, Enframing, is the extreme danger, and if there is truth in Hölderlin's words, then the rule of Enframing cannot exhaust itself solely in blocking all lighting-up of every revealing, all appearing of truth. Rather, precisely the essence of technology must harbor in itself the growth of the saving power. But in that case, might not an adequate look into what Enframing is as a destining of revealing bring into appearance the saving power in its arising?

In what respect does the saving power grow there also where the danger is? Where something grows, there it takes root, from thence it thrives. Both happen concealedly and quietly and in their own time. But according to the words of the poet we have no right whatsoever to expect that there where the danger is we

should be able to lay hold of the saving power immediately and without preparation. Therefore we must consider now, in advance, in what respect the saving power does most profoundly take root and thence thrive even in that wherein the extreme danger lies, in the holding sway of Enframing. In order to consider this, it is necessary, as a last step upon our way, to look with yet clearer eyes into the danger. Accordingly, we must once more question concerning technology. For we have said that in technology's essence roots and thrives the saving power.

But how shall we behold the saving power in the essence of technology so long as we do not consider in what sense of "essence" it is that Enframing is actually the essence of technology?

Thus far we have understood "essence" in its current meaning. In the academic language of philosophy, "essence" means *what something is*; in Latin, *quid*. *Quidditas*, whatness, provides the answer to the question concerning essence. For example, what pertains to all kinds of trees—oaks, beeches, birches, firs—is the same "treeness." Under this inclusive genus—the "universal"—fall all real and possible trees. Is then the essence of technology, Enframing, the common genus for everything technological? If that were the case then the steam turbine, the radio transmitter, and the cyclotron would each be an Enframing. But the word "Enframing" does not mean here a tool or any kind of apparatus. Still less does it mean the general concept of such resources. The machines and apparatus are no more cases and kinds of Enframing than are the man at the switchboard and the engineer in the drafting room. Each of these in its own way indeed belongs as stockpart, available resource, or executer, within Enframing; but Enframing is never the essence of technology in the sense of a genus. Enframing is a way of revealing having the character of destining, namely, the way that challenges forth. The revealing that brings forth (*poiēsis*) is also a way that has the character of destining. But these ways are not kinds that, arrayed beside one another, fall under the concept of revealing. Revealing is that destining which, ever suddenly and inexplicably to all thinking, apports itself into the revealing that brings forth and that also challenges, and which allots itself to man. The challenging reveal-

ing has its origin as a destining in bringing-forth. But at the same time Enframing, in a way characteristic of a destining, blocks *poiēsis*.

Thus Enframing, as a destining of revealing, is indeed the essence of technology, but never in the sense of genus and *essentia*. If we pay heed to this, something astounding strikes us: It is technology itself that makes the demand on us to think in another way what is usually understood by "essence." But in what way?

If we speak of the "essence of a house" and the "essence of a state," we do not mean a generic type; rather we mean the ways in which house and state hold sway, administer themselves, develop and decay—the way in which they "essence" [*Wesen*]. Johann Peter Hebel in a poem, "Ghost on Kanderer Street," for which Goethe had a special fondness, uses the old word *die Weserei*. It means the city hall inasmuch as there the life of the community gathers and village existence is constantly in play, i.e., comes to presence. It is from the verb *wesen* that the noun is derived. *Wesen* understood as a verb is the same as *währen* [to last or endure], not only in terms of meaning, but also in terms of the phonetic formation of the word. Socrates and Plato already think the essence of something as what endures, what comes to presence, in the sense of what endures. But they think what endures as what remains permanently [*das Fortwährende*] (*aei on*). And they find what endures permanently in what, as that which remains, tenaciously persists throughout all that happens. That which remains they discover, in turn, in the aspect [*Aussehen*] (*eidōs, idea*), for example, the Idea "house."

The Idea "house" displays what anything is that is fashioned as a house. Particular, real, and possible houses, in contrast, are changing and transitory derivatives of the Idea and thus belong to what does not endure.

But it can never in any way be established that enduring is based solely on what Plato thinks as *idea* and Aristotle thinks as *to ti ēn einai* (that which any particular thing has always been), or what metaphysics in its most varied interpretations thinks as *essentia*.

All essencing endures. But is enduring only permanent enduring? Does the essence of technology endure in the sense of

the permanent enduring of an Idea that hovers over everything technological, thus making it seem that by technology we mean some mythological abstraction? The way in which technology essences lets itself be seen only from out of that permanent enduring in which Enframing comes to pass as a destining of revealing. Goethe once uses the mysterious word *fortgewähren* [to grant permanently] in place of *fortwähren* [to endure permanently].* He hears *währen* [to endure] and *gewähren* [to grant] here in one unarticulated accord.²⁴ And if we now ponder more carefully than we did before what it is that actually endures and perhaps alone endures, we may venture to say: *Only what is granted endures. That which endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants.*²⁵

As the essencing of technology, Enframing is that which endures. Does Enframing hold sway at all in the sense of granting? No doubt the question seems a horrendous blunder. For according to everything that has been said, Enframing is, rather, a destining that gathers together into the revealing that challenges forth. Challenging is anything but a granting. So it seems, so long as we do not notice that the challenging-forth into the ordering of the real as standing-reserve still remains a destining that starts man upon a way of revealing. As this destining, the coming to presence of technology gives man entry into That which, of himself, he can neither invent nor in any way make. For there is no such thing as a man who, solely of himself, is only man.

But if this destining, Enframing, is the extreme danger, not only for man's coming to presence, but for all revealing as such, should this destining still be called a granting? Yes, most emphat-

* "Die Wahlverwandschaften" [Congeniality], pt. II, chap. 10, in the novelette *Die wunderlichen Nachbarskinder* [The strange neighbor's children].

24. The verb *gewähren* is closely allied to the verbs *währen* (to endure) and *wahren* (to watch over, to keep safe, to preserve). *Gewähren* ordinarily means to be surety for, to warrant, to vouchsafe, to grant. In the discussion that follows, the verb will be translated simply with "to grant." But the reader should keep in mind also the connotations of safeguarding and guaranteeing that are present in it as well.

25. *Nur das Gewährte währt. Das anfänglich aus der Frühe Währende ist das Gewährende.* A literal translation of the second sentence would be, "That which endures primally from out of the early. . . ." On the meaning of "the early," see n. 20 above.

ically, if in this destining the saving power is said to grow. Every destining of revealing comes to pass from out of a granting and as such a granting. For it is granting that first conveys to man that share in revealing which the coming-to-pass of revealing needs.²⁶ As the one so needed and used, man is given to belong to the coming-to-pass of truth. The granting that sends in one way or another into revealing is as such the saving power. For the saving power lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence. This dignity lies in keeping watch over the unconcealment—and with it, from the first, the concealment—of all coming to presence on this earth. It is precisely in Enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence—it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light, provided that we, for our part, begin to pay heed to the coming to presence of technology.

Thus the coming to presence of technology harbors in itself what we least suspect, the possible arising of the saving power.

Everything, then, depends upon this: that we ponder this arising and that, recollecting, we watch over it. How can this happen? Above all through our catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological. So long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain held fast in the will to master it. We press on past the essence of technology.

When, however, we ask how the instrumental comes to presence as a kind of causality, then we experience this coming to presence as the destining of a revealing.

When we consider, finally, that the coming to presence of the essence of technology comes to pass in the granting that needs and uses man so that he may share in revealing, then the following becomes clear:

26. Here and subsequently in this essay, "coming-to-pass" translates the noun *Ereignis*. Elsewhere, in "The Turning," this word, in accordance with the deeper meaning that Heidegger there finds for it, will be translated with "disclosing that brings into its own." See T 45; see also Introduction, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii.

The essence of technology is in a lofty sense ambiguous. Such ambiguity points to the mystery of all revealing, i.e., of truth.

On the one hand, Enframing challenges forth into the frenziedness of ordering that blocks every view into the coming-to-pass of revealing and so radically endangers the relation to the essence of truth.

On the other hand, Enframing comes to pass for its part in the granting that lets man endure—as yet unexperienced, but perhaps more experienced in the future—that he may be the one who is needed and used for the safekeeping of the coming to presence of truth.²⁷ Thus does the arising of the saving power appear.

The irresistibility of ordering and the restraint of the saving power draw past each other like the paths of two stars in the course of the heavens. But precisely this, their passing by, is the hidden side of their nearness.

When we look into the ambiguous essence of technology, we behold the constellation, the stellar course of the mystery.

The question concerning technology is the question concerning the constellation in which revealing and concealing, in which the coming to presence of truth, comes to pass.

But what help is it to us to look into the constellation of truth? We look into the danger and see the growth of the saving power.

Through this we are not yet saved. But we are thereupon summoned to hope in the growing light of the saving power. How can this happen? Here and now and in little things, that we may foster the saving power in its increase. This includes holding always before our eyes the extreme danger.

The coming to presence of technology threatens revealing, threatens it with the possibility that all revealing will be consumed in ordering and that everything will present itself only in the unconcealedness of standing-reserve. Human activity can never directly counter this danger. Human achievement alone can never banish it. But human reflection can ponder the fact that

27. "Safekeeping" translates the noun *Wahrnis*, which is unique to Heidegger. *Wahrnis* is closely related to the verb *wahren* (to watch over, to keep safe, to preserve), integrally related to *Wahrheit* (truth), and closely akin to *währen* (to endure) and *gewähren* (to be surety for, to grant). On the meaning of *Wahrnis*, see T 42, n. 9 and n. 12 above.

all saving power must be of a higher essence than what is endangered, though at the same time kindred to it.

But might there not perhaps be a more primally granted revealing that could bring the saving power into its first shining forth in the midst of the danger, a revealing that in the technological age rather conceals than shows itself?

There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name *technē*. Once that revealing that brings forth truth into the splendor of radiant appearing also was called *technē*.

Once there was a time when the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called *technē*. And the *poiēsis* of the fine arts also was called *technē*.

In Greece, at the outset of the destining of the West, the arts soared to the supreme height of the revealing granted them. They brought the presence [*Gegenwart*] of the gods, brought the dialogue of divine and human destinings, to radiance. And art was simply called *technē*. It was a single, manifold revealing. It was pious, *promos*, i.e., yielding to the holding-sway and the safekeeping of truth.

The arts were not derived from the artistic. Art works were not enjoyed aesthetically. Art was not a sector of cultural activity.

What, then, was art—perhaps only for that brief but magnificent time? Why did art bear the modest name *technē*? Because it was a revealing that brought forth and hither, and therefore belonged within *poiēsis*. It was finally that revealing which holds complete sway in all the fine arts, in poetry, and in everything poetical that obtained *poiēsis* as its proper name.

The same poet from whom we heard the words

*But where danger is, grows
The saving power also.*

says to us:

. . . *poetically dwells man upon this earth.*

The poetical brings the true into the splendor of what Plato in the *Phaedrus* calls to *ekphanestaton*, that which shines forth most purely. The poetical thoroughly pervades every art, every revealing of coming to presence into the beautiful.

Could it be that the fine arts are called to poetic revealing? Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primally, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving power, may awaken and found anew our look into that which grants and our trust in it?

Whether art may be granted this highest possibility of its essence in the midst of the extreme danger, no one can tell. Yet we can be astounded. Before what? Before this other possibility: that the frenziedness of technology may entrench itself everywhere to such an extent that someday, throughout everything technological, the essence of technology may come to presence in the coming-to-pass of truth.

Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it.

Such a realm is art. But certainly only if reflection on art, for its part, does not shut its eyes to the constellation of truth after which we are *questioning*.

Thus questioning, we bear witness to the crisis that in our sheer preoccupation with technology we do not yet experience the coming to presence of technology, that in our sheer aesthetic-mindedness we no longer guard and preserve the coming to presence of art. Yet the more questioningly we ponder the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes.

The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become. For questioning is the piety of thought.