TO BE IS NOT-TO-BE: NIHILISM, IDEOLOGY AND THE QUESTION OF BEING IN HEIDEGGER'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

PART II: TRUTH, HUMANISM AND TECHNOLOGY

Mihai NOVAC

Lecturer, PHD, Nicolae Titulescu University – Bucharest (novmih@yahoo.co.uk)

Abstract

Allegedly, Heidegger never quite finished *Being and Time*: his initial intention had consisted in the determination of the meaning of Being as such, apart from Dasein's *own* existentiality. Afterwards, however, and despite the growing public excitement revolving around the published unfinished version of his project, his preoccupations, *thematic conceptuality* and very language, apparently started to shift away towards a strange and unfamiliar stance which he would never leave. Quite surely, his Nazi flirtation and subsequent withdrawal did not help in bringing clarity over this. On the other hand, this was not necessarily unexpected (although not necessarily to be expected, as well). What I mean to say is that for someone reading *Being and time in spirit* and not *in letter*, the possibility of such a *substantive rethought* of his initial scheme is present throughout the work. *One's changing one's mind with respect to oneself* is, after all, one of the basic possibilities conveyed by Dasein's achieved resoluteness [Entschlossenheit]. Furthermore, despite his apparent reorientation, I think we can speak of some sort of *attitudinal unity* between Heidegger's initial and later work, conceptually mediated by the relationship between Dasein's *Being-unto-death* [Sein-zum-Tode] and the so called *concealedness* [Verborgenheit] of Being.. That is precisely what I aim to lay bare through this conceptual reconstruction of some of his *post-Being and time* works: (i) *On the Essence of Truth* (1930) and (ii) *Letter on Humanism* (1946). Basically, I will try to show that if in *Being and Time* he tried to come to Being from Dasein, in his later work he tries to get to Da-sein from Being, fact which unsurprisingly brought along some reconsiderations but that, broadly

speaking, essentially amounts to what he set out to do in his initial ontological project. Surprisingly, the most concrete instance of this pendulation between Dasein and Being is to be found, at least to my knowledge, in one of his more political works, i.e. (iii) *The Question Concerning Technology* (1953), around which our present endeavor will mostly revolve.

Keywords: Being (*Sein*), entity (*Seiende*), Unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*), Stock (*Bestand*), Enframing (*Ge-stell*)

My main difficulty when teaching Heidegger is trying to translate his meanings into terms which are more agreeable to the *common sense* individual. One cannot, at first, teach Heidegger by speaking like Heidegger. His words and phrases are not so much technical (as with Husserl, for example), as so contorted and jumbled that they become almost unrecognizable in their *common sense* use. Why is that? Why would someone prefer a language which, apparently, is so abstruse that it threatens the acceptability of the message it tries to convey? Given that *usually people do it the hard way only when there is no easy way*, maybe because, in this case as well, he felt that there was no other way. More to the point, the basic motive behind the oddity of Heidegger's language is, I think, the fact that it is not so much *representational*, as *performative*: namely, its point is not so much to *describe* its objectual signification as clearly and distinctly as possible, as to pro-duce/in-duce[1] the proper *existential horizon* or *experiential context*[2] for his interlocutors to be able to come on their own *to the things being referred to in the way that it's done*.[3] And by *proper* I mean the *experiential context* belonging *to the things themselves* (as opposed to one which was predefined and imposed on them). In other words (and by this I also mean other than the ones he would use), Heidegger's faith in the

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[1] *Hervorbringen* (ger.) – *poiesis* (gr.).

[2] Although Heidegger would, most probably, discharge both terms as unsatisfactory (i.e. already reifying).

[3] Existentially, I think this has to do with the distinction we have already discussed in the first part of the paper between Dasein's two kinds of *caring* for the Other: the one by which Dasein tries to *leap-in* (*einspringen*) for the Other and, consciously or not, dominate and reify him/her, and the one by which Dasein tries to *leap-ahead* (*vorausspringen*) of the Other and, consequently, let the Other be as he/she is/chooses (*Seinlassen*).

empathic power of language is so great that he believes that it can (and must, if properly used) not merely describe and convey to the interlocutor the things and situations experienced by the *locutor*, but actually make him/her *be* in those situations; it is very similar to the way an actor or a poet would relate to language. Arguably, the need for this new, more life-laden and empathic philosophical language is rather transparent, from the very early stages of his thought:

„The intentional odd mix of street sights and sounds, a stop at the bookstore, chance social encounters, entering the classroom, recollections of the last class, and the like strung along this life-continuity, ultimately seeks to underscore the point that the whole of this motley continuity nevertheless possesses the self-contained unity of a situation. Even the most disparate things, say, what now lies on my desk, are held together in the ‚relative closure' of ‚my situation.' Whatever happens, we say, has its ‚context'. And the experiential context gives itself as a situation, a certain unity already in experience prior to all theorizing. What is the character and basis of this unified whole called a ‚situation'? (...) For it is *this* I which gives the situation *this* character; the walk would be different for another student. The I plays a role in defining the tendency of the situation, but in turn is defined by the underlying motivations driving the situation."[4]

In other words, *the I* and *the situation* are codeterminative: although the I fashions the situation in his/her own specific image (bestows upon it his/her own kind of specific unity), the situation itself has its *own*, autonomous semantic structure which codetermine both the I's self-interpretation and his/her interpretation of the situation itself. Better put, the I and the situation *flow into each other*. Where does the semantic structure of the situation itself come from? This is a very difficult question to which we will come back later. For the moment, as a formal indication, we can view it as a loosely interlocked set of meanings which *gloamingly presketch the what* of the elements partaking of a given

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[4] Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie,* GA 56/57 (Frankfurt: Klostermann), 1987, pp.205/70f apud Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (London: University of California Press), 1993, pp. 64-65.

situation, i.e. their approximate identity and array of possible connections. This array of meanings are, according to Heidegger, pre-linguistic and, more importantly, pre-theoretical – in fact they constitute the basis and define the parameters of any theoretical and sentential act. Consequently, they are out of the grasp of theoretical knowledge as, consciously or not, any form of theoretical knowledge is tributary to them. On the other hand, this doesn't mean that they are out of the grasp of any form of knowledge whatsoever and that is precisely where hermeneutics, especially etymological hermeneutics comes in. In other words, by looking at the etymology of the terms and concepts we usually deploy in a given situation, we can catch a glimpse of the pre-reflective, transculturally inherited meanings which define it (and, obviously, *our being in it*). As such, Heidegger's *linguistic coinage* is not at all arbitrary, it takes place within the boundaries of any given term's/concept's etymology and it is intended to bring forth the subjacent pre-reflective semantic structure unconsciously involved in our using it. We can view all of this as some sort of active etymological radiography. After all, that is exactly what *ana-lysis*, in its original etymological meaning amounts to: *loosening*, *unfastening* within a boundary (gr. *hóros – horízōn).*

On the Essence of Truth

Hopefully, all this will become clearer after discussing Heidegger's notion of truth as presented in his 1930 lecture *On the Essence of Truth*. Now, if you remember from our discussion in *Part I*, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger had defined truth on the basis of Dasein's *Being-in-the-world* [in-der-Welt-Sein], i.e. as *truth of existence* achieved through Dasein's state of *resoluteness* [Entschlossenheit], brought about, in its turn, by Dasein's acknowledgement of *its own* finitude, that is of its *Being-onto-death* [Sein-zum-Tode]. This allowed Dasein to unbind itself from the spell of the impersonal self of everyday existence [das Man] and take matters, i.e. its own existential project [Entwurf] , into its own hands. As known, Heidegger wrapped al this up in the concept of *authenticity* [Eigentlichkeit], basically amounting to Dasein's acknowledgement of its own *uncanniness*

[Unheimlichkeit] with respect to the standards of *common sense everyday life*. In this respect, truth was not so much some desirable feature of our inferences and ideas, but rather something to be lived:

„Resoluteness is a distinctive mode of Dasein's disclosedness. In an earlier passage, however, we have interpreted disclosedness existentially as the *primordial truth*. Such truth is primarily not a quality of ‚judgment' nor of any definite way of behaving, but something essentially constitutive for Being-in-the-world-as-such. Truth must be conceived as a fundamental *existentiale*. In our ontological clarification of the proposition that ‚Dasein is in the truth' we have called attention to the primordial disclosedness of this entity as the *truth of existence*; and for the delimitation of its character we have referred to the analysis of Dasein's authenticity."[5]

In *The Essence of Truth* the approach is complementary. Now, truth is not viewed from Dasein's perspective, but Dasein and its relation to Being are viewed, and somewhat reconsidered from the side of truth. At the same time, the ontological character of the approach is notably purer, i.e. less anthropocentric: it is not I that reveal Being through my presence, but rather Being itself reveals itself to itself through me. In other words, as we will see, the essence of truth is now the self-disclosedness of Being itself, of which man, or rather each Dasein, can partake, provided that he/she decides [entschließt sich] to *ex-ist*, that is to *let go of itself* and *expose* itself in the free interplay space provided by the self-disclosedness of Being. Now, allegedly, *truth of existence* is not so much Dasein's *state of authenticity* but rather its *standing into the open* [das Offene] provided by Being. On the other hand, as I will attempt to show, Dasein's achieved state of authenticity, i.e. its coming to terms with its own Being-unto-death and uncanniness, is, in fact the only way Dasein can achieve the self-detachment necessary for the *exposedness to Being* of which Heidegger, in his later thought, speaks of as being the essence of truth.

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[5] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford : Basil Blackwell), 1962, pp.343/par.297.

Anyway, he starts with the traditional, supposedly *Aristotelian*, notion of truth as propositional correspondence: "A statement is true when what it means and says agrees with the thing of which it speaks."[6] On the other hand, he asks, *what precisely agrees to what in such a relation*? We must take into account the fact that we usually refer not only to statements as being true, but also to states of facts, beings and, ultimately, even things. In our daily use of the term it is not uncommon to refer, for example, to a friend or a lover as being true, or untrue (i.e. *false*), or to a certain object, or substance: *This is not true (i.e. genuine) gold!* is not at all a far-fetched use of the term. In such situations the relations are reversed with respect to the standard *Aristotelian* understanding: it is not that our representation/opinion must agree with the object in cause for them to be true, but, *au contraire*, the object being referred to must agree with our representation/opinion of it in order for it to be true. As such, contrary to the traditional understanding, *adequatio* can mean two things; in the first, shall we call it *ontological*, sense, *a thing must hold true* of its representation/opinion/idea, in the second, shall we call it *ontic*, *a representation/opinion/idea must hold true* of the object it refers to: „firstly, the correspondence of a thing with the idea of it as conceived in advance, and secondly, the correspondence of that which is intended by the statement with the thing itself."[7] At this point Heidegger sets about showing that and how the former meaning of *adequatio* is in fact primordial with respect to the latter and he basically does this by pointing out that in order for any statement to be true of a thing, the one making it has to have a previous notion or conception of it. In other words, there is no neutral moment of perception in order to allow for an *objective* i.e. imponderable [*freischwebend*] judgmental standpoint: we always perceive and judge through an implicit preconception of any given thing. This is precisely the *subjacent semantic structure* I have referred to in the introduction.

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[6] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 295.

[7] *Idem* p. 295.

With that being said, Heidegger continues by making a historical hermeneutics of the relation between intellect and thing with respect to the meaning of correspondence as *adequatio*: *Veritas est adequatio rei et intellectus.*

In this respect, he notes that if we look at the history of philosophy keeping in mind the afore-established alethic dichotomy, we can find two meanings of *intellectus*, one referring to the intellect of God, with Whose ideas any created object must agree (i.e. *agreement of the object to the Idea*) and the other, referring to the human intellect, which has to *adequate* its ideas to the objects (i.e. *agreement of the idea to the object*). As such, according to the implicit original meaning of *intellectus*, any object must first fit within the general order of the Creation and only as long as it does, can it become the point of reference to which any statement about it must correspond. In short, *coherence* (i.e. agreement with the Idea of general order of Creation – the ancient *Kosmos*) precedes *correspondence* (agreement of the idea to the object being referred to in the statement). The interesting thing is that in Heidegger's analysis, the *human intellect*, as a created thing, in order to fit with the general order of Creation, must correspond to its Idea, and it does so precisely by fitting its ideas (*representations*), to the things fitting the general order of Creation. *Coherent correspondence* is, I think, a proper name for this notion of truth.

Schematically, things would look more or less like this:

Intellectus divinus → *the general order of Creation* – Ideas (*Eidē*) → things of the world → human intellect → ideas

„The *intellectus humanus* is likewise an *ens creatum*. It must, as a faculty conferred by God on man, satisfy His Idea. But the intellect only conforms to the Idea in that it effects in its propositions that approximation of thought to thing, which, in its turn, must also conform to the Idea. The possibility of human knowledge being true (granted that all that ‚is' is created) has its basis in the fact that thing and proposition are to an equal extent in conformity with the Idea and thus find themselves conforming to one another in the unity

of the divine plan.(...) *Veritas* always means in its essence: *convenientia*, the accord of ‚what-is' itself, as created, with the   destiny of the creative order."[8]

Heidegger claims that, culturally, while the former meaning of *intellectus*, i.e. *intellectus divinus*, had its day back in the scholastic period, the latter, i.e. *intellectus humanus* gained more and more ground during the modern era until it completely absorbed the *intellectus divinus* and all of its tasks. As such, in the modern age, human reason progressively comes to consider itself capable, ready and willing to potentially calculate and predetermine the entire evolution of the world. Correspondingly, political modernity amounts to a *potentially universal administrative claim* on the world, of which, as we will see later on, technology itself is the most concrete extension.

„The creative order as conceived by theology is supplanted by the possibility of planning everything with the aid of worldly reason [Weltvernunft], which is a law unto itself and can claim that its workings...are immediately intelligible."[9]

The most interesting thing however, Heidegger notes, is the fact that this interpretation of truth as (what I have called) *coherent correspondence* was maintained all along this transition from *intellectus divinus* to *intellectus humanus* (with the *coherent* part of it becoming, however, silent). All the more, this definition of truth gradually became so widely accepted that people started taking it for granted, as an axiom, thereby forgetting both its origins and the transition itself. In other words, positivism tends to forget that the very *positivistic* notion of truth actually got started in a cultural and philosophical context to which it thinks to oppose. Thereby the positivistic notion of truth is actually groundless [Grundlos] as, unknowingly, its very aim is to deny its grounds. In this interpretation, Heidegger comes very close to Nietzsche's warning to (post-

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[8] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 296-297.

[9] *Idem* p. 297.

)modernity regarding the risk of the secular truth crumbling along with the belief in the monotheistic God.[10]

On the next step, Heidegger supplements the hermeneutical aspect of his approach with some sort of phenomenology of correspondence. *What does it actually (i.e. as experience) mean for two things to agree with each other?* As a propaedeutic observation, he points to the fact that by correspondence, the corresponding things, beyond their coinciding aspects, do not become one and the same but, au contraire, have to remain different. In other words, *the distinction of the corresponding things is a precondition of the correspondence itself*. On the other hand, when speaking of the traditional, supposedly *Aristotelian*, notion of truth, what we have in mind is, usually, a certain kind of correspondence, i.e. the one between sentence and thing, that is *the agreement of the sentence to the intended thing*. At the same time, in keeping with the previous considerations, a corresponding sentence does not and cannot become its intended object if it is to say something about it. This *agreement of the sentence to the intended object* is a particular type of correspondence which Heidegger calls *re-presentative [vorstellende] relation* (keeping in mind that the *ad litteram* translation of the German term would be *setting-in-front-of*). As Heidegger sees it, in such a relation, the sentence is *pointed to* the intended thing (*as a target*) in a certain respect, thereby capturing and conveying the way the thing is in that respect. Along with this, the thing becomes an object.

„The thing so opposed must, such being its position, come across the open towards us and at the same time stand fast in itself as the thing and manifest itself as something constant."[11]

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[10] "2. The end of Christianity-at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God (the sense of truthfulness, developed highly by Christianity, is nauseated by the falseness and mendaciousness of all Christian interpretations of the world and of history; rebound from "God is truth" to the fanatical faith "All is false"; Buddhism of action-). (…) 5 . The nihilistic consequences of contemporary natural

science (together with its attempts to escape into some beyond). The industry of its pursuit eventually leads to self-disintegration, opposition, an antiscientific mentality. Since Copernicus man has been rolling from the center toward X." Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, trans. by Walter Kaufmann & R.J. Hollingdale, (New York: Vintage Books), 1968, pp. 7-8.

Given that Heidegger's thematization draws very much on a *German language game*, a few linguistic observations are in order: the German word for object, *Gegenstand*, has two components, namely *gegen – against* and *stand – stand*, thereby amounting to *standing-against*. However strange, this is actually a quite accurate apprehension of the Latin etymology of the term, *obiaceo – obiacere* (*inf.*) meaning (just as *Gegenstand* does) *standing-in-front-of* and *standing-against*. As such, we could say that in Heidegger's view, a thing becomes an object in the moment at which it becomes remarkable for Dasein in a certain respect as a separate entity. Furthermore, a thing becoming an object presents a certain interest for Dasein in the aforementioned respect and, as such, Dasein feels compelled to lay claim to it. *Logos* and its verbal derivate, sentential language is, in Heidegger;s view, Dasein's first and foremost means of apprehending the *objectualized thing in the respect presenting an interest.* At the same time, however, the thing becoming the object of Dasein's interest must awaken Dasein's interest and, as such, must reveal itself in the particular respect which makes the object of Dasein's interest. As such, in Heidegger's view, correspondence, as representative agreement between sentence and thing presupposes a mutually intended coincidence between Dasein and entity. However similar, this is not the old subject-object relation as, as always with Heidegger, Being is the one behind both.

Basically, I think Heidegger's claim in this respect can be stripped down to two things: first, that in order for someone to be able to apprehend something as an object [Gegenstand], the thing itself must reveal itself in a certain way, i.e. in such particular way and respect for Dasein to take notice of it and second, that in order for this thing to happen, Dasein itself must *make itself available*, must *sensitize itself*, if you will, to the given thing in that particular respect. To put it in a more Heideggerian language, truth as correspondence is a *meeting* [Begegnung] in which both Dasein and thing must partake by

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[11] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 300.

willingly *coming into the open* [das Offene], that is in the space of free interplay between Dasein and entity where they allow themselves and each other to become co-constitutive:

„All working and carrying out tasks, all transaction and calculation, sustains itself in the open, an overt region within which what-is can expressly place itself, as and how it is what it is, and thus become capable of expression."[12]

In other words, Heidegger tries to provide an alternative to the traditional dichotomy between transcendental philosophy and positivism, implicitly criticizing both for their reductionism and artificiality. As such, truth, in his view, primordially amounts to neither imposing a set of pre-given concepts to an inert raw material, nor to *secondhandly* conceptualizing some supposed *unbiasedly pure* initial peceptions, but to *uncovering that which belongs to the entity in the sense intended by Dasein*. To offer a somewhat Husserlian example, let us suppose that we are seeing the three facets of what we think it is a cube. Let us also suppose that when turning the cube we find that, quite surprisingly, we are not dealing with a cube at all, but with some other object. Of course, an empiricist would say that there is nothing mysterious here, that in fact all we have (and could have) done was to change our concepts in light of our perceptions. *Yes, but what determined me initially to intend the three facets I saw in the direction of a cube, as it quite clearly was not the only possibility?* Quite obviously it was a matter of subjectively deployed meaning, but the meaning itself, even if *put to use* by me, in a certain way, it was neither chosen, nor developed by me: I simply (and mistakenly) saw the thing as a cube. I think that the array of possible meanings which can be deployed with respect to a given thing in a particular situation defines in fact what Heidegger more or less metaphorically calls the open [das Offene] or the *clearing* [die Lichtung]; it is precisely what enables (and in fact constrains) me, in every given situation, to perceive something with meaning i.e. 'to see

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[12] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 310.

something (i.e. the three facets) *as something* (i.e. a cube)' [etwas *als etwas*], deriving from, what in *Being and Time* was called, *significance* [Bedeutsamkeit] of the world[13].

In lay terms, it would appear that for him, truth as correspondence means finding *the appropriate meaning of a given thing in a particular situation* – a *coming together* of the meaning suscitated by the thing in Dasein and the one bestowed by Dasein upon the thing.

Subsequently, the statement does nothing more than to capture and fasten this coincidence: „Directing itself in this way the statement is right (true). And what is thus stated is rightness (truth)."[14]

Of course that we adapt our concepts to our perceptions, as an empiricist would put it, but our perceptions as well are unwittingly predetermined by an array of meanings which, on the other hand, are not theoretical, i.e. conceptual in nature (as a neo-Kantian or some other transcendental philosopher would put it). In short, all of these meanings derive from Being in its *intercorrelative sense* as I have called it in *Part I*, i.e. from the general schema of the world into which we are, more or less, contingently borne and to whose ontology we are involuntarily delivered by our very ontogenetic becoming, i.e. *growing up*.

In nuce, at this point, Heidegger comes to the conclusion that the essence of truth consists in the mutual exposition of Dasein and entity within the open [das Offene]. On the side of Dasein, this would amount to saying that its adherence to truth depends on its *personal* decision to open itself to the thing revealing itself [Offenständigkeit]. In my

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[13] „Not only is the world, *qua* world, disclosed as possible significance, but when that which is within-the-world is itself freed, this entity is freed for its *own* possibilities. That which is ready-to-hand is discovered as such in its serviceability, its *usability* and its detrminentality. The totality of involvements is revealed as the categorial whole of a possible interconnection of the ready-to-hand. But even the 'unity' of the manifold present-at-hand, of Nature, can be discovered only if a possibility of it has been disclosed." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford : Basil Blackwell), 1962, pp.184/par.144.

[14] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 301.

opinion, the direct connection with *Being and Time* is that this *self-ex-positive* decision is truly, i.e. *authentically*, achievable only by means of Dasein's resoluteness [Entschlossenheit] attained through its realization and coming to terms with its Being-unto-death [Sein-zum-Tode].

In other words, in Heidegger's view, on the side of Dasein, attaining truth depends on a certain self-detachment in favor of the entity revealing itself out into the open. We can also understand all this by analogy to the relation between a picture and its viewer, or interpreter. What distinguishes a good, i.e. *truthful*, from a wrong, shall we say *artificial*, interpretation of a picture? Well, an answer would be that, an interpreter can err in two ways with respect to a picture, namely, he/she can put either *too much of him-/herself and too little of the picture* in the interpretation, or, *too little of him-/herself and too much of the picture (plus other interpretations) into it*. In other words, a *wrong interpretation* can either impose too much of the viewer's experience and lifeworld onto the picture, thereby being abusive, or it can concentrate too much on the picture itself, its *lifeworld* and other eventual interpretations that it becomes impersonal, i.e. it doesn't say anything about the viewer/interpreter's own relation to the picture. A good interpretation, on the other hand, aims at being *true* both to the viewer/interpreter (i.e. *personal*) and to the picture itself; in other words it *works with* the picture, namely it brings forth the array of meanings conveyed by the picture itself, elaborates them in the context of the author's lifeworld, from there on establishing a connection with the viewer/interpreter's own lifeworld and, finally, *lived experience*[15].

As I have said earlier, I think Heidegger's *hermeneutical* notion of truth is best understood by this analogy. Anyway, the famous statement to which he arrives at this point can be interpreted as an indication in this respect: „Freedom is the essence of truth".[16] However, as we will elaborate later on, his notion of freedom is substantially

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[15] Ger. *Erlebnis*.

[16] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 303.

different from the standard, that is *individualistic-anthropocentric*, understanding of it. *In nuce*, his notion of freedom is much more ontological in nature, that is he views freedom not as something that Dasein *has* as *quality* [Eigenschaft], or property [Eigentum], but as something that *it is*, namely a way of adhering to Being. In other words, for Heidegger freedom amounts to some sort of *ontological self-detachment* on the part of Dasein which enables its self-exposition to the entity revealing itself *as it is* out into the open; only through freedom, thus understood, can Dasein *sensitize* itself to the truth, and that is not because Dasein is *the cause of freedom*, but au contraire, because freedom (as self-detachment) is the basic manifestation of Being as truth[17]:

"(...) freedom is the basis of the inner possibility of rightness only because it receives its own essence from the more primordial essence of the uniquely essential truth."[18]

In other words, for Heidegger, freedom is not *with respect to the world* and *by virtue of Dasein's self*, but to the contrary, *with respect to itself* and *by virtue of the world*. More concretely, in Heidegger's view, Dasein doesn't become free by surpassing (or dominating) the world and thereby *being more like oneself* in its *immanent solitude*[19] but, quite the other way around, by surpassing itself onto the world (or onto the world as Being, to be more precise). Only by *existing*, in the original Latin meaning of the term *as standing out of and for itself*[20], can Dasein *expose* itself to the entity revealing itself *as it is*. In Walter Biemel's words: " Standing in the realm of the open, he (i.e. Dasein) is able to subject himself to what is manifest and shows itself in it, and to bind or commit himself to it."[21] Heidegger wraps all this up in the notion of *Letting-be* [Seinlassen], which means „to

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[17] *I.e.* the most basic and essential possibility of being bestowed by Being upon Dasein.

[18] *Idem* p. 305.

[19] As in a Cartesian understanding of freedom, for example, would, arguably, be the case.

[20] See Mihai Novac, „To Be Is Not-To-Be: Nihilism, Ideology and the Question of Being in Heidegger's Political Philosophy. Part I: Being and Time" in *CKS 2015* (Bucharest: UNT), 2015, pp.834-844.

[21] Walter Biemel, *Martin Heidegger. An Illustrated Study*, trans. J. L. Mehta (New York: Harvest Book), 1976, pp.84.

consent or yield [sich einlassen] to what-is. (...) Letting be (...) means participating in the open and its openness, within which every entity enters and stands.””.[22] As previously noted, in such an interpretation, freedom doesn't mean *self-assertive isolation in spite of the world* but „an exposition into the revealed nature [Entborgenheit, unveiledness] of what is”.[23]

In my opinion, as also pointed out earlier, we are not that far from Heidegger's position in *Being and Time* as some might (and do) think. First, because, as I have said, the freedom as self-detachment necessary for Dasein's self-exposition to Being is, arguably, attainable only by its realization of its being-onto-Death as its *ultimate and ownmost possibility*. Second, because in *Being and time* itself, Heidegger already discussed extensively on Dasein's *openness* [Erschlossenheit] to Being as its fundamental, i.e. *existential, truth*:

"Dasein, as constituted by disclosedness, is essentially in the truth. Disclosedness is a kind of Being which is essential to Dasein. *'There is' truth only in so far as Dasein is and so long as Dasein is.* Entities are uncovered only *when* Dasein is; and only as long as Dasein *is*, are they disclosed. (…) What does it mean to say 'there is truth'? 'We' pressupose truth because 'we', being in the kind of Being which Dasein possesses, are 'in the truth'. We do not presuppose it as something 'outside' us and 'above' us, towards which, along with other 'values', we comport ourselves. It is not we who presuppose 'truth',; but it is '*truth*' that makes it at all possible ontologically for us to be able to *be* such that we 'presuppose' anything at all. Truth is what first *makes possible* anything like presupposing." [24]

By *Letting-be* Dasein, i.e. man, becomes Da-sein, i.e. acknowledges itself as that being who is defined by its relation to the open. We are, in fact, I think, on *different versants of*

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[22] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp. 306.

[23] *Idem* pp.307.

[24] *Idem* pp. 269-270/par.227.

the same mountain: as repeatedly pointed out, *existence* in its original Latin etymology means both *standing forth to oneself* and *standing outside of* oneself; if in *Being and time* Heidegger dealt with the *standing forth* side of existence, in *The Essence of Truth* and the subsequent works, with the *standing outside* side of it.

As such, in Heidegger's view, truth amounts to a mutual self-exposition of Dasein and entity or, differently put, *of Being as Dasein* and *Being as entity*. The exposition of Dasein to entity depends on its voluntary self-detachment which, in its turn, as I have tried to show, depends on Dasein's coming to terms with its own finitude (authenticity). However intricately conceptualized, this is actually not so hard to grasp. On the other hand, the self-exposition of the entity to Dasein is not easy to understand. *How could an entity, i.e. an inanimate object, expose itself to anything?* Well, *in nuce*, Heidegger's answer to this, is, as far as I can understand it: we don't know, but it happens, at least as long as truth is what we originally and primordially experience it to be: *aletheia* i.e. *uncoveredness/unconcealment* [Entborgenheit] 'of something *as something'*. On the other hand, the very fact that we don't know what self-discloses itself to Dasein as Being is mysterious – and that mistery, i.e. the *mistery of the source*, actually belongs to our original way of experiencing truth. After all, *Aletheia* is the negation of *Lethe* (etym. gr. *oblivion, concealment*) – truth as *unconcealment* or *disclosedness* [Entborgenheit] is grounded on and derives from *concealment* or *hiddenness* [Verborgenheit] and our *definition of truth* should take that firmly into account (fact which, according to Heidegger, neither positivism, nor transcendental philosophy do[25]):

„From the point of view of truth conceived as revealedness...hiddenness is un-revealedness [Un-entborgenheit] and thus untruth proper which is intrinsic to the nature of truth."[26]

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[25] Although some would argue that Kant's *thing-in-itself* [Ding and sich], as an unknowable precondition of all phenomenal knowledge did just that.

[26] Martin Heideger, „On The Essence of Truth", trans. R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick, *Existence and Being* (Chicago: Regnery), 1949, pp.313.

As such, just as in *Being and Time*, for Heidegger truth still amounts to the ‚undisclosedness of Something *as something*'. As a quick reminder, in *Being and time*, 'something as something' [etwas *als etwas*] is the basic semantic structure defining and modulating our perception of the world. Concretely, it is what, for example, would allow one, depending on context, to spontaneously perceive a spherical object (something) '*as a football ball*', or '*as a bowling ball*', or a metal T-shaped object '*as a hammer*' and so on. To put it in a very non-Heideggerian language, for the sake of approximation we could say that the first ‚something' would more or less correspond to the *sensory data*, whereas the *'as something'* to the meaning one ascribes to it depending on context (keeping in mind that, in Heidegger's view, our spontaneous and original perception is not that of the sensory data, but that of the meaning). As pointed out earlier, the so called *open* [das Offene] in which things reveal themselves to Dasein is, at least how I see it, precisely the array of potential meanings, i.e. of "*as somethings*", which can be ascribed to a thing in a certain context.[27]

Now, what I think Heidegger claims in this last respect is that this *open* can and does change from one time period to another – in other words, the array of potential '*as somethings*' which can be ascribed to a certain something varies historically. *In nuce*, one and the same thing can (and does) *mean* different things according to the historical age in which we contextualize it. Being reveals itself differently from one historical period to another. In fact, in Heidegger's view, this is precisely what history primordially amounts to: the changing of the *open*, of the array of meanings by which Dasein *exists*, i.e. relates

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[27] „The circumspective question as to what this particular thing that is ready-to-hand may be, receives the circumspectively interpretative answer that it is for such and such a purpose [es ist zum...]. If we tell what it is for [des Wozu], we are not simply designating something; but that which is designated is understood *as* that *as* which we are to take the thing in question. That which is disclosed in understanding – that which is uderstood – is already accessible in such a way that its ‚as which' can be made to stand out explicitly. The ‚as' makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood. It constitutes the interpretation. In dealing with what is environmentally ready-to-hand by interpreting it circumspectively, we ‚see' it *as* a table, a door, a carriage, or a bridge; (...)" Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford : Basil Blackwell), 1962, pp.184/par.144.pp.189/par. 149.

to and *exposes itself to* Being. From this perspective, the empirical-chronological history, that is what people do at one historical date or another, is just secondary.

As such, every historical age has its own specific *open* and consequently its *truth*. This does not mean, however, that according to Heidegger, in the bigger picture, all *opens* are the same and therefore valid in their own right. *Au contraire*, some are better than others depending, first, on the fullness of the unconcealment [Entborgenheit] of Being they allow for, and, second, on the authenticity they suscite in Dasein. Generally, one could say that a given *open* is more or less accomplished depending on the degree to which it explicitly takes into account and integrates into its *truth*, *the mistery*, i.e. the hiddenness [Verborgenheit] of Being as part of the disclosedness [Entborgenheit] of Being. In this regard, neither post-archaic[28] *European epochs* fare particularly well, while our present one, as already shown in *Part I*, fares particularly badly.[29] The reasons therefor, though clearer now than at the time I wrote this, are not yet sufficiently clear; however they will be further fathomed later on. For the time being, suffice it to say that, in Heidegger's view, it is not necessarily our fault that things turned out that way: both disclosedness [Entborgenheit] and hiddenness [Verborgenheit] are *of Being* also in the sense that they belong to it; in other words it might well be that the oblivion [Seinsvergessenheit] of Being is part of the hiddenness [Verborgenheit] of Being which is the ground of the disclosedness [Entborgenheit] of Being.

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[28] As in ancient archaic Greece.

[29] As stated there "(…) according to Heidegger, the founding fathers of the European Lifeworld, i.e. those thinkers that grounded the framework of our existence as Europeans have articulated and passed down a distorted and restrictive understanding of Being, i.e. one that didn't allow for the reiteration of the question of Being (which normally should be reenacted with every new cultural configuration, or individual destiny). The very categories and language of our thought and human interaction are, according to Heidegger, tributary to this traditional misinterpretation of Being which followed an ever degenerative path up to the (post)modern age – therefrom, our alienation from our lives and Being, namely nihilism. That is why Heidegger states that the history of European thought and culture is in fact the history of the *withdrawal of Being* (form the world).
To Heidegger, the sources of this historic distortion are to be found with the very origins of our thought, namely the ancient Greek thought and more particularly Plato. In short, the *oblivion of Being* conducive to nihilism is the gradually sublimated product of the Platonic definition of Being as *immutable presence*, i.e. as perpetually identical and unchanging." Mihai Novac, „To Be Is Not-To-Be: Nihilism, Ideology and the Question of Being in Heidegger's Political Philosophy. Part I: Being and Time" in *CKS 2015* (Bucharest: UNT), 2015, pp.834-844.

This has to do with the ontological reasons for the oblivion of being I have mentioned in *Part I*. More on this, later on.

Letter on Humanism

Supposedly, Heidegger wrote his *Letter on Humanism* as an answer to Jean Beaufret's questions, but in response to Sartre's *Existentialism is a Humanism*. Allegedly, this marks the moment of his explicit dissociation from the French existentialism. *Grosso modo*, I think that his attitude in this regard could be summed up as follows: *if the existentialism is a humanism, then my philosophy is not existentialism*.

As repeatedly pointed out, after his *Being and Time* era, Heidegger came to see the entire Western tradition of philosophy (at least since Plato) as the byproduct of some sort of *ego inflation*, or, to put it in a more Heideggerian language, as *anthropocentric*. Basically, this means that, irrespective of the doctrinaire particularities, the general trend in Western philosophical thought was to conceive Being through some or other feature of Dasein: ideas, experience, consciousness, reason, will and so on. As such, says Heidegger, humanism, along with subjectivism and idealism, constitute a triad which progressively came to define the generic and specific attitude of Western thought with respect to Being. Essentially, this is what anthropocentrism, at least in its standard sense, amounts to. The so called *oblivion of Being* [Seinsvergessenheit] extensively discussed by him in *Being and time* (and by us in *Part I*) is, probably, the major symptom thereof.

On the other hand, as we have seen, his considerations in *The Essence of Truth* had led him to believe that Dasein's, i.e. man's, existence is to be understood by way of its *self-exposedness* to Being. This would amount to saying that *what man is, depends on, and is defined by the way it relates to (aprox. understands and comports itself with respect to) Being at one (historical) time, or another*. *In nuce*, what Dasein, or rather *Da-sein* amounts to is defined by its *open* [das Offene], or *clearing* [Lichtung]:

"The standing in the clearing of Being I call the ex-sistence of man. Only man has this way to be. Ex-sistence, so understood, is not only the basis of the possibility of reason,

ratio, but ex-sistence is that, wherein the essence of man preserves the source that determines him."[30]

As we also have seen, in Heidegger's view, (i) the *opens* change historically and, all the more, (ii) their change is indeterminate, i.e. Dasein has no control over the way they change. Concretely, in a less Heideggerian language, this is to say that what a thing *is*, depends on the array of meanings in which it is embedded and this, in its turn, depends on the general semantic structure of the world at the time (the so called *significance* [Bedeutsamkeit] of the world). Consequently, the significance of the world, the open [das Offene] or the clearing [Lichtung] change historically in an uncontrollable way. This does not necessarily mean that their change is chaotic, quite the opposite, but it does mean that Dasein, Da-sein or man has no control over it. However, *having no control over it*, does not mean that Dasein cannot grasp or fathom it. *Au contraire*, this is actually man's most fundamental calling, according to Heidegger: that of *laying bare*, that is of *bringing forth and articulating*, the open or the clearing in which it happens to be situated (or, maybe better said, *thrown*). This is precisely where the *task of thinking* comes in:

"Thought brings to fulfillment [Erfüllung] the relation of Being to the essence of man."[31] - where fulfilling meant "to unfold something in the fullness of its essence."[32]

Thought...lets itself be called into service by Being in order to speak the truth of Being. It is thought which accomplishes this letting [Lassen]. (...) Thought acts in that it thinks. This is presumably the simplest and, at the same time, the highest form of action: it concerns man's relation to what is." [33]

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[30] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", trans. Edgar Lohner in *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century,* vol. 3, ed. William Barrett and H.D. Aiken (New York: Random House,), 1962, pp. 277.

[31] *Idem* p. 271

[32] *Idem* p. 270

[33] *Idem* p. 271

As such, by thinking, Da-sein can *lay bare* its more or less specific clearing and the way it came about – i.e. the general historical succession of *clearings*. Essentially, this is to say that ancient Greek culture, classical Greco-Roman culture, Christian Middle Ages, modernity and postmodernity are just successive ways of, implicitly or explicitly, understanding Being or, better said, of Being self-disclosing itself to man. Articulating each of these clearings, i.e. cultural moments, in its specificity with respect to one's own existence constitutes the task of thinking, which Heidegger will try to fulfill in his later works.

Question Concerning Technology

According to the standard tradition of the myth, Hephaestus, the Greek god of craftsmanship, was so deformed at birth that his mother, Hera, didn't want him at her side and literally threw him out of Mount Olympus, fact which, at least in some versions, further crippled him. He later got back at Hera by way of one of his *skillful contrivances* and, though unwillingly, also got back on Mount Olympus. I think this story also conveys the basic claim of the Heideggerian standpoint on modern technology, i.e. that it is the product of some sort of *resentful domination* – it emerges as an attempt at compensating and overcoming man's *ontological precariousness*, i.e. its *finitude*[34] by imposing on Being its own laws and principles, by *making Being in its own* (i.e. man's) *image*, if you will. More concretely, in Heidegger's view, modern technology is the supreme product of the world-reification process which started with Plato's metaphysics. The definitive process of the corresponding post-modern worldview is what we could call *subjective-ideal presentisation*, namely that of (i) shrinking reality to what is *now, at the present moment*, perceived by *mind* and (ii) of making the thing(s) so perceived dependent on the mind's ideas. *To be is to be perceived* and *to be perceived is to be reasoned, i.e. conceptually determined* are, I think, in Heidegger's view, the two basic principles of today's, i.e. post-modern, life-world. In the next section, we will explore Heidegger's arguments for the

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[34] Made manifest in its *throwness* [Geworfenheit], it's *Being-onto-death* [Sein zum Tode] and in the hiddenness or concealedness [Verborgenheit] of Being.

dominative nature of technology, his account of the historical emergence and development of technology in this particular sense and the political consequences thereof.

As we have previously seen, Heidegger came to believe that Dasein, i.e. *man*, is its existence and existence is the way it *opens itself*, that is relates to and comports itself [Verhält sich] with respect to Being. This goes to saying that what *any-thing*, including Dasein itself, is, is determined by the particular meaning Dasein, in that particular situation, chooses to ascribe to it and that this meaning, in its turn, derives from a more comprehensive array of meanings contained, in their turn, in the *general semantic structure of the world* as conceived by the culture in cause. As also seen earlier, Heidegger wraps all this up in the concepts of *open* [Offene] or *clearing* [Lichtung] of which he came to the conclusions that (i) it changes historically and that (ii) this change is not under Dasein's control. However, even if Dasein cannot intervene in the historical change of the clearings, it can *think* it, that is analyze it and determine its own position both with respect to the general historical transformation of the clearings, and with respect to the particular clearing in which it happened to be thrown. By doing so, Dasein can, allegedly, codetermine, that is *take part in*, its own destiny, or provide its own personal answer to the question of Being, if you will.

Given that the original name of the lecture was *Das Ge-stell* and that, even after its re-elaboration, this is still the most central concept of the work, a few preparatory observations in its regard I think are entitled. The most common English translation of *Ge-stell* was *enframing* and that, I think, is a good translation given that it more or less explicitly covers the last two of the three original meanings of the term, while at the same time alluding to the first. Concretely, in German *Ge-stell* means (i) *something put together*, i.e. generated by composition, by inter-joining different parts, (ii) *framework* and (iii) *standing frame* or *rack*[35]. In addition, *Ge-stell* may also refer to (iv) a *hearth* or to

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[35] Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, (Oxford: Blackwell), 1999, pp. 210.

(v) *the well of a blasting furnace*. Quite obviously, the semantic sphere of the term is rather ample but, at the same time, these meanings are visibly correlated. By a mere superficial overview of the list of denotations one may conclude that *Ge-stell* refers to something which belongs in a workshop or a building yard.

Anyway, the *Ge-stell* or *enframing* is, according to Heidegger, the essence of modern technology and, consequently, of (post-)modern age itself. More explicitly, it constitutes the distinguishing ontological attitude of modern man, basically amounting to something we could call *complete calculatory predeterminative securization of the world*. Essentially, according to Heidegger, (post-)modern man tries to overcompensate its own finitude by attempting to control every, apparently, contingent aspect of its world. As we have already seen at the end of *Part I*, however, this, is not the right way given that, according to Heidegger, it is precisely our *own* finitude[36] which makes us *Da-seinly human*, if you will. Without limitations and their realization, Da-sein can grasp neither of its existential preconditions: (i) *authenticity* [Eigentlichkeit] as resolute integration of its Being-onto-death and (ii) the *hiddenness* or *concealedness* of Being as the inaccessible ground of its truth as disclosedness [aletheia – Entborgenheit]. Existentially speaking, we could say that without the former, Dasein cannot *stand forth to itself*, without the latter, it cannot stand *outside of itself*.

Anyway, Heidegger starts by stating that he is not interested in technology as such, but *in its essence*, i.e. in something lying beneath it, announcing itself *through and as it* and definitive of its greater finality (its *For-which* [Wozu] as he would have called it in *Being and time*).

"Technology is not equivalent to the essence of technology. When we are seeking the essence of a 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

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[36] Manifested especially as *Being-onto-death* in *Being and time* and as the *hiddenness* or *concealedness* [Verborgenheit] of Being in his later thought.

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."[37]

To make this distinction clearer he addresses the common notion of technology as instrument. Quite strangely, he states that even though this instrumental interpretation of technology is surprisingly *accurate* [Richtig] for a common interpretation, it is not also *true* [Wahr]. In saying this he alludes to a point he will try to make explicit later in this lecture according to which the main *ontological flaw* of modern technology is that it covers *the truth behind it*, i.e. the clearing [Lichtung] and, ultimately, the *concealedness* [Verborgenheit] of Being as the ground of the disclosedness [Entborgehneit] of Being. I have also tried to anticipate this point in *Part I*, when I was writing that in Heidegger's view man as Dasein/Da-sein is made possible by its *pervasiveness to nothingness* (mainly instantiated in *Being and time* by Dasein's Being-onto-death and in his later work by the concealedness or hiddenness of Being). As such, what I have called here the (i) *subjective-ideal presentisation* and the (ii) *complete calculatory predeterminative securization of the world* prevent, i.e. *cover*, precisely that, thereby precluding Dasein from realizing its existentiality. What I have then called the reification of the world is also an interrelated aspect thereof. More on this later.

Anyway, in its common interpretation, technology is essentially instrumental. Therefore its point consists in its intended effect, in what can be achieved through it. In other - i.e. mine, not Heidegger's - words, technology amounts to some sort of *intentionally enacted causality*. As such, we should take a look at the original meaning of causality, respect in which, Aristotle's account is still the most influential, even if in a misinterpreted sense according to Heidegger. Allegedly, both in his *Physics* (II, 3) and in his *Metaphysics* (V, 2), Aristotle distinguishes among four so called *causes* of a thing or state of affairs: 1) *causa materialis* (*hyle*) – the material, or substance a thing is made of; 2)

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[37] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" trans. by William Lovitt in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (New York: Garland Publishing), 1977, pp.4.

causa formalis (*eidos*) – its shape, or aspect; 3) *causa efficiens* – that which brings it about and also determines it to change and move; 4) *causa finalis* (*telos*) – the finality of its movement, purpose of its action and, eventually, goal of its intention. Formally, these are the four causes of anything and, consequently, any account of something must consider all four of them in order to be complete. On the other hand, Heidegger notes, the Greek word for cause is *aitia/aition* which, originally was not used in such an abstract and specialized way but simply meant *bearing the responsibility for*, or *by virtue of*. This implies a *personal connection with*, or to put it in a more Heideggerian language, *Dasein's involvement* in the respective thing or state of affairs. In other words, *the bringing about of something*, for example, presupposes a modification of Dasein's own existential stance, mood [Befindlichkeit] and, in the end, Being-in-the-world [in-der-Welt-Sein] itself. This is something that the abstract-specialized use of the notion of causality tends to overlook and not by accident, as this abstract and detached use of the notion of causality is precisely the byproduct of the subject-object dichotomy specific to the reificatory ontology culminating in the modern worldview.

Heidegger famously exemplifies the four types of causes and the difference between the original and the abstract(-*modern*) meaning of *causality* by referring to an *offering cup* or *chalice*. The material, formal and final causes of the offering cup are simple enough, I think, not to require any special analysis: (1) the material cause is the silver the cup is made of, its (2) formal cause is its actual shape, *the way it looks*, if you will and its (4) final cause is, quite expectedly, the procession or rite in which it is used. The actual difference between the original and the common-abstract notion of cause appears with respect to (3) *causa efficiens* supposedly, the silversmith as he is the one bringing the cup into existence. On the other hand, simply labeling the silversmith as the *causa efficiens* of the cup disregards his very personal involvement in the making of the cup, his mastery (or lack of it), decisions, intuitions, feelings while and after making it. More concretely, such an approach disregards the cup itself as the creation of that particular silversmith – another silversmith would have made a different cup.

"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. (...) 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."[38]

The silversmith does not just *generate* the cup, he/she *makes it* and in making it he/she brings forth, just in the way it stands forth, something that previously *was not there* – in this act of creation *the standing forth to itself* (existence) and the *standing forth and against* (object) come together in a unique way: a new entity takes its place in the *there/here* [Da] of Being [Sein]. This is why Heidegger calls this way of creating *bringing-forth* [hervorbringen] as he traces it back, through the Latin *pro-ducere* to the Greek word *poiesis*.

"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, poiesis. Physis also, the arising of something from out of itself, is a bringing-forth, poiesis. Physis is indeed poiesis in the highest sense. (…)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

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[38] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" trans. by William Lovitt in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (New York: Garland Publishing), 1977, pp.8.

coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [das Entbergen]."[39] The silversmith is the *aitio* of the sacrificial cup, i.e. the ground responsible for its occasioning and being just the way it happens to be - by no mere accident, therefore, also *techne* referred to both what we would call *technical*, and *artistic* creation: any such act of creation is not just objectification of the *inner* representations in some inert products, but a modulation of Dasein's own ontological stance.

Nature, on the other hand, says Heidegger, is different in this regard, in that it needs no *aitio*, at least not in this latter sense – nature is able to bring by itself, that is without anyone's personal involvement, things into existence and subsequently to their fulfillment:

"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 heautoi)."[40]

Among such beings, at least initially, governed by nature was also Dasein. On the other hand, Dasein, besides following nature's cycle of emergence-fruition-dissolution was also what we (but not Heidegger) could call *aware* thereof. Consequently, Dasein grew more and more dissatisfied with this cycle as it, most obviously, imposed on its existence an imminent finitude. As such, Dasein tried to both copy and overcome nature. It tried to copy nature by its creative power, it tried to overcome it by attempting to impose on it, given its aforementioned creative power, its own laws and principles. Basically, Heidegger claims that the entire history of the European culture and civilization, at least since Plato, constitutes just Dasein's attempt at making nature into a controllable object. The contemporary product thereof is what I have previously called *complete calculatory predeterminative securization of the world*, or what Heidegger calls, in a single word, *enframing* [Ge-stell]. Enframing is modern man's way of creating not by joining in the cycles and forces of nature, but by *ensnaring*, storing and directing them for its purposes. Basically nature, just as the world as such, is viewed by the Ge-stell-man as

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[39] *Idem* pp.10-11.

[40] *Idem ibidem*.

simply a provider of raw materials to be used in this historical crusade against its own finitude.

"The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging [Herausfordern], 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. (…)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. 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."[41]

Heidegger calls the *way things are* within the Ge-stell, *Bestand*, i.e. *standing reserve* or, more commonly, *stock*. Everything is instrumental within the Ge-stell, i.e. matters only as a means to an end which, in its turn, is also a means to another end and so on. What about Da-sein? Well, theoretically, the entire Ge-stell is centered around Da-sein which consequently would be the only end in itself. However, precisely thereby, if Da-sein were to *lose itself,* the Ge-stell and everything within it would become pointless, i.e. just a means to an end which is itself instrumental. And, according to Heidegger, it just happens that in order not to lose itself Da-sein needs the angst caused by the confrontation with its *own* finitude (manifested as thrownness [Geworfenheit], Guilt [Schuld], Being-onto-Death [Sein zum Tode] and, later, Hiddenness [Verborgenheit]). As we have already discussed in

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[41] *Idem* pp.14-16.

Part I these are the preconditions for its authenticity and, as argued here, for its existentiality. As such, precisely by overcoming nature and its own ontological precariousness Da-sein loses itself within the Ge-stell: nothing has any meaning given that any meaning is, now, instrumental. Da-sein itself has become Bestand, i.e. a mere *standing reserve* to be used in the mass production of its alleged illimitation. Materialist scientific positivism constitutes the metaphysical model of the Ge-stell, while industrial ideologies such as Capitalism, Marxism and Nazism its socio-political avatars. The question of Being has become completely forgotten and, paradoxically, just at the apex of its age, man is no longer to be found:

" (…) 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. (…) 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." [42]

Of course, the Enframing [Ge-stell] provides man with plentiful of immediately accessible and utilizable things, but they are in fact devoid of any true meaning: the Ge-stell just *generates objects for subjects* if you will, but although utilizable, they are not really useful – they do not existentially engage Da-sein in any way. Contrary to the aforementioned sacrificial chalice, a plastic mug, for example, does not involve Da-sein's

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[42] *Idem* pp.27.

personal creativity – ultimately, it is the very same plastic mug irrespective of who pushes the buttons of the production line. In making it, Da-sein doesn't really create anything and in using doesn't partake in anything (except, maybe, for the daily routines of the They/One-self [Man]).

Given his defeatist view on technology, many judge Heidegger as a traditionalist or, at least, as a *rural passeist*. However, Heidegger does not promote the kind of *back to the stone-age* anti-technologism he was accused of. He was very aware of the fact that technology and the Being of the future man are inextricably linked. At the same time, on the bigger, i.e. *ontological* scale, we should take note of the fact that the Enframing, for what it's worth, is, in the end, the Clearing [Lichtung] of the (post-)modern man and that the changing of the Clearing is not something over which Dasein has control. As such, I do not think Heidegger ever recommends the renunciation on part of (post-)modern man to technology, despite of its *alienating and nihilating effects*. Modern man should not and could not renounce technology but what it could do would be to relate and comport itself [Verhalten] differently with respect to it, namely more *mindfully*.

"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 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."[43]

Just as I said at the end of *Part I,* the problem is in Heidegger's view, not so much technology as such, but what we could call technologism, i.e. the belief that technology necessarily should and could be relied upon in solving any humanly conceivable problem,

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[43] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" trans. by William Lovitt in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, (New York: Garland Publishing), 1977, pp. 26.

the problem of Being in particular. Although Heidegger does not explicitly put it like this, I think we could understand technologism as the joint product of technology and the impersonal One or They [Man] aiming at the complete securization of man within its world through their interlocked reification. As noted at the end of *Part I*, the main gain of this would be the alleged *dis-limitation* of (post-)modern man, both in the sense of immortality and in that of complete and perpetual Unconcealedness (*non-Heideggerianly speaking*, some sort of omniscience). However, as previously pointed out, the price therefor is maybe too high, as this *dis-limitation* of man would most probably also bring about its depersonalization. Trading an *owned mortality* for a *disowned immortality* would not be the most gainful exchange for (post-)modern man although, at least according to Heidegger, this was the tacit finality of the entire European culture from at least since Plato. One of the main symptoms thereof is the very *anthropomorphization of Being* we have discussed at the beginning, i.e. the fact that the entire post-Platonic philosophical tradition sought to conceive Being through one of the particular aspects of Dasein. The main danger of this process is that of Da-sein's losing its own existentiality, both in the sense of *standing forth* to itself and of *standing outside* of itself.

In considering that, we should take into account the incessant preoccupation of all traditional philosophy with *defining human nature*, i.e. ascribing a set of *primordially definitive and unchanging* set of characteristics to *any-thing human*. So the *anthropomorphization of Being* errs in fact in two ways: first by making man the measure of all things, i.e. the *Lord of Being* and second by imposing on Dasein(s), each with *its own uncanny* [unheimlich] way of being, a *generic human nature*. In so doing anthropomorphization brings about the forgetfulness of Being and, in the end, of man itself as Da-sein.

On the other hand, as previously noted, this is not, so to say, *Dasein's fault*, as the *unfolding and retraction* of Being is not something within Dasein's control, but something pertaining to Being as such. Consequently, there is no general socio-cultural solution to the oblivion of Being. However, this doesn't preclude a personal or, shall we say,

individual solution. In this sense, each Da-sein is *indebted* to provide *on its own* an answer to the question of Being by *thinking through* [durchdenken] its Clearing and resolutely coming to terms with its Being-onto-Death within it. In so doing, Dasein has the possibility of *rejoining in its own being* the two primordial aspects of *techne*: art and instrumental craftsmanship in some sort of personal reinstatement of *poiesis* through one's *own* life. Ultimately, the answer to the question of Being is strictly personal - there is no community capable of inducing to its members either Being, or its question and it is sad that Heidegger forgot that for a few years.

What did I try to do here and where did I get in doing it, at least so far?   Mainly, I think, I have tried to disprove one of the standard trends in Heidegger's exegesis consisting in the exaggeration of the difference between his *Being and time* period, and its subsequent thought. I have repeatedly spoken of an *attitudinal unity* between these two alleged periods in Heidegger's philosophy, attempting to show, in this respect, that they can be subsumed under his primordial understanding of the concept of *existentia*, respectively viewed as a complementary transition from the *standing forth to oneself* (the former period), to the *standing outside of oneself* (the latter period). More concretely, I have tried to show that the realization of Dasein's Being-unto-death which is conducive to authenticity and, ultimately, to Dasein's fulfillment of *its own* existence, in the former sense, is the pre-condition of achieving the kind of *self-detachment* and *exposedness to Being* which Heidegger defines as existence, in his later period.

In nuce, the three main steps of this endeavor were:

I The determination of the attitudinal precondition of truth as freedom from oneself and self-exposedness to Being;

II The understanding of the self-exposedness to Being as *taking place* within an *ontological revelatory space* Heidegger calls the open [Offene] or the Clearing [Lichtung]. In non-Heideggerian terms, the Clearing can be understood as *the general semantic structure of the world* at a given historical moment. As

such, what Da-sein is depends, every time, first on the particular Clearing in which it happens to be thrown, second, on the way it reacts existentially to it, that is, chooses to live within it. Irrespective of the particular content of its choice, first Da-sein has to think through its Clearing the general historical succession of the Clearings (the so called *Fate* [Schicksal]) and then resolutely decide *on its own* its standing within it.

III The *through-thinking* of the present Clearing and of Da-sein's situation within it, or, in other words, Heidegger's radical critique of technology. Basically, by technologism Da-sein apparently comes to overcome both nature and its ontological precariousness (Being-unto-death and the Hiddenness of Being); however it might well be that such so called limitations are, in fact, precisely the preconditions for Dasein's existentiality which, in its turn, is what differentiates Da-sein from the other, shall we say, inert entities. As such, just when apparently overcoming its ontological precariousness through technology Da-sein comes on the verge of losing itself in the form of *Bestand*, i.e. of becoming just one of the resources involved in the technological process. However, Heidegger is aware of the fact that Da-sein cannot renounce technology altogether and so he does by no means recommend such a solution. What he does say, at least how I understand it, is that each Da-sein should overcome the *technological impersonal One/They-self* and creatively put technology to use for the shaping of its own existence as self-exposedness to Being's self-revelation.

Man is a frail being and only by acknowledging such frailty can it find the strength to help it bear the burden of its own existence and, eventually, even the allies therefor: Being as Nature and Nature as art.

In living so, *Dasein* rejoins techne and *poiesis* in its own being.

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