

# Second Philosophy

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Led by	Oswy Gothly / Keith Parker
Title	The Question Concerning Technology
Date	12 October 2008

## INTRODUCTION

I find the views of Heidegger in his later work as exemplified in 'The Question Concerning Technology' as unpalatable as his views in the latter part of 'Being and Time'. Heidegger feels that what he calls technological thinking or the technological mode of Being puts us in a position of grave danger. It reduces Being in the world to be manipulators of objects or the subjects of manipulation ourselves.

All of the world of nature including ourselves reduced to a resource, ready for use, a standing reserve. Everything available for exploitation and manipulation is the enframing of the world by Technology. For Heidegger this has become the possibly inescapable fate of the West and perhaps the whole world. The way our Being is revealed in Technological thought threatens to block out or submerge any alternative ways of thinking and Being.

What does Heidegger prefer and propose? Well he has a deeply pessimistic view of modern technological achievement, what we may call the modernist project. For example he contemplates the river Rhine. Using the Rhine for hydro electric power has deprived the river of its essence. For Heidegger this is 'monstrous', his word. He says despairingly, "But it will be replied the Rhine is still a river in a 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."

Heidegger likes, old windmills, wooden footbridges, peasant farmers working the fields as subsistence farmers, Greek silversmiths Arts and Crafts chalice makers and old foresters like his grandfather but now sadly reduced, 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, that a set configuration of opinion becomes available on demand." His agenda is clear his spleen and pessimism palpable. Heidegger the reactionary technophobe.

His proposal for solution as in 'Being and Time' seems to be, beyond a return to the Middle Ages or even the New Stone Age, a sort of monk like contemplation of poetry and art. Contemplation of these things is no bad thing in itself but in themselves a wholly inadequate response to meet the real challenges of modernity. So for instance if you are a modern environmentalist forget Heidegger. As the philosopher Richard Polk points out the environmental approach would not suit Heidegger's vision because preserving the rain forests etc," is all well and good but notice that this approach continues to view nature as a collection of natural resources that it is up to us to control and manage.

We are still on the way to educating all other living things to food, drugs, pets and zoo specimens. A menagerie is not a wilderness." Sorry Greenpeace but in Heidegger's terms you are part of the problem. so we return to Heidegger's favourite dichotomy. On the one hand, the many, the everyday, the technocratic, the pre determined, the inauthentic, the modern, the urban, the capitalist, the unreflective, in total the bad.

On the other, the few, the enlightened, the uncollective, the pre capitalist the free, the saviour elite, the isolated individual, the authentic, the post technological the post urban, the good. Heidegger's whole analysis and solution to the supposed problem of technology seems to me to be preposterous.

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It is romantic a reactionary looking back to a mythical golden age of rural Greek/Teutonic artist, craftsmen farmers living in tree hugging arcadia.

We all feel the challenge of technology and technological thinking. The mature approach to that challenge is to recognise the benefits of technology and to use its way of Being to moderate its worst aspects. I agree with Heidegger that we cannot escape the inevitability of technology but that does not mean we should curl up and intellectually die in the face of its challenges.

## **My Issues with Heidegger on Technology**

The philosopher George Pattison speaking of Heidegger's philosophy said." A combination of elements gives Heidegger's philosophy a distinctive stamp. Some would regard this stamp as that of a wisdom deeper than that of a merely academic thinker or manager of knowledge. Others, however, are likely to see it as flowing from and contributing to an elitist and authoritarian, not to say pretentious, view of the task of the philosopher, couched in a grandiose rhetoric of superiority whose promises cannot be delivered Plato's philosopher king, but without the discipline of logic or dialectic. On this view, any claim that might be made by and for Heidegger as a philosopher is spurious. At best he might be counted a kind of secular prophet or quasi mystical poet, whose words speak only to those who like that sort of thing. Or, simply, a latter day sophist."

**I agree and I have serious issues with the `Later Heidegger`**

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does Heidegger see instrumental technological thinking as such a threat to our existence? Isn't his belief that we are `enframed` by this thinking naively simplistic? Are we not well aware of the danger of thinking and being in one mode as the present concern over environmental change shows?
2. In a lecture in 1949 called `The Enframing` Heidegger said the following, "Agriculture is now a motorised food industry-in essence the same as the manufacturing of corpses in gas chambers and extermination camps the same as the starving of nations, the same as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs." Doesn't such an outrageous statement reveal the true attitude of Heidegger to Technology, out of proportion, technophobic, reactionary as well as being unrepentant about his Nazi past? Does not Heidegger's choice of examples and metaphors in `the Question Concerning Technology` reveal his post 1945 reincarnation as, what one philosopher, has called an `Idealised Green Nazi`?
3. Does not Heidegger's advocacy of the contemplation of art and poetry and non engagement with the everyday reality of technological world smack of useless intellectual surrender?

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## DISCUSSION:

**Oswy:** Let's start with Question 1: Why does Heidegger see instrumental technological thinking as such a threat to our existence? Isn't his belief that we are `enframed` by this thinking naively simplistic? Are we not well aware of the danger of thinking and being in one mode as the present concern over environmental change shows? Over to you ...

**Renald:** That's 3 questions.

**Oswy:** Yes any order and I think they are interconnected

**Oswy:** Ah I see Renald yes three in one to start

**Renald:** The second part of "Question 1" seems the most straight-forward.

**Simulat:** In reference to question 1 - I don't understand Heidegger's reductionism - why does using a river to make electricity reduce the river to only being a tool for making electricity?

**Oswy:** Take any part

**Wichard:** How has the immediate Nazi past influenced Heidegger?

**Shingles:** firstly I must state that I find discrediting a philosopher on the grounds of his background (Nazi, in this case) inappropriate. Secondly, I fail to see how, in that introduction you have shown Heidegger to be a sophist, Os

**Wichard:** certainly there's nothing wrong with contemplating art and poetry, but that doesn't prevent someone from going out and committing mass murder.

**Simulat:** I agree with that Shingles - calling him a Nazi is sort of an ad hom

**Wichard:** Good, I think we can dispense with the Nazi past, too.

**Simulat:** but in fact his thinking paralyzes other thinking, which is a sort of Nazi thing to do

**Oswy:** Shingles eh issue of Nazism is not an attempt to slur. it is a fact he joined the party and he never repudiated it. The themes in his work seem to be deep themes in Nazi ideology.

**Renald:** I'm curious where Heidegger would draw the line between "good" and "bad" technology. Actually I'm less curious about WHERE he would draw that line than I am about how he would justify drawing it in one place instead of another.

**Simulat:** But does anyone have a response to my question about H's reductionism?

**Shingles:** elitism, yes, I grant that. But why do we recoil so from such thinking. NVM, that's off-topic

**Renald:** Not a response, Sim, but my question is related, I think.

**Oswy:** his attitude to the Rhine and his belief that it has some deep essence that is now lost strikes the same type of theme. The Rhine is a potent metaphor for Germany. All his examples seem to hark back to a supposed golden age. A nostalgia and un-repentance about the past?

**Teleo:** Sim, I think Heidegger is really partly inferring how culture takes on the background values and perspectives of the technologies themselves, so if a factory takes a view of a river as an exhaustible resource then society takes on the same view of nature, also.

**Simulat:** Because it seems to me that his reductionism is the key to his thinking

**Nick:** so, Heidegger was pessimistic about technology like the Amish?

**Wichard:** We must question his thinking because we are inner sceptics who are also technologists. I don't understand the good/evil position of technology, but I can see a technologist's actions through that lens

**Simulat:** yes - but why can't a river be both just a river and also a tool or a means to an end?

**Shingles:** is it not a bad logical symptom of existentialism that has caused his dislike of the technology?

**Oswy:** Simulat it seems to me he is reducing to a German past which he says is better. this could be because he is a technophobe in the first place.

**Teleo:** Heidegger is not interested in pessimism or its opposite. Heidegger has a system of understanding and he applies it to every aspect of life... just as many do.

**Wichard:** Tools are tools. Technologists, which to some extent means all of us, use tools for a variety of purposes and interpret their results within their perspective or across some range of autobiographical

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perspectives, usually within a single epistemological stance. I am wary. Why should someone state that “the *essence of technology is by no means anything technological*”?

**Renald:** Wichard, who said that?

**Marya:** Heidegger said that, Ren

**Simulat:** well - the idea of essence is very strange I think

**Wichard:** It was from one of the Heidegger translations that I read

**Alaya:** Simulat depends of the use you do with the tools, if after using it, as for example dumping used water, its not good anymore, as we use a Kleenex, than ones should have a reflexion about it, cause it has to remain reusable, alive, a dead river is a dead river.. and we are depending on it to live for the water

**Oswy:** All the Rhine, peasant farmers, comparing the modern food industry to death camps. These are not accidental choices he is clearly expressing a preference. It's not just quietism on his part.

**Renald:** Oswy, that's true. But if we can deal with the logic of Heidegger on the merits, that seems stronger.

**Simulat:** sure Alaya - but we can use rivers without polluting them

**Teleo:** the only preference H may be asserting as far as I can tell, is a preference for people not to skew everything up

**Sojourna:** Hi all, apologies for being late, shall join in soon, finishing off some work here.

**Wichard:** But does his romanticised version of the middle ages have any appeal to your ways of thinking?

**Oswy:** Ok Renald what is the logic in your view?

**Renald:** Well, I think it's flawed.

**Simulat:** for instance - even in arcadia people would use a river as a source of food and transport

**Simulat:** how is using it to make electricity any worse?

**Wichard:** And waste was carried downstream

**Renald:** Heidegger's complaint about agriculture seems particularly revealing and disingenuous. Agriculture was ALWAYS about technology, that's what distinguishes it from ... gathering.

**Alaya:** Simulat, I don't see in that question something answerable, dumping isn't really the only use of the river we can do... dumping isn't to do, it kills resources has to be used and maintain... no kill or we become killing virus, mortal virus for the environment witch bacteries even don't do, they keep their host alive cause they depend on this to live

**Teleo:** H's method does not deal with any romantics... He may as many do have an interest in meaningful past thoughts or technologies or arts, and recovering them because He thinks they merit value...but that as far as I can see is quite normal

**Oswy:** Wichard the attack on the power station was his point

**Marya:** I'm not sure I can answer Sim, but I can try to tell who what I gleaned from it - I didn't think he was saying that the river only became a tool for electricity, but rather he was focusing on using that example to show how the thing becomes a resource as opposed to what it was before - and how we are coming to view all things as a resource - including people - and that is the 'essence' of the technological age which is what he seems to be warning against - and because of this we are losing the human 'essence'.

**Shingles:** by no means is Heidegger backward here, I think, but it seems to me he is being blatantly impractical and has been led here as a consequence of existentialism ie a thing is defined by its usage, So he cries out for the river to remain purely the river for fear of destroying its natural usage over its technological one

**Teleo:** Heidegger is not anti technology

**Renald:** Yes, Marya... I suspect that's imaginary, though not uncommon.

**Simulat:** But Alaya - I'm pointing to a case that isn't dumping - I'm not proposing to spoil the water quality - just use the energy of the flow

**Wichard:** Marya, but I guess that our meanings change as we develop and use new technologies, even the simplest of words are contrivances that are used for the appearances of communication. We do things with words (Austin?) and conduct acts with our speech (Searle).

**Simulat:** well - we know from last week what I think of his idea of a human essence :-)

**Oswy:** All he does choose a technology that is clear and his choice reveals a lot about him and the direction of his ideology.

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**Renald:** I suspect Neolithic farmers viewed rivers, etc., as resources to be used, too. Of course, they also looked on nature with fear and respect, too.

**Oswy:** Marya I think you are right but is he right in seeing us in such a one dimensional way.

**Marya:** Maybe not Oswy, I am really not sure :)

**Alaya:** I figure, Marya that we became in some way, users and throwers away based living being, and it wasn't like that before, even the technologies, isn't changing that, we throw away cells phone as we were train to do with old Kleenex, and buy another one... the pattern is something that as no link with technology in it self

**Shingles:** I think it would be a dangerous method of supposition if we look for choices as revealing something, nothing is purely indicative of a thinking, Oswy

**Oswy:** Renald do we only view the Rhine in the way the tourists do in his example. Don't we still respect nature? H is always trying to reduce our responses as if he knows better?

**Alaya:** its there cause of the marketing pattern created

**Teleo:** purpose: to gain some perspective on our own orientation to the world, and thus achieve a perspective on technology.

**Wichard:** I had the sense that H. was seeing all technology as brutalizing and colonizing, but I don't see technology as that

**Teleo:** Points.

1: that the development of the physical sciences has been so dependent upon the technological development of devices for testing, measuring, etc., that science cannot be viewed as a "cause" or "origin" of technology.

2: that modern modes of technology, "challenges" our planet's resources.

3: that these ways and modes alter attitudes and values towards material. These attitudes and values are implicit within the technological techniques and apparatus and are subsequently taken up invisibly by society at large.

Hence, this tendency to view and value materials as resources, are translated by culture & society into viewing nature itself as a resource for experience. Nature becomes framed as Art experience. Tourism, the technical enabler, re-frames the resource value paradigm within a new value context of Art experience.

4: Modern mechanical and information technology use a resource which is technically \*invisible\* namely; electricity. Today, society's attitudes towards reality strangely echo's this invisibility. Like our attitudes towards commodities, we know not from whence it comes and to wither it goes, resources / obsolesces or exhausts.

**Renald:** Oswy, I think the danger of over-commodification is real. But I don't think it's gone all the way, nor do I think it's inevitable.

**Oswy:** Shingles we can only go with his choice of examples and he was a careful writer I am sure they are not chosen by accident.

**Wichard:** I see situations where technology has been used to colonize and brutalize, but it's also been used to break through such regimes and open societies (like in Eastern Europe)

**Shingles:** yes, but we should not pounce upon them with our own suppositions, is all I'm saying

**Oswy:** Renald, I think it is real as well which is why I resent Heidegger's oversimplification of our response and his wholly inadequate solutions

**Renald:** Well... when did H die, anyway?

**Oswy:** Shingles evidence is evidence in my book. it establishes and supports an interpretation.

**Simulat:** well - it seems to me that this points out the flaw of a concept of essence Teleo - an essence seems to me to be an idea about what we should be - and I don't think we should be anything - we and the world is changing all the time

**Shingles:** but the interpretation? The interpretation is where the suppositions creep in. I'm asking us to be wary of that, Oswy

**Simulat:** Look at all the changes the planet has gone through in its history

**Renald:** Almost 30 years ago.

**Oswy:** Simulat a sort flexible and multi factored response?

**Oswy:** Renald Do you think Heidegger had an adequate response to the threat of commodification?

**Simulat:** About 50 years ago it was figured that it was natural for the dominant species on the planet to take what they wanted - but now we increasingly don't think that because we've learned the consequences

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**Shingles:** Interesting Renald. There is interesting research on skyscrapers that behave like trees and other buildings that partially harmonize with nature

**Simulat:** we learn and grow and develop

**Oswy:** All I quoted Polk pointing out that even Greenpeace would not meet H's criteria

**Simulat:** Heidegger thinks we should just be

**Renald:** Oswy, I don't think H's response was adequate, no. But I think I can imagine an understanding of it.

**Simulat:** I prefer growth

**Shingles:** betterment is the term I would use there

**Wichard:** I think that for all of us here, just being requires lots of technology!

**Renald:** Shingles... that's exactly the sort of thing H didn't live to see.

**Oswy:** Simulat I agree. Looking backwards contemplating Art and disengaging is not good enough

**Sojourna:** Is it easy for someone to copy-paste for me what Oswy mentioned where H's criteria/ and why Greenpeace doesn't fit them?

**Teleo:** not really Sim, essence is something H identified in pre Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies, Plato turned this earlier world view of being becomings of living entities into ideos, a realm of pure ideas on which reality was constructed.. H see this platonic notion as a constriction into a abstracted idea technical realm, so basically, H is bringing back an important picture as to how we understood nature at a more primal, experiential and phenomenological level.

**Shingles:** yes, its a shame that philosopher's positions are hindered by the advancements to date of science and psychology of their period, Renald

**Simulat:** lots of us besides H have rejected Plato Teleo

**Alaya:** Simulat growth is part of being, but growth as a peek in nature's cycle, so if human adjust to it, we are better along, than in dichotomy with that

**Oswy:** Teleo, that's a sympathetic reading of H my point is that there are other perhaps more sinister readings of what he said.

**Simulat:** Nature responds to us and changes Alaya - and we respond to nature and change - it was ever thus

**Oswy:** I think we should remember that H was writing this stuff post 1945 and after he had served his period of de-nazification.

**Simulat:** there is no stasis

**Renald:** And no separation

**Teleo:** well as long as they act as effective signposts Oswy and are not ascribed wrongly to a philosopher, I don't mind personally

**Simulat:** yes Renald

**Shingles:** Nazi is such a hideously connotative word

**Alaya:** nope Simulat, modern man does do that because the machine was created to go faster than what nature could deal with in return... only the speed is the problem

**Oswy:** Shingles it describes someone who joined and supported the Nazi party. And served in it for a couple of years and never repudiated it.

**Wichard:** What fascinates me is that Heidegger seems able to handle the change of meanings that surround potent symbols as the utilitarian instrumentality of the technology changes: river is a source of movement and change through trade, transportation, irrigation and cultural or local identity, but with the increase in manufacturing and hydroelectric power production that symbol changes to one that include military-industrial prowess, even when he decries this change.

**Shingles:** ok, but why should his membership of the party be relevant, Oswy?

**Renald:** Oswy, I just find myself thinking about what was going on in the world from 1945-1976. I don't know when H stopped writing, but, that was a pretty hideous epoch in the "modernist project".

**Teleo:** Oswy, if H had done that, lets be honest... any veracity his philosophy had would be killed...instantly.. and anyway, I think one high ranking Nazi described H as "probably the most dispensable Nazi in the party"

**Oswy:** shingles because it's incredible that he subscribed to it.

**Sojourna:** Just as incredible as Hitler playing the piano, no?

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**Shingles:** yes, however increases in the speed of developing technology is limited to distribution speed in however that manifests, Alaya

**Shingles:** why incredible? How does it change his works, Oswy?

**Simulat:** yes Renald - when I first came to Vancouver in 1970 False Creek was a body of water that looked like it would burn if you through a match at it - now people fish in it

**Renald:** Sim, exactly.

**Simulat:** just as we can make things bad in a hurry, things can get better in a hurry

**Oswy:** Wichard interesting but isn't he not subscribing. He is reacting badly against the new tech. Look at what he says about his grandfather the forester. This turns into a diatribe against the modern publishing industry.

**Sojourna:** I think, Shingles, in order to value the words of a philosopher we tend to need to value the actual philosopher as a human being.

**Renald:** hmm

**Renald:** That's always nice, isn't it, Soj? :-)

**Sojourna:** That's why I'm with Wittgenstein all the way

**Shingles:** I reject ad hominem as a poor and cheapened method of viewing a work. It's about the work, not the author, Sojourna

**Teleo:** are we waxing sentimental?

**Sojourna:** Renald - lol - :))

**Shingles:** ad hominem is all supposition

**Renald:** It just seems unnecessary.

**Wichard:** Oswy, yes, he doesn't like it but there's a forced accommodation to the new technology. He also doesn't deal with natural disasters that can also make tremendous changes

**Oswy:** Al what a philosopher does in his life casts a light on what he says. Plato as totalitarian. Aristotle who still approve of slavery. Hegel the German nationalist. I am not saying this is all they amount to but its feature to be factored in.

**Simulat:** shingles - I agree - there are lots of reasons for rejecting H besides him being a Nazi - and if you focus on him being a Nazi you may not pick up on those other reasons

**Renald:** Better to actually be able to refute the arguments.

**Oswy:** You could say it shows that H was himself deeply authentic and that his idea of the authentic was impractical

**Simulat:** yes Renald

**Sojourna:** I agree that that is what it should be like Shingles, but I don't think it is what we tend to do. Take politician's for example, to trust them to lead us, they have to be worthy individuals.

**Shingles:** there we go Simulat, lets look at what he wrote down, not what he does in the bathroom, also Oswy

**Wichard:** So did H. going to the preSocratic idea of "essence" have an impact on philosophical discussions like ours?

**Wichard:** Do we still have to wrestle with "the essence"?

**Oswy:** Inauthentic Freudian slip

**Renald:** Wichard, I hope not.

**Oswy:** OK let's come back to the thrust of question 1. What does he find so threatening about the tech way of being is it just commodification and instrumentality?

**Alaya:** essence in the sense of essential or in the sense of a species?

**Wichard:** Or is "essence" an underlying ideal?

**Teleo:** no I said earlier, that was Plato's invention

**Alaya:** some meaning have being forge by imaginary I guess

**Shingles:** worthy individuals? Deary me, how much more complex shall we make it? How derogatory and profligate to seek 'worthy individuals' to write philosophically. This is absurd, Soj

**Renald:** Oswy, I don't know. I might guess it has to do with the pretty much permanent challenge of balancing material with spiritual.

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**Sojourna:** Is it that technology both reveals but because it is so new and weird and we don't get it (take computers) it also hides reality and so things get murky.

**Renald:** Or in other words, today against tomorrow.

**Alaya:** the essence is the species and the nature and limits of it,, so i can affirm that essence and preservation or used are link together

**Wichard:** Perhaps there's a fear that the technology will lead to further dehumanizing after WWII and the Cold War start.

**Marya:** Oswy, I thought he was saying the threat lies in how the commodification of everything changes the way we think about things - that everything will be valued on how resourceful it is - including people.

**Wichard:** Yes, Marya, that's part of the dehumanizing.

**Renald:** Yes.

**Alaya:** if you over used something not created in essence to support this, cause of its limits in time of renewing itself, you killed it, , water can be reused but not a human, different essences are involved there

**Wichard:** People become like the lumber going to the pulp mills to be made into paper.

**Shingles:** it would be credible to claim that people are already viewed as commodities, Marya

**Marya:** Yes I think so Shingles

**Teleo:** good point Alaya

**Oswy:** Wichard it might help if you spelt out what you think he meant by essence?

**Renald:** Yes, Marya, Wichard, the problem is, that's an ancient, probably permanent problem.

**Sojourna:** BRB

**Oswy:** Do we agree that there is an essence of humanity that is under threat?

**Renald:** Maybe and no.

**Simulat:** not me - I don't think there is an essence of humanity

**Oswy:** All you see this sounds to me like a theory of human nature?

**Shingles:** yes, but not from dehumanisation or commodity thinking, oswy

**Wichard:** I fight against reducing an human to a tally or cipher that is inserted as datum into a machine, and yet in our bureaucratic society I know that I am often represented that way and all other humans are, too. I am weighed and measured and processed through various associations and locations.

**Oswy:** Shingles what is it under threat from?

**Alaya:** well human are under threat right now as all essences of species are endanger, we are in the same environmental restriction, but we manage to live in a man made one, separated from outside consequences, that now reaches

**Renald:** Yes, Wichard. But this seems to me to be a refinement of things that human being have done as long as there have been such.

**Shingles:** de-autonomisation. I invent the term, Oswy

**Oswy:** Shingles explain sounds good.

**Simulat:** you also come to discussions like this Wichard - so even if you have a number applied to you that is not all there is to be said about you

**Wichard:** I still think the threat is always from other humans who are using the technology to their advantage.

**Marya:** Ren, as much as I read (which wasn't a great deal), it seems that Heidegger said that there were different ways of thinking in different ages, for example, when the Christian religion was more dominant - people were viewed as created by god and therefore had a different sort of value, or were perceived as having a different sort of value

**Wichard:** This would fit with the nature of terrorism today and the ways various US politicians ahve organized massive funds and technology against them

**Oswy:** All I personally think humans are more flexible multi faceted. I think H constantly underestimates our capacities

**Renald:** Marya... I think that's true in a way, and always will be. But some things persist over time and place, too.

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**Shingles:** autonomy- the ability to choose. But in indoctrination as occurs in all cultures to some extent and poor info-sharing or deliberate info-withholding reduces an individual's power to choose. This is the de-autonomisation which is more prevalent than perhaps we imagine, Oswy

**Oswy:** His underestimation of humans is very common in extreme conservatives.

**Renald:** Societies seem generally to concern themselves with resource management, including the members themselves. A society which does not do so seems like it would be very fragile at best.

**Alaya:** Marya, this belief was forced on them, otherwise they were doing what we called inquisition cause people would oppose to the authority in place, "supposedly place by god, so definition, were anathema , anti-nature being, so devilish, etc

**Teleo:** essence is really just the basis on which something stands and can be said to be.. the essence of things is the similarity of certain things with certain other things... we identify groups of things by this similarity of being... a tree is a tree is a tree

**Wichard:** Oswy, I agree. I don't buy that technology necessarily leads to "supreme danger" because I see liberating and communicative aspects of modern digital technology that can allow us to live lives of meaning and thoughtfulness with others who are interested similarly. The tool can be used in multiple ways, and, for some perspectives, the use may be threatening of comfort and the status quo and will, thereby be defined as "bad", but for other perspectives the same action of the same tool in the same hands may be "neutral" or "good" – of course, I take a multiple-perspectives position here which is contrary to an absolutist view of "truth" or "good/evil" dichotomies. And, of course, I situate myself outside the "Judeo-Christian/Islamic" religious traditions of the West –a position that must be at odds with Heidegger (and many others).

**Alaya:** Marya, I also think that some beliefs are on us as a modern world too.

**Marya:** Alaya, I see what you are saying - do you think it is inherent in humans to see other people as resources? (Or I 'think' I see what you're saying - just need to check that I'm reading you correctly there)

**Oswy:** Shingles how is tech thinking /being robbing us of choice . Many would say it extends it.

**Shingles:** the will to power would demand that, yes, Marya

**Alaya:** Wichard, the speed and distance disparition with new technology can help do thing , but can speed some act in a way that nature can renew itself, also....

**Shingles:** oh yes, and it is not the technology that withholds information, it is i fact an ally as you say, Oswy

**Shingles:** its the holders or distributors of information that are part of the problem

**Alaya:** or it can be used to speed other thing that are to destructive to made our environment renewable by it self, it can be the opposite as well

**Oswy:** Shingles so we are down to instrumental thinking ? That is the cause of loss of choice?

**Teleo:** Heidegger quote: when you can simultaneously "experience" an assassination attempt against a king in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo; when time is nothing but speed, instantaneity, and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from all Dasein of all peoples; when a boxer counts as the great man of a people; when the tallies of millions at mass meetings are a triumph; then, yes then, there still looms like a spectre over all this uproar the question: what for?--where to?--and what then?

**Wichard:** We can look at our planet now in ways that weren't possible a few years ago and see changes and work for improvements.

**Renald:** It seems to me that, any way one looks at it, neither technology nor the "technological mindset" is the problem we face. It comes back to the choices we make. Different technology provides opportunity to make different choices, but the choices remain the issue.

**Shingles:** I don't understand what instrumental thinking is, sorry, oswy, could you explain it?

**Oswy:** Teleo Sounds like v fame to me

**Sojourna:** lol Oswy! Was just going to say the same thing!

**Alaya:** the avanu with any tools is the same.... the cycle and the speed, to remain in a viable rhythm

**Sojourna:** very phobic quote unfortunately

**Oswy:** Soj, there are plenty of people who see the danger of v fame and are trying to counter it. Ditto with instrumental thinking.

**Teleo:** and of course we have no view of the future, so, it speaks for itself

# Second Philosophy

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**Wichard:** Renald, and the person making the choices is the locus of the ethical concerns no matter what technologies are in play.

**Renald:** Yes, Wich, exactly.

**Marya:** I don't think Teleo was here for the Fame meeting so he may not know what vFame is

**Renald:** I was wondering that, myself.

**Oswy:** Shingles As I understand it the attitude of mind that sees all others objects and humans as a standing reserve in H's terms something that only exists for their exploitation.

**Wichard:** I missed vFame, too

**Teleo:** I don't think I was

**Shingles:** Instrumental thinking (if it means viewing others as commodities) I would say is good for one's autonomy

**Renald:** Oh... I hope there can be a distinction, there.

**Shingles:** and should be adopted by those who wish to thrive

**Renald:** Between instrumentality and commodification.

**Renald:** Wait, commodification? That's not right... commoditization.

**Wichard:** But I think instrumental thinking may go further, to the point of allowing the thinker to stop considering the human-ness of others and treat them as disposable.

**Alaya:** with the technology and the cells phone they could help reforest a near desertification land, in Africa, but with the same technology they finally success later on to cut it very fast and deliver all that to many places,, and now its all gone... the desert cam again , and people were forced to quit

**Renald:** Wichard, it CAN go further. Anything can go too far.

**Oswy:** All Sorry V fame is Mark Rowlands term for Virtual fame the adulation of people just for being famous. Ie: the cult of the worthless star. It sounded very like the thing you were describing .

**Shingles:** yes, go on, so what would the conclusion be, Wichard?

**Teleo:** no Shing, I think it is taking on the values of the instrumentality value of the technical apparatus, itself ... you take on the values of the tools and methods used, of the existing technology – it was a rather new insight, in philosophy anyway

**Oswy:** Wichard I think that is exactly how H saw it but he only saw that aspect . A sort of mono view.

**Wichard:** instrumental thinking could lead to the buying and selling of humans as if they were only instruments to be used rather than people with rights and personalities.

**Oswy:** All again sorry if I am not picking up all the points but there are several streams of argument.

**Wichard:** And I still see the user of technology as the essential location for humanist and ethical decision-making

**Renald:** I can see the recent extra mystification of the relationship between our choices and their effects as a major problem, to be sure.

**Shingles:** ok, take that principle and insert it into a hypothetical of a smaller group of people, if each party is attempting to use its peers, then the struggle between them shall be a drive to expand or rather develop themselves in response. Just consider that, Wichard and all

**Oswy:** Wichard, in that you disagree with H. He saw this sort of enframing of people into a standing reserve as a bad thing.

**Oswy:** Shingles Going back a long way. I don't think H would have thought instrumentality as liberating.

**Shingles:** perhaps he didn't, but I would propose that it is

**Wichard:** But I consider that action and striving and using technology have potent benefits like Shingles suggests.

**Renald:** When you put it that way, I suspect H himself would have had to agree.

**Oswy:** Picking up on Wichard's point and looking at my third issue don't we need something like his approach to get us out of our environmental hole and not H's Deep Ecology approach?

**Teleo:** well, I think the taking on of instrumentation may be in many ways fine; what is the problem is when we have no knowledge or ourselves even doing so...

## Second Philosophy

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**Renald:** Oswy, I think so. But I think further that H cannot have properly appreciated the depth of the hole, even the depth it attained during his lifetime.

**Shingles:** Rather I think it's more liberating when it's conscious, Teleo. NVM, off-topic again

**Oswy:** Renald he certainly gives the impression that we are all going to hell in a handcart.

**Wichard:** But digital technology can give us quick reactions to our choices, unless we use something that filters only for certain aspects; unfortunately I think that many do filter this way, and it's hard to avoid because we tend to go to discussions on topics that interest us and look at things from our own frames of mind.

**Teleo:** As the philosopher Richard Polk points out the environmental approach would not suit Heidegger's vision because preserving the rain forests etc," Is all well and good but notice that this approach continues to view nature as a collection of natural resources that it is up to us to control and manage... so this guy really interprets

Heidegger's stance \*negatively\* because? He thinks Heidegger is saying, don't manage rain forests? And I suppose this is "logic"?

**Oswy:** He even adopts a position where he welcomes the danger since he sees the solution coming from it. An idea he got from Holderlin.

**Wichard:** But I want my handcart to Hell to have a good motor so I can at least go fast!

**Renald:** Heidegger seems to have been of the opinion that left alone; nature would take care of itself. But even if we all agreed to do that eventually, we've gone about too far now to just start there.

**Renald:** And there are too many of us.

**Alaya:** Wichard, the destruction of the Amazon is all about that, enframing aborigine in a slave work and made them do the opposite of the environment adaptation they had by burning it, in a false promise of modern development witch never occur, its only a colonisation of human over other human as a tool s, it as never change, and its not development, its not technologies, but its based on that such imaginative view , inculcate to them in a modern fashion as religions used to do before, nothing change the new religions are the development with technologies, as our saviour..... as the end of our suffering in the future.....

**Wichard:** "nature would take care of itself" seems a romantic ideal that's out of date now, but might not have been 50 years ago.

**Shingles:** besides, on that agreement some party or other would seek to abuse it, leading to a situation much like our contemporary one, Renald

**Renald:** Yes, both Wichard and Shingles

**Oswy:** Teleo Polk is saying that H would reject anything that smacked of instrumentality. Greenpeace are thinking of ways of manipulating us out of the environmental problem. For H that's the wrong mind set.

**Teleo:** I don't think these polarising view are in anyway close to either what and especially how, Heidegger is saying what he is saying. to be honest

**Renald:** Regardless, he was never confronted with the facts of the 21st Century.

**Wichard:** Alaya, I also see that there are some technological projects with Google Earth that are trying to get the indigenous forests and peoples to be their own voices for repair and reforestation

**Alaya:** Heidegger was seeing this done in its own time ...

**Shingles:** manipulation is present in every act of every party, our intellectual recoil from the idea stems from a fear-response

**Oswy:** Teleo What do you think he is saying if you don't agree?

**Teleo:** Heidegger view is built on a systematic strong interpretative basis.. to just disagree with the way something looks has no effect on whether it may or may not turn out to be ugly... in our views

**Oswy:** All you all seem to be saying that Heidegger was wrong here. I can't believe it, does that mean I have won? Haha

**Shingles:** oh dear, winning

**Marya:** Tongue firm in cheek I think, Shingles :)

**Renald:** Shingles won back at the beginning by saying "die-hard Heideggerian" 5 times fast.

**Oswy:** Shingles after three weeks bashing H it would be a relief?

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**Alaya:** Wichard there isn't anything realist about that, in fact the destruction is done in a fashion time, for no reason than to take all aborigine and non profitable land... to made them become a tools for making money, and workers,, tools, as a human being, all those land are not used, only speculated by outsiders, that will invest in the country later.... so its all about believed and one pattern only.... that all is a tools to take over

**Oswy:** Ok it's after nine I will try ad sum up.

**Shingles:** the common goal is expanding and developing thought. In this sense nobody should seek to win, it's counter-productive

**Renald:** Interesting accent you're developing, Oswy

**Oswy:** My typing is becoming as incoherent as my head.

**Wichard:** And H. contributes mightily to the discussion we've been having.

**Teleo:** I can give you some digested info on how and what basis I think Heidegger is operating. I have it in a note card... but of course I have to simplify it so... I am uncertain how intelligible it will turn out to be

**Alaya:** environmental isn't about it, it's more about the pattern done, because of a philosophy about things

**Marya:** Sounds good Teleo

**Teleo:** ok

**Oswy:** Fine by me Teleo.

## Teleo Aeon - Historical Dasein – See End

**Oswy:** All As for tonight. There was a firestorm at the beginning when I suggested that H's view could be interpreted as the view of an unrepentant Nazi at least an extreme conservative. This led to violent disagreement both on the factual accuracy of what I said and its relevance ie can a humans character be taken into account in relation to his writing.

**Shingles:** that issue will always be there. Id read what David Mamet says on back-story

**Oswy:** All We then went on to discuss the adequacy of H's analysis of human Being in relation to the issue of Technological thinking. I suspect that a majority feel he was not fully up to this task and that his solution is not an adequate response to our present dilemmas. As before our aim was to air our views and not reach agreement. I hope again you will take up the Facebook option to discuss matters further. Thanks for all the contributions stimulating as usual and please continue the discussion informally.

**Shingles:** Mamet: *'Everyone's concerned with back-story, which is the dumbest idea. It's like asking what colour underpants the guy in the painting is wearing. People walk in the story happens then it ends'*. I recycle this approach to dispense with Ad Hominem, Soj

**Oswy:** While I am prattling away here I am sure Marya and Soj would agree that your support has been wonderful

**Renald:** Oh, dear, Shingles... where to begin dealing with that?

**Sojourna:** Oswy - do you think H was posing a problem and looking for a solution - or merely questioning, trying to get some idea of the issue at hand?

**Sojourna:** I wonder what colour underpants H preferred.

**Oswy:** We would also very much welcome any contributions you would like to make to doing a debate of your choice . ie a short intro some questions and off we go. If you have any ideas and would like to volunteer please let us know

**Sojourna:** I'm very keen on back-story - always was. I don't think ideas exist independent of people, lives, experiences, history

**Alaya:** Sojourna the choices were according natural tinctures at that time.....

**Marya:** Yes indeed, Oswy

**Alaya:** :)

**Shingles:** to allow Ad Hominem is to open the gate for all sorts of outlandish suppositions. Besides, what should it matter about who wrote it and what about them, they are not trying to convert us in that sense? The text is there for our usage, let's forget any other counter-productive judgements; it would be silly

**Renald:** I like to always at least acknowledge a useful distinction between art and philosophy, myself.

# Second Philosophy

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**Sojourna:** Otherwise how could I reconcile Nietzsche's misogyny when he was so brilliant at tearing down appearances with regards to everything else? I have to know about his unrequited Salome affair! Then it makes sense.

**Shingles:** Sartre did both, Ren

**Renald:** And between art and artists.

**Shingles:** Why do you need to understand the author? he wrote all that he meant to say

**Renald:** Back-story properly exists within a work, not between a work and its creator.

**Oswy:** Soj, I think he was posing a problem but the way he expressed it especially in this essay seems to offer his solution. His metaphors DNA examples point in a particular quietist conservative direction. In view of the time he was writing it so soon after the terrible event of 39-45 he was at least being insensitive. Or perhaps provocative?

**Wichard:** But I have to construct meaning from what he wrote, and that requires considerable interpretation on my part.

**Alaya:** how can we trust a translation, about Nietzsche?

**Sojourna:** But Shingles, some of it, as with the Nietzsche misogyny thing, doesn't make sense when you look at his work as a whole. But if you get the personal gossip, it does make sense.

**Renald:** And knowing about the process by which a creator created is interesting, but not part of the creation.

**Sojourna:** hmm - Oswy, something to think about.

**Renald:** Except in a Meta sense. Which, again, is interesting. Useful.

**Wichard:** If I know more about an author and the times he/she lived in, I have some more tools to use in my interpretation

**Renald:** Yes, true, Wichard.

**Shingles:** yes, but do not seek to judge the author, one concedes to pettiness and prejudice by doing so, Wichard

**Oswy:** Soj i dont think you can ignore Nietzsche's misogyny. Or Rousseau abandoning his children.

**Renald:** Only judge author as an author, right, Shingles?

**Alaya:** it like all old philosophers were in Alexandria that was in Egypt, but the translation were made by others,, that wanted to take over that area and the philosophy or cultures, making a roman empire,, as we know.... so did the translation and media disinformation started.... it never stopped

**Oswy:** They don't have to be the most important factor is assessing their work but they remain a factor.

**Sojourna:** No, Oswy, you cannot ignore it - need to make sense of it and I think the clues are in the personal details and not the philosophy.

**Renald:** hmm

**Wichard:** Shingles, yes, sometimes that can get into pettiness and prejudice, but that's part of what I hope to filter out on some level.

**Oswy:** Shingles to look at eh examples he choose is not Ad Hominem. He wrote them and published them.

**Alaya:** because as we know it was only them that were holding the book scribes, in there empire and them that allow anything to be written....

**Shingles:** their behaviour is none of my concern. My concern is their works, if there is a failing in the work, the work is simply flawed. Lets not invent conclusions from their REPORTED (remember) history, Soj

**Alaya:** since when are we out of that ... when did this religious Latin empire had ended up.....

**Teleo:** Heidegger is more difficult in historical terms.. His approach nets a great deal of historical grasp is why. His relation to the Nazis I don't think is of much import to be honest.. I used to think it was but not now.

Nietzsche on the other hand does lend himself to a historical understanding better...but even then, this is quite simplistic to say

**Shingles:** to explain the flaws

**Sojourna:** Well, not reported if actual journals or letters?

**Shingles:** if we're being pedantic, they report on themselves there

**Alaya:** maybe we are the first premises that can be free of that,, are we taking everything from the past.... as a based for our futures, or something.....

**Sojourna:** so why should their philosophy then be anymore accurate than their journals?

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**Renald:** I'm with Shingles this far at least, that evaluating a person and her art or philosophy are two different things. It's not necessary that the evaluations ignore each other, but it's important they not be confused either.

**Sojourna:** Well, I'm not evaluating, just accessing, understanding.

**Shingles:** it shouldn't necessarily, but that's all we should concern ourselves with. The contrary to that would lead to character assessment from oneself, another character and would be indicative of prejudice that way, Soj

**Oswy:** All, read the lecture on Enframing, there he makes the point about the food industry and gas chambers. In 1949. He wrote that and he knew what it implied. Of course apologists say he meant no disrespect to the dead of eh holocaust. But its still an issue and remains one. Most books on H still have to come to terms with it.

**Sojourna:** But Shingles, it is like you are suggesting that the work exists and has value in itself, beyond human blood and flesh, as if it is a Platonic ideal.

**Shingles:** no I'm not – I'm suggesting that all the information one requires on that philosophy resides in their texts

**Renald:** Yes, Oswy... that statement strikes me as some kind of explicit over-compensation.

**Shingles:** if we look elsewhere we shall confuse ourselves

**Wichard:** Oh, well, then lest us be confused.

**Sojourna:** That would be like reading a text in another language without knowing the language.

**Alaya:** when something was very controversial in history with Latin religious authority , protestant and Catholics, it was describe from a bias point of view form the authorities, , as the sorcerers became that, and as the satyrs were the demonic inspirations of Greek bards, and as many other things wee mediatise to be,, but most of the time, it was not so direct, just look alike distorted, to dis-informed enough to be realistic....

**Wichard:** I think that the work itself always need interpretation, and I must interpret through my own lenses.

Sometimes I have historical and other information that helps me make my interpretations, sometimes I don't

**Shingles:** it's written in plain English, or translated into another plain language, I really don't see that point you made as valid, Soj

**Oswy:** All Remember it is H who chooses to pontificate on Technology. He chooses the subject matter to make his case. He deals in Time he is historical so he must expect his words to be interpreted in an historical context. In my eyes this leaves him wanting others don't agree and see him as Saint Heidegger, the founder of Deep Ecology.

**Sojourna:** Hey, I just remembered that I used to give philosophical texts to boyfriends who had not studied while I was a philosophy student

**Shingles:** As I said: it's written in plain English, or translated into another plain language, I really don't see that point you made as valid, Soj

**Renald:** Oswy, I guess I'm indifferent to the wantingness or saintliness of H himself

**Sojourna:** I wanted to see how they would interpret them outside of academia

**Teleo:** agree with Ren

**Shingles:** ones interpretation should remain untainted by character judgements, if we want to be serious, Wichard

**Renald:** At least as far as my attitude toward his ideas are concerned.

**Sojourna:** We'd speak about them - and often understand each other, other times we would be using different vocabulary

**Wichard:** Shingles, I think you're underestimating how much interpretation goes into understanding a text. Plain English is not plain.

**Oswy:** Ren Teleo He is however an iconic figure. i think his reputation is overlaped. I like Part 1 of Being and time but not much else.

**Sojourna:** OK - so, Shingles, let me ask you this then, when you read a text do you read it from a specific personal/social/cultural reality or situatedness?

**Wichard:** And we make judgments about every line in a text because it's the reader who is building the meaning form that text.

**Sojourna:** I can't buy it if you say you approach a text without a sense of being placed somewhere, a point of view, personal, historical etc

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**Renald:** That may be, Oswy. One of the advantages of not being an actual philosopher, I guess, I don't have to deal with that. :-)

**Shingles:** yes, interpretation is the route to understanding, Im simply wanting to keep the interpretation of the text relevant Wichard

**Sojourna:** And you once said that everyone has an agenda.

**Teleo:** in my opinion, it has nothing to do with reputation and all to do with content..

**Alaya:** so we can read it according that,, and take what is from a Latin point of view in it, and also knowing that we can discriminate from that and the background cultural context , of the writers, if its him who write or if he was cited by another one....who his this other one, this lead book to have an avant propos, and an presentation and a device of the author by an other one etc.

**Oswy:** Soj I have an agenda the defence of the enlightenment project that H tried to rubbish.

**Shingles:** well, the question is impossible to say 'no' to Soj

**Shingles:** I agree Teleo

**Wichard:** By making the interpretation of the text relevant Shingles you are changing it to fit your interpretation. You seem to be taking a more absolute view of meaning than I can accept.

**Sojourna:** lol Shingles

**Oswy:** Teleo The content is interpreted in the light of reputation.

**Renald:** Avert!

**Shingles:** no, don't misquote me please, Wichard

**Alaya:** no Latin were capable of translation the oriental Egyptian and mid eastern view, they all tried to convert all this in a western christian point of view, that were excluding all other, and the translation were done according to this,

**Wichard:** What did I miss, Shingles?

**Shingles:** I'm saying we should interpret the relevant information. In this case, the text, Wichard

**Teleo:** Soj, the insight is, in my opinion, that the enlightenment was the mechanical age and it's philosophers accorded with this mechanism... the electrical age however, has an invisible quality and Heidegger's philosophy speaks to insights of this age.

## Teleo Aeon – Historical Dasein

For Heidegger, Being is central. He begins his investigation with the question "why are there beings at all, instead of nothing?" This question is approached systematically and in depth. I here, on the other hand, must simplify.

Heidegger's investigation pivots upon the centrality of [Being]. In regards to this [Being-centrality] the other modes and ways of being are opposed to it, necessarily. e.g. the positions these other modes necessitate are modally, in opposition. So -Being- is both first and central. e.g. implicitly something may come to -be- even if it has not yet come to be.

Following this, is the -coming to be-. This is indicated in such words or compound ideas as, be-come. When something has come into being, we have a capacity or mode of being which is able to -Think of it-. This thinking / rationalising, may then lead on to constructing a further mode (or) an \*ought-to-be\*.

A river has not come to be by the same process which a flower may have come to be but they have both come to be. Atoms, are the basis of which current modes of scientific thought, interpret something to be. [atomic realism].

For Heidegger, that something such as a River is said -to be- (or) that the water in it or the atoms or molecules themselves are subsequently taken as constituting -The River- is problematic. Such interpretations of -being- are taken-themselves' as being central. The current state or stable state of a water molecule and its seeming solidity

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is taken as seeming to represent reality. The molecules of water of course are merely within a transitional state. The various quantifiable properties of atoms are therefore, taken up in science as central.

Heidegger is saying that, this posited being reality of atoms are merely in fact, interpretations of reality. Atoms have already come to be (or) are becoming. The coming into being of an atom is not itself the basis on which [Being] or even [beings] stand. Rather that, any \*coming to be\* or \*seeming to be\* or even \*Thinking-about\* something-or-another as being \*solid\* is subsequently followed by a \*thinking\* about a way in which we may - think something- \*ought-to-be\*. For Heidegger, the way in which we think of something or of how some such state of affairs \*ought-to-be\*, are modes of being, that are in opposition to how we may think something currently \*seems to be\*. For him this represents how, be-comings / thoughts and oughts are modes that exist in opposition to a more central reality. For him this answers the question of how and "why there are beings at all?"

His concerns regarding technology therefore, are concerns regarding the problems of miss-interpreting reality. It may seem to be for instance that a factory on a River is a good idea because we rationalise that, the state of affairs that will be obtained will be beneficial in bringing about a change, to some or another state we think ought-to-be. The problem is not to do with obtaining this or that desirable state of affairs, rather it is to do with, interpreting a centrality of reality as to being such and such the case. e.g. justified on the basis of a good or an ought-to-be. We have all no doubt sense this phenomenon engendered in those who evangelise using \*ought-to-be's\* or by using these ought-to-be's as central justifications. For Heidegger, coming to be, seeming to be, thinking and ought-to-be's, are modes of being that are opposed -necessarily- to [Being]. and as we can see daily, ruining of natural environments are carried out on a basis which can be translated into a series of, ought-to-be so's built onto the bases of what seems to be so's.

Heidegger is most certainly not some long booted farmer, dreaming of a golden age in which we would not have to be subjected to an infernal technology. In fact I would assert that, this very interpretation of him would be guilty of the same modes of interpretation which he himself pointed to as being the root-problematic. Namely: a \*thinking\* of what it is that this Heidegger \*seems to be\* in opposition, to what it is the person carrying out the thinking \*Thinks\* this Heidegger \*ought-to-be\*.

For Heidegger, an important insight is, that the central mode of Being has been lost to us. Human being sees that seeds grow and come to be something. Human beings can not only experience a plant or thing which comes into being to be-come-some-thing but that they can also access some centrality as to what it is of any seed, may come to be. For Heidegger, Humans have a particular mode of being which is historical. This is the mode he terms, historical Dasein. As Humans we have a particular ability to see where things may come from and to where they may be leading. If we ignore it or it remains transparent to us, we stumble through both our history, and our technology. To be or not to be, that is not the question. To suffer the slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune, would be more apt.

