Introduction

1. This is the final volume of my three-volume[1] attempt to understand and communicate the insights of Martin Heidegger, the thinker who seems to me, in spite of his large political error and occasional philosophical errors, the most important philosopher of modern times. Of the three volumes this is the most personal; personal in the sense that, save where I explicitly criticize him, the views I attribute to Heidegger are ones I have learnt to adopt as my own.

As its title indicates, the book is concerned with the philosophy of the later Heidegger. By 'later Heidegger' I mean, at a first approximation, the Heidegger who, by his own account made a radical 'turn' away from his earlier philosophy, the philosophy of *Being and Time* (1927), a turn that began in 1930 (LH p. 250) and completed itself during 1936–8 (GA 15 p. 366). Really, however, what I mean is 'finished' Heidegger, or, better put, the Heidegger who had progressed as far as he was to go along his 'path of thinking'. Occasionally there are respects in which that point is reached in texts which antedate the 'later' period. Hence, though most of my discussion is confined to texts written after 1936 I have not hesitated to dip, on occasion, into earlier works.

2. A common assumption, even among those well-disposed to Heidegger, is that his 'real' philosophy stops with *Being and Time*, and that what he produced after 1927 is both incomprehensible and, *qua* philosophy at least, worthless. Two factors, in particular, have encouraged this view.

The first lies in the undoubted contrast in style between early and late Heidegger. While *Being and Time*'s style, though difficult, is still, in a broad sense, 'scientific', the style adopted after the mid-1930s becomes ever more increasingly 'poetic'. This has encouraged the view that later Heidegger

[1] The first and second volumes are *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), hereafter *HPN*, and *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), hereafter *HPA*.

lapsed from philosophy into the (by definition) incomprehensibility of mysticism. Bernd Magnus expresses this common view when he writes that '[i]n the end' 'the author of *Being and Time* yields to mysticism'.[2]

The second factor that has encouraged the rejection of later Heidegger as philosophy is his own frequent tendency to do so; to represent himself as engaging in a new kind of post-philosophical, 'meditative' thinking.

Neither of these reasons, however, is adequate to sustain its conclusion. Though later Heidegger's writing (and hence thought) is indeed highly poetic this by no means excludes the possibility – which I shall suggest to be the truth of the matter – that it is *also* philosophical. Magnus' assumption that poetry (or 'mysticism') and philosophy are antithetical represents an old, Platonic prejudice which, as we will see, is highly suspect.

As to Heidegger's own positioning of himself after the 'end of philosophy' (a dangerous stance, since it invites over-trumping), what needs to be observed is that he does so only when he uses 'philosophy' as a synonym for what he calls 'metaphysics', a position which he regards as the most disastrous of all errors.

At other times, for example in the 1966 interview with the magazine *Der Spiegel* (S), he is perfectly happy to describe himself as doing philosophy. The conclusion is, therefore, that when he represents himself as 'after philosophy' he is really only representing himself as 'after *bad* philosophy'.

What is odd about the Heidegger admirer who holds that the real philosophy stopped in 1927 is this. *Being and Time* he regards as a great work and its author, therefore, as a great thinker. But when someone one recognizes as a great thinker calls his early work a 'dead end' (GA 15 p. 366)[3] demanding the 'reversal'[4] represented by his later thinking, then, on pain of inconsistency, one should take very seriously the idea that the great thinker's greatest thoughts are to be found in the later rather than earlier work. This is my approach and conviction.

3. In chapter 1, I outline what Heidegger (correctly) claims to be the foundation of all his thinking, his *Seinsphilosophie*, his 'philosophy of Being', a label that covers his account of truth and reality, as well as what he takes to be a

[2] *Heidegger's Metahistory of Philosophy* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1970) p. 141.
[3] See, further, chapter 1, footnote 2.
[4] Heidegger's word for 'the turning' in his thinking is '*Kehre*', U-turn, rather than '*Wende*', curve.

fundamental and deeply entrenched error concerning these topics which he calls 'metaphysics'.

In chapter 2, borrowing a metaphor from Nietzsche, I view Heidegger as the 'physician' of modern Western culture. *Qua* physician, I suggest, he identifies three leading symptoms of modernity's spiritual 'sickness': loss of the gods, the 'violence' of technology, and loss of 'dwelling' or 'homelessness'.

Since Heidegger claims his philosophy of Being to be the foundation of all his thinking, it is important not to separate Heidegger the 'ontologist' (actually a bad word to apply to later Heidegger) from Heidegger the cultural critic and philosopher of technology. We must, rather, seek to discover the *unity* of his later philosophy, seek to understand how his cultural criticism and philosophy of technology are grounded in his philosophy of Being. Specifically, we must undertake the difficult task of understanding his reason for claiming that the underlying cause of each of the three symptoms of our culture's 'destitution' is the mistake about Being which he calls 'metaphysics'.

I conclude chapter 2 by asking why it is that metaphysics is the underlying ground of loss of the gods. In chapter 3 – a discussion of Heidegger's claim that the 'essence' of modernity is what he calls *Gestell* ('Enframing') – I ask the same question with respect to the alleged 'violence' of modern technology, and in chapter 4 – concerned, mainly, with death – with respect to modernity's loss of 'dwelling'.

In chapter 5, I turn from the diagnostic to the therapeutic aspect of Heidegger's 'medical' thinking, to his account of the character of 'the turning' of our culture to a new, post-'destitute', post-metaphysical, post-modern age that we must hope for, and of what we can do to promote it. The central argument of this chapter is that, in spite of his severe critique of modern technology, later Heidegger is no Luddite. Though the turning to a new age (the 'world turning', as I call it, as opposed to the 'personal turning' which might occur in the life of an individual) will represent a radical transformation of life it will not involve the breaking of machines.

In chapter 6, I canvass the commonly raised objection that (contrary to the presupposition of chapter 5) there is actually *no* therapeutic phase in Heidegger's later thinking, that according to the 'fatalism' summed up in his remark that 'only a God can save us' there is nothing at all we can do to promote the turning to a new age. In chapters 7 and 8, I prepare the ground for the rejection of this claim by looking in some detail at what it is that

constitutes the life of one who has made the ('personal') turning – the turn from destitution to 'dwelling'. In chapter 9, I finally reject the claim that there is nothing we can do to promote the turn to a new condition of our culture. Though they may be modest, there are steps we can take in order to 'foster the saving power in its increase', and which we will take if we become 'dwellers'. Among the several meanings contained in the rich and complex remark that 'only a God can save us', the idea that we are the impotent spectators of history is not to be found.

1 Being, truth and metaphysics

1. Heidegger's philosophy has a great deal to say about the first and last things that confront each of us as we attempt to live our lives as best we may. His discussions of, *inter alia*, art, death, alienation, technology, community and ecology are, as the Germans say *actuell*, of evident 'relevance' to our existential concerns, the kinds of discussions non-philosophers look to philosophers to provide (but are, these days, often disappointed). For all of this manifest 'relevance', however, the centre of Heidegger's philosophy lies in none of the above topics but in, rather, his *Seinsphilosophie*, his 'philosophy of Being'. The concern with Being – *the* 'matter of thinking', for Heidegger – is so fundamental to all of his work, both early and late, that unless one attains a solid comprehension of what he has to say about it one's grasp of his discussions of the other, initially more accessible, topics is bound to remain superficial and insecure. So it is that in this first chapter we need to begin with the seemingly dry constellation of topics itemized in its somewhat forbidding title. (*Seemingly* but not really dry: the excitement of Heidegger's philosophy is the discovery that the first and last things in the philosophy of Being, properly understood, are also the first and last things in life.)

Truth

2. First and foremost, then, the '*Seinsfrage*', the 'question of Being': what is it? One of Heidegger's statements about Being is that it constitutes 'the hidden essence [*Wesen*] of truth' (DT p. 83), a linking of topics which suggests that truth might be a fruitful point of entry into the topic of Being.

What, then, is truth? Unlike the impatient Pilate, Heidegger devoted a lifetime to providing, in full, an answer to this question. The first major formulation of his account of truth occurred in 1925, in *Plato's Sophist*[1], and

[1] Trans. R. Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

received a major restatement in section 44 of *Being and Time* (1927). Its implications were not, however, properly understood in that work which is the reason why later Heidegger views his early masterpiece as, for all its insights, fundamentally flawed.[2] A useful 'take', indeed, on his life's work, it seems to me, is to describe it as the endeavour fully to understand and appropriate all of the ramifications of *Being and Time*'s theory of truth. An improved restatement of the theory occurs in the 1930 'On the Essence of Truth' (ET) an essay he identifies as the beginning of the 'turn' (away from 'metaphysics') that separates later from early Heidegger (LH p. 250). A further restatement occurs in 1936 in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (OWA pp. 50ff.) and thereafter in many later works.

What then, to repeat, is truth? According to the Western philosophical tradition it is 'correspondence' or, as Heidegger, following the Medievals, calls it, 'adequacy'. Truth is a property of 'propositions' or 'statements', a property they possess when they correspond – are 'adequate to' – the facts. What, however, asks Heidegger, tells us what the facts are to which propositions are to be compared for correspondence (OWA p. 51)?

One answer – the answer, he suggests, provided by the Western tradition in general – is that you just look and see. So, for example, if someone says 'Betty is very thin' you look at what 'Betty' stands for – if there is any doubt about what that is the speaker will simply point – and see whether it is thin or not.

Let us, then, try to apply this simple procedure. I say, pointing, 'Betty is very thin.' You, seeing that what I am pointing at is a rather portly little horse, decide I have said something false. In fact, however, that to which I intended

[2] In *Being and Time*, he says, 'metaphysics . . . is still dominant' (LH p. 256). Since, as we will shortly see, later Heidegger takes his central task to be the overcoming of 'metaphysics', this judgment is the basis of his description of *Being and Time* as constituting (along with all his work from 1927 to 1936) a 'false turning [*Holzweg*] albeit a necessary [i.e. productive] one' (GA 15 p. 366).

'*Holzweg*' I take to be intended to describe the *dominant* character of the period and to be, therefore, consistent with particular works – conspicuously the 1930 'On the Essence of Truth' which (as the main text is about to remark) Heidegger describes as the beginning of the 'turn' to his later thinking – being genuinely free of 'metaphysics'. One may perhaps think of 1927–36 as analogous to late winter with isolated works, the 'Essence of Truth' and parts of 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in particular, representing the first buds of spring. This mixed or transitional character of the period is the reason scholars interested in a finer-grained periodization of Heidegger's career than I, at present, am, have identified it as a 'middle' period. On the periodization of Heidegger's 'path of thinking' see, further, HPA p. 3.

to refer was (for my own arcane reasons) not the horse but rather its skin, a skin which is indeed very thin. Or, to change the example, perhaps I say, pointing at the horse, 'That's very old.' You, knowing the horse to be but a foal, decide that I have said something false. In fact, however, that to which I intended to refer (for, again, my own arcane reasons) was not the horse but rather the region of space it exactly occupies.

These examples are, of course, extraordinarily far-fetched. They are, nonetheless, revealing, for they show that the mere correlation of words with bits of reality – merely saying '"Betty" stands for *that*' and pointing – is insufficient to determine reference. Normally, of course, communication flows smoothly and we do not suffer from the kinds of misunderstandings illustrated by these examples. Communication is usually unproblematic. But that is only because we share a – usually unnoticed – background understanding as to the kinds of entities that are being talked about. Generally, for example, we share the assumption that the things named and pointed to are whole natural objects rather than their surfaces or the spaces they occupy. What the far-fetched examples reveal, however, is that it is only because of such a background assumption that we know what kinds of things, and hence what kinds of facts, are under discussion. Heidegger calls such a background understanding a 'horizon' (DT p. 63), a horizon of 'disclosure' ('revealing', 'unconcealment'). Sometimes, echoing Nietzsche, he calls it a 'perspective' (QB *passim*).

Heidegger does not deny that truth is correspondence. His point is rather that since the possibility of propositions being true or false (the possibility, as I shall put it, of reality's becoming 'intelligible' to us) depends on there being things to which they refer and facts about those things to which they may or may not correspond, and since the identification of such a realm of facts depends on a horizon of disclosure which alone makes it possible, truth as correspondence is dependent on a something more 'primordial'. This condition of the possibility of propositional truth Heidegger calls 'truth as disclosure' or often, using the Greek word, '*aletheia*' (OWA p. 51) – *a-letheia*, bringing out of 'oblivion' or concealment.

Truth as disclosure, says Heidegger, is always simultaneously 'concealment' (ET p. 148, OWA pp. 53–4). This is how it makes truth as correspondence possible. The horizon of whole natural objects puts out of consideration,

blocks, conceals, 'denies' (OWA p. 54) both the horizon of surfaces and that of spaces. But this means that horizons of disclosure also block access to certain truths. If our talk is confined to whole natural objects then truths about their surfaces or spaces are not allowed to appear. This is why Heidegger says that 'truth is un-truth' (not to be confused with falsehood) since there always 'belongs to it the reservoir[3] of the not-yet-uncovered, the ununcovered in the sense of concealment' (OWA p. 60).

Heidegger calls that which truth conceals (from now on when I use 'truth' without qualification I mean truth as disclosure) 'the mystery' (ET p. 148). Because of the hidden 'reservoir', the hidden 'depth' (compare BT 152) to truth, truth is 'uncanny' (OWA p. 54), 'awesome' (OWA p. 68). Initially, this is a puzzling inference. Though the whole natural object horizon may block, for now, the spaces and surfaces horizons, the blockage is merely temporary. We can, if we want, choose at a later date to inhabit those other horizons, to discuss reality from a spaces or surfaces 'perspective'.

Heidegger, however, when he speaks of horizons of disclosure means *ultimate* horizons. The horizons discussed so far are, as one might put it, optional. I may adopt and abandon them as, more or less, the mood takes me. My Heideggerian horizon, however, is non-optional. It is, he says, 'transcendental' (DT p. 63), that is (to stay with Kant's language), an '*a priori*' feature of my existence, something which, as a member of the current epoch of the historical culture to which I belong, I inhabit as a matter of necessity. Embodied in the language I speak – language understood broadly as social practice (HE p. 301) or, as Wittgenstein puts it, 'form of life' – it constitutes for me and my fellows, the limit of what, to us, is intelligible. It is, as it were, the horizon of all our horizons. In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger calls it a 'world' – 'world' in the 'ontological' sense which is not to be confused with 'world' in the 'ontic' sense of the totality of beings that are disclosed by world in the first sense (AWP p. 129, DT p. 76). In *Being and Time* he calls it the 'thrownness' in which one finds oneself 'already' as one becomes an adult human being and which constitutes one as the kind of human being one is. Language, as Heidegger puts it in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*, is not something man has as an attribute. Rather, language is 'the happening that has man', the 'process through

[3] *Herkunftsbereich*. Literally, 'originating region'.

which man first enters history as a being (IM p. 141; compare GA 39 section 7 (h)).[4]

To suppose the limits of intelligibility for my historical-cultural epoch to be also the limits of intelligibility *per se* would be the height of irrational epistemological chauvinism. Once one understands the notion of a transcendental horizon and sees its historically and culturally relative character,[5] the conclusion presents itself that in addition to what is intelligible to us, reality possesses an indefinitely large number of aspects, a 'plenitude' (*Vollzähligkeit*) of 'sides' or 'facets' (*Seiten*) (WPF p. 124, DT p. 64) which would be disclosed to us were we to inhabit transcendental horizons other than the one we do, horizons which, however, we can neither inhabit nor even conceive. Truth, then, is concealment, ultimate truth concealment of the, to us, *ineluctably* mysterious. In 'The Origin of the Work of Art' Heidegger calls this 'region' (see footnote 3 above) 'earth' (*Erde*). 'World' (in the ontic sense) is the intelligible in truth, that which is 'lit up'; as Heidegger calls it, 'the clearing' (*Lichtung*).[6] 'Earth', on the other hand, is 'the not ['linguistically'] mastered [the] . . . concealed, the disconcerting [*Beirrendes*]' (OWA p. 55), the dark penumbra of unintelligibility that surrounds (and in an important sense, as we will see in later chapters, grounds) our human existence.

[4] Kant views the horizon of human world-disclosure – 'the categories' – (though he would not, of course, put it this way) as a kind of 'software programme' that is 'hardwired' into the human being as such, hardwired at all times and places. For Heidegger, however, world-disclosure is embodied in the much more malleable phenomenon of 'language', language considered as social practice. This yields a more fluid picture of horizons of intelligibility than is allowed by Kant, a fact which might lead one to question the appropriateness of Heidegger's describing one's ultimate horizon as 'transcendental'. I think that Heidegger would reply that though world-disclosure is indeed a malleable phenomenon, to the extent that it changes so does the human being. A radical transformation in my ultimate horizon of disclosure (I emigrate to Japan and acquire a native competence in Japanese while gradually losing my competence in English) makes me a new person. Hence the world-disclosure into which I am 'thrown' remains 'transcendental' for me and my 'generation' (BT 385), a necessary and defining feature of *our* existence.

[5] Notice that while horizons of disclosure are dependent on social practices and are hence relative to particular cultures, it does not follow that truth (as correspondence) is. That the *medium* of discovery is (for short) 'subjective' does not entail that *what* is discovered is dependent on us. And the latter proposition Heidegger denies. Though Newton's Laws were not true (or false) before Newton formulated them (BT 226–7), 'for nature [reality, Being] to be as it is does not need . . . unveiledness' (BP p. 220). Newton discovered (at least approximately) a human-being independent feature of reality itself.

[6] Notice that world in the ontological sense is not the clearing. It is rather that which 'clears' (creates) the clearing. More accurately, 'the clearing' can only refer to world in the ontological sense if 'clearing' is understood as a *verbal* noun, as referring to the activity which, as it were, releases the totality of beings in the midst of which we find ourselves.

Notice that in contrast to the simplicity of the correspondence theory, truth, on Heidegger's account, is *complex*. It is a complex of four elements; the undisclosed (earth), the disclosed (world in the ontic sense), the horizon of disclosure (world in the ontological sense), and man, the discloser. Heidegger records this complexity by calling truth a 'constellation'. To achieve 'insight into that which is' (TT p. 47) (and everything which we will discover that to entail) we must, he says, 'look into the constellation of truth' (QCT p. 33).

being

3. So much for 'truth'. What now of 'Being'? What, to repeat, is Being?

Readers possessing even a slight acquaintance with the secondary literature on Heidegger will have noticed its indecision as to whether 'Being' is to be written with a large or a small 'b'. (The secondary literature in English; in German, since all nouns are capitalized, and since Heidegger almost always uses *Sein* as a noun, the issue does not arise.) This indecision, I shall suggest, is due to the fact that, without being very helpful or consistently explicit about it, Heidegger in fact uses the term in *two* central senses. (One senses that at times he himself struggled to be totally clear on the matter.) Readers who capitalize respond to one, those who do not, respond to the other of these senses. It is, however, I shall argue, important to respond to both. The one sense I shall mark with the small 'b' the other with the large. (The acute reader, noting that I have capitalized up to now, might reasonably conclude that the capitalized sense is, in my view, the most important, that my fundamental sympathies lie with the capitalizers.) When I wish to remain neutral as to which sense is intended, or when I think that both are, I shall either retreat to the German *Sein* or else write 'B/being'.

In the small 'b' sense, being is, as Heidegger puts it, 'presence' (TB p. 2, ID p. 18, WCT p. 235), or sometimes 'presencing' (QB p. 308). Presence (*Anwesenheit*) is contrasted with 'what presences [*das Anwesende*]' (QB p. 299, D p. 163). Since the essence of a being [*das Seiende*] is that it is something present, noticeable, capable of being of 'concern' (TB p. 23) to us, 'what presences' is just another name for beings. While beings are 'ontic', being, i.e. presence, as, not a being but rather, in a yet-to-be-explored