

COMMITTED TO THE DECLINE?

Reading Heidegger's analysis of modern
technology

Carlijne Vos

'But isn't all this unfounded mysticism or even bad mythology, in any case a ruinous irrationalism, the denial of ratio?' – Heidegger, Martin.

Student Number: 4116089

Humanities Honours Thesis 2017-2018

Supervisor: dr. Johan de Jong

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Introduction	3
Chapter 1 – A Problematic Meta-history.....	6
1.1 Ereignis, Geschick and Gestell.....	6
1.2 Criticizing the Meta-history.....	8
1.3 Another Proposal: Habermas	11
Chapter 2 – Three Unique Readings	14
2.1 The Practical Reading	15
2.2 The Historical Reading	18
2.3 The Methodological Reading.....	20
Chapter 3 – Committed and Discernable?.....	25
3.1 The Practical Reading	25
3.2 The Historical Reading	27
3.3 The Methodological Reading.....	29
Conclusion.....	32
Bibliography.....	35
Heidegger’s German Texts From the Gesamtausgabe and Their English Translations	36

Abstract

Thomas Sheehan deems Heidegger's analysis of modern technology untenable, because of its commitment to a meta-history of the decline of Western society. Heidegger's use to this highly theoretical explanation for societies demise, brings Sheehan to the conclusion that there is nothing valuable left in Heidegger's notion of modern technology since everything that makes Heidegger's analysis unique lies in this meta-historical narrative. To what extend is the unique characteristic of Heidegger's analysis of modern technology committed to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world? I propose three readings of Heidegger's notion of modern technology: a practical reading, a historical reading and a methodological reading. Every reading has a different presupposition about what makes Heidegger's analysis unique. Next, I evaluate whether the readings can on the one hand, distinguish themselves from another philosophy of technology, for which Habermas' technoscientific rationality is used as a point of contrast. And on the other hand, if they are committed to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world. The practical reading does not represent what makes Heidegger's approach unique, but is not committed to a meta-history. Next, the historical reading is committed, although its commitment makes it possible to discern it from Habermas. Finally, the methodological reading is not committed to a meta-history of the decline of Western society and at the same time is discernable from Habermas. This last reading meets Sheehan's challenge while being able to reinterpret some of Heidegger's key-notions.

Introduction

Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in a story and some philosophers are masters at story-telling. One of those stories is about modern technology and particularly the role of technology in our society. Martin Heidegger puts modern technology at the heart of his philosophy. He tells the story of a society caught up in instrumental reasoning, blindly following the dictate of modern technology. It is a fatalistic story and it is easy to believe fatalistic stories and grand scale narratives about the decline of modern society.

According to Thomas Sheehan, Heidegger's later philosophy is just that: a very good story. But a lot of work must be done before it could be philosophically valuable. *In Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* Sheehan argues that the Heideggerian 'being' discourse has hit a wall. The various ways Heidegger scholarship has understood his works over the last fifty years, are no longer able to accommodate the full range of his lectures and writings. It is time to make distinctions. Sheehan himself says that his proposal will be controversial and that most Heidegger scholars will consider his interpretation to be plain wrong.¹ In this new paradigm there is no room for Heidegger's later work, which Sheehan typically defines as Heidegger's claim 'that the overlooking of appropriation explains the tragic condition of the contemporary world'.²

In the last chapter of his book Sheehan uses Heidegger's analysis of modern technology to show how Heidegger conjured up a meta-historical narrative about the decline of Western society. In the end, he concludes that the use of this meta-history is so problematic that it deems Heidegger's whole analysis philosophically untenable. But I wonder if Sheehan is right about this. Is there nothing valuable left in Heidegger's analysis of modern technology? Is it not possible to untie Heidegger's notion of modern technology from the use of a meta-history of the decline of society? This is my first motivation, to search for a reading of Heidegger that is not committed to what Sheehan deems highly problematic, a meta-history of the decline of Western society.

My second motivation comes from another remark of Sheehan. 'Heidegger's nightmare vision of a world dominated by the techno-mentality of exploit-produce-consume may well resonate with some of his readers—although not necessarily for the reasons he gives.'³ It might be easy to formulate a reading of Heidegger that denies a commitment to a meta-history, but maybe that reading does not represent what Heidegger makes unique. Maybe, such an interpretation dresses down Heidegger's

¹ Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd., 2015), xi–xviii.

² Sheehan, 271.

³ Sheehan, 259.

philosophy that much that it does not represent Heidegger anymore. And then we could ask ourselves, why are we reading Heidegger and not another philosophy of technology?

I combine these two motivations in one question. To what extent is the unique characteristic of Heidegger's analysis of modern technology committed to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world?

To answer this question, I have to explain the problem in more detail. What is problematic about reference to a meta-history for Heidegger's notion of modern technology? The first chapter revolves around this problem. In my reading, Sheehan's critique on Heidegger gets its shape between three notions of Heidegger's thinking, *Geschick*, *Gestell* and *Ereignis*. With Sheehan's interpretation of these three notions he claims that Heidegger makes a meta-historical move which leads to the decline of Western society. I will present Sheehan's arguments against Heidegger's turn to a meta-historical narrative. I will also add another argument, which consists of Lyotard's critique on the use of grand narratives in philosophy. At the end of the first chapter, I will propose another theory about technology that can describe the same paradox as Heidegger's about the domination of technology within society, Habermas' theory of technoscientific rationality. At that point Sheehan seems to be right. Why would we still read Heidegger if he uses this highly problematic meta-history when other philosophical theories can generate the same notions and problems that Heidegger wants to point out?

But what makes Heidegger's analysis Heideggerian? What is the unique characteristic of Heidegger's analysis of technology? In chapter 2 I propose three different readings of Heidegger: a practical reading, a historical reading and a methodological reading. These readings make use of different presupposition. The practical reading presupposes that Heidegger's analysis makes it possible to describe all phenomena in terms of instrumentality. The presupposition of the historical reading lies within the epochal character of technology. And the methodological reading presupposes that we should read Heidegger through his hermeneutical phenomenology. These distinctions within Heidegger scholarship are my own and I see them as archetypes of different strategies to read Heidegger. I have chosen to present one or two interpretations of Heidegger for each reading, but I also make use of Heidegger's original texts to show how every reading can be found in his own work.

In the third chapter I will examine if the different readings from the second chapter are 1) committed to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world, and 2) if they can discern themselves from other philosophies of technology. For the second part, I will use Habermas' theory of technoscientific rationality from chapter 1 as a point of contrast. The presuppositions of the different readings will be the material for this twofold analysis. The different readings are archetypes within Heidegger scholarship and within them there are going to be differences between scholars. To be able to say something more general about a reading I only analyze what they *have* to assume, their most basic presupposition. If a presupposition is able to distinguish itself from Habermas and at the same

time does not commit to a meta-history, it is in principle possible to formulate a reading of Heidegger that describes his unique take on modern technology and addresses Sheehan's concerns. In the last chapter I will argue that it is the methodological reading that is able to do this.

A tremendous amount has been written about Heidegger and his analysis of modern technology and different approaches to Heidegger have different philosophical consequences. I want to take a step back and see what the different approaches to his work are and what we need to assume from Heidegger's philosophy to make different approaches work. The practical and the historical reading are not able to counter the problems that the use of a meta-history poses. A methodological approach to Heidegger, which relies on his notion of truth, will turn out to give an alternative interpretation of notions like *Geschick*, in a way that it is not committed to a decline of society or a 'meta-history'.

Chapter 1 – A Problematic Meta-history

In this chapter I will discuss Thomas Sheehan's critique on Heidegger which takes place between three notions of Heidegger's work: *Ereignis*, *Geschick* and *Gestell*. First, I will explain Sheehan's interpretation of these notions. Next, Sheehan's arguments against Heidegger will be laid out. Sheehan deems Heidegger's use of a meta-history of the decline of the Western world deeply problematic. I will add another argument against Heidegger's use of a meta-history, which is inspired by Lyotard's critique on meta-narratives. But I will also point out that even Lyotard seems to think that some of the problems that Heidegger noticed are worthy of our philosophical attention. Therefore, I'll discuss a different theory which can formulate the same kind of paradox between society and technology as Heidegger's, but that does not entail a meta-historical narrative about the decline of Western society. For this purpose, Habermas's theory of technology as technoscientific rationality is introduced at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Ereignis, Geschick and Gestell

It is within Sheehan's interpretation of *Ereignis* and its relationship to *Gestell* and *Geschick* that Sheehan's critique on Heidegger's later work picks up, because the coming together of these three notions give a sense of Heidegger's problem with the direction that modern society is taking. *Ereignis*, *Geschick* and *Gestell* are among Heidegger's most difficult ideas and it will not be possible to give a complete overview of their meaning. The explanation I present below is Sheehan's interpretation of Heidegger, in order to understand Sheehan's critique on Heidegger. It will be the subject of chapter 2 and 3 to what extent it is possible to read Heidegger differently and therefore to interpret these notions in different ways than Sheehan proposes.

For Sheehan, the later term 'appropriation' (*Ereignis*) and 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*) are simply different words for the same phenomenon. Thrownness and appropriation are both answer to the question about why there is meaningful presence at all.⁴ *Ereignis* is sometimes translated by 'event of appropriation' but Sheehan opposes to the translation of 'event'. *Ereignis* is not an event or happening in the temporal sense, it is 'a *fact*, that which is always already done (*factum*) and thus always already operative'.⁵

Sheehan approaches appropriation on the basis of the two etymons that the word *Ereignis* is heir of: 'to see' and 'to own'. Appropriation is seen, in the sense that it appears. It occurs. Again, not

⁴ Sheehan, 237.

⁵ Sheehan, 234.

in the temporal sense, but it always already has occurred as the thrown-openness of existence. Next, appropriation has a sense of to own or to appropriate. This does not mean owning property like owning a house. It is about a property that belongs to a thing, like a characteristic that is special to it. That what makes something what it is. When these two meanings of the word appropriation are combined it means that ‘ex-sistence has always already been brought into its own as the thrown-open clearing, and “occurs” precisely as that.’⁶

I wonder if Sheehan is correct when he claims that ‘thrownness’ and ‘appropriation’ can be understood as ‘existentially the same’.⁷ According to Vallega-Neu, it is important to realize that we cannot willfully subject ourselves to appropriation, but that there is a fundamental attunement possible for at least a few of us. In *Being and Time*, it was the attunement of anxiety, but in Heidegger’s development of appropriation in the thirties this becomes a disposition of an epoch rather than of an individual.⁸ The difference between thrownness and appropriation is that appropriation carries the idea of the thrown-open clearing with some kind of ‘historical’ character. Thrownness, as used in *Being and Time*, does not. But it is exactly this epochal or historical character that Sheehan is going to question.

With his interpretation of appropriation, Sheehan continues that when Heidegger says that being is forgotten in the history of metaphysics, he means that appropriation is forgotten. What is forgotten is not the being of things, but what makes that possible. Through this forgetting Heidegger tells the tale of the history of Western philosophy and culture from the pre-socratic thought to the modern era with disastrous result for our present day. This is the decline of Western society.⁹

In our present day the overlooking of appropriation is itself overlooked, which is the dispensation of our time. Heidegger calls this *Gestell*, often translated as ‘enframing’. In *Gestell* we should hear the word *stellen*, which has a wide variety of uses. It means putting into place, to order, to arrange, to furnish or supply. Sheehan interprets enframing as ‘the world of exploitation’. His reason for this is that Heidegger reads the current way that humanity discloses beings provokes and compels us to treat everything in terms of its exploitability, for its consumption. In the modern world of calculative rationality, the instruments and the mindset of technology dominate the way we understand and relate to everything. For Sheehan, enframing is coterminous with the epoch of technology, which is the epoch of our time.¹⁰

⁶ Sheehan, 233–34.

⁷ Sheehan, 237.

⁸ Daniela Vallega-Neu, “Ereignis: The Event of Appropriation,” in *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, ed. Bret W. Davis (United States of America: Routledge, 2014), 142–43.

⁹ Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, 250–51.

¹⁰ Sheehan, 258.

Heidegger characterizes epoch with the term *Geschick*. *Geschick* is often translated as ‘destining’ and the German word also has the root *schicken*, which means sending. Sheehan makes clear that *Geschick* does not mean history like the subject of an academic history book would be. It is a highly theorized argument about how appropriation is ‘giving’ or ‘sending’ the possibility of meaningful worlds in various ways throughout Western metaphysics.¹¹ The danger that enframing poses to society comes for a great part from Heidegger’s ideas about destining, because it seems that if appropriation is destining society to reveal everything as something to consume there is no other way to for humans to disclose something.

Enframing is also Heidegger’s answer to the question of the essence of modern technology. In Sheehan’s reading of “Question Concerning Technology” the specific kind of revealing (*Herausfordern*) that modern technology embodies is colonizing every part of human society. In this revealing man is ‘provoked’ to see everything as something that can be used or consumed. This consumption is caught up in a standing-reserve. Everything is constantly furthering something else and in this way putting things in their proper place according to the revealing of modern technology.¹² Sheehan uses this text in his last chapter as the ground for his critique on Heidegger.

But is enframing as the answer to the essence of modern technology coterminous with enframing as the epoch of modern technology? And does that mean that we need to take destining as a highly theorized argument on board? For Sheehan, Heidegger’s investigation of the phenomenon of modern technology automatically leads to a ‘historical’ claim about the whole of our society, but I wonder if this has to be the case.

1.2 Criticizing the Meta-history

Now, that it has become clear what the relationship is between *Geschick*, *Ereignis* and *Gestell*, and why these three notions form a danger for Western Society, we are able to understand Sheehan’s critique on Heidegger’s analysis of modern technology. Sheehan calls Heidegger’s move on the matter of destining and enframing ‘meta’ because it is about the way that manifest history is determined by something else. Heidegger is telling a meta-metaphysical narrative about how society ended up where it is. Being, in the guise of modern technology, is determining everything as calculable and manageable, while at the same time hiding the question of being. And on top of that, modern society is even forgetting that they are forgetting the question of being in the first place. According to Sheehan,

¹¹ Sheehan, 250.

¹² Sheehan, 281–82.

Heidegger reduces everything that is wrong with society to the forgetting of appropriation, which is destined as modern technology.¹³

Sheehan does not immediately reject the idea of appropriation as the possibility of intelligibility. The ‘meta-history’ represents the idea that the forgetting of appropriation is the reason for our dehumanized world and societies demise, because it is ‘destining’ (meta) society to reveal everything as a resource. It is this second claim that Sheehan extensively criticizes.¹⁴ The entire Western civilization is enticed by consumption and compels us to understand whatever we meet in terms of their extractable usefulness. Sheehan states that such a reading of the modern industrial world is hardly new, but Heidegger is unique in his claim that he knows why all this has come about. He understands the essence of modern technology and the reason for societies demise.

‘And how did he do that?’ asks Sheehan. Not by studying history, sociology and economy, but by philosophizing. Everything that is wrong with Western society is the consequence of human forgetting. And all this was not due to human causality, it has nothing to do with what we call human history. The human demise lies totally in the way of disclosing the world that was given to us by something, that not even *is*, and that sends us all meaning-giving worlds, including the dehumanized world we are living in today.¹⁵

First, Sheehan asks how Heidegger came to his conclusions. What kind of ‘method’ did he use? Heidegger does not like the word method, he rather speaks of the ‘pursuit’ of a matter. Heidegger, the phenomenologist, is usually highly perceptible to the importance of context of the phenomenon under investigation, but in this analysis historical context is missing. According to Sheehan, it is not sufficient to use a few cherry-picked and unrepresentative examples like Heidegger does.¹⁶ Also, is it even possible to grasp the *essence* of such a multilayered and complex phenomenon as modern technology? Even if such a venture is possible it cannot be done without a precise description of what the subject matter is, including at least an account of the historical and economic context of the exploitative relationship between men and nature.¹⁷ Sheehan concludes that the way, the ‘method’, Heidegger investigates and describes modern technology is not satisfactory and cannot be called phenomenological.

Second, Sheehan wonders how adequate a highly philosophical explanation for the state of Western society is. Without providing anything like a thick description Heidegger declares that the epoch of modern technology applies everywhere and to everyone. Heidegger lays out a meta-history that makes no contact with human history. Without any reference to such history, to capitalism,

¹³ Sheehan, 257–60.

¹⁴ Sheehan, 267–68.

¹⁵ Sheehan, 281–84.

¹⁶ Sheehan, 284–85.

¹⁷ Sheehan, 290.

different cultures, or political movements, his analysis lacks explanatory power.¹⁸ In order to earn its right to any serious philosophical attention this philosophical account needs more than just the texts of some metaphysicians. It would require rethinking between *Geschick* and the human history in its concrete material manifestations.¹⁹

Because Heidegger cannot back up his claims about technology, the demise of the Western world or the source of this demise, this brings Sheehan to the conclusion that:

As illuminating as his interpretations of various philosophers from Parmenides to Nietzsche may be, he far exceeded his competence when he conjured up his philosophical narrative of how the West devolved from the glories of sixth-century Greece to the depredations of modern technology, all because it had forgotten *Ereignis*. [...] With his history of philosophy, especially as he worked that out in the 1930s and 1940s, Heidegger overplayed his hand.²⁰

For Sheehan, the core of Heidegger's thought is that radical human finitude is the source of meaning, but after his readings of sequenced Western philosophers and *Sein und Zeit*, where the fundament of this argument lies, 'full stop'.²¹ But Sheehan is not the only one that has problems with Heidegger's turn to a meta-history. Another problem does not lie within Heidegger's 'method' or in his highly philosophical explanation, but in the idea of meta-histories or meta-narratives themselves, a postmodern critique.

In *The Postmodern Condition* Lyotard argues that metanarratives like philosophies of history are simply modern and passé. Modern is the term used to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta-discourse, making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, like the hermeneutics of meaning or the dialectics of Spirit. For Lyotard, postmodernism describes the general condition of contemporary society in which 'grand narratives of legitimation' are no longer credible.²² By 'grand narratives' he means the overarching philosophies of history. These 'meta' narratives initiate a modern approach to the problem of legitimation. They construct a totalizing meta-discourse which situates and legitimates first-order practices. The meta-discourse narrates a story about the whole of human history and in doing so renders first order practices 'true' or 'just'.²³

Lyotard means 'meta' in a very strong sense. It purports to be a privileged discourse able to characterize, situate and evaluate all other discourses, without being affected by contingency or

¹⁸ Sheehan, 286–88.

¹⁹ Sheehan, 291–92.

²⁰ Sheehan, 291–92.

²¹ Sheehan, 292.

²² Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (United States of America: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiii–xxv.

²³ Lyotard, 31–37.

historicity which render first-order discourses distorted and in need of legitimation.²⁴ In contemporary society the grand narratives themselves have lost their legitimation, regardless of what kind of unification it uses or where its credibility stems from. In Heidegger's case this means that the grand narrative is the questioning of being, which is essential for humankind.²⁵ Questioning is the legitimation for Heidegger to predicate the course of contemporary society as 'wrong'. However, Heidegger's meta-history is simply a discourse among others which cannot be the foundation for any kind of legitimation.

At the same time, Lyotard points out that one structural tendency is appearing in modern society: the universalization of instrumentality that subjects all discourses to the criterion of efficiency. In Lyotard's view this threatens the autonomy of science and politics, because these practices cannot be measured against the standard of efficiency. Even Lyotard, who condemns any kind of metanarrative, sees the need for a form of social criticism that transcends local mini-narrative. Despite his arguments against it, he narrates a totalizing story about a large-scale trend in society.²⁶ Lyotard sees danger in the growing instrumental stance of Western Society, just as Heidegger.

1.3 Another Proposal: Habermas

Maybe we need to turn to another philosophy of technology in order to be able to understand the danger in the instrumentality that technology poses, but one that does not need to refer to a meta-history of the decline of Western society. Stiegler finds in Habermas an alternative for the same paradox within instrumental reason and modern technology that Heidegger describes: technology, which appears to be an instrument in hands of humanity, becomes autonomous from the instance it empowers and as a result it undermines human society.²⁷

Habermas opposes the concept of communicative action to technical activity. Technical activity is a new form of political domination. Most importantly it is no longer recognized as political domination, because it is legitimized by the process of technoscientific rationality. All human history can be analyzed as the history of varying sets of relations between communicative action on the one hand and purposive-rational action on the other. Communicative action refers to particular social

²⁴ Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture and Society* 5, no. 2–3 (1988): 376–77.

²⁵ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, 37.

²⁶ Fraser and Nicholson, "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism," 379.

²⁷ B. Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus.*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (United States of America: Stanford University Press, 1998), 13.

norms that cannot be put on the same level as technical rules that are simply empirically sanctioned, but social norms are only grounded on intersubjectivity.²⁸

The difference between traditional societies and modern societies is that, in the former, communicative action forms the basis of social authority. But now, legitimation is dominated by technical and scientific rationality which progressively spreads across all areas of life, including social worlds. The communicative aspects of the social world are denied by the rationality of technology. This happens when science and technology become indissociably, which has the development of the technocracy as a result.²⁹

The technocracy no longer aims to encourage communicative action. Its activity consists in finding solutions to questions of a technical nature. This situation becomes a closed-up system, in which social interests coincide with the interest of maintaining the system.³⁰ This is the case when the power of technical control over nature made possible by the sciences is extended directly to society. Every isolatable social system, every cultural area becomes a separate, closed system whose relations can be analyzed immanently in terms of presupposed system goals.³¹

The problems of technical control solved by science are transformed into life problems. The scientific control of natural and social processes, technology, does not release humans from performing actions. Conflicts still must be decided, interests will be realized, and interpretations must be found with the help of ordinary language. But this language becomes extremely technologized through the penetration of the rationality of technology in all parts of human life.³²

For both Habermas and Heidegger, technology, which appears to be dominated by humankind, becomes the dominator. Both theories rely on the idea that society becomes perpetrated completely by a system where efficiency and instrumentality become their own goal, that all problems that arise come from the framework that technology sets up in the first place. And this framework is constantly securing and advancing itself, because everything gets caught up in the self-created need for maximization and control that is made possible by technology itself. Also, technology is in a way hiding itself. For Habermas, language becomes infected with ‘techno-talk’ and it is the difficult question of our time how it is possible for language to be liberated from ‘technization’.³³

Stiegler points out that the divergence between these two thinkers lies mostly in the fact that Habermas continues to analyze technology from the perspective of means, while for Heidegger this is

²⁸Stiegler, 10–11.

²⁹ Stiegler, 11–12.

³⁰ Stiegler, 12–15.

³¹ Jürgen Habermas, “Technical Progress and the Social Life-World,” in *Readings in the Philosophy of Technology*, ed. David M Kaplan (United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd., 2004), 84.

³² Habermas, 84–85.

³³ Habermas, 87.

a metaphysical determination.³⁴ Habermas proposes that an attempt has to be made to consciously mediate between technical progress and the social world. It is not enough for a social system to only fulfill the conditions of technical rationality. The irrationality of the domination of technology can only be mastered by the development of a political decision-making process tied to the principle of general discussion free from domination.³⁵ In this proposal technology is still a means to an end, but a means to an end that does not dominate the social and political dialogue anymore.

Habermas does not avoid Lyotard's critique on meta-narratives completely. But as we have seen, even Lyotard himself thinks the danger of instrumentality taking over is great enough to retreat into a larger narrative about Western society. However, Habermas does not use a highly philosophical explanation, nor does he need to reside into a meta-history. He is able to generate a lot of the same problems and notions within his analysis of the role of technology in modern society as Heidegger. So, maybe Sheehan is right when he says that we should abandon Heidegger's analysis of technology altogether, since it has been possible to formulate a similar narrative without reference to a meta-history. Does everything that makes Heidegger's notion of technology unique also commit it to a meta-history about the dehumanized state of our current society?

³⁴ Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 13.

³⁵ Habermas, "Technical Progress and the Social Life-World," 86–87.

Chapter 2 – Three Unique Readings

To find out if everything that makes Heidegger's analysis of technology unique also commits it to a meta-history of the decline of Western society, I want to take a closer look at Heidegger's notion of modern technology. What is the unique characteristic of modern technology? I will formulate three different readings on Heidegger's analysis: a practical reading, a historical reading and a methodological reading. All three put forward a different emphasis on how Heidegger's texts must be read. These differences make them presuppose different unique characteristics of Heidegger's analysis. The practical reading presupposes that Heidegger's notion of modern technology can be characterized in terms of instrumentality, the historical reading presupposes that modern technology is the epoch of our time, and the methodological reading presupposes Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology.

Technology for Heidegger is not about technological 'things'. Heidegger does not provide a category in which certain things fit and others not, he is looking for the 'essence' of modern technology. This is seen in the predecessors of *Gestell*: *Machenschaft* and *Erlebnis*. Heidegger uses *Machenschaft* in the thirties to speak of the reduction of beings to mere variables of calculation and *Erlebnis*, which is often translated as 'lived experience', stands for the reduction of beings to means to adventures. Heidegger says in the thirties that the questioning of being does not even arise in the domination of machination and adventure.³⁶ The theme of the forgetting of being because of what later becomes the essence of modern technology, is then already present in Heidegger's thinking. But also, the idea that society gets caught up in calculation and our adventurous experiences without asking what the consequences of this are, is an important theme that traces back before Heidegger introduced the term *Gestell*. We could even say that *Machenschaft* as instrumental reasoning, is seen in Heidegger's discussion of the tool shop in *Being and Time*. What the exact status is of that discussion within enframing is still a debatable topic.³⁷ These themes, the forgetting of being, the consequences of instrumental rationality and a lack of questioning are approached differently by the three readings.

These distinctions within Heidegger scholarship are my own, but it is important to look through the work that has been written about this subject and see what the philosophical consequences of certain approaches to Heidegger's work are. The different readings are not categories in which all Heidegger scholarship can be placed, some will be a mixture of two readings, others may not even fit in any of them. I see them as archetypes of different ways to read Heidegger, since they are the most

³⁶ Vallega-Neu, "Ereignis: The Event of Appropriation," 144.

³⁷ Hubert Dreyfus discusses this point in: Hubert L. Dreyfus, "Between Techne and Technology: The Ambiguous Place of Equipment in Being and Time," *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 32 (1984): 23–35.

common strategies to approach his analysis. This does not mean that they represent different 'Heideggers' who cannot exist next to one another. We can find traces of these different readings all over Heidegger's texts. His works are so rich and dense that it seems to be beside the point to claim that the 'true' interpretation of Heidegger has been found. But, as will be discussed in the last chapter, different approaches have different philosophical consequences.

2.1 The Practical Reading

The first approach I discern is a practical one. The practical reading presupposes that with Heidegger's notion of technology all 'things' can be understood in terms of instrumentality. The emphasis lies on the instrumental, goal-oriented character of technology. I call this reading practical, because the unique characteristic of modern technology is found in what it does to humans on a daily basis, the way it frames our thinking and acting in a goal-oriented paradigm.

The term paradigm should not be confused with modern technology as an epoch, which is the emphasis of the historical reading. A paradigm is not a historical constellation like an epoch but is rather a framework or a for-structuring. And in contrast to epoch, it is also possible for multiple paradigms to exist among each other, the paradigm of hammering next to the paradigm of transportation for example.

The description of Heidegger's modern technology that Søren Riis gives is an example of a practical reading.

Heidegger maintains that the technically disclosed world is imagined (*vor-gestellt*) as a potentially fully controllable object. In this framework, everything appears as something, which ultimately can be manipulated at will.³⁸

And later on:

Heidegger's argument against modern technology is in principle quite straightforward and can be restated in the following way. Technology and techniques are used to achieve specific goals using different kind of resources.³⁹

In the practical reading, the essence of modern technology is the way the paradigm 'works'. When a certain paradigm dominates there can be a number of unchangeable statements that are thought to be correct. If a new paradigm emerges then some statements that were considered correct must be

³⁸ S. Riis, "The Question Concerning Thinking," in *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, ed. J K Berg Olsen, E Selinger, and S Riis (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 126.

³⁹ Riis, 127.

revised. Riis sees the change of paradigm in analogy to the process of disclosure. The way that modern technology discloses beings works as a paradigm in which things are stated to be correct or incorrect.⁴⁰

It is not completely clear what Riis means when introducing the non-Heideggerian term ‘paradigm’. When Riis says that in a paradigm there can be a number of unchangeable statements that render other statements correct or incorrect, this sounds as if the paradigm can only ‘work’ within the correct. Which would be problematic since Heidegger always aims to get to the essence of a phenomenon, the true. Also, I wonder if the paradigm is actually a framework or for-structure in which everything appears as something that can be manipulated, or if it is some kind of conceptual scheme in which statements can be correct or incorrect. The first would be about our practical life. The latter is about concepts and knowledge and that is not something Heidegger would be after.

Riis adds that the concept of perfection plays a crucial role. Technology reaches specified goals in the most efficient ways. It is possible to discern better technology from worse, because technology is always oriented toward perfection within its own pre-established norms. By using a hammer, we silently support an understanding of the world, which was the prerequisite of setting it up in the first place. The better the technique of hammering is mastered, the less it is questioned. A professional carpenter does not question whether thinking in terms of hammers and nails should be changed entirely, but rather if hammers and nails serve their pre-established purpose. For Riis, Heidegger’s argument is that only if a hammer is ‘thoughtlessly’ used as an instrument we do not recognize that they belong to a certain way of revealing beings and thinking about the world. They encourage us to reason in terms of means and ends.⁴¹

Dreyfus has argued that the technological framework cannot only be a ‘bad’ thing. Once we understand the essence of technology and what it does, we should also be grateful for it. ‘Our technological clearing is the cause of our distress, yet if it were not given to us to encounter things and ourselves as resources, nothing would show up as anything at all, and no possibilities for action would make sense.’⁴² Without the essence of modern technology we would not be able to do anything at all, there would be no practices. For Dreyfus, modern technology does not only frame human life in pre-fixed means and ends, but by doing that it makes our practical life possible.

Dreyfus’ point about the ‘good’ thing of modern technology is typical for this kind of approach, because it sets human practical life again at the center of Heidegger’s investigation. However, he seems to imply that modern technology is the only way through which something can

⁴⁰ Riis, 125–26.

⁴¹ Riis, 128–29.

⁴² Hubert L. Dreyfus, “Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology, and Politics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles B. Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 363.

become intelligible in contemporary society and I wonder if it then does not become vulnerable for Sheehan's or Lyotard's criticism.

Examples like the use of a hammer stand for the second reason I call this reading practical. It does not only use examples to illustrate the argument, but the practical reading relies on examples to do argumentative work. This strategy is not uncommon. Heidegger himself also employs examples from everyday life to strengthen or clarify his analysis. The practical reading takes these at face value and reinforces or reinterprets them. They are used to show the way in which objects or situations are part of enframing.

Even though the practical reading has some difficulties, it is possible to recognize this practical approach in Heidegger's texts. A well-known example of Heidegger himself is the hydroelectric plant built in de Rhine. With this discussion, Heidegger asks us how it is possible for humans to build such a thing in the first place. '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.'⁴³ The essence of that power station is modern technology. So, to build a hydroelectric plant the Rhine must be seen as something that can be instrumentally deployed to extract energy from.

But instrumentality can be ascribed to almost anything, not only to technological or mechanic things. Heidegger clarifies this point within the same discussion of the Rhine when he says: 'But, it will be replied, the Rhine is still a river in the landscape, is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry.'⁴⁴ Even if the people on vacation are convinced that they are looking at a beautiful river, just the Rhine as it is by itself, they are wrong. The Rhine is sold by the vacation industry, which the vacation goes fly to with an airplane. This airplane is also not an object, but a resource stocked for flying somewhere, a means to an end.⁴⁵

Even humans become part of instrumental thinking and talking. Heidegger continues that:

'The current talk about human resources, about the supply of patients for a clinic, gives evidence of this. The forester who, in the wood, measures the felled timber and to all appearances walks the same forest path in the same way as did his grandfather is today commanded by profit-making in the lumber industry, whether he knows it or not.'⁴⁶

The phrase 'human resources' or the forester unknowingly working for a big company in a chain of events that are all interlocked and secured; these are scenes we recognize and can easily

⁴³ GA 7: 19/16.

⁴⁴ GA 7: 19/16.

⁴⁵ GA 7: 20/17.

⁴⁶ GA 7: 21/18.

transfer to our own lives. The practical reading uses this ‘practical’ side of Heidegger at the center of its arguments.

In short, the practical reading consists of the following ideas. The essence of modern technology lies in the way it sets up a framework with pre-established norms, goals, means and ends. It is particularly concerned with the way that modern technology influences our everyday practices and finds its ground within these by using examples as arguments. This is in contrast with the historical and methodological reading for which the instrumental framework is the outcome of the analyses, not the starting point. Also, the other two readings do not rely on examples to do any argumentative work, their arguments are carried by other aspects of Heidegger. For the methodological reading, this is the way of his hermeneutical phenomenology, and for the historical reading, metaphysics as ontotheology. By emphasizing these parts of Heidegger’s notion of modern technology, the practical reading presupposes that it has become possible to describe all the phenomena of our world in terms of instrumentality.

2.2 The Historical Reading

The second reading is the historical reading. The historical reading presupposes that modern technology is the epoch of our time. When Heidegger says in “The Age of the World Picture” that ‘machine technology remains up to now the most visible outgrowth of the essence of modern technology, which is identical with the essence of modern metaphysics’⁴⁷ he himself describes the way this reading works. Technological things are the most obvious things that stem from the essence of modern technology, enframing, but this essence is the same as the essence of modern metaphysics. According to this reading, what is unique about Heidegger’s approach is how he points out that modern technology stands for a metaphysical age. This approach relates modern technology to some of Heidegger’s most difficult texts, but Thomson insist that this is the only way to fully understand his thoughts.

In turn, this critique of ‘enframing’ follows from, and so can only be fully understood in terms of, the understanding of metaphysics as ‘ontotheology’ central to his [Heidegger’s] later thought.⁴⁸

Thomson explains Heidegger’s ontotheology as the fundamental twofold characteristic of metaphysics. In metaphysics the question “what is an entity?” can be heard in two ways, asking about either *what* makes an entity an entity, ontology, or about the way that an entity is the ‘highest’ or ‘first’ entity, theology. The first is an understanding of entities as such and the second is an

⁴⁷ GA 5: 75/116.

⁴⁸ I. Thomson, “Understanding Technology Ontotheologically, or: The Danger and the Promise of Heidegger, an American Perspective,” in *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, ed. J K Berg Olsen, E Selinger, and S Riis (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 150.

understanding of entities in its totality. In the history of philosophy these two ways of answering the question “what is an entity” have always come simultaneously. In answering the ontological question there is a search for a ground that is common to all entities. But it also asks, which entity is the highest entity, and in which sense it *is*. Metaphysics as theology, seeks to understand these two interconnected aspects and thinks of the totality of entities with regard to the supreme, all founding entity.⁴⁹

The historical aspect of ontotheology is that metaphysics has the primary historical role of establishing and maintaining a ground for what *is*. This historical constellation of intelligibility endures for an epoch only to be replaced by the next. When Heidegger speaks of epoch we always need to take in mind that in Greek *epochê* means ‘to hold back’. When a successful epoch has been established this holds back the ontological historicity for a while. The ground for what is and what counts as beings becomes stable, but only for as long as the epoch is established.⁵⁰ This poses the question how one epoch replaces the other and how an epoch ‘destabilizes’. I cannot give answers to these questions in this thesis, but a historical reading needs to bear these questions in mind.

The ontotheological historical approach of Heidegger is recognized in “Age of the World Picture”, where Heidegger reflects on the essence of modern science in order to comprehend what the metaphysical ground is for its essence. When the metaphysical ground is reached, ‘the entire essence of the modern age will have to let itself be apprehended from out of that ground.’⁵¹ To get to this ground Heidegger investigates the understanding of modern science of what counts as beings, what is, and what notion of truth is in play.⁵²

Heidegger characterizes modern science as research. He continues that research has disposal over everything that can be calculated. In this way beings become ‘set in place’ (*gestellt*). Nature and history, the subjects of science, become the objects of a representing that explains. But at the same time this representing ‘counts on nature, and takes account of history’. Only an object that in this way *is*, is considered to be a being. This objectifying is aimed at bringing each being to the researcher as something he can be sure of, something that in calculation can be certain. So, science as research can only come up if truth is transformed into ‘certainty of representation’ and if ‘what it is to be’ means ‘to be objective.’ These two interconnected characteristics of the metaphysical ground of research determine the essence of our age, because science as research is an essential phenomenon of the modern time.⁵³

⁴⁹ I. Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, Online Edi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 10–13.

⁵⁰ Thomson, 19–20.

⁵¹ GA 5: 76/117.

⁵² GA 5: 86/126.

⁵³ GA 5: 87/127.

How do we recognize the epoch of our time in this text? Our age is determined by that the ground for beings is constituted as they represent themselves before humans. But also, the entirety of ‘what is’ is determined by representation, the age as a world picture. There is nothing above or beyond us that determines what something is, ontology, or what the entirety is, theology. In the medieval times the highest cause was God. To be in being meant to belong to a specific rank of the order that God had created. In our time ‘... Being of that which is consist here in the fact that it is brought before man as the objective, in the fact that it is placed in the realm of man's knowing and of his having disposal, and that it is in being only in this way.’⁵⁴

According to the historical reading, we can only understand modern technology through this ontotheological lens. In the case of modern technology, our Western reliance on this ontotheology is leading us into disclosing all beings as standing-reserve, including ourselves.⁵⁵ We are no longer modern subjects seeking to master an objective world, we become meaningless resource to be optimized, ordered and enhanced with maximal efficiency. As this historical transformation of beings becomes more pervasive an epoch ‘holds back’, our critical gaze disappears.⁵⁶

Summarizing, the historical reading presupposes that modern technology must be understood through the ontotheological structure of our age. Modern technology is primarily seen as epoch. This reading relies mainly on Heidegger’s later work about ontotheology, in contrast with the methodological reading, which also uses Heidegger’s early work. In addition, the historical reading distinguished itself from the practical and the methodological reading in another way. Heidegger investigates a phenomenon to get hold of the ontotheological structure that governs it. The historical reading then states that we should take this structure, the outcome, in mind when we read what Heidegger has to say about modern technology to fully comprehend his critique. The other two readings do not rely on the outcome of the investigation in this way. For the methodological reading, it is not the outcome that is most important but Heidegger’s way of investigating. And the practical reading differs as it sets up its argument entirely within how beings are technological and often reinterprets Heidegger’s ideas about ontotheology and epochs.

2.3 The Methodological Reading

The last reading is the methodological reading, which presupposes Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenology. It holds that we can recognize technology not through practical examples or an overarching historical diagnosis, but through a certain way of phenomenologically looking at phenomena.

⁵⁴ GA 5: 90/130.

⁵⁵ Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, 54–56.

⁵⁶ Thomson, “Understanding Technology Ontotheologically, or: The Danger and the Promise of Heidegger, an American Perspective,” 150–51.

What is unique about Heidegger's notion of modern technology is the way he employs the analysis. Von Herrmann points out that:

Heidegger's thinking from beginning to end lives off this understanding of phenomenology -an understanding which the later Heidegger formulated simply as 'letting the matter show itself'. For this reason the only proper way of access to Heidegger's thinking is the way of *phenomenological* interpretation.⁵⁷

Before I discuss how this reading approaches Heidegger's analysis of modern technology, his hermeneutical phenomenology must first be explained. To fully understand the methodological reading we need to look into earlier work than for the other two readings because Heidegger's ideas about hermeneutics and phenomenology are mostly found in *Being and Time*. After that, I will discuss how, according to Von Herrmann, Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology is still present in his later work and illustrate this with some passages from "The Question Concerning Technology".

Phenomenology is often associated with the phrase: '*Zurück zu den Sachen Selbst*', 'To the things themselves'. This phrase intends to capture the idea that naturalistic explanations for the emergence of phenomena get the order of philosophy wrong. Phenomenology starts with the phenomena themselves, rather than advancing hypotheses or constructing explanations with the idea that phenomena are just images that float in our minds.⁵⁸ When I listen to music I do not hear separate sounds, I hear a melody. When I pick up an apple, I do not see yellow and red spots that form a circular object, I immediately see an apple.⁵⁹

But what exactly *are* the 'things themselves'? In his explanation of the phenomenological method in *Being and Time* Heidegger says that the actual phenomena are not discovered easily. In Heidegger hermeneutics and phenomenology coincide. Phenomenology begins with how Dasein is hermeneutically imbedded in a world that is already meaningful, therefore its method is the interpretation of that meaning. It is an explanation of the different ways Dasein is already in-the-world and how it already understands being.⁶⁰ How things come to our attention is already embedded within a world where everything is intelligible. Dasein is in-the-world, already has an understanding of being, a *Seinsverständnis*, before we experience beings at all.⁶¹

For Heidegger's phenomenology it is important to see that what is already understood, must come 'from the things themselves'. Because phenomenon is characterized in *Being and Time* after

⁵⁷ Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann, "Way and Method: Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Thinking the History of Being," in *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, ed. Christopher Macann (New York: Routledge, 1992), 325.

⁵⁸ Taylor Carman, "The Principle of Phenomenology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Charles. B Guignon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 98–99.

⁵⁹ G. Visser, *Heideggers Vraag Naar de Techniek: Een Commentaar* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014), 50.

⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Sein Und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), 34–39.

⁶¹ Heidegger, 15–17.

interpreting the Greek word as: the self-showing-in-itself.⁶² It is an insight in how beings show up as something at all, but to get through to this insight it is necessary to start with the way we already understand those beings. In *Being and Time* the interpretation of hermeneutical phenomenology operates essentially within the fore-understanding of Dasein, but for the later Heidegger this will transition to the fore-understanding of an age.⁶³

Von Herrmann argues that in Heidegger's later work the structure of hermeneutic phenomenology is transformed to thinking in terms of the history of being. The unity between Dasein and the unfolding of Being which is 'seen' or 'heard' in appropriation becomes the pure enactment of the self-showing of phenomenology and therefore the title phenomenology falls away.⁶⁴ This thinking is phenomenological, in so far as it lets the self-showing of things themselves or being as such be seen, and hermeneutically, in so far as the for-understanding of the self-showing of beings is interpreted.⁶⁵

In the methodological reading, Heidegger's notion of truth plays a crucial role. In both early and later Heidegger, phenomenology looks beyond the representational manner of objects, the correct, and into the truth. For Heidegger, the truth is not about making correct statements corresponding with states of the world or with the facts. This is truth as correspondence. In "Vom Wesen Der Wahrheit" uses Heidegger 'truth as correspondence' to come to a more original notion of truth, truth as *aletheia*, as unconcealment. Truth is the play in which beings show themselves in a certain way, but by showing themselves they also hide a part of themselves.⁶⁶ Later Heidegger will drop the term truth and will only speak of *aletheia*, because truth is interpreted as a certainty of knowledge about being and *aletheia* is the play or the openness. *Aletheia* grants the possibility of truth of which there can be no certain knowledge.⁶⁷

Heidegger speaks of *aletheia* in terms of light, darkness and the clearing. In a forest, light and dark cannot appear without a clearing. Light are the beings as they come to our attention, darkness is what they hide from us. But to be able to step into the light a clearing, possibility, is needed. And 'light never first creates openness. Rather, light presupposes openness'.⁶⁸ The openness is prerequisite for something to happen in the first place. In the later Heidegger, truth becomes this possibility, the stage on which the play can be played. Phenomenology is the 'methodology' to get insight of this possibility of phenomena to occur in the way they do. For this reason, Von Herrmann emphasizes that Heidegger's phenomenology becomes the thinking of possibility.⁶⁹

⁶² Heidegger, 31.

⁶³ von Herrmann, "Way and Method: Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Thinking the History of Being," 317–18.

⁶⁴ von Herrmann, 311–12.

⁶⁵ von Herrmann, 320.

⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen Der Wahrheit* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1954), 18–19.

⁶⁷ GA 14: 86/389.

⁶⁸ GA 14: 81/384.

⁶⁹ von Herrmann, "Way and Method: Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Thinking the History of Being," 311.

An insight into the truth can be acquired with the phenomenological method, even though Heidegger also does not use the term phenomenology or method anymore in his later work. He uses 'way' or 'pathway' to avoid any connotations with the idea of the scientific method, which he thinks is opposed to his own approach. The scientific method is used to grasp the correct out the representational and domineering relation to beings, produces them solely as objects and eventually even reduces beings to an orderable standing reserve.⁷⁰ This is where Heidegger's analysis of modern technology comes in.

The opening sentences of "The Question Concerning Technology" show that Heidegger still 'uses' his old methodology to search for the true within the correct. Heidegger begins his text with:

In what follows we shall be questioning concerning technology. Questioning builds a way. We would be advised, therefore, above all to pay heed to the way, and not to fix our attention on isolated sentences and topics. The way is a way of thinking. All ways of thinking, more or less perceptibly, lead through language in a manner that is extraordinary.⁷¹

Heidegger speaks of a way that is built by questioning. The questioning can be seen as hermeneutically interpreting the dominating answer to what technology is. Through an interpretation of this answer a new answer will be formulated. The hermeneutical side of phenomenology is seen in the breaking down of our fore-understanding of technology and technological things. Our insight into the more original basis that provides for the phenomena to come to our attention in the way they do, is through the phenomena as they come up in the way they do. In this approach to the subject matter, we can recognize an interpretation of the self-showing of beings.

Heidegger also says that we should not 'fix our attention on isolated sentences and topics'. This speaks for his phenomenological approach, because it has always been about the investigation in its totality and not only about the outcome of the investigation. In the methodological reading modern technology cannot be understood by understanding the outcome of the investigation, like the historical reading, it must be understood by every methodological step that is taken.

Also, Heidegger's discussion of phenomena like the airplane, the woodworker or the hydroelectric plant in "Question Concerning Technology" are apprehended with his phenomenological eyes. When Heidegger says:

But, it will be replied, the Rhine is still a river in the landscape, is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry.⁷²

⁷⁰ von Herrmann, 322.

⁷¹ GA 7: 7/3-4

⁷² GA 7: 19/16.

We could interpret this as an example to show that all these phenomena can be described in terms of instrumentality like the practical reading does. But we can also see this as a call from Heidegger to look beyond what the phenomena seem to be at first. Just because we see the Rhine as something beautiful when we are on vacation, does not say that we experience it in another way than when we use it as a source of energy. If we really ‘look’ we can come to the insight what structures are working ‘behind’ these phenomena.

According to Visser, examples like a hydropower plant or an airplane disguise how the challenge of modern technology can also be found in daily objects like a faucet above a sink or a match. Very simple products that make our lives a lot easier. Where first a series of human operations were needed, now only a single act is needed. All those instruments are very handy, but we never realize what the handiness does to us.⁷³ Notice that this is different from the practical reading. For the practical reading, the argumentative force lies within these examples. The methodological reading employs these phenomena to show technology at work, but it does not rely on the examples to do any argumentative work. The argument is made in the whole of Heidegger’s texts and the ‘way’ he builds, the method he uses.

In short, the methodological reading presupposes Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenology. It emphasizes that if we ‘look’ in a certain way at the phenomena under investigation we will be able to see what Heidegger saw, and understand what Heidegger tried to articulate. The presupposition of this reading is that this methodology will guide us beyond the representational objects towards something more original or essential. So, alongside with the hermeneutical phenomenology comes the intimate relationship this methodology has with Heidegger’s notion of truth as *aletheia*. The methodological reading still relies in some way on being in terms of a history of being. But its emphasis lies on truth revealed in looking a certain way and not, as in the historical reading, on this historical character of our time. Next, every methodological moment matters in this reading, so the whole of text must be taken into account. In contrast to the practical and historical reading, they emphasize a certain ‘part’ of the analysis itself. At last, this approach is again in contrast with both the practical and the historical reading in that it is imbedded in the whole of Heidegger’s work, opposed to only his later texts.

⁷³ Visser, *Heideggers Vraag Naar de Techniek: Een Commentaar*, 104.

Chapter 3 – Committed and Discernable?

In this last chapter I will evaluate if what makes Heidegger's analysis of modern technology discernible from others consists in his turn to meta-history. I propose a twofold analysis of the three readings from chapter 2. On the one hand, is it possible to discern the reading from another philosophy of technology? I will use Habermas' ideas about the political domination of technoscientific rationality and compare Habermas' theory with each reading from chapter 2 to find out if the presuppositions from the different readings can be distinguished from his technoscientific rationality. On the other hand, is the presupposition committed to a meta-history of the decline of Western society? Here, I will also use the presupposition of the three readings, because these formulate what each reading at least must presuppose and thus is committed to.

With this twofold analysis I will answer the question if what makes Heidegger's analysis unique, also commits it to a meta-history of the decline of the West. I will argue that the practical reading does not commit to a meta-history but cannot be discerned from Habermas. Next, the historical reading can be discerned from Habermas, but is also committed to a meta-history of the decline of Western society. Finally, the methodological reading does not commit and is discernable from Habermas's technoscientific rationality.

When I discuss if a presupposition is committed or not, I have the following two questions in mind. 1) To what extent does the presupposition rely on a meta-history of the decline of the Western world? 2) To what extent does the presupposition lead to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world?⁷⁴

3.1 The Practical Reading

Does the practical reading commit to a meta-history of the decline of Western society according to one of these questions? The presupposition of the practical reading is that with Heidegger's notion of modern technology all phenomena can be described in terms of instrumentality.

First, this presupposition does not rely on a meta-history of the decline of the Western world. The arguments of the practical reading are mostly made in the discussion of examples that show how

⁷⁴ Being committed means that notions are in some way bound to one another. First, a presupposition is committed to a meta-history when the analysis of modern technology relies on it. This would mean that the presupposition of a reading of Heidegger's analysis of technology cannot come about without the idea of a meta-history of the decline of the Western world, but that it does not belong to the presupposition itself. The meta-history is used to set up the argument. The second way to be committed to something, is when the presupposition leads to a meta-history. The presupposition has as a consequence that there is a decline of Western society.

phenomena or everyday practices are part of enframing. There is no need for a meta-historical narrative to employ and analyze everyday scenes for this purpose. Also, Habermas shows that it is possible to analyze human history as a varying sets of relations between communicative action and purposive-rational action. He is exemplary for a theory that states that we are living in a society where everything can be described in terms of means and ends without the use of meta-historical narratives. So, because the starting point and argumentative work of this reading lies especially in the practical everydayness of modern technology, a reliance on a meta-historical narrative is excluded.

Second, the presupposition of the practical reading does not lead to a meta-history. Riis argues that Heidegger's own analysis would be more consistent if he did not exclude the Greek understanding of technology from modern technology. The preoccupation with mastering tools and techniques that took place in antiquity just as in modern society, is a manifestation of instrumental reasoning. Thinking in means and ends must have been common to the Greeks as well, since it is inherent in their technology. The possible danger at the root of technology, according to the interpretation of the practical reading, is not limited to present-day technology.⁷⁵

When the reasoning behind modern technology is not limited to our own age, what does the practical reading make of notions like *Geschick* and *Ereignis*? With the above argument Riis abolishes the idea that technology stands for an epoch that applies to contemporary society, but how is it then that the essence of technology is 'sent' to us? On the one hand, the practical reading could deny that such a process takes place. But would that not leave us with a theory that has been stripped down of most of Heidegger's insights? On the other hand, it could reinterpret the meaning of these notions. Dreyfus sees the history of being establishing itself in technological practices. He gives the example of Japan where traditional non-technological practices still exist alongside high-tech production and consumption. The Japanese can enjoy technology without being completely dominated by a technological understanding of being and Western society is also able to see that modern technology 'is our destiny, but not our fate'.⁷⁶ However, pointing to practices where technological or instrumental thinking is recognized is not unique for Heidegger's approach.

Although the practical reading is not committed to a meta-history, it cannot discern itself from Habermas. First, Habermas and Heidegger diverged in their approaches at the moment that Heidegger went beyond instrumentality. That phenomena can be described in instrumental terms stays within the instrumental idea of technology. That instrumental thinking is all over our society is not unique for Heidegger's approach, because Habermas also made us aware of this fact.

⁷⁵ Riis, "The Question Concerning Thinking," 130–31.

⁷⁶ Dreyfus, "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology, and Politics," 363.

A possible objection to this has been made by Riis. He discusses that someone may object to his proposal that it supports what Heidegger describes as the instrumental misunderstanding of technology, the neutral instrumental-anthropological answer. He continues that we have to remember that Heidegger also points out that the instrumental account of technology is ‘so uncannily correct’. In our urge to master technology we do not see that it is indeed not a neutral instrument. The instrumental part of technology is just not the whole answer, but it is a part of the answer. This is why perfection is crucial for Riis’s reading. With the notion of perfection, we can understand why society gets caught up in the pre-fixed means and ends proposed by different paradigms and get an understanding of technology that is deeper than the instrumental misunderstanding.⁷⁷

I doubt that this is enough to discern the practical reading from Habermas. Habermas also recognizes that technology is not a neutral instrument and that thinking in a technological manner has enormous consequences for society. He states that when social interest coincides with the interest of maintaining the system the situation becomes a closed-up system.⁷⁸ Every isolatable social system becomes a separate closed system whose relations can be analyzed immanently in terms of presupposed system goals.⁷⁹ These systems are in a way also pursuing perfection, when they only allow us to analyze them within their own means and ends. Adding the notion of perfection is not enough to discern the practical reading from Habermas.

3.2 The Historical Reading

The historical reading distances itself from the practical emphasis on instrumentality. The importance of Heidegger’s analysis lies in its temporal aspect, technology as an epoch. In the historical reading, what makes Heidegger unique is the understanding of technology through its ontotheological substructure, through the way it sends us meaning giving worlds, through *Geschick*. Or as Sheehan calls it, through a meta-history. So, the historical reading relies on the use of a meta-historical narrative.

Does that also mean that it is committed to a meta-history *of the decline of the Western world*? This leads to one of the questions that Sheehan also puts forward. What is the relationship between manifest history and *Geschick*, what is the relationship between the ontic and the ontological?

Thomson argues that Heidegger’s philosophical methodology, both early and late, presupposes that the ontic and the ontological are interconnected. The ontological is the condition for the ontic, but

⁷⁷ Riis, “The Question Concerning Thinking,” 130.

⁷⁸ Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 12–15.

⁷⁹ Habermas, “Technical Progress and the Social Life-World,” 84.

at the same time our only access to the ontological is through the ontic and what makes an ontological interpretation convincing is how it puts a ‘revealing light’ on ontic phenomena.⁸⁰

Heidegger’s way through the phenomena and his use of etymology are guiding the reader to the place where Heidegger wants them. But according to Thomson ‘... it is crucial to recognize that the argumentative work in his [Heidegger’s] ontological critique of technology is done by the understanding of metaphysics as ontotheology which quietly undergirds and generates this critique.’⁸¹ The argumentative work does not come from Heidegger’s method, but from the ontotheological substructure that transcends the phenomena he is examining.

The domineering character of the epoch has already been presupposed even if a phenomenological investigation gives a new insight about them. It is presupposed that all the phenomena of our age are sent by the ontotheological structure that modern technology is, and it is explicitly stated that we should understand Heidegger’s critique on society through this structure. It cannot be possible to deny the grand narrative that Heidegger spells out about our society, when the meta-history that makes this narrative happen is already presupposed, in combination with the idea that this narrative can only be constructed using the phenomena that ‘the decline’ is about. The historical reading is committed to a meta-history.

The historical reading’s commitment to a meta-history makes it discernable from Habermas’s technoscientific rationality. The presupposition that we must understand modern technology through its metaphysical substructure clearly goes beyond the instrumental character of technology. It meta-historically imbeds why objects can come up as instrumental, without being instrumental itself. By relating enframing immediately to the historic character of the epoch the analysis does not revolve around instrumental paradigms or closed-up systems and their beings, it gives an explanation of what kind of age we are living in that goes beyond the instrumental character of technology. Thus, it goes beyond what Habermas does, since he stays within instrumental determination of technology.

The role of appropriation illustrates this. For Habermas, it was possible to free ourselves from the technoscientific rationality by freeing our language from the ‘technization’ it was enduring. For the historical reading this can never be enough. In the act of freeing our language we are treating the ‘technization’ of language again as a problem to be solved, something we can control, something we can ‘do’ to save our society. According to the presupposition of the historical reading, this can never bring us beyond the technological disclosed age. Only in the event of appropriation it is possible to relate to the sending of modern technology in a different way. However, this does lead the historical reading exactly to the spot where Sheehan’s criticism on Heidegger picks up and interprets

⁸⁰ Thomson, *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, 66.

⁸¹ Thomson, 53.

appropriation in a way that Sheehan rejects.

3.3 The Methodological Reading

Finally, I will argue that the methodological reading is not committed to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world and at the same time can discern itself from Habermas. The methodological reading presupposed Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology as the way into the phenomenon modern technology. *Aletheia* as possibility for beings to occur is of great importance for all of Heidegger's work, and his phenomenological approach is the thinking of this possibility.

The methodological approach is not committed in the sense that it relies on or leads to a meta-history. Hermeneutical phenomenology does not rely on a meta-history of the decline of Western society, it relies on Heidegger's distinction between the correct and the true. This distinction has to be accepted, otherwise what distinguishes Heidegger's phenomenology from others could not be preserved. When Heidegger ties phenomenology and hermeneutics together with his unique approach to what a phenomenon is, he needs to make the distinction between the correct and the truth, otherwise the process of interpretation within his methodology would have no purpose.

But what about the important role that *aletheia* has for the phenomenological approach? Does *aletheia* in later Heidegger not translate in terms of the history of being? So, phenomenology in later Heidegger leads to a history of being, which is a meta-history about ontological manifestations.

For the methodological reading this does not hold. When *Geschick* is approached through phenomenology with an emphasis on *aletheia* it does not have to acquire a meta-historical character like Sheehan proposes. Caputo argues that Heidegger should be 'demystified' in the sense that his history of being should be disentangled from the narrative structure of a decline of history from the Greeks to our own age. *Aletheia* as the opening or the possibility of beings, grants every historical epoch and their notion of truth. There is no privileged meaning or truth of being, but only the unfolding of many meaning and truths of being across the epochs. None can be privileged over the other.⁸²

Caputo proposes to read Heidegger's criticism on modern technology as a critical history. Epochs can be used to play each other off or to let one be corrective for the other. Heidegger's narrative does just that. The thought of *aletheia*, which provides all epochs their own notion of truth delimits the prestige of any epoch, none is better than the other. It does not make sense to speak of an actual decline of Western society.⁸³

⁸² John. D Caputo, "Demythologizing Heidegger: 'Aletheia' and the History of Being," *Review of Metaphysics* 41, no. 3 (1988): 536–37.

⁸³ Caputo, 539–41.

Rosemann adds to Caputo's interpretation that this enables us to understand *Geschick* as more humble than other philosophies of history. Heidegger's phenomenology could be mistaken for construing the chronically later, correct, to the chronically earlier, the true. Heidegger himself does not always manage to stay away from this 'narrative impulse'. Yet, Heidegger is better understood as not trying to make any chronological points. He points out the *phenomenologically* earlier.⁸⁴ *Geschick* is not meta-historical or transcendental in the sense that it spells out how history will develop, it does not hover 'above' or 'beyond' manifest history. According to Rosemann, such a reading of Heidegger is 'correct', but he doubts if it is true, since it keeps objectifying history itself. *Geschick* understood through phenomenology is a groundless process where being gives itself. But Heidegger would never claim that an 'objective truth' of that process can be found.⁸⁵

At the same time the methodological reading can discern itself from Habermas's technoscientific rationality, because phenomenology is a radically different approach than Habermas' rational reconstruction. According to Pedersen, the key function of rational reconstruction is to make explicit an implicit, pre-theoretical knowledge. Ryle's difference between 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' illustrates this implicit knowledge. We can express meaningful sentences within a language and develop consistent arguments without knowing the rules we necessarily follow. An agent knows how to perform actions without having an awareness of the different conditions that make these actions possible. Habermas seeks for the underlying rules and structures as conditions for any meaningful linguistic expression.⁸⁶

When comparing methods these two philosophers are engaged in completely different projects. Habermas' produces hypotheses which are open to confirmation or falsification. They are based on empirical analyses and do not represent a transcendental philosophical uncovering of the condition of possibility. It is not a completely non-transcendental project since he searches for the conditions of communicative action, which are 'detranscendentalized'. Instead of an a priori transcendental necessity, are these conditions intersubjectively shared.⁸⁷ Of course, Heidegger is also not looking for *the* possibility, but with his hermeneutical phenomenology he tries to stay attuned to possibility in itself. Heidegger is in search of the phenomenologically earlier, for the 'conditions' of the phenomena through his way of looking at them, and Habermas is seeking for the possibility of agreement solely on

⁸⁴ Philipp Rosemann, "Heidegger's Transcendental History," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 4 (2002): 517–18.

⁸⁵ Rosemann, 518–19.

⁸⁶ Jørgen Pedersen, "Habermas' Method: Rational Reconstruction," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 38, no. 4 (2008): 462.

⁸⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *Kommunikatives Handeln Und Detranszendentalisierte Vernunft* (Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 2014).

the basis of factual (empirical) utterances.⁸⁸ So, Habermas is not engaged in a pre-ontological project. He is not even doing ontology.

In addition, the methods themselves differ drastically. Habermas uncovers principles for rational exchange of opinions that are embedded in the use of language. To achieve this, he analyzes factual statements and utterances of competent language speakers. This makes up the material for his investigations.⁸⁹ Heidegger also builds his way through language, but he listens to a more original meaning of words to guide him to a more original answer to his questions. The big difference between these two is that Habermas takes what people say at face value and analyzes those speech-acts in search of underlying structures that makes the expression meaningful, but Heidegger listens to what we might say about something and tries to show what the ground is to be able to say it in the first place.

Concluding, I have discussed whether the three readings of chapter 2 are committed to a meta-history and if they can be distinguished from Habermas. The presupposition of the practical reading cannot be distinguished from Habermas and the presupposition of the historical reading commits to a meta-history of the decline of our society. The presuppositions of these two readings have philosophical consequences that can be problematic, or at least should be dealt with when scholars read Heidegger in this way. The methodological reading did not commit, and it is discernable. This makes this reading a strong candidate as an interpretation of Heidegger that is philosophically valuable.

⁸⁸ Pedersen, "Habermas' Method: Rational Reconstruction," 464.

⁸⁹ Pedersen, 468.

Conclusion

We have seen that Sheehan's criticism of Heidegger mostly lies in Heidegger's use of a 'meta-history' of the decline of the Western world. Sheehan claims that Heidegger reduces everything that is wrong with contemporary society to the way that modern technology sends us (*Geschick*) to understand every being as ready for use. According to Sheehan, Heidegger's idea about sending or destining is meta-historical, because it is the 'thing' that is defining manifest history.⁹⁰

In the first chapter I have set out the problems revolving around Heidegger's reliance on a meta-history and I have proposed a different theory of technology that could be used instead of Heidegger's. Sheehan's problems with Heidegger's analysis of modern technology mostly revolve around the meta-historical part of the analysis and I have endorsed this view with the help of Lyotard's critique on meta-narratives.

In the second chapter, I have compared three different ways to read Heidegger in the search for what is unique about his analysis. These different readings all have different presuppositions accompanying them. Most importantly, all the readings have their tracks in Heidegger's own texts. They are all defensible readings of Heidegger's analysis of technology.

In chapter 3, I have evaluated these readings on two aspects. 1) Does the presupposition of the reading commit to a meta-history of the decline of Western society. 2) Is the presupposition of the reading discernible from Habermas's theory about the role of instrumentality and technology in our society. As to the practical reading and the historical reading, Sheehan is right. The practical reading is not committed to a meta-history of the decline of the West, but at the same time it could not discern itself from Habermas. So, the unique aspect of the practical reading is not unique for Heidegger at all. In contrast to the historical reading, which could discern itself, but its presupposition, the epochal character of technology, did lead to a meta-history of the decline of Western society.

To what extent is the unique characteristic of Heidegger's analysis of modern technology committed to a meta-history of the decline of the Western world? The answer to this question depends on what reading of Heidegger is proposed. In the context of this thesis I have to conclude that the methodological reading has the best of both worlds. I argued that the methodological reading is not committed and at the same time can discern itself from Habermas. With this reading it is possible to meet the challenge that Sheehan's poses when he states that it is the meta-historical turn in Heidegger's thought that makes his analysis of modern technology unique but untenable. There is

⁹⁰ Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, 288–92.

something valuable left in Heidegger's notion of modern technology, namely the way Heidegger 'looks' at the phenomenon.

But there is another problem with the way Sheehan presents his 'paradigm switch'. I doubt Sheehan is right when he declares that there is nothing valuable left in Heidegger's thinking about modern technology because the methodological reading bypasses his criticism. But Sheehan himself should be doubtful about his own statement too. Sheehan's reading of "Question Concerning Technology" is a historical reading. The way he analyzes *Geschick* and *Gestell* emphasizes that modern technology has an epochal character. It is technology as an epoch that makes Heidegger discernable from other philosophies of technology, but it leads to a meta-history that Sheehan thereafter problematizes. On first sight, Sheehan's position can be defended.

However, it does not make sense for Sheehan to read Heidegger in the historical way since he values Heidegger most as a phenomenologist. If Sheehan truly wanted to read Heidegger in a phenomenological manner, as he states in the beginning of his book, he should have done that throughout the whole of Heidegger's work. He could have given a reading which is much more grounded in Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology than he did. It seems that Sheehan might be more consistent if he understands *Geschick* in a different way.

With a methodological reading, *Geschick*, epoch and ontotheology are interpreted without commitment to a meta-historical decline, because they are not about historical facts or about an ultimate philosophical explanation for the state of society. Heidegger allows himself to be led through language by 'listening' to word *Geschichte*. *Geschick* is not 'earlier' because it is an older word than *Geschichte*, but 'sending' allows history to unfold. The same holds for epoch or the ontotheological ground of phenomena. They are not actual constellations in time, but they can be used to de-center our modern world-view and critically approach phenomena we take for granted or take to be 'just true'.

How should we go further? In my analysis I have compared the different readings to Habermas. It would be useful to do the same with other philosophies of technology, especially the methodological reading. Maybe another philosophy of technology could refute that Heidegger's method is unique for his project. In addition, I have only worked with three different archetypes of reading Heidegger. The benefit of this approach was that I was able to make claims about more general types of reading Heidegger. But there might be more ways to read Heidegger that are not committed to a meta-history and that are unique for his project. Also, I have generalized the way these readings work to be able to say something about them, but I have not presented all the intricate argumentations that could change the outcome of the analysis.

What is missing in the literature is an investigating of the possibilities of the methodological reading. In this thesis I have only concentrated upon the possible philosophical consequence of a

decline of Western society, but there might be more consequences in Heidegger's philosophy that we do not want to accept. It may give us a new understanding of *Ereignis* as the different way to relate to the essence of modern technology. Heidegger emphasizes it is not something humans can 'do' or control. How can this other relationship between humans and technology, our longing for control and efficiency, come about?

Also, I propose to get more insight into the philosophical consequences of the methodological reading. This requires the rethinking of *aletheia* as possibility. What does *aletheia* mean exactly in relationship to reading Heidegger as a critical history, instead of a grand narrative? How can we employ this critical history without falling into the trap of just telling a very good story? If Heidegger's thought constitutes an attempt to confront the problems of our society, we can still ask ourselves if his analysis is more helpful than others in enabling us to comprehend what is happening and to respond to the challenges that modern technology poses. How can his critique help us understand the consequences of our reliance on instrumental thinking, efficiency and rationality, and how can it give us the tools to critically analyze our own conceptions of these developments?

But isn't all this unfounded mysticism or even bad mythology, in any case a ruinous irrationalism, the denial of *ratio*? I ask in return: What does *ratio*, *nous*, *noein*, apprehending mean? [...] The technological scientific rationalization ruling the present age justifies itself every day more surprisingly by its immense results. But this says nothing about what first grants the possibility of the rational and the irrational. The effect proves the correctness of technological scientific rationalization. But is the manifest character of what *is* exhausted by what is demonstrable? Doesn't the insistence on what is demonstrable block the way to what is?⁹¹

⁹¹ GA 14: 89/391

Bibliography

- Caputo, John. D. "Demythologizing Heidegger: 'Aletheia' and the History of Being." *Review of Metaphysics* 41, no. 3 (1988): 519–46.
- Carman, Taylor. "The Principle of Phenomenology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, edited by Charles. B Guignon, 97–119. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Dreyfus, Hubert L. "Between Techne and Technology: The Ambiguous Place of Equipment in Being and Time." *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 32 (1984): 23–35.
- . "Heidegger on the Connection between Nihilism, Art, Technology, and Politics." In *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, edited by Charles B. Guignon, 345–72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Fraser, Nancy, and Linda Nicholson. "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism." *Theory, Culture and Society* 5, no. 2–3 (1988): 373–94.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Kommunikatives Handeln Und Detranszendentalisierte Vernunft*. Stuttgart: Reclam Verlag, 2014.
- . "Technical Progress and the Social Life-World." In *Readings in the Philosophy of Technology*, edited by David. M Kaplan, 81–93. United States of America: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd., 2004.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Sein Und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006.
- . *Vom Wesen Der Wahrheit*. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1954.
- Herrmann, Friedrich Wilhelm von. "Way and Method: Hermeneutic Phenomenology in Thinking the History of Being." In *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, edited by Christopher Macann, 310–29. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. United States of America: Manchester University Press, 1984.
- Pedersen, Jørgen. "Habermas' Method: Rational Reconstruction." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 38, no. 4 (2008): 457–85.
- Riis, S. "The Question Concerning Thinking." In *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, edited by J K Berg Olsen, E Selinger, and S Riis, 123–45. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Rosemann, Philipp. "Heidegger's Transcendental History." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40, no. 4 (2002): 501–23.
- Sheehan, Thomas. *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*. London: Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd., 2015.
- Stiegler, B. *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*. Translated by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. United States of America: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Thomson, I. *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*. Online Edi. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- . "Understanding Technology Ontotheologically, or: The Danger and the Promise of Heidegger, an American Perspective." In *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, edited by J K Berg Olsen, E Selinger, and S Riis, 146–66. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Vallega-Neu, Daniela. "Ereignis: The Event of Appropriation." In *Martin Heidegger: Key Concepts*, edited by Bret W. Davis, 140–54. United States of America: Routledge, 2014.

Visser, G. *Heideggers Vraag Naar de Techniek: Een Commentaar*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014.

Heidegger's German Texts From the Gesamtausgabe and Their English Translations

GA 5: 75–113, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes (1938)” = Heidegger, Martin. “The Age of the World Picture.” In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, 115–54. United States of America: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977.

GA 7: 7–36, “Die Frage nach der Technik” (1953) = Heidegger, Martin. “The Question Concerning Technology.” In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, 3–35. United States of America: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977.

GA 14: 67-90, “Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens (1964)” = Heidegger, Martin. “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking.” In *Basic Writings, from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, translated by Joan Stambaugh, 373-392. United States of America: Harper San Francisco, 1977.