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IS HUMANISM TO BLAME? HEIDEGGER ON ENVIRONMENTAL EXPLOITATION

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Humanities

By

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B.A., Wright State University, 2014

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GRADUATE SCHOOL

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY **Jacob A. Litteral** ENTITLED **Is Humanism to blame? Heidegger on Environmental Exploitation** BE ACCEPTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF **Master of Humanities**.

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ABSTRACT

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Humanism has been targeted as the source of environmental exploitation. With the aid of Martin Heidegger's philosophy, this paper will attempt to answer the environmental critique of humanism. It will be shown that humanism is not to blame for environmental exploitation. This paper will also present Heidegger's alternative to contemporary environmentalism in addressing the issue of exploitation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Lewis Hinchman has observed that, concerning the inquiry into the origin of the Western exploitative mood, environmentalists have targeted humanism.[1] According to such environmentalists, the problems of our time, including environmental degradation, climate change, resource depletion, overpopulation, and pollution, are all traced back to humanism's exploitative mood armed with technological devices.[2] My thesis deals with challenging that kind of environmentalism which charges humanism, and thereby technology, as being responsible for our current environmental issues. Yet, my thesis also ultimately shares with environmentalism such concerns over exploitation and its rectification. With the aid of Martin Heidegger, I will challenge and present a better alternative to that of the environmental critic.

The environmentalist project is guided by metaphor which is medical in form. For instance, there are obvious symptoms showing that there is something wrong with our

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[1] Lewis P. Hinchamn, "Is Environmentalism a Humanism?" *Environmental Values* 13, no. 1 (2004): 3, url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=phl&AN=PHL1779849&site=eds-live.

[2] I recognize that there are various aims, ideas, strategies, values, etc., that fall under its broad umbrella. My target is not a straw-man, but is aimed at certain voices and implicit ideas within the broad umbrella.

time and planet, showing it to be diseased. The etiological origin of the disease is traced back firstly to something immaterial, and then something material. The immaterial causes of the disease are ideas about man's place in the universe, a world-view, which adversely effects the environment in terms of exploitation. Humanism, it is claimed, is that worldview in which the Western exploitative mood has its origin, which through time has diseased our planet. The material cause are the actual technological devices employed by human beings who are governed, whether explicitly or implicitly, by that humanistic worldview. The prescribed cure and remedy for such a disease is likewise immaterial and material.

For the immaterial side, with the aid of polemical debate, we combat and change our worldview. In debate, we point out the flaws in holding such a view, showing its inconsistency, untenability, and its unethical and harmful consequences. Polemical debate, however, is most effective by appealing to sentiment: it is easier, for example, to sway an opinion about factory farming by talking about, and showing pictures of, the terrible living conditions of the poor, helpless animal in front of customers at the meat counter at the local grocery. Secondly, we attempt to positively change our worldview by (a) proffering a new, healthier way of regarding everything that is nonhuman (usually by assigning rights and ascribing intrinsic value), and (b) by proffering a new, healthier way of regarding humanity, usually by deflating human uniqueness, and getting one to see that human beings are 'just another' animal or organism.

For the material issues, in our polemics we teach people the dangers of technology for our individual lives and greater environment. Thus, we instill suspicion, apprehension, and disdain for technology. From this there are many resulting practical guidelines or programs for living and dealing with technology. For example, we could just do away with technology completely, and return to a primitive, simple lifestyle in the fashion of a Luddite or Neo-Luddite. We could actively sabotage technological devices and property, employing guerilla-like tactics such as those of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). Or instead of being technophobic and rejecting technology outright, we could reform our relationship to it, utilizing technological devices in a healthier and ecologically responsible way.

Thus, the environmental critic takes on the form of a physician: identifying the symptoms, diagnosing the disease, locating the causes of the disease, and providing the cure for the disease. However, this medical perspective has unfortunate side effects. Firstly, in diagnosing the disease, it renders the human being as a pathogen, as an infectious agent. The pathogenic interpretation of the human being only makes sense if man were some kind of alien invader bringing some incompatible substance from a foreign home world with which to disrupt terrestrial-homeostasis. Secondly, it points moral blame on the human being, in which certain inward and outward responses are called upon in response. A kind of self-flagellation, guilt, and disapprobation for pride species is encouraged inwardly, and active measures to level-off and deflate human uniqueness in public discourse is encouraged outwardly.

Humanism, I argue, is *not* the origin for the Western exploitative mood. I agree that we should offer a healthier way to regard humanity, yet it should not involve pointing blame and deflation; we can still have a healthy ecosystem with human beings regarding themselves as unique. Martin Heidegger's work challenges such criticisms of humanism, and can be seen as a form of humanism itself which actually aligns with the environmentalist's cause.

Heidegger does argue against humanism in his famous *Letter on Humanism*, albeit a particular type of humanism, what I will refer to as 'homocentrism.' Heidegger does not explicitly endorse or espouse humanism, nevertheless his work betrays a commitment to the real substance of humanism: the preservation of human dignity, and the preservation of humanism—understood in an academic sense as the humanities—against the absorbing and totalizing power of the levelling discourses of science. Furthermore, even though humanism proper is against any deflation tactics with regard to humanity by seeking to keep human dignity and uniqueness in place, nevertheless it is ultimately friendly towards, and is continuous with, the values and concerns shared by the environmental critic. Heidegger's work provides an alternative to the environmentalist's approach to the ills of our time, overall challenging their approach and offering a better way of solving the problem all the while preserving humanism proper.

II. HUMANISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

It is uncontroversial at this point in history to say that human beings by and large have impacted the environment in a variety of negative ways. At this precise moment of typing these words, just in the year 2017 around 934,111 hectares have been deforested worldwide, 2,155,430 hectares of the world's fertile land have become arid, and around 1,758,902 tons of toxic chemicals have been released into the environment. Our energy consumption has left us with only 150,015 days' left worth of coal, and only 58,846 worth of natural gas.[3] An entire paper could be dedicated to the effects of human activity on the environment, but my aim is philosophical. Because environmental degradation results most evidently by human activity, it is fitting to conduct a reassessment of what it means to be human. Particularly, humanism will be under our investigation, as Lewis Hinchman claims, in that "environmental theorists, seeking the origin of Western exploitative attitudes toward nature, have directed their attacks against 'humanism.'"[4] In this section, I will chart the "problem" of humanism: that humanism is the root of environmental issues, and that humanism and environmentalism are at loggerheads with each other. However, utilizing Hinchman's insights, the case can be made for their unity,

[3] "Worldometers – real time world statistics," http://www.worldometers.info/.

[4] Lewis, *Environmentalism*, 3.

showing that humanism and environmentalism are compatible, and that ultimately humanism proper is not to blame for the exploitative mood.

Environmental ethics itself was born out from inquiry concerning the moral relationship between human beings and the environment. For early thinkers in this sub-discipline, the challenge was that of assessing how man regarded himself, and how he regarded the environment which got us to our current environmental state. As Lynn White, Jr. states, "what people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them."[5] Beginning with Artistotle, man was seen as the center of value, as the sole-possessor of intrinsic worth. In *De Anima*, Aristotle formulated a hierarchy of souls in which humans possessed an intellective soul, above the lesser degrees of souls of animals, with a sensitive soul, and plants, with a vegetative soul. In Aristotle's *Politics*, he implies that this hierarchy is value-laden and not merely descriptive:

> In like manner we may infer that, after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments.[6]

Showing man's place to be above animals and plants in a hierarchy, (1) a right was given to man, and (2) an instrumental value was therefore ascribed over plants and animals.

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[5] Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* Vol. 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1205, doi: 10.1126/science.155.3767.1203.

[6] Artistotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Part VIII, url: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.1.one.html.

This gives rise to anthropocentricism and places the human being in the middle of the universe in significance.

Some have argued that Christianity is the source of our environmental issues. Maintaining that man had a God-given superiority over other forms of life, the right to exploit became embedded in Western man's mind, as indicated in *Genesis* 1:27-8 (KJV):

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Likewise, in Peter's Vision in the *Acts of the Apostles* in the New Testament, Peter hears the voice of God saying, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat," after seeing a vision of a sheet descend which contained "all manner of fourfooted beast of the earth, wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air."[7] This implies that God himself gave a right to Peter to eat, however clean or unclean, all animals. Consequently, all were alike in being worthy of eaten, demonstrating the instrumental value that animals possess for sake of man's ends, one that is reckoned so from on high. In Lynn White, Jr.'s 1974 disputed article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," the claim is made that a psychic revolution occurred with the "victory of Christianity over paganism,"[8] a point in time in which certain historical turning points (e.g., the Industrial Revolution) ultimately trace their roots. The exploitative attitude within contemporary technology and science, the

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[7] Acts 10:11-13 (King James Version).

[8] White, *The Historical Roots*, 1205.

author claims, gains much of its traction with the developments of the Christian medieval period.[9]

The change in the method of tillage is one indicator, according to White, that societies began operating under a different psychic assumption concerning man's place in the environment than in previous times. For instance, White shows that in agricultural societies of the Near East and Mediterranean, the scratch-plow method of tillage was used such that the light soil allowed for it, it provided minimal interference with the soil, and a single family with two oxen could sustain itself with just a relatively small, squarish field. In this method of tillage, a cross-plow was therefore needed. However, by the latter part of the 7th century, societies in the north of Europe began using a new kind of plow, "equipped with a vertical knife to cut the line of the furrow, a horizontal share to slice under the sod, and a moldboard to turn it over…It attacked the land with such violence that cross-plowing was not needed, and fields tended to be shaped in long strips."[10] This new method required double the oxen power, whereas previously the amount of oxen power was proportionate to the consumption demands of a single family unit for a single square field. Afterward "man's relationship to the soil changed," in which land distribution was based "no longer on the needs of a family but, rather, on the capacity of a power machine to till the earth."[11]

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

It was the advent of Judeo-Christian theology, White claims, that brought such a shift in attitude from being part of nature, to being the exploiter of nature. Even today, given our "post-Christian age," White argues, "we continue to live, as we have lived for about 1700 years, very largely in a context of Christian axioms."[12] Christianity had re-thought and inverted the human-environment relationship into a competing dualism between the two. Firstly, it provided a creation story, and with it, linear time. In an orderly succession and with hierarchical significance, God created heaven and earth, light and darkness, days and nights, land and water, plants and animals, and finally male and female, who are the pinnacle of creation. Secondly, Western Church Fathers insisted that "when God shaped Adam he was foreshadowing the image of the incarnate Christ, the Second Adam. Man shares, in great measure, God's transcendence of nature."[13] God is *other than* his Creation, unlike pantheistic accounts of God, and he has dominion over his creation. In the image of God, man likewise possesses this *other than* quality to that of nature.

Thirdly, Christianity uprooted our animistic ways of dealing with nature, such that natural objects previously had their own guardian spirits. Each violating instance between man and nature was a harrowing event: we grieved and felt sympathetic to nature, causing us to find a means to reconcile the enmity with the use of placation rituals. Currently, the mood of indifference to natural objects reigns. Fourthly, the entire

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

discipline of Natural Theology—having initially an understanding of nature as a "symbolic system through which God speaks to men: the ant is a sermon to sluggards; rising flames are the symbol of the soul's aspiration"[14]—has become less of a communicative interaction between man and the environment, in which man would attempt to decode God's divine message speaking through the latter. Rather it became more of "the effort to understand God's mind by discovering how his creation operates."[15] Instead of the rainbow being a symbol of hope, the rainbow became a source for optical science, and consequently, a tool for technical superiority and domination.

Anthropocentrism might best be understood firstly as a *descriptive claim* about man's place in the universe, in terms of status and value compared to other kinds of beings. However, anthropocentrism represents merely the justificatory inner idea behind the prescriptive claim that humans *should* be preferred over and against other forms of being. The idea of anthropocentrism as describing human significance, combined with the prescriptive claim, I argue, produces the definition of humanism so targeted by environmentalists. Humanism for them is not just a claim about our cosmic significance. The Western cultural zeitgeist since the days of Plato and Aristotle for the environmental critic has been informed by an entire *Weltanschauung*, or worldview, revolving solely around human supremacy, pervading every area of human life, informing our attitudes and behavior.

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[14] Ibid., 1206.

[15] Ibid.

How we get to the notion that human beings are in fact at the center of things may vary, whether it be that we had received it via a divine dictate from a deity, or through rigorous philosophical reflection. Nevertheless, the cash-value of such a self-perception or belief often yields certain ways of acting and engaging in the world. On a theoretical level, anthropocentrism does not necessarily justify exploitation; the belief could simply rest inside of our skulls without having it be put to action towards a larger, exploitative program. David Hume's famous discussion detailing how one cannot derive an 'ought' from an 'is' suggests that, however matter-of-fact it may be that humans are at the center of things, prescriptive or ethical inferences from that claim cannot be justified. As a side note, human action does not need *true* justifications to proceed with an activity, but just enough *perceived as true* justification. Your mind only needs an efficacious amount of cognitive permission, or a good enough rational argument, with which to carry out a behavior that the 'gut' initially determined was worth pursuing. Additionally, and pragmatically speaking, beliefs, regardless of their truth, tend to be rules for action. Therefore, it is no wonder that such a large scale, cosmically significant belief concerning our place and significance in the universe would inevitably produce some degree of an exploitative attitude.

Humanism, defined as a descriptive claim concerning the status of the human being affixed with a prescriptive claim that human beings should be preferred and take precedence in all manner of things, is regarded by many environmentalists as *the* main contributor for environmental issues. However, against the broad preference for

humanity, certain sub-targets are also levelled against, principal among them being reason and rationality. The biologist David Ehrenfield in his 1978 book titled *The Arrogance of Humanism* claims that humanism is a religion, one powered by "a supreme faith in human reason—its ability to confront and solve the many problems that humans face, its ability to rearrange both the world of Nature and the affairs of men and women so that life will prosper."[16] For Ehrenfield and many others, humanism stands for a religion of human greatness. This greatness is shown in our liberation from the oppressive stronghold of God and Church through the utilization of our own inborn rational capacities. After liberation from oppression, a reinvestigation of where we should derive our authority and foundations for culture inevitably led to the development of autonomy, an idea most attributed to Kant. Aided by reason, human beings should therefore free themselves to think for themselves, to find within their own rational capacities an authority and foundation to inform their lives and their surrounding society. It is a 'self-incurred' tutelage, Kant explains, "when its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. *Dare to know!* (*Sapere aude.*)."[17] Kant encourages humans to think for themselves[18], to wrestle free from their self-incurred tutelage, and not to fall back into

[16] David W. Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (Oxford; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1981), 5.

[17] Immanuel Kant, "Answering the Question: What is Enlightenment," url: http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html.

[18] Ibid.

the mass of "domestic cattle" who have been unfaithfully stewarded and steered never to question established dogma and truth. However, an unfortunate side-effect emerges from our self-emancipation from the religious or mythical view of the world: disenchantment.

Paul Jeffrey Lindholt, in an article published in *The Trumpeter Journal of Ecosophy*, provides another sub-target for criticism in his statement that "when intellectuals embraced humanism, many of them banished nature as a site of inspiration and wonder…[because] By and large it is not considered rational, and hence it is not humanistic, to regard contemplation of the natural world as a route to human improvement."[19] Nature disenchanted, nature drained of its ennobling capacities is often associated with humanism. Humans are no longer beckoned by nature to regard her as having contemplative worth. Incidentally, Max Weber was the first to explicitly articulate such a sentiment. Weber showed that, along with disenchantment, the world became regarded as a "causal mechanism", produced by "rational, empirical knowledge".[20] Furthermore, by the means of science and technology, rationality entailed,

> …the knowledge or belief that, if only one wanted to, one could find out at any time. Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces

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[19] Paul Jeffrey Lindholdt, "Antidotes to Humanism," *Trumpeter: Journal Of Ecosophy* 28, no. 1 (2012): 112, url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=90565479&site=eds-live.

[20] Max Weber, "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1948), quoted in Patrick Sherry, "Disenchantment, Re-Enchantment, and Enchantment" *Modern Theology* 25, no. 3 (2009): 370, url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=phl&AN=PHL2137774&site=eds-live.

> that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted.[21]

Nature became regarded as just dull, meaningless stuff to which the rational mind can work over to produce knowledge for mastery, which thus affects the vocation of science. As Patrick Sherry interprets Weber, this way of regarding the natural world affects the motives of scientists in such a way that:

> Most scientists today, says Weber, are not concerned with learning through science about the *meaning of the world*, or with answering Tolstoy's question "What should we do? How should we live?"[22]

Nevertheless, nature abhors a vacuum. From the development of intellectualism and rationalism, modern industrial capitalism and bureaucracy emerge to rule over our public lives, leaving us to carve out private lives which function as safe-spaces of resistance. A paradigm of loss of connection, a sense an estrangement and dualism between man and environment, and the resulting fragmentation of our social lives into public and private spheres now reigns.

Notwithstanding the insights of some of these criticisms, environmental critics are mistaken in their attempt to render humanism guilty and responsible for the Western exploitative attitude. On a superficial level, what is objectionable are the definitional leaps and assumptions made by environmentalists: oftentimes anthropocentrism and humanism are used interchangeably, resulting in an oversimplification and

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[21] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), url: http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-Science-as-a-Vocation.pdf.

[22] Sherry, *Disenchantment, Re-enchantment, and Enchantment*, 371.

misrepresentation of the latter. ‘Homocentrism’ might be a better word for the sense in which they are using the term, a word Hinchman defines as “the conviction that human interests should always take precedence over the interests of other species.”[23] The way environmentalists define humanism is nothing but a sloppy misuse of the term and a straw-man. By providing a definition of the way they are using the term humanism (now as homocentrism) that keeps the descriptive and prescriptive elements distinct, I hinted toward retaining the word ‘humanism’ from its being understood mainly in the context of anthropocentrism. In doing so I hope to render humanism free and clear of the charges levelled against it by environmental critics. The real charge is against homocentrism, not humanism; the two must be kept distinct. Humanism proper, as will be laid out by Hinchman, is a much broader term with historical significance, and some of the ideas within are beneficial to environmentalism.

Hinchman provides a noteworthy argument concerning the misrepresentation of humanism by environmental critics. Additionally, Hinchman provides an argument that bridges the gap between humanism and environmentalism. He aims at reconciling the two by first drawing humanism away from its tendency to treat nature and freedom as metaphysical polarities, and then by drawing environmentalism away from its flirtation with deterministic, biologistic worldviews. To draw humanism away from its flawed, polarizing metaphysical tendency, it is best to get down to brass tacks: what exactly does humanism mean *on its own terms*. But first, Hinchman briefly outlines the standard

[23] Lewis, *Environmentalism*, 5.

critiques levelled against humanism. One standard critique is the simple one provided above, as being against the notion that human interests should take precedence. However, Hinchman observes that there is a deeper, more complex critique "implicit in many of the best essays in environmental theory, one that can be reconstructed as a historical narrative."[24]

This narrative depicts a primordial age, a type of Garden of Eden, in which humans dwelled peacefully with the land, respectful of the guardian spirits and not puffed up with feelings of their own self-worth over and against their environment. Humans felt embedded with nature, so they claim, and felt a kinship with land, animals, and divinities. But at some point, things changed for Western Civilization. "Philosophers began to exalt human beings above the rest of nature, depicting mind as both a separate substance and as the repository of a higher, truer reality."[25] A narrative "fall from grace" points the blame at the philosopher's meddling, an act which instigated a dualism between man and nature, ultimately leading to representationalist accounts of knowledge that imposed upon nature "a grid of concepts and mathematical relationships—sometimes called 'Galilean nature'—designed to promote human interests, especially those amenable to scientific and technological control."[26] Hinchman does however acknowledge that there are sophisticated environmentalists who do recognize that humanism is a complex, 'tapestry

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

of ideas,' and is not to be oversimplified. Nevertheless, the narrative of a 'fall' and its causes seem to crop up again and again in their writings which misrepresents humanism, all the while "influencing us to draw political and ideological lines in the wrong places."[27]

Environmentalists critics tend to downplay the *historical significance* of humanism as an explicit tradition by named individuals, and instead focus their attention on its worldview influence on attitude and behavior. In doing so, they misrepresent and attack a straw-man. As Hinchman explains, humanism has:

> …a history traceable to and embodied in the writings of certain philosophers and creative artists. To disconnect philosophical terms from their historical context is to invite misunderstanding and arbitrariness, as well as to lose a sense of the depth and resonance they evoke. Would it be intellectually responsible to talk about liberalism without examining the texts of, say, Lock, Mill, Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls? Besides, the convictions that inform everyday life usually turn out to be less rigorous versions of doctrines that have been articulated in formal treatises and essays.[28]

However, some may grant that there is an historically traceable humanist tradition embodied in people and books, but that these have nothing in common with contemporary humanism. As Ehrenfield observes, historically traceable definitions of humanism are obsolete, in that contemporary humanists do not typically define themselves as having a passion for reviving classical Greek and Latin texts.[29] Humanists

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., 6.

[29] Ehrenfield, *Arrogance*, 6-7.

today likewise do not share with their Renaissance counterparts a passion to provide better translations of the Bible. Similarly, humanism no longer means "the pursuit of the humanities," meaning that a "poet, a professor of comparative literature, and a sculptor are not automatically humanists."[30] Ehrenfield finally argues that we "cannot allow the definition of humanism to become totally amorphous,"[31] for throughout history the humanist label has been slapped on a vast variety of people and movements. Therefore, he opts for isolating humanism's definitional content to those mentioned above, which has its place in contemporary versions of humanism.

Even though there is a disconnect between contemporary and Renaissance humanism's self-conception, Hinchman believes that this does not therefore mean that we should opt for the simpler, easier definition of humanism embodied most evidently in contemporary versions. He believes that "it may be possible to uncover continuities and unexpected connections between humanism past and present if we reflect on *why* the literati of earlier centuries were preoccupied with such matters."[32] What were those preoccupations for early humanists? As protest to scholasticism, Renaissance humanists endeavored to find "some more direct access to the world than through arid syllogisms and priestly pronouncements."[33] By accessing classical languages and studying the works

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[30] Ibid., 7.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Hinchman, *Environmentalism*, 7.

[33] Ibid.

of the great ancient philosophers, a new fascinating world opened up, one that "seemed far more civilized, urbane, and cultivated than anything the Middle Ages had to offer."[34] In other words, Renaissance humanists attempted to "mark off an intellectual space free of the categories and preoccupations of the Christian Church."[35] Renaissance humanism then valued the 'all-sided-man' of learning and skill acquisition, giving rise to men like Leon Battista Alberti. Alberti was gifted in many areas including gymnastics, music, civic and canonical law, physics, mathematics, painting, architecture, and literature, to name a few.[36] Alberti was the paradigmatic humanist of the day, one who exclaimed *bon mot*: "Men can do all things if they will."

Yet, an environmental critic may immediately see such phrase as justifying their pronouncement that Western man's arrogance gives rise to exploitation. However, this is not the case. Alberti's engagement with the world "does not strike the reader as arrogant and manipulative, but rather as overflowing with the delight of mind and senses in a world too long dismissed as a vale of tears."[37] Whereas in the middle ages the world was a sinful, depraved place, only to be destroyed at the end of the world, the world for people like Alberti became precisely that enchanting place that was said to be lost due to

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, vol., quoted in Lewis P. Hinchman, "Is Environmentalism a Humanism?" *Environmental Values* 13, no. 1 (2004): 7, url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=phl&AN=PHL1779849&site=eds-live.

[37] Ibid.

the advent of human supremacy. As Jacob Burckhardt observes, Alberti was far from an arrogant, nature exploiter:

> But the deepest spring of his nature has yet to be spoken of—the sympathetic intensity with which he entered into the whole life around him. At the sight of noble trees and waving cornfields he shed tears; handsome and dignified old men he honored as 'a delight of nature,' and could never look at them enough. Perfectly formed animals won his goodwill as being specially favored by nature; and more than once, when he was ill, the sight of a beautiful landscape cured him.[38]

To the contrary, having been revivified by means of learning and cultivation, Alberti viewed nature precisely as that magical, enchanting place which may be in consort with sentiments shared by environmental critics themselves.

Another aspect of humanism's past that is downplayed is its civic emphasis, which Hinchman claims appeared to favor "neither a leviathan state nor technocratic problem-solving approaches; instead it gives sustenance to those environmentalists who imagine small-scale, local Jeffersonian communities of equal citizens in face-to-face conversations about their common affairs."[39] Republicanism in Rome and democracy in Athens would have undoubtedly been encountered in humanism's attempt to revive the heritage of classical antiquity. Such a revival would have presented a world of citizens expressing confidence in self-rule and cooperative interaction for the sake of societal well-being.

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Hinchman, *Environmentalism*, 7.

A historical resurgence of Renaissance humanism in the latter part of the 18th century also indicated a much different self-conception than the demonized homocentric version of humanism. Also known as the *Goethezeit*, this period was marked by two impulses: the philosophical influence of Kant, and the reactionary movement of Romanticism which attempted to overcome the dualisms of Kant's *Critiques*. Kant provided some of the decried features of humanism with his dualisms, "especially the notion of human freedom set off against 'deed', mechanical causation, representationalism (albeit with a transcendental twist) on the conception of autonomy as a struggle to overcome nature."[40] However, Hinchman claims that there were good reasons for these dualisms. Their benefit lies in the attempt to preserve ethics from the "associationist psychology and proto-utilitarianism of Hume."[41] Preserving ethics from Hume would help create a "theoretical space" in which insights could be articulated without fitting them into the "straightjacket of Galilean physics and associated empiricist philosophies."[42] The resulting single, universal categorical imperative was countered by Romantic writers as promoting a kind of monoculture which prevented cultural formation in terms of letting each culture flourish on its own terms. Notice that both impulses of this period, it can be argued, have as their goal that which environmentalist can agree on: Kant sought a theoretical safe-space against oppression of a rational Galilean physics,

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

and Romantic writers sought a more pluralistic type of *Bildung* that resists an abstract monoculture being applied to all cultures at all times in an arid uniformity.

Humanism at present still retains these themes, while also adding others that "confront more directly the erosion of humanity at the hands of bureaucratic, technologically advanced, consumer societies."[43] Humanism past and present eventually veered away from a trail that would lead into rationalism and mathematically based physical sciences, and pursued an entirely different course "that would lead via Vico and Herder to Dilthey's conception of the humanities as methodologically distinctive."[44] In other words, humanism would give rise to a whole new area of scholarly concern dealing with human culture and activity as methodologically distinct from the those of the sciences, attempting to assign to each discipline their own incommensurable way of discoursing. Among such influential thinkers such as Wilhelm Dilthey, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Martin Heidegger, efforts were made to ward off "the assimilation of the humanities by natural sciences, to warn against the dystopias of technocratic reason, and to articulate the distinctive approaches and contents that set the human sciences apart."[45]

However, as Hinchman observes, Heidegger would inevitably reject the term humanism as characterizing his own way of thinking. Even though Heidegger offers a well-known critique of humanism, his thinking is aligned with humanism as outlined by

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[43] Ibid., 16.

[44] Ibid., 8.

[45] Ibid.

Hinchman. Heidegger's critique operates with the sense of humanism as homocentrism shown above, in which he treats humanism in the context of anthropocentrism. Furthermore, Heidegger's thinking exemplifies this marriage of humanism and environmentalism that Hinchman so carefully demonstrates. In the next section I will show Heidegger's critique of humanism. Why? As a way of reformulating what it means to be human and the word 'humanism' so that we can deflect the charges levelled by the environmentalist. Heidegger's critique does not render him an anti-humanist, rather it shows him to be more aligned with humanism properly understood by Hinchman.

III. HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF HUMANISM

Heidegger's critique of humanism will be presented from two angles: (i) from ideas pulled from his earlier work, *Being and Time*, and (ii) from his explicit argument against a homogenized version of humanism presented in his "Letter on 'Humanism.'" Heidegger's critique is ultimately against homocentrism, and not humanism proper.

i.

Hans Ruin notes that *Being and Time* is "animated by a sense of crisis. From its inception, the question which it seeks to answer has already been lost, and is in need of being reawakened."[46] This crisis was the *meaning* of Being. The meaning of Being is lost, forgotten, and its content vacuous, empty, and evanescent.[47] Being's meaning is of primordial importance for Heidegger, in that "everything we talk about, mean, and are related to is *in* being one way or another."[48] Only until the question of Being has beensufficiently addressed can one even tackle such disciplines as ethics, religion, and

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[46] Hans Ruin, "The destiny of freedom: in Heidegger," *Continental Philosophy Review* 41, no. 3 (2008): 279, url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=34490578&site=eds-live.

[47] Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt. (Yale University Press, 2000), 78.

[48] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 7. e-book url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=7751&site=eds-live.

even humanism itself. “Without such an opening up of Being, we could not be “human” in thefirst place.”[49] Heidegger’s inquiry into Being resultantly redefines the human being in such a way that would drain the conceit of the anthropocentric self-image.

Pursuing the question of Being is difficult. Our conceptual schemes do not conform to Being for the very reason that Being is not an entity, it is not an “it.”[50] Metaphysical thinking will have to be challenged and set aside if we are to come back to the meaning of Being. Heidegger spells out the issue with thinking metaphysically about Being:

> As what is asked about, being thus requires its own kind of demonstration which is essentially different from the discovery of beings. Hence what is to be *ascertained*, the meaning of being, will require its own conceptualization, which again is essentially distinct from the concepts in which beings receive their determination of meaning.[51]

If Being is not an entity which can be grasped by means of metaphysical thinking, and must be exhibited in a way of its own, then there is a split: there are beings (conceptual, extant, individuated entities), and Being itself. Being and beings are split such that to each is accorded a different mode of conceiving: beings are conceived in determinate ways via signs, and Being is conceived in a different manner. Heidegger calls this the “ontological difference” (*die ontologische Differenz*), a crucial point in which Being (*das Sein*) and beings (*das Seiendes*) are kept distinct. Heidegger’s claim is that “’Being’ is

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[49] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 88.

[50] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 7.

[51] Ibid., 7.

not something like a being,"[52] but Being is that "which determines beings as beings, that in terms of which beings have always been understood no matter how they are discussed."[53] This other way of conceiving Being might be regarded as pre-conceptual, in that it is what determines something becoming intelligible *as* something. Heidegger expresses his concern for the necessity of clarifying the meaning of Being:

> The question of being thus aims at an *a priori* condition of the possibility not only of the sciences which investigate beings of such and such a type and are thereby already involved in an understanding of being; but it aims also at the condition of the possibility of the ontologies which precede the ontic sciences and found them. *All ontology, no matter how rich and tightly knit a system of categories it has at its disposal, remains fundamentally blind and perverts its innermost intent if it has not previously clarified the meaning of being sufficiently and grasped this clarification as its fundamental task.*[54]

The way of conceiving the meaning of Being is very difficult, however, and Heidegger's work is the attempt to think of Being through other "conceptual" means. *Being and Time* is Heidegger's attempt at such another way of thinking about Being, known as *fundamental ontology*.

To commence fundamental ontology, an 'access-point' for inquiry is required. By interrogating one particular type of being, namely, the human being, Heidegger thought he could ascertain the *a priori* conditions for the possibility for something to 'show up' at all, how beings are disclosed as intelligible and meaningfully relevant to human beings.

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[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 11.

Why interrogate the human being? Because humans have a special distinctiveness,[55] such that they are "ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being."[56] Further, human beings have a privileged access to being, albeit in a pre-conceptual way. Michael Inwood notes that human beings possess a three-tiered implicit, pre-conceptual understanding of being, in which (1) humans engage with entities "ontically, acquiring ontical knowledge about them," (2) only insofar as humans have a pre-ontological (*vorontologisch*) understanding of Being in the first place, and (3) as a philosopher, a human can attain at least concepts about Being.[57] An interrogation of the human being, therefore, is that access-point for retrieving the meaning of Being.

In part one of *Being and Time*, Heidegger sets to task the elaboration of the question of the meaning of Being through "a special interpretation of a particular being"[58] mentioned above. That being is the human being, what Heidegger now calls Dasein, a word composed of the German *Da* (there) and *Sein* (being): literally 'being-there'. Heidegger opts for describing human being in this way to subvert traditional ontological labeling using criteria of 'whatness,' which ascribes "a case and instance of a genus of beings as objectively present."[59] Heidegger wants to move away from this kind of

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[55] Ibid., 12.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 147.

[58] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 40.

[59] Ibid., 43.

labelling for the very reason that objectively present things are indifferent to their own being. Too see its importance, recall that Heidegger is interested primarily in inquiring into Being, and the access-point to inquiry is that of the human being, a being for whom its own being is an issue for it. Dasein cares about its own being and its own ways of existing as a temporal-historical being. Dasein, unlike other beings, is its own being (*Jemeinigkeit*), and it *is* its own being "to be always in this or that way."[60] Dasein's "essence" if you will, is not a 'what' but a 'way,' namely existence.[61] The characteristics of Dasein are not objectively present (*Vorhandenheit*), that which have "such and such an 'outward appearance,' but rather possible ways for it to be, and only this." Think of the being of Dasein as a verb, *be-ing*, as ways for it to be in its historical unfolding. The priority of existence and the 'always-being-mine' of Dasein yields an interpretation which Heidegger claims provides the confrontation "with a unique phenomenal region."[62]

Dasein is a being that "always defines itself in terms of a possibility which it *is* and somehow understands in its being."[63] However, Dasein does not confront the possible ways for it to be in a thematic or theoretic way, but these ways are uncovered through analysis revealing that Dasein was initially 'indifferent' to them. Notice I stated earlier that Dasein is that being for whom its own being is an issue, whose being is

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid., 44.

‘always-being-mine,’ and for whom possible ways of existing is of chief concern. How can Dasein be ‘indifferent’ then to those terms of its own possibility? Heidegger explains:

> At the beginning of the analysis, Dasein is precisely not to be interpreted in the differentiation of a particular existence; rather, it is to be uncovered in the indifferent way in which it is initially and for the most part. This indifference of the everydayness of Dasein is *not nothing*; but rather, a positive phenomenal characteristic. All existing is how it is out of this kind of being, and back into it. We call this everyday indifference of Dasein *averageness*.[64]

Average everyday ways of interacting in the world is what constitutes Dasein’s “ontic immediacy.”[65] This indifference can be demonstrated in a practical way, as for example, when I turn the door knob to walk into my apartment, the door knob is itself passed over in importance; the door knob does not ‘show up’ in any strikingly salient way, but blends in as a mere part of the activity of entering my apartment. Interestingly, my indifference to the door knob does not constitute the object as a vague, indeterminate something. Rather, it shows the door knob to be pregnant with significance as part of an overarching goal-structure, albeit one that I grasp in a behavioral know-how.

Far from dealing with the door knob in a thematic, conceptual way as a ‘material object,’ instead I deal with it like I would a familiar piece of furniture. If you were to ask me, “what is that thing you grasped?” I would say, “a door knob,” and not “a material object.” J.L. Austin famously terms these kinds of objects as “moderate-sized specimens

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

of dry goods,"[66] in which objects are familiar to us. They are familiar in the sense that they are proportionate to the human form and to human activity, such that they are "near" to us yet inconspicuous. Heidegger terms this way of encountering beings in the world as ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*), a primordial way of associating in the world "with inner-worldly beings".[67] Our associations "are already dispersed in manifold ways of taking care of things."[68] The closest and nearest associations with things in the world are pre-thematic; they show up in activities of handling, using, manipulating, and taking care of things. In Heidegger's analytic, these indifferent associations and structures are the primary targets for interrogation because in them we can get closer to the meaning of Being. They form the *existentials* that characterize Dasein's average everydayness.

Having profiled Dasein's condition of caring about its own possible ways of being, and the *existentials* of Dasein's average everydayness that yield a 'unique phenomenal region' for interrogation, Heidegger shows that these all must be "seen and understood *a priori* as grounded upon that constitution of being which we call *being-in-the-world*."[69] This constitution of being-in-the-world forms the underlying basis for all structural determinations and modes of Dasein's existence. It is a "*unified* phenomena,"

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[66] J.L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia; Reconstructed From The Manuscript Notes By G J Warnock* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 8, url: http://selfpace.uconn.edu/class/percep/AustinChs1-6.pdf.

[67] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 72.

[68] Ibid., 66.

[69] Ibid., 53.

in that it must be taken as a whole even though it contains "several constitutive structural factors."[70] 'Being-in' does not imply a spatial relation, as of water being 'in' the glass. Rather, being-in designates "a constitution of being of Dasein, and is an *existential*."[71] Heidegger's use of being-in is understood through an etymology of "in," which has its origin in *innan-*, a word that means to live, particularly to dwell. The '*an*' of the word *innan* suggests a kind dwelling that is not just factual dwelling in the spatial sense of living in a house, a geographic region, or the world generally, but is a kind of dwelling in the familiar sense, in which one has familiar associations of taking care of things. It means "to dwell near…, to be familiar with…"[72] Being-in is a familiarity in relation to the second part of Dasein's fundamental constitution, 'the-world'. Dasein's relationship with the world can be defined "in the sense of being absorbed in the world."[73] To be absorbed suggests a 'being-with' and not a "being next to each other,"[74] or a coming 'face-to-face' to each other in terms of objective presence. This constitutional structure of Dasein as being-in-the-world must be distinguished from Dasein's *facticity*, which are the factual ways "in which Dasein actually is."[75]

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., 54.

[72] Ibid., 55.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., 56.

Heidegger regards the 'being-in' of being-in-the-world to be the "formal existential expression of the being of Da-sein," which has "the essential constitution of being-in-the-world."[76] The formal expression is made manifest in various ways. Heidegger gives the examples: "to have to do with something, to produce, order and take care of something, to use something, to give something up and let it get lost, to undertake, to accomplish, to find out, to ask about, to observe, to speak about, to determine."[77] These suggest a fundamental character of *taking care of…* This fundamental constitution has profound implications for what it means to 'know' something, and hence upending subsequent links underpinning humanism.

Knowing is a mode of being for Dasein, and it is just one of many kinds of ways of being-in-the-world. It is grounded beforehand in being-in-the-world, a being-already-absorbed-with-the-world and dealing with things in numerous ways. Dasein is firstly "*taken in by* the world which it takes care of,"[78] in which Dasein goes about its everyday activities mostly hitch-free. It is only until there is a *deficiency* in Dasein's absorbed dealings with things that the possibility for 'knowing' in the traditional, Cartesian sense can occur. For example, when I am engaged in digging a hole, I am absorbed in the digging such that I am performing a task requiring more sensorimotor functioning than abstract, thematic reasoning; the bulk of my awareness is on performing the task at hand.

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., 57.

[78] Ibid., 61.

However, if my shovel breaks, then there is a breakup in the momentum of my concernful dealing with the task of digging. Heidegger claims that it is at this very moment that my mode being-in switches to the only available leftover of "lingering with…"[79] To linger-with is to stop what one is doing in order to look at the thing that is stripped of everyday significance, in order to 'see' it as something objectively present. Heidegger explains:

> *On the basis* of this kind of being toward the world which lets us encounter beings within the world solely in their mere *outward appearance* (*eidos*), and as a mode of this kind of being, looking explicitly at something thus encountered is possible. This looking at is always a way of assuming a definite direction toward something, a glimpse of what is objectively present. It takes over a "perspective" from the beings thus encountered from the very beginning. This looking itself becomes a mode of independent dwelling together with being in the world.[80]

Knowing in the Cartesian sense is possible for Dasein, but only derivatively possible. When Dasein lingers-with something after a deficiency in its concernful dealings, a perception of the that something can take place. By perception is meant "*addressing* and *discussing* something as something,"[81] in which a perception becomes a *definition.* Having its expression in propositional form, the definition can be maintained and reified. Heidegger calls this the "perceptive retention of a proposition,"[82] which is mistakenly interpreted in Cartesianism to be the procedure whereby "a subject gathers representation

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 62.

[82] Ibid.

about something for itself which then remain stored up "inside" as thus appropriated."[83] From this mistaken interpretation numerous interminable problematics arise out from the question as to how these representations correspond with reality.

Rather, the perceptive retention of a proposition is itself just another way of being-in-the-world, another type of caring. Dasein's knowing is not an event of going "outside of the inner sphere in which it is initially encapsulated,"[84] in order to get that thing *outside* to bring it back *inside*. Rather, it can be said that Dasein is already, initially "outside," together with some being already discovered:

> Again, the perception of what is known does not take place as a return with one's booty to the "cabinet" of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it. Rather, in perceiving, preserving, and retaining, the Da-sein that *knows remains outside as Da-sein*.[85]

The use of the term 'outside' is a play on the 'insideness' of the Cartesian knowing subject located somewhere inside the corporeal body; this is another crafty inversion scheme by Heidegger to subvert the tradition. Dasein's being as already-being-outside reveals that Dasein's knowing yields a "new *perspective of being* toward the world already discovered by Da-sein,"[86] and can be developed as a guide for Dasein's being-in-the-world. However, as Heidegger concludes, "knowing neither first *creates* a

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Ibid.

"commercium" of the subject with the world, nor does this commercium *originate* from an effect of the world on a subject. Knowing is a mode of Da-sein which is founded in being-in-the-world."[87]

In what manner is *Being and Time* against humanism? Heidegger provides another definition of what it means to be human against what may be considered *the* most influential view embedded within the modern tradition: Cartesian subjectivism. Descartes' philosophical project of finding a sure foundation for knowledge led him to postulate the *ego cogito* subject, an immaterial substance which confronts a material world by means of a representative apparatus. The subject was emancipatory; a weaponized philosophical postulate against the epistemic authority of God and Church. As Heidegger explains in "The Age of the World Picture":

> For up to Descartes…the being, insofar as it is a particular being, a particular *sub-iectum (hypo-keimenon)* is something lying before from out of itself, which, as such, simultaneously lies at the foundation of its own fixed qualities and changing circumstances. The superiority of a *sub-iectum* (as a ground lying at the foundation) that is preeminent because it is in an essential respect unconditional arises out of the claim of man to a *fundamentum absolutum inconcussum veritatis* (self-supported, unshakable foundation of truth, in the sense of certainty). Why and how does this claim acquire its decisive authority? The claim originates in that emancipation of man in which he frees himself from obligation to Christian revelational truth and Church doctrine to a legislating for himself that takes its stand upon itself.[88]

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 148, e-book url: http://ssbothwell.com/documents/ebooksclub.org__The_Question_Concerning_Technology_and_Other_Essays.pdf.

The subject was now to be regarded as *the* epistemic center of priority. However, as Heidegger argues, subjectivism leads to anthropology, and consequently, to humanism.

Heidegger in "The Age of the World Picture" claims that two events shaped the modern age, such that (a) the world became fundamentally regarded as a 'picture' (*Bild*) which is (b) at the *subiectum*'s disposal as a thing to be manipulated and conquered.[89] The more extensively man regards the world as picture, the more the *subiectum* grows in significance. In the picture, beings are indexed and assigned a proper place, indeed man himself is placed: as the maker and confronter of the picture, in which man "empowers himself as lord of the earth."[90] Resultantly, the world changes into "a doctrine of man, into anthropology."[91] Seeing as though the world is increasingly seen as a picture for a subject, the world becomes increasingly understood via human lenses. From anthropology, Heidegger claims that "it is no wonder that humanism first arises where the world becomes picture."[92] Heidegger continues:

> It would have been just as impossible for a humanism to have gained currency in the great age of the Greeks as il would have been impossible to have had anything like a world picture in that age. Humanism, therefore, in the more strict historiographical sense, is nothing but a moral-aesthetic anthropology. The name "anthropology" as used here does not mean just some investigation of man by a natural science. Nor does it mean the doctrine established within Christian theology of man created, fallen, and redeemed. It designates that philosophical

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[89] Heidegger, *World Picture*, 133.

[90] Ibid., 152.

[91] Ibid., 133.

[92] Ibid.

> interpretation of man which explains and evaluates whatever is, in its entirety, from the standpoint of man and in relation to man.[93]

Anthropology arises with the commencement of subjectivism, from treating the world as picture. Consequently, this leads to the "fundamental event of modernity" as the "conquest of the world as picture."[94] Anthropology leads into humanism, providing a link between Cartesianism and humanism.

It must be pointed out that Heidegger's use of the term humanism is associated with anthropology, a usage Joanna Hodge finds unusual. She says it is unusual because Heidegger's use of humanism "does not address what is usually meant by the term."[95] Rather, Heidegger's use of humanism arises from the "connection between theories assigning value to what it is to be human, given in humanism, and the epistemological and metaphysical roles assigned to theories of the subject."[96] Anthropology picks out the connection between the two. What is usually meant by humanism is debatable, as I believe the term cannot be isolated to a singular doctrine, but rather is the tapestry of ideas as laid out by Hinchman. What is usually meant by the word humanism is not provided by Hodge, but I surmise she means the garden variety version of humanism in the sense of freedom and autonomy, the freedom *from* tradition and the freedom *for* a

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 134.

[95] Joanna Hodge, *Heidegger and Ethics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), 111.

[96] Hodge, *Ethics*, 11.

self-grounding authority. This contemporary view sees humanism as the liberator of ancient philosophy from Christian Theology, a view Heidegger rejects:

> Ancient philosophy was pressed by Christian dogmatism into a very definite conception, which persisted through the Renaissance, humanism and German idealism and whose untruth we are only today beginning slowly to comprehend. Perhaps the first to realize it was Nietzsche.[97]

Far from being the liberator, humanism itself still retains Christian theological residues. It is no wonder that Cartesian subjectivity looks a lot like a modern 'soul theory'. I will proceed on the humanism-anthropology assumption, and hence the Cartesianism-humanism connection. I am not alone in making this connection. For instance, Erica Fudge observes that Descartes is "the poster-boy for current representations of humanist ideas."[98] Heidegger's thinking in *Being and Time* directly addresses and counters Cartesian thinking, providing further reason for Heidegger's supposed 'anti-humanism.'

However, such an interpretation of Heidegger is over-simplification. Even though environmentalists are wont to rally around anti-humanism in their discourse and activism, Heidegger should not be engaged as such. Kevin Michael Deluca observes that Heidegger's thought has been wielded mainly for citation-demand purposes, such that oftentimes Heidegger will be engaged "not to develop environmental theory; rather, Heidegger is cited to lend some borrowed legitimacy to the fledgling enterprise….

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[97] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeil and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 64.

[98] Erica Fudge, "The Animal Face of Early Modern England," *Theory, Culture And Society* 30, no. 7-8 (2013): 182, doi: 10.1177/0263276413496122.

wherein Heidegger joins a potpourri of thinkers, including Dōgen, Job, St. Francis of Assisi," etc.[99] In Heidegger's "Letter on 'Humanism'" he does give a sustained criticism of humanism, however, by arguing that humanism does not treat the human being *highly enough*.

ii.

In the "Letter on Humanism" Heidegger addresses a question that was given to him in a letter: "Comment redonner un sens au mot 'Humanisme'? [How can we restore meaning to the word 'humanism'?]."[100] To restore meaning to the word 'humanism' implies that the word has lost its meaning. Further, it suggests an intention to retain the word, an intention Heidegger himself is apprehensive of doing, in that for Heidegger all '-isms' are suspect.[101] But because the "market of public opinion" demands novel words, new "-isms" to capture a body of gathered knowledge for public use, Heidegger will endeavor to bring sense back into the word 'humanism,' but not without heavy criticism and revision. Heidegger's critique will above all attempt to show the failure of humanism to respect human uniqueness and dignity, revealing his preoccupation with preserving humanity and the humanities as distinct from the natural sciences and technocratic

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[99] Kevin Michael Deluca, "Thinking with Heidegger: Rethinking Environmental Theory and Practice," *Ethics and the Environment*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (2005): 68, url: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40339096.

[100] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism,'" trans. Frank A. Capuzzi in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 241, url: http://pacificinstitute.org/pdf/Letter_on_%20Humanism.pdf.

[101] Heidegger, *Humanism*, 241.

reasoning. First, to set a trajectory for such an inquiry into humanism, Heidegger explains the notion of *humanitas* as having an origin in Rome:

> *Humanitas*, explicitly so called, was first considered and striven for in the age of the Roman Republic. *Homo humanus* was opposed to *homo barbarus*. *Homo humanus* here means the Romans, who exalted and honored Roman *virtus* through the "embodiment" of the παιδεία[102] [education] taken over from the Greeks. These were the Greeks of the Hellenistic age, whose culture was acquired in the schools of philosophy. It was concerned with *erudition et institution in bonas artes* [scholarship and training in good conduct]. Παιδεία thus understood was translated as *humanitas*.[103]

This is the first explicit version of humanism: the embodiment of the spirit of *paideia*, in the affirmation of education and training in good conduct. Thus, early humanism had for its emphasis mainly a behavioral transference of tutelage: from being guided by one's baser animal nature to being guided by refined faculties attained through re-education, self-taming, and self-fashioning. In other words, humanism meant the cultivation and transformation of the unfinished, lacking animal (e.g., *homo barbarus*) into the civilized *homo humanus*. This sense of humanism shares the emancipatory aspect of later humanism, in which we are freed from impulse and instinct. Heidegger states that humanism "remains in essence a specifically Roman phenomenon, which emerges from the encounter of Roman civilization with the culture of late Greek civilization."[104]

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[102] *Paideia*

[103] Heidegger, *Humanism*, 244.

[104] Ibid.

This Greek spirit of *paideia*, per Heidegger, is present in all the succeeding versions of humanism, including Renaissance, Scholastic, and modern versions found in Liberalism, Marxism, Existentialism, and Christianity. What is crucial for Heidegger's exposition is the assumption that *paideia* and *humanitas* are synonymous, an assumption which has not gone uncontested.[105] Vito R. Giustiniani, challenges the assumption that "every 'historical' humanism cannot be anything else than a resurgence of Greek *paideia*."[106] Gavin Rae notes that for Giustiniani, this Greek emphasis on culture "does not fit well with Roman or Renaissance versions." Heidegger's "homogenization" of humanism in terms of the spirit of Greek *paideia*, according to Giustiniani, is misinterpreted due to Heidegger's 'valorization' of Greek antiquity. Giustiniani argues the Heidegger fails to account for the two senses of the word *humanitas*:

a. *Humanitas* as the *affirmation* of a culture of education and reason
b. *Humanitas* as the *cultivation* of specific individual character traits

Therefore, Giustiniani's criticism seem to suggest that, according to Rae, "there are different versions of humanism because each differs in terms of how it structures the relation between the dual senses of the term '*humanitas*.'"[107] Along with Rae, however, Heidegger's (mis)-interpretation of the synonym of *humanitas* and *paideia* is actually

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[105] Gavin Rae, "Re-Thinking the Human: Heidegger, Fundamental Ontology, and Humanism," *Human Studies* Vol. 33, no. 1 (2010): 28, doi: 10.1007/S10746-010-9136-Y.

[106] V.R. Giustiniani, "Homo, humanus, and the meanings of 'humanism,'" *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46(2) (1985), quoted in Gavin Rae "Re-Thinking the Human: Heidegger, Fundamental Ontology, and Humanism," *Human Studies* Vol. 33, no. 1 (2010): 28, doi: 10.1007/S10746-010-9136-Y.

[107] Rae, *Rethinking*, 29.

beneficial, for "error can lead to the unveiling of new insights and paths of thought."[108] Sometimes misinterpretation and misreading can open up new horizons of thought. One paradigmatic example is that of Jean-Paul Sartre's misreading of *Being and Time*, a reading which saddled onto it a generality that Heidegger never intended: the interpretation of his work as the formulation and commencement of a new philosophical approach known as Existentialism.

Conceding to Giustiniani that Heidegger's interpretation fails to appreciate a more nuanced account of *humanitas*, if we are to continue we must approach Heidegger's homogenization as just a lesser strategic point for use in his larger argument. Taking for granted Heidegger's homogenized version of humanism, Heidegger argues that the defining features within the paideic core of humanism are ultimately metaphysical; each version of humanism is "either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one."[109] It can be argued that Heidegger is anti-metaphysical. Metaphysics, for Heidegger, is a dead-end road. Why? Heidegger explains:

> Metaphysics thinks about beings as beings. Wherever the question is asked what beings are, beings as such are in sight. Metaphysical representation owes this sight to the light of Being. The light itself, i.e., that which such thinking experiences as light, does not come within the range of metaphysical thinking; for- metaphysics always represents beings only as beings. Within the perspective, metaphysical thinking does, of course, inquire about the being which is the source and originator of the light. But the light itself is considered sufficiently illuminated as soon as we recognize that we look through it whenever we look at beings.[110]

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[108] Ibid.

[109] Heidegger, *Humanism*, 245.

[110] Martin Heidegger, "Introduction to 'What Is Metaphysics?'" in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 277.

Because metaphysics can only represent 'beings as beings,' it can never represent Being, but only infer it as the 'light' by which beings are understood. Traditionally, Being has been taken as the 'cosmic ground' or the 'all-founding being,' typically regarded as the ontological bedrock for metaphysics. Metaphysical thinking cannot penetrate the meaning and essence of Being, which is not an *entity* and hence is ungraspable by the means of traditional, fixed logical categories mentioned above. Metaphysics and the kind of thinking accompanying it constrains Heidegger's main project of inquiring into Being, the main priority that runs through all of Heidegger's works. "Metaphysics does not ask about the truth of being itself…Being is still waiting for the time when It itself will become thought-provoking to the human being."[111] Returning to humanism, Heidegger identifies three metaphysical features, all of which are present in each version of humanism, features rejected by Heidegger: (1) the universalization of the essence of humanity as *animal rationale*, (2) the fundamental importance and usage of binary oppositions, and (3) the presupposition of certain truths as being self-evident. I will pass over (2) and (3) and focus primarily on (1).

Animale Rationale is the canonical Aristotelian definition of human nature. The definition is problematic for Heidegger for two reasons. Firstly, the Greek *zoon logon echon* (animal having capacity for discourse) is falsely translated into the Latin *animale*

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[111] Heidegger, *Humanism*, 246.

rationale (rational animal), a translation "conditioned by metaphysics"[112] in that it replaces discourse or language with rationality. Secondly, the comparative context of *animale rationale* "will never disclose the essential aspect of the human being."[113] What do I mean by comparative context? The context in which *animale rationale* gains its sense is by way of comparison with animals. Heidegger argues rhetorically whether such a comparative context is helpful, whether "we are really on the right track toward the essence of the human being as long as we set him off as one living creature among others in contrast to plants, beasts, and God?"[114] If we are to proceed in such a fashion, Heidegger exclaims, "we abandon the human being to the essential realm of *animalitas* even if we do not equate him with beasts but attribute a specific difference to him."[115] Richard Rorty offers, however tangential, an insightful perspective to the comparative context, a perspective we shall turn to only briefly.

Notice that in Roman humanism there is the setting up of opposition to some other, namely to that of *homo barbarus*. In "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," Rorty argues that we have been involved in creating distinctions between 'paradigmatic humans' and 'pseudo-humans' of borderline cases. *Homo*

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Rae, *Rethinking Humanism*, 30.

[114] Heidegger, *Humanism*, 246.

[115] Ibid.

barbarus were indeed living, breathing humans, but not "true humans." Rorty explains in more detail this distinction-making process:

> The human-animal distinction, however, is only one of three main ways which we paradigmatic humans distinguish ourselves from borderline cases. A second is by invoking the distinction between adults and children. Ignorant and superstitious people, we say, are like, children; they will attain true humanity only if raised up by proper education. If they seem incapable of such education, that shows that they are not really the same kind of being as we educable people are…When it comes to women, however, there are simpler ways of excluding them from true humanity: for example, using "man" as a synonym of "human being" …Being a nonmale is the third way of being nonhuman.[116]

These methods of distinguishing true humans from non- or in-humans have provided justification for violence, the reason for not playing nice with those not within the circle of true humanity. However, to "straighten out this confusion" philosophers became preoccupied with the question of human identity, specifically with "specifying what is special about featherless bipeds, explaining what is essential to being human."[117] In other words, philosophers have been attempting to know who they were by seeing what separates them from animals, attempting to gain knowledge of the special ingredient that places humans "in a different ontological category than brutes."[118] The answer was rationality, and that a "respect for this ingredient provides a reason for people to be nice to each other."[119] Although Rorty's interpretation of the motivation behind the question

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[116] Richard Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," *Truth & Progress* (1998): 168-169, url: http://www.nyu.edu/classes/gmoran/3RORTY.pdf/

[117] Ibid., 169.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

of what is "special about featherless bipeds" is mainly understood in regards to rights and ethical behavior, nevertheless it helps shine a light on why the term *animal rationale* is problematic: the comparative context is in the dimension of *animalitas.* Even though Heidegger did not address initial motivation for the comparative context in terms of ethical behavior, he does see it as an issue for defining the essence of humanity. Heidegger does not explicitly put forth a reason *as to why* philosophers were motivated to define the essence of humanity by comparing them to animals, for that is a kind of social-psychoanalysis that Heidegger was not interested in. Although he does hint in a few places that doing so brought a kind of 'ease of explanation,' as an expedient that equalized all beings onto a graspable register. However, with such an expedient came the eschewal of ambiguity, vagueness and indefiniteness for sake of technological manipulation and serviceability toward human ends. The bottom line is that the comparative context in the dimension of *animalitas* is within the problematic manner of metaphysics,[120] hence closing off access to Being.

For Heidegger, the problem with abandoning the human being to the essential realm of *animalitas* is that it fails to define humanity on its own terms. Metaphysical thinking that compares the human being to animals "does not think in the direction of his *humanitas*." To think in the direction of the human being requires a different orientation to his essence. In an obscure passage, Heidegger attempts to explain that human essence is to be understood as 'ek-sistence,'

[120] Heidegger, *Humanism*, 246-247.

> Metaphysics closes itself to the simple essential fact that the human being essentially occurs in his essence only where he is claimed by being. Only from that claim "has" he found that wherein his essence dwells. Only from this dwelling does he "have" "language" as the home that preserves the ecstatic for his essence. Such standing in the clearing of being I call the ek-sistence of human beings. This way of being is proper only to the human being. Ek-sistence so understood is not only the ground of the possibility of reason, *ratio*, but is also that in which the essence of the human being preserves the source that determines him.[121]

Let me attempt to unpack this passage. Heidegger is claiming that metaphysics closes itself to a "simple essential fact." Namely, the fact "that human being essentially occurs in his essence" when he is "claimed" by Being. It is only from that claim has the human being "found wherein his essence dwells." Humanism has tended to think the essence of the human being as something that resides 'inside' of the human being, a property located probably somewhere a little bit behind the eyes and half-way into the head from both ears. Furthermore, humanism has tended to think that essence is something *a priori* within our possession, in the same way that my teeth in my head are mine, such that they have always been mine, and such that my DNA would point to there being in my possession and not in someone else's. Rather, what Heidegger is suggesting is that what constitutes essence is neither something *inside of the human being*, nor something *intrinsically in my possession*, but a *way* of being as a relationship between humanity and Being having obtained only through a 'claim'.

Notice what Heidegger is doing: he is turning the canonical *animale rationale* on its head. Firstly, in the canonical definition rationality is the defining, essential property

[121] Ibid., 247.

that both resides inside of and is intrinsically within the possession of the human being. For Heidegger, by stating that human essence is found in a relationship with being as a "standing in the clearing," he thereby decenters essence and brings it outside. Additionally, in stating that essence occurs only when there is a 'claim' by Being, Heidegger shows that human essence is not something intrinsic to the human being, but is given as a gift. Interestingly, in Aristotelian metaphysics relations are classified as predicables and are considered accidental and therefore non-essential. Furthermore, because human essence is given from without by Being, it is therefore extrinsic, and hence, not considered to be something *constitutive*, showing it to be inadequate in attempts to define the essence of the human being. Secondly, the canonical definition gains much of its sense by comparison with animals, a flawed approach because of its failure to think "in the direction of his *humanitas*." The way ek-sistence now gains its sense is by way of comparison with Being itself.

By claiming that human essence is found within what traditional metaphysics would regard as non-essential and inadequate, Heidegger disrupts metaphysical thinking. He intentionally transgresses fixed, traditional, and logical ways of thinking which fundamentally make use of binary opposites by inverting and playing with the importance of the essential over the accidental, and the intrinsic over the extrinsic in defining human being's 'essence'. By also claiming that the human being is understood in comparison to Being instead of animals, Heidegger attempts to derail its primary motive as an equalization mechanism seeking to define all life on the same level, which thereby fails

to appreciate human uniqueness. The following table might prove useful in seeing Heidegger's inversion process:

Human Essence	Defining Property	Property Location	Property Status	Comparative Context
Animal Rationale	Rationality	Inside, Center	Essential, Intrinsic	Animals
Ek-sistence	Standing in the Clearing	Outside, Decentered	Accidental, Extrinsic	Being

The inversion process is Heidegger's attempt to overcome the strictures of metaphysical thinking. However, Heidegger's critique only serves the purpose of attempting to direct our gaze back upon Being itself.

Heidegger's critique against humanism is not an 'anti-humanism,' which argues for a devaluation and levelling of human significance with the endorsement of a kind of biospheric egalitarianism. Rather, Heidegger claims that we need to keep human dignity intact, and treat humanity as that unique being that it is. Anti-humanism seems to operate from a negative rendering of 'human exceptionalism,' which is seen as the cause of all environmental issues: this bloated sense of worth and right over the environment. I will argue that Heidegger does maintain human exceptionalism, but not in the destructive kind. Heidegger does share with anti-humanists the concern with domination and technical exploitation over the environment. Heidegger provides an account of the origin of the exploitative mood in a form of revealing. Furthermore, Heidegger's work shows that human beings should not be singled out for moral blame.

IV. HEIDEGGER, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE ORIGIN OF THE EXPLOITATIVE MOOD

Why critique technology? Why call into question that which affords us with a better standard of living? The car that I drive affords me with the convenience of not having to burn as many calories by walking or running to my destination, my cell phone connects me to relatives far away, and the micro-wave in the kitchen saves me from having to gather wood to make a fire. The surface level ecological answer is that technology's convenience and labor-saving benefits come at a price. The pollution from our vehicles, the plastic wrappers and containers from our food and gadgets, and the radioactive waste buried deep underground threaten the stability of our natural environment. A much more significant, and deeply rooted answer will inevitably be revealed in our reading of Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology*. In it we see a sustained criticism against that which the environmentalists address, the Western exploitative attitude most evident in modern technology. Most importantly, and contrary to its critics, humanism is not to blame for such an attitude. What is to blame is a way of revealing, a framework for making sense of things whose origin lies not in man's doing, but in Being's.

It should be noted at the outset that Heidegger's project is not another reactionary polemic against the evils of technology. As Hubert Dreyfus observes:

> …although many respectable philosophers, including Jürgen Habermas, take him to be doing just that; nor is he doing what progressive thinkers such as Habermas want him to do, proposing a way to get technology under control so that it can serve our rationally chosen ends.[122]

The reason for getting clear about this stems from the fact that Heidegger himself has not always been clear about his own approach, lending an interpretation of his work as the dissemination of anti-technological platitudes. For example, in his attack on consumerism during the war:

> The circularity of consumption for the sake of consumption is the sole procedure which distinctively characterizes the history of a world which has become an unworld.[123]

Another example, from an address given to Schwarzwald peasant:

> Hourly and daily they are chained to radio and television. Week after week the movies carry them off into uncommon, but often merely common, realms of imagination, and give the illusion of a world that is no world. All that with which modern techniques of communication stimulate, assail, and drive man—all that is already much closer to man today than his fields around his farmstead, closer than the sky over the earth, closer than the change from night to day, closer than the conventions and customs of his village, than the tradition of his native world.[124]

On the face of it, this passage portrays the sentiment of a crotchety old man, one whose attitude toward modern technology can be echoed contemporarily by a grandfather's grumbling protest against his grandson's cell-phone usage, an item of technology

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[122] Hubert Dreyfus, "Heidegger on Gaining a Free Relation to Technology," from *Readings in the Philosophy of Technology* ed. by David. M. Kaplan (Lanham: Rowman & Littefield Publishers, 2003), 53, url: http://www.nyu.edu/projects/nissenbaum/papers/free_relation.pdf.

[123] Martin Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 107.

[124] Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson & E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 48.

criticized for brainwashing and preventing the young boy from experiencing the real world. One final example will suffice:

> The world now appears as an object open to attacks of calculative thought. Attacks that nothing is believe able any longer to resist. Nature becomes a gigantic gasoline station, an energy source for modern technology and industry.[125]

Such passages, as Dreyfus observes, seem to portray Heidegger as a kind of luddite.[126] Yet, care must be taken to not conclude prematurely in that regard.

I agree with Dreyfus that we need to carefully chart an interpretive path that disaffiliates his stance on technology as being just another "romantic reaction to the domination of nature."[127] The worry in making sense of Heidegger's thinking about technology is that we run the risk of translating his words into "conventional platitudes about the evils of technology."[128] We should not prematurely mistake Heidegger's ontological concerns with "humanistic worries about the devastation of nature."[129] As Dreyfus summarizes, "Heidegger's concern is the human *distress* caused by *technological understanding of* being, rather than the *destruction* caused by *specific technologies*."[130] That being said, against Dreyfus I argue that, even though we should be charitable towards interpreting his worry as being primarily ontological in nature,

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[125] Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 50.

[126] Dreyfus, *Free Relation, 54*.

[127] Dreyfus, *Free Relation*, 53.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid., 54.

nevertheless Heidegger's thought contains residues of ideas beneficial to the environmentalist conversation. When Heidegger addresses the main ontological issue, he thereby opens up a space and another interpretive framework wherein we can address and make sense of issues revolving around environmental devastation. Consequently, his thought can provide us with ways in which we may do something about it.

In questioning technology, it is beneficial to note Heidegger's attempt to develop another way of being, one called *thinking*, in which our thinking is about Being. In his *Discourse on Thinking*, Heidegger observes that the "[m]ost thought provoking in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking."[131] We are currently in an age of *thoughtlessness*, referring specifically to our modern technological age. Contrary to our modern age, the age of the Greeks addressed the importance and purpose of thinking. Parmenides' famous statement that 'One should both say and think that Being is,'[132] caught Heidegger's attention: we should be thinking *about* Being, for it is Being that *calls for* thinking. If it is Being, and not beings that calls for thinking, then according to Heidegger in our thinking about our thinking we soon realize that we are not thinking. In our modern age, what calls for thinking is the antithesis of Being, namely its withdrawal or absence. We have forgotten Being's call for thinking, and thus "remain unfree and chained to technology."[133]

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[131] Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 6.

[132] Heidegger reinterprets this statement as: 'Useful is the letting-lie-before-us, so (the) taking-to-heart, too: beings in being [- the presencing of what is present].'

[133] Heidegger, *Technology*, 3

Heidegger speaks of this way of thinking in various ways. In one sense, thinking occurs in response to deficiency in activity, and it attends to things made into *objects*. The thinking process, attending to and thinking about objects, is for the purpose of understanding it: either to fix it, or to speculate about it, whether 'it' is the malfunctioning equipment, the purpose of the activity, etc.). Heidegger calls this *das rechnende Denken*. The word *das Rechnen* is usually translated as 'to reckon,' and is associated with the compound *berechnen*, meaning 'to calculate.' Thus, it is 'calculative thinking,' and it is conveyed with disapproval by Heidegger: "Everydayness takes Dasein as something at hand that is taken care of, that is, regulated and calculated [*verrechnet*]. "Life" is a "business", whether or not it covers its cost."[134] This type of thinking "…roams to and fro only *within* a fixed horizon, within its boundary, although it does not see it."[135]

Calculative thinking operates by responding to objects, to *beings*, in a linear and calculative way. Heidegger also at times calls this "merely thinking" [*denkend*, *denkmäßig*]: the general, run of the mill type of thinking employed in our everyday lives. However, Heidegger contrasts this type of thinking with genuine, appropriate thinking located at the top of a thinking-hierarchy, one which tends toward transcending horizonal standpoints. This type of thinking is truly philosophical. Inwood interprets Heidegger's account of philosophical thinking as an inquiry that "knows only "matters" [*Sachen*] as

[134] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 289-290.

[135] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* vol. III, *The Will to Power as Art*, trans. Joan Stambough, D.F. Krell, F.A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 143.

possible sources and motives of questioning and of the development of the respects in which they are to be questions."[136] This is summed up with the phrase, *Philosophie ist Philosophieren*, or "philosophy is philosophizing,"[137] and is not to be regarded as a body of answers to questions. More specifically, philosophical thinking "…points the *direction* in which we have to search..."[138] Genuine philosophical thinking asks questions, and not merely for the sake of answers. It asks questions in such a way that questioning continues and does not foreclose on other horizons of meanings and possibilities. Finally, it reflects back onto the questioning itself, questioning the questioners' own questioning standpoint.

Calculative thinking is also seen as an activity wherein a thinker is roused into thinking solely on the basis of volition. Yet, all types of thinking, whether calculative or the approved kind, stand for an after-the-fact response to the provocation of something else. Heidegger, according to Inwood, exploits thinking's affinity in the German, as *denken*, with the word "*Dank, danken*, 'thanks', 'to thank', which once meant 'to think, remember;"[139] emphasizing thinking's relationship to ideas such as remembrance, as recollection, as response, as *thanking*. Thinking as thanking is firstly about recognizing yourself as having been, and as continuing to be, provoked by what presents itself. Secondly, thinking as thanking appreciates that *that is so*. Thinking as thanking is both the recognition of the *fact of* thinking's own occurring as being provoked by what

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[136] Ibid., 216.

[137] Martin, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 4.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Inwood, *Heidegger dictionary*, 215.

presents itself, and actually *being thankful* for it. Thinking in the lower sense, as calculative thinking, even though owing its origin to being provoked by what presents itself, it nevertheless remains closed off from this aspect of thinking in this higher sense. Hence calculative thinking is unable to heed Parmenidean dictum 'to say and think that Being is'; it can neither recognize that it indeed owes its origin to what presents itself, nor can it be thankful for what presents itself. Calculative thinking is one that is trapped within a fixed horizonal standpoint.

In our modern age, what we are being called by is the opposite of Being, its voided leftover space. In other words, Being's *being-forgotten*, or its withdrawal (*Seinsvergessenheit*). Therefore, from his work on thinking I see three motives for Heidegger's inquiry into technology. Firstly, to build on a new way of being, one of *thinking* which thinks about Being. Secondly, to chart Being's being-forgotten, wherein Being withdraws most evidently in our modern technological age. Thirdly, to articulate the essence of technology for the purpose of establishing a free-relationship with it, in such a way that "we shall be able to experience the technological within its own bounds."[140] As Dreyfus argues, the "greatest danger" in modern technology is not necessarily "the destruction of nature or culture but a restriction in our of thinking—a leveling of our understanding of being."[141]

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[140] Heidegger, *Technology*, 3.

[141] Dreyfus, *Free Relation*, 55.

Moving forward in the questioning of technology, Heidegger seeks to clarify technology as separate from the *essence* of technology. Why does he split up technology with technology's essence? Because the two are not equivalent, and doing so will help us remain free in our relationship to technology. Heidegger's explanation is a bit paradoxical:

> When we are seeking the essence of "tree," we have to become aware that That which pervades every tree, as tree, is not itself a tree that can be encountered among all the other trees.[142]

The "that which pervades every tree, as tree," or the tree's essence, when distributed to other trees, results in an encounter which treats each tree in a universal and uniformal fashion. Heidegger is warning of the dangers of *reification*. In other words, when we collapse the thing in question with its essence, rather than keeping them apart, we run the risk of flattening out the particulars of the thing and over-defining it only in terms of certain features picked, those features which capture *what* it is. Essence becomes reified, or made concrete in such a way that produces an inflexible relationship. For example, when someone thinks of a slice of pizza, they more than likely associate it with being triangle in shape. The triangleness becomes most salient, and is utilized as a cognitive shorthand for dealing with the object; it is less taxing on the mind to work with simple, abstract features than to work with more nuanced, complicated features. In short, while recognizing that a thing has an essence, or a set of features defining what it is, it also has particular features which outrun the simple, reified, cognitive shorthand way of

[142] Ibid.

encountering it. There are other ways that the thing in question can be defined and encountered. For example, a rubber tire may be defined from its traditional feature as a rolling-thing. It may also be defined as a swing for children, as a planter for vegetables and flowers, and as building material for rammed Earth thermal mass dwellings.

Briefly indicated above, "[a]ccording to ancient doctrine, the essence of a thing is considered to be *what* the thing is."[143] To inquire into technology is to ask what it is, to ask what its essence is. Yet, technology's essence is not necessarily technological. Technology is normally taken to mean two things: (1) as a means to an end, and (2) as a human activity. "The two definitions belong together."[144] To postulate an end is a human activity, and to conceive of means to achieve postulated ends is likewise a human activity. Technology is therefore taken to be a whole complex of "contrivances," or instruments, from the Latin *instrumentum.* Heidegger describes this definition of technology as the "instrumental and anthropological definition,"[145] and it normally goes unchallenged.

It may be correct to say that technology is instrumental, but according to Heidegger, it need not be true. Heidegger claims that for something to be correct, it must undergo 'fixing,' and thus "fixing by no means needs to uncover the thing in question in its essence."[146] Fixing allows us to cope effectively with that pertinent thing under our

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[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., 2.

[146] Ibid.

consideration. We can fix onto the tire the correct assessment that it *is* a rolling-thing, but that does not mean its truth, its essence, is *to be a rolling-thing*. The thing may allow for multiple correct definitions of it (it is indeed correct to say that a tire is a rolling-thing, a planter-thing, and a building-material thing), but its *whatever-it-is*, its truth and essence, outruns fixed definitions. Likewise, the "correct instrumental definition of technology still does not show us technology's essence." To accomplish a free-relationship with technology, it is required to keep this notion in mind. Heidegger however concedes and agrees with the notion that the only way to the truth of technology's essence, or to come close to it, is to "seek the true by way of the correct."[147] Thus, if it is correct to say that technology is instrumental, what exactly do we mean by the word 'instrumental?'

Instrumentality lies in means and ends, in which means are employed as a cause for the attainment of desired ends. "Wherever ends are pursued and means are employed, wherever instrumentality reigns, there reigns causality."[148] Heidegger harkens back Aristotle's explanation of 'why' questions that can be classed into four causal answers. Firstly, the *causa materialis*, which is the constitutive, material composition of a thing. Secondly, the *causa formalis*, which is the arrangement of the thing's material composition into a shape or form. Thirdly, the *causa efficiens*, which is the agent that brings about the effect. And fourthly, the *causa finalis*, which is the for-the-sake-of, end

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[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

goal, or overall purpose of the causal process. Thus, instrumentality can be traced back to fourfold causality, and technology as a means therefore discloses itself as the correct definition. But further still, Heidegger asks, what do we mean by causality?

Typically, a cause is simply "that which brings something about."[149] The 'that which brings' is more significant than the 'something about'. However, as Heidegger notes, in that case *causa efficiens* sets the standard for causality among the four; final cause, or the product, is eclipsed in significance. We do not typically regard the product as a cause, although it may cause in us a desire as a goad for setting ourselves to work, nevertheless the actual working toward that goal is regarded as the cause *par excellence*; quintessentially a cause lies in the moment that the nail is driven into the wood from the force of the hammer. Conversely, Heidegger claims that causality should be understood with the emphasis on the product, in which it gains its sense from an etymological origin in the verb *cadere*, meaning 'to fall'. What it means to fall is "that which brings it about that something falls out as a result in such and such a way."[150] Heidegger explains:

> The doctrine of the four causes goes back to Aristotle. But everything that later ages seek in Greek thought under the conception and rubric "causality," in the realm of Greek thought and for Greek thought per se has simply nothing at all to do with bringing about and effecting. What we call cause [*Ursache*] and the Romans call *causa* is called *aition* by the Greeks, *that to which something else in indebted*. The four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else.[151]

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[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid., 3.

[151] Ibid.

To-fall and being-responsible-for are important notions for Heidegger. Firstly, in that to-fall means to bring about a result that *falls in line with the thing's nature*, and reveals something about it. When I push a bowling ball off the table, the result of it falling to the floor obtains because of how it is as a rolling, heavy thing. It has a disposition and tendency, which when efficiently caused, produces a result. The result discloses something about the bowling ball, namely its heaviness and its round-feature, and its tendency to fall and make a dent in the floor. The result is in line with what it is, and reveals something about what it is.

When I am responsible for the bowling ball, I am doing something to it (as an agent of causation) in such a way that brings about the result that aligns with the nature and disposition of the thing. I am revealing something about it in my being-responsible-for, and am utilizing the fourfold in such a way that each in turn are co-responsible for and indebted to each other, resulting in a revelatory disclosure of an aspect of the thing's nature, of whatever-it-is. To clarify, Heidegger gives a concrete example with aid of a silver chalice:

> As this matter (*hyle*), it is co-responsible for the chalice. The chalice is indebted to, i.e., owes thanks to, the silver for that out of which it consists. But the sacrificial vessel is indebted not only to silver. As a chalice, that which is indebted to the silver appears in the aspect of a chalice and not in that of a brooch or a ring. Thus the sacrificial vessel is at the same time indebted to the aspect (*eidos*) of chaliceness. Both the silver into which the aspect is admitted as chalice and the aspect in which the silver appears are in their respective ways co-responsible for the sacrificial vessel.[152]

[152] Ibid.

Keep in mind that all the terms 'being-responsible-for', 'being-indebted-to', 'co-responsible-for', are *forward looking*: they point away from the process toward the result, toward the big reveal of an aspect of a thing's nature. Each step in the causal process works up to a fall, a natural consequence and result of following along responsibly with the nature of the thing.

In revealing an aspect of a thing, there is another act by the agent, one that was mentioned above. Namely, that of 'fixing,' or as Heidegger puts it regarding the silver chalice, "that which in advance confines the chalice within the realm of consecration and bestowal."[153] In working on the silver, being-responsible for it, the circumscription of boundaries (form) for a completed goal (product) takes place. The product, even though in advanced fixed and circumscribed, nevertheless aligns with the thing's nature and reveals something new and interesting about it. Recall earlier my talk of rubber tires. The whatever-it-is thing we label a tire has multiple aspects: it has the aspect of being a rolling-thing, an aspect of being vessel-like, and an aspect of being building material. In other words, the thing's nature can be put to use in multiple ways, ultimately for the sake of revealing aspects of it. Causality is for the sake of revealing aspects, and ultimately for the sake of revealing generally, namely that of truth (*alētheia*). The fourfold causality mentioned above, Heidegger argues, should be understood as four ways of being responsible for something in terms of truth.

[153] Ibid., 3.

In questioning technology's essence, Heidegger arrives at revealing when questioning the 'correct' definition of technology as instrument. As Heidegger summarizes, when we "inquire, step by step, into what technology, represented as means, actually is, then we shall arrive at revealing."[154] Thus, technology is not simply instrumentality, however correct it is to say so. At bottom, technology is about *alētheia*. Technology's essence lies not within means-end instrumentality, but in the revealing of aspects. "Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing."[155]

Let us trace Heidegger's inquiry and take stock. Firstly, he questions technology by asking what it is. Namely, technology is an instrument. It is a correct assessment to say that technology is instrumental, but that does not mean that its essence is instrumental, nor that its essence is even technological.[156] Secondly, he questions what it means to be an instrument, and discovers that it has something to do with means and ends, with causality. Referencing Aristotle's fourfold causality, Heidegger observes that causality traditionally understood focuses more on the actual causal moment, as a *middle-function*, and less on the *resulting product* that the causal process leads to. Heidegger responds with an etymological analysis and re-definition of the verb 'to cause,' which highlights the resulting part of the causal process. Instead of the word 'causality,' Heidegger employs 'being-responsible-for' to deemphasize the role of the middle-

[154] Ibid., 5.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Ibid., 1.

function as being subordinate to, and as less significant than, the final resulting product at the end. That thing at the end is a revelation of an aspect. For Heidegger, inquiry into technology arrives at truth.

Heidegger then addresses the word technology itself. In Greek, we have the word *Technikon*, which stems from the word *technē* that primarily covers a whole range of human activities involving skill, craftsmanship, and even the fine arts. *Technē* also has been linked with knowledge in the widest sense, meaning "to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it."[157] Heidegger then shows that *technē* is "bringing-forth, to *poiēsis*; it is something poietic."[158] Likewise with instrumentality, *technē* leads us back to the conclusion of revealing, of *alētheia*. Technology at bottom, understood definitionally as instrument, and etymologically as *technē*, is inescapably a form of revealing. Even modern technology, "when we allow our attention to rest on this fundamental characteristic does that which is new in modern technology show itself to us."[159] Even though modern technology is a form of revealing, Heidegger shows that it is unlike its ancient predecessors.

Modern technology, even though a form of revealing, does not reveal in a *poietic way*, but in a *challenging way* (*Herausfordern*). Revealing an aspect of something can take the form of a revealing that aligns with the nature of the thing, a poeitic way, and one that does not align with the nature of the thing, a challenging way. Both equally

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[157] Ibid.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid., 6.

reveal truth, although both equally do not reveal *truthfully*. Challenging, for Heidegger, "puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such."[160] This challenging does not regard nature according to its own essence, of bringing forth what it is in its fullness out of concealment. Rather, challenging sets upon (*stellen*) nature an order and structure which is useful to humanity; it is a way of regarding solely for the purpose of storing up nature's energies to be used on a later occasion. To store up and use later is to expedite nature's processes. Expediting allows one to speed up the process that would otherwise occur freely and naturally, and to store up the beneficial energies for a later use.

Expediting is directed toward "driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense."[161] The energy that has been expedited places objects 'on-call' for further use, for further extraction of energy. Additionally, when the energy in objects is placed on-call for further use, nature as a whole becomes transformed into what Heidegger calls 'standing-reserve' (*Bestand*). In other words, nature is placed on-call for further use and is placed both metaphorically and literally in stockpiles. In regarding nature merely as that which is standing-reserve, one fails to reveal what it truthfully is, failing to regard and appreciate it as having its own essence which outruns any sense of usability. Objects in nature lose their own-ness, and their own nature as standing-against (*Gegenstand*) human interests[162] is denied and kept concealed. Though aspects are revealed, namely the

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[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid., 15

[162] Ibid., 17

usable features, yet other aspects and its essence remains hidden. Furthermore, those usable features become reified. Modern technology thus results in what Dreyfus summarized as the "restriction in our of thinking—a leveling of our understanding of being."[163]

The answer to the environmentalist's query concerning the origin of the Western exploitative mood now seems obvious: it is this challenging way of revealing that denies ownness to things and causes man to treat nature uniformly as mere resource towards our own ends. But where does this challenging *itself* originate from? The environmentalist will say that it stems from man's self-perception as being at the center of things. However, Heidegger claims that this way of challenging is not under our control, nor is it something that man brought about. Heidegger explains,

> Who accomplishes the challenging setting-upon through which that we call the real is revealed as standing-reserve? Obviously, man. To what extend is man capable of such a revealing? Man can indeed conceive, fashion, and carry through this or that in one way or another. But man does not have control over un-concealment itself, in which at any given time the real shows itself or withdraws.[164]

The challenging way of revealing is not under our control. Further still, un-concealment, and the revealing and withdrawing of the 'real' is likewise not up to us. If revealing and withdrawing are not the product of man's handiwork, then what is it a product of? Where does it come from?

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[163] Dreyfus, *Free Relation*, 55.

[164] Heidegger, *Technology*, 8.

The answer to that question is far from easy, and has been misinterpreted in mystical terms, but for sake of discussion it is the real itself, namely Being. It is "That which has already claimed man and has done so, so decisively that he can only be man at any given time as the one so claimed."[165] Recall earlier the notion of thinking as a kind of response, as thanking, in which something else provokes the thinker in order for thinking to commence. Heidegger argues that all ways of unconcealing are not something brought about by man. Those ways are allotted to man in his already being claimed by the real. Heidegger summarizes:

> The unconcealment of the unconcealed has already come to pass whenever it calls man forth into the modes of revealing allotted to him. When man, in his way, from within unconcealment reveals that which presences, he merely responds to the call of unconcealment even when he contradicts it. Thus when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing-reserve.[166]

Thus, it is the real's own doing: it unconceals itself. From this we can counter the environmentalist's attack on humanism, for it is up to Being for the way in which we view and therefore treat the world. To be clear, this concern for Heidegger remains most explicitly within the realm of ontology. However, ontology—how we regard objects and beings—bleeds into and informs our interactions. Exploitation necessarily follows from the challenging way that Being is unconcealed.

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[165] Ibid., 9.

[166] Ibid.

This challenging way of revealing, Heidegger goes on to discuss, is granted by Being. It is a claim that Being has upon man, in which it "gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing-reserve."[167] Heidegger calls this *Ge-stell*, or enframing. The word *ge-stell* means something like a framework, a "gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve."[168] If the essence of technology is to be understood in terms revealing, of *alētheia*, then modern technology's essence also has to do with revealing, but as a revealing that challenges, as *ge-stell*, which is "the way in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve."[169] If it is not man's sole doing for the Western exploitative mood, the question might therefore be, 'Where do we point the blame?'

Do we point the blame outside of man, to Being itself? No. Being is not a 'thing' to be blamed, and man still has a part in it, for revealing does not happen beyond all human doing. Yet, we cannot blame man solely, as the critics of humanism (i.e., homocentrism) are wont to do, because "neither does it happen exclusively *in* man, or decisively *through* man."[170] Instead, we should stop playing the blaming game, for there is no clear-cut answer; blaming is something we should transcend if we want to be effective about changing our current condition. We can locate the root of the issue as

[167] Ibid., 9.

[168] Ibid., 10.

[169] Ibid., 12.

[170] Ibid.

being a mood of exploitation without assigning definite moral blame on a particular party.

In the next section I will show how Heidegger's philosophy challenges the environmentalists' strategy by questioning their motives. Afterward, even though Heidegger eschews a reactionary ethics against this way of viewing the world, some of his other later works seem to suggest a counter-strategy, in which passivity is to be preferred over activity, and in which releasement (letting beings be without exploitation) is to be preferred over the way of challenging. Though allowing for truthful revealing, of *poiēsis*, it is also contributive as a counter-strategy for 'doing' something about the environment in a way that keeps human dignity in place, keeps humanism free from guilt, and offsets the hidden underlying problems with modern environmental problem-solving.

V. HEIDEGGER'S ENVIRONMENTALISM: HIS CHALLENGE AND HIS ALTERNATIVE

Heidegger identifies the root cause of the Western exploitative mood in a form of revealing. Both man and Being are co-responsible for it, yet neither can be singled out for moral blame. We should move away from the blaming game, move away from criticism of humanism and move towards being more efficacious about the environment. Some have argued that Heidegger proffers a sort of 'ground-plan' for doing something about the environment, most notably Michael Zimmerman.[171] On the other hand, thinkers such as Kevin Michael Deluca deny that Heidegger's philosophy provides anything like ground-plan. Instead, Heidegger offers a way of thinking, one that provides us with "the gift of distress that provokes us to question our presuppositions and goals;"[172] the presuppositions and goals being those within environmentalism. Heidegger helps us to question the environmentalist's own presuppositions regarding humanity's relation to nature, and humanity's and environmental groups' relation to industrialism and technology. With the aid of Deluca, it will be shown that Heidegger offers a challenge to the environmentalist, while at the same time, and against Deluca, providing a counter-

[171]See Michael Zimmerman's "Toward a Heideggerean Ethos for Radical Environmentalism," *Environmental Ethics* Vol. 5, no. 2 (1983). doi: 10.5840/enviroethics1983524.

[172] Deluca, *Thinking with Heidegger*, 71.

strategy to the Western exploitative mood and a ground-plan "that will lead us out of the current crisis in culture and environment."

Heidegger's philosophy highlights certain stasis points, according to Deluca. These stasis points are pertinent for environmental discussion, and Heidegger's work helps to challenge and to surpass them. For Deluca, the first stasis point in environmental discussion revolves around humanity's relation to nature. For the environmental critic of humanism, humanity sees itself as being at the center of things, assigning intrinsic value to itself, and instrumental value to nonhuman animals and objects. Yet, according to Deluca, Heidegger shows that environmentalists themselves are still trapped within that mindset they so reject. "To put it plainly, in environmental circles it is still a Cartesian world, wherein the founding act is human thinking (*cogito ergo sum*) and the earth is object to humanity's subject."[173] How is this so? Acts of conservation and strategies for saving the earth are bound up with the subject's interest. For example, the saving of the rain forests is motivated upon the realization that the forests "contain potential medical resources and because they alleviate global warming."[174] From this awareness that the motives of environmentalists are too anthropocentric came radical environmentalism, the proponents of what is known as 'deep' ecology, who criticize other environmentalists as being too 'shallow'. Yet, as Deluca has shown, in their attempts to avoid anthropocentrism radical environmentalists run into many problems.

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[173] Ibid., 71-72.

[174] Ibid., 72.

On the theoretical level, "in the effort to avoid the stain of anthropocentrism all beings are posited as having equal *intrinsic worth/value* and difference is levelled."[175] What happens here is a deflation of human significance, such that difference is levelled, individual uniqueness is brought down so that nothing is special. One problem about this is that values are incoherent and "always relational," such that "to posit intrinsic worth/value is to deny the ecological insight that all beings are constituted in relation to other beings and their environment."[176] Another problem is that in denying difference we "blunt analysis of our current situation" and deny "the differential levels of effects different species have."[177]

On a practical level, avoiding anthropocentrism means advocating misanthropy. For example, the radical group Earth First! label humanity as a cancer on the planet. Likewise, the Voluntary Human Extinction Movement, who claim that humans are intrinsically incompatible with the bio-/ecosphere, seem to advocate a hatred for humanity. The metaphor that humans are cancer, as a singled-out disease of the planet, suggests that humans are "an alien other, not a part but apart."[178] It portrays humanity as actively preying upon the earth. In this respect, Cartesianism is still intact because of the implicit use of dichotomization in their rhetoric: subject-object, human-animal, culture-

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[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

nature, and civilization-wilderness dichotomies undergird their notions. Even current debates in environmentalism concerning various groups' dismissal of other groups for being too anthropocentric are themselves trapped within this stasis point, because both sides (pro- or anti-anthropocentrists) remain "oblivious to the underlying Cartesian presuppositions they both share."[179] Reform and 'shallow' environmentalists privilege humanity, whereas radical and 'deep' environmentalists deflate or demonize humanity, yet both are ensnared in Cartesianism. Heidegger helps shed critical light on the underlying motives of environmentalism. His thinking on "the subject-object dichotomy, Descartes, and the phenomenology of the structure of reality offer a useful lever with which to displace these dichotomies and challenge traditional ontology that undergirds and girdles environmental thinking."[180] To surpass this stasis point, Heidegger's work helps to displace the subject-object dichotomy such that it opens up "a horizon of possibilities of other ways/beginning/trajectories for environmentalism."[181]

Another stasis point revolves around "the conflict between strategies of reformist mainstream groups and grassroots activist groups."[182] Reformists tend to work within dominant industrial systems while radical groups work outside those systems and question their validity. The debate between the two is often framed "on pragmatic versus

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[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., 73.

[181] Ibid., 74.

[182] Ibid.

moral grounds: realistic reformers versus idealistic radicals or hypocritical reformers versus principled radicals."[183] Heidegger, in offering a critique of technology, provides a challenge and another orientation transcending both the reformist and radical impulse. Although harshly condemned on ontological grounds, technological enframing is necessary in the historical unfolding of Being. Machination (*machenschaft*), a word not yet discussed, is the fundamental feature of our modern epoch.

In *Contributions to Philosophy*, Heidegger writes of the growing domination of calculatedness in our dealings with representational objects. He writes: "[M]achination [is] that interpretation of beings as re-presentable and re-presented. In one respect, re-presentable means "accessible to intention and calculation"; in another respect in means "advanceable through pro-duction and execution."[184] Heidegger speaks of the 'shackles' of machination as the "pattern of generally calculable explainability, by which everything draws nearer to everything else equally and becomes completely alien to itself—yes, totally other than just alien."[185] In *Mindfulness* Heidegger writes:

> *Machination* means the accordance of everything with producibility, indeed in such a way that the unceasing, unconditioned reckoning of everything is predirected.[186]

Machination also,

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[183] Ibid.

[184] Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy* (*from Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kennthy Maly (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 76.

[185] Ibid., 92.

[186] Martin Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London: Athlone, 2006), 12.

> …fosters in advance the completely surveyable calculability of the subjugating empowering of being to an accessible arrangement…Modern technicity releases man into the urge towards structuring his massive way of being through which every human particularity is overpowered[.][187]

Deluca notes that environmental strategizing, whether in the reform or radical kind, contributes and is in lockstep with the dictates of machination. Environmental strategy falls victim to and perpetuates machination. For reformists, this involves "setting up headquarters in the political center (Washington D.C.) of global capitalism—arguably the finest manifestation of the logic of machination."[188] For radicals, they have "increasingly relied on managing images and manipulating media,"[189] contributing to grassroots oppositional public relations, which partakes of the logic of machination. Furthermore, the manipulation and dissemination of media itself is machination. "What are the consequence when Greenpeace champions the cause of furry baby harp seals at the neglect of less photogenic indicator species?"[190] Instead, what Heidegger offers is the "admonishment to question what it takes for granted…"[191]

Heidegger's philosophy provides a better kind of environmentalism than that of both the reform and the radical sort. Firstly, he achieves this by setting out new possibilities in terms of 'thinking' shown earlier. Donald Turner discusses Heidegger's

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[187] Ibid.

[188] Deluca, *Thinking with Heidegger*, 77.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid., 77-78.

philosophy as illuminating other modes of thought that might be characterized as being more responsible and caring, providing the groundwork for a way of being that does not set upon the world the demand to extract energy and power. This is the positive aspect of Heidegger that Deluca was apprehensive about, for he regarded Heidegger as only providing the gift of distress and critique. Yet, for Turner "Heidegger valorizes and promotes modes of thinking that are more reticent and observatory, modes that he thinks the Western tradition has neglected."[192] The value in Heidegger's work stems from his distinguishing "the human capacity to let beings show themselves authentically—to let them be—from the human tendency to recognize only what practical use we might make of the world, forcing being into appropriate conceptual and existential forms."[193]

Bringing back to focus the notion of 'thinking,' there is another mode of thinking in addition to 'thanking,' what Heidegger calls 'meditative thinking' (*besinnlichen Denken*). Meditative thinking, for Heidegger, "demands of us not to cling one-sidedly to a single idea, nor to run down a one-track course of ideas."[194] This kind of thinking allows for an openness of interpreted meanings, and is not 'one-sidedly' concerned with profit or loss. For example, when I view a tree and think about it in a calculative manner, I may think about it in terms of material for shelter, firewood to keep me warm, safety

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[192] Donald Turner, "Humanity as Shepherd of Being: Heidegger's Philosophy and the Animal Other," in *Heidegger and the Earth: Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, ed. Ladelle McWhorter and Gail Stenstad (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 160.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 53.

from predators, an obstruction to my path, etc. The tree is reduced to human needs. However, when I view a tree without merely relating it to my needs, I allow it to be what it is in its own multiform way. In meditative thinking, I am released *from* the calculative treatment of entities, and released *to* a pure, un-defined presence. Both modes of thanking and meditative thinking, Turner writes:

> …are markedly reticent and reluctant to proclaim final and decisive ontological defintions and value assessments, and they involved pausing to reflect or meditate upon being before making presumptive reckonings or calculations, free of the 'illusion…that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct.'[195]

In other words, these modes of thinking eschew hastiness, and promote calm and careful considerations; they call for patient listening. How exactly does this affect the environment, and how does this contribute to environmentalism?

Heidegger regards human beings as shepherds of Being, and as such, Heidegger promotes a thinking that heeds protectively. To see how he comes to this conclusion, let us look at Heidegger's account of 'dwelling'. Dwelling can mean either originary dwelling, one which is poetic, as in the line from Hölderlin:

> Humans dwell on this earth
> Full of merit, but also poetically.

Or dwelling can mean unpoetic dwelling, the constitutive way of being in our present age due to an excess of "raging measuring and calculating."[196] In Heidegger's "Building,

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[195] Ibid.

[196] Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze. Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7, quoted in Hanspeter Padrutt, "Heidegger ad Ecology" from *Heidegger & the Earth: Essays in Environmnetal Philosophy* ed. by Ladelle McWhorter and Gail Stenstad (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 17.

Dwelling, Thinking", poetic dwelling is defined in terms of how mortals "rescue the earth." Hanspeter Padrutt identifies two senses of 'to rescue'. Rescuing (saving) is understood not only as (i) "a rescuing of something from danger," but also (ii) as "freeing something into its own way of being."[197] When man dwells poetically, we "spare, protect, and preserve (*shonen*) the 'fourfold' of earth, sky, god, and humans."[198] Dwelling poetically therefore means preserving, or 'safeguarding' the fourfold in terms of freeing it into its own way of being." Interestingly, the Greek word for 'dwell' is *oikeo*, from which it is derived from *oikos* meaning 'house' or 'household,' from which the word 'ecology' has its origin.

To preserve and safeguard the fourfold presupposes that we are in such a shepherding position to begin with. Recall earlier Heidegger's re-working of what it means to be human in terms of 'ek-sisting'. According to Mario Wenning, to 'ek-sist' means to step "outside not only with regard to particular objects, but with respect to Being in general."[199] This new way of characterizing the human being does not signal a new trajectory for Heidegger, but as Padrutt observes with Heidegger's earlier work in BT, "the basic thrust in *Being and Time* is a *shifting*, whereby what philosophy up to now has displaced into the self-enclosed place of consciousness is shifted in the open expanse

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[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid., 18.

[199] Mario Wenning, "Heidegger and Zhuangzi on the nonhuman: Towards a transcultural critique of (post) humanism," In *Asian Perspectives on Animal Ethics: Rethinking the Nonhuman*, ed. Neil Dalal and Chloë Taylor (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 96.

of the *Da*."[200] Heidegger's reworking of what it means to be human was to displace Cartesianism and 'homocentricm,' and it ran through all of his works. In ek-sisting, we are involved in an activity; ek-sisting is a way and a verb. If our essence is not a 'what,' but a 'way,' then there are certain implications for the nonhuman world. But first, how does Heidegger regard the nonhuman world?

In Heidegger's *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, a book composed of lectures given in the years 1929-1930, Heidegger provides his first major treatment of topics concerning the definition of organisms, animal behavior, and environment (i.e., the nonhuman). In his attempt to answer the question concerning "What is World?", Heidegger offers a comparative analysis of three guiding theses:

1. The Stone is Worldless
2. The Animal is Poor in World
3. Man is World-Forming

The comparative analysis unfolds by focusing on a perspective, namely on the specific relation that each subject in question (stone, animal, man) has toward the world. Starting with the middle thesis, that the animal is poor in world, Heidegger states that the animal is poor, suggesting poverty as opposed to richness. Poverty entails the possession of something less. Less of what? Less concerning the notion of accessibility, "of whatever

[200] Hanspeter Padrutt, "Heidegger ad Ecology," from *Heidegger & the Earth: Essays in Environmnetal Philosophy* ed. by Ladelle McWhorter and Gail Stenstad (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 24.

as an animal it can deal with, of whatever it can be affected by as an animal, of whatever it can relate to as a living being."[201] Lesser in relation to who?

For Heidegger, the range of accessibility for an animal is lesser than that of man. Heidegger claims that animals are driven primarily by instincts, with their behavior governed by the 'reflex arc,' a stimulus-response mechanism directed toward some end. Heidegger summarizes this as a driven performance (*Treiben*). Further, this driven performance results from animals' being intrinsically absorbed and locked into themselves, from being captivated (*benommen*) with their own instinctual preoccupations. What results, according to Heidegger, is the inability for animals to grasp something *as* being present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*), or as something explicit in terms of understanding it in bare facts. In other words, animals cannot recognize something as being present, even if that something in question *is* present. For example, if a bee sucks up honey from a bowl, it will get to a point where it is met with the presence of having too much honey. However, it does not recognize it *as such*, but the presence becomes something too much for the bee to cope with, in which case it will stop sucking. However, if the abdomen is removed while it is sucking the honey from the bowl, it will continue to carry out its behavior regardless of the fact of there *being too much honey*; it continues with the driven activity because the belly fails to get full, which then fails to signal satiety.

[201] Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 193.

As opposed to poverty, man is rich; man can recognize the presence of something as such, and can populate and deepen his range of accessible things which can be dealt with. Unlike man, the animal is primarily trapped inside its own limited instincts, fated to perform a behavior directed toward some end. Additionally, man can override any sense of drivenness. Man can short-circuit the inertia of instinctual urges and develop himself beyond what an animal can, a point shared and encouraged within humanism. These three notions, of being able to recognize presence as such, of being able to extend worlds, and of being able to override instinct, seem to suggest a fundamental difference between man and animal, with man higher up on the chain of being.

However, even though man is higher up on a chain of being, Heidegger's re-working of the what it means it be human, and his philosophy in general, signals a reversal of the human-world relationship: emphasizing passivity over activity, and letting-be over technical manipulation. Keeping human uniqueness in place, however, Heidegger then reorients everything else in such a way that this fact does not go to our heads. As Wenning notes, this calls for the "gradual replacement of anthro- or Dasein-centrism with pastoral-centrism."[202] Heidegger's vision of human uniqueness cancels out any sense of conceit by defining humanity as shepherd and not as exploiter. Yet, according to Wenning, this alone already commits the original sin of humanism. I agree, and that is just fine. There is nothing inherently wrong with viewing humanity as unique. Keeping uniqueness in place helps to retain dignity in the face of the levelling and

[202] Wenning, *Heidegger and Zhuangzi*, 97.

deflating powers that be. What are the roles of a shepherd regarding the nonhuman? Shepherds can either let it be, protect it, or allow it to flourish.

Returning to dwelling, Heidegger's work contributes to a positive ecological message with this sense of shepherding in mind. Padrutt identifies the phrase 'Coming-Forth Holding-in-Reserve' to be of importance in the connection between Heidegger's work and ecology/environmentalism. For Heidegger, the Greeks in the classical age "caught sight of the sayable from out of a 'coming-forth holding-in-reserve."[203] This echoes the Parmenidean dictum earlier that one should both say and think that Being *is*. The notion of 'coming-forth holding-in-reserve' is the "way in which mortals are to dwell in language."[204] Firstly, holding-in-reserve means 'holding-back' from naïve prejudice and rash theorizing; it means suspending all judgements and leaving all definitions pending. Secondly, according Padrutt 'coming-forth' fits:

> 1. …with what is unpretentiously own—unsaid and unthought, unexpected—to the 'originary' in future and in history.
>
> 2. …with what is called 'fore-running' into the possibility of death in *Being and Time*, which—when called by the call of conscience—ensures the 'disclosedness' in any given 'situation' and is not confused with a rash, breakneck leap.[205]

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[203] Martin Heidegger, "Markings," quoted in Hanspeter Padrutt, "Heidegger ad Ecology," in *Heidegger & the Earth: Essays in Environmnetal Philosophy* ed. by Ladelle McWhorter and Gail Stenstad (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 21.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid., 22.

Thus, this idea of the 'coming-forth holding-in-reserve' helps us elucidate the safeguarding of the fourfold in terms of not exploiting it, letting it be, pausing and allowing its phenomenal presence to flood the moment with new features previously foreclosed on because of rashness and hastiness. Padrutt finds this notion to be a fitting designation for ecological concerns, for what is at issue is a "fundamental comportment of self-effacement, respect, and joining in with a broader connectedness, on that bears us up and withdraws itself from our control."[206]

The responsible shepherd must bear in mind, however, that human beings still sustain themselves by transforming the earth through work. Is this at odds with shepherding the fourfold, and does this outrun machination? Gerry Gill gives an interesting reading of Heidegger's 1936 essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art." In it, Heidegger clarifies the distinction between 'earth' and 'world.' Gill departs from Heidegger's intent to discuss the ways in which great works of art "bring a specific historical way of life into being."[207] Instead, the author intends to focus his scope on concepts relating to the issues related to the concept of 'landscape.' For Heidegger, the world is a familiar realm of human engagement and activity, including the artifacts of such activity. The world is not to be seen as a composite of present-at-hand objects, but rather as the summation of the activity of 'worlding.' Heidegger writes,

> World is the ever-nonobjective to which we are subject as long as the paths of birth and death, blessing and curse keep us transported into Being. Wherever

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[206] Ibid.

[207] Gary Gill, "Landscape as Symbolic Form: Remembering Thick Place in Deep Time," *Critical Horizons* 3, no. 2 (2002): 183, doi: 10.1163/156851602760586644.

> those decisions of our history that relate to our essential being are made, are taken up and abandoned by us, go unrecognized and are discovered again by new enquiry, there the world worlds.[208]

The world is a 'place' where particular ways of being and dwelling, with its possibilities and limits, comes into being. On the other hand, the earth is that upon which worlds and worlding can occur. "The earth is that which sustains and shelters. Earth is irreducibly spontaneous, is effortless and untiring. Upon earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world."[209]

The relationship between the two, however, is one of strife. Heidegger writes that the world, "in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it."[210] Such that the "opposition of world and earth is strife."[211] Gill notices that many radical environmentalist take from this the intent to remove the strife in its entirety. Yet, a more realistic alternative must be fleshed out. Granted, the opposite of technical mastery is caring and letting-be; Gill notices that this strife is "an inevadable part of the human condition."[212] Recall earlier in Chapter 1 White's historical account of agriculture. In utilizing the less harmful scratch-plow, agrarian societies nevertheless were transforming the earth through work. In the

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[208] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings*, ed., D. F. Krell, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), quoted in. Gill, Gerry. "Landscape as Symbolic Form: Remembering Thick Place in Deep Time," Critical Horizons 3, no. 2 (2002): 183, doi:10.1163/156851602760586644.

[209] Ibid., 183-184.

[210] Ibid., 184.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Gill, *Landscape as Symbolic Form*, 185.

hypothetical golden-age before the fall into so-called humanism and exploitation, there was still strife of some sort. The word strife is not a bad word, only the destructive kind of strife is at issue. Furthermore, the problem arises when strife is no longer sustained, and when equal tension between world and earth is lost. Gill explains:

> Rather than contrasting caring for the earth with mastering and manipulating it, the crucial discrimination is between destructive modes of strife and those which preserve it and allow it to maintain its health.[213]

Provided that strife is inevitable and inevadable, it provides a more nuanced and realistic account of our shepherding role. A generalized, laissez-fare account of caring is too vague: we must realize that some 'harm' will come about in our strife, in our transforming the earth through work. Is this the same as machination? Not necessarily. So long as the strife maintains and 'sustains' equal tension between world and earth, and so long as we are circumspect to not level off Being into calculative explainability, then we outrun machination. In our dealings with non-human objects, we as shepherds must be careful to 'sustain' that healthy strife.

There are also implications in our dealings with non-human animals in our role as shepherds. As Turner observes, the whole enterprise of Agribusiness has up to now framed "individual non-human animals as units of potential value from which businesses seek maximum yield at minimum expense, granting these animals only that meagre care and maintenance that promotes this economic imperative."[214] Turner shows how

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[213] Ibid.

[214] Turner, *Humanity as Shepherd*, 161.

Heidegger's philosophy helps counter the justifications for mechanized agribusiness based on non-human animal's incapability of self-awareness and rationality. How? By requiring of us to "encounter the non-human animal in a pre-cognitive openness to the demand of a needful Other."[215] If in our role as a shepherd we approach non-human animals without pre-figuring or pre-conceiving, with the kind of openness and reticence to an "original but neglected sense of mystery when faced with the other animal, which, like a human, has subjective experience…we will hesitate before issuing proclamations about their being or calculations of their value."[216] Turner claims that by encountering the animal other in this way, as a consequence it will require us to cease rendering them up for consumption.

In a concrete way, how might we shepherd non-human animals? In our three roles as shepherd (protecting, letting be, allowing to flourish), we might better embody such roles by the creation and maintenance of wildlife areas; to create conditions in which non-human animals could live out more authentically with minimal human interference. Although, Turner notes along with Gill, the role of the shepherd requires more imagination than just a "generally protective but laissez-faire approach to other animals."[217] For that the human and non-human animals' worlds have and always will be entangled with each other such that it will require of is to examine and come up with new possibilities for living with them. The modes of thinking Heidegger suggests, along with

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[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid., 162.

[217] Ibid.

an ‘openness to the mystery’ (*Offenheit für das Geheimnis*) can provide the solution by opening up new, un-thought possibilities of dwelling in the world with ourselves and with non-human animals.

However, this position of shepherding, Turner notes, comes with a caveat. For the very reason that humans possess a kind of power over the non-human animal’s being and world, we should be wary of just how we go about our shepherding, because we may do more harm than good. Humans have the ability to either significantly expand or contract the worlds of non-human animals. For example, in the case of teaching sign language to apes, we can expand the world for an ape that was hitherto unavailable. Yet, as in the case of factory farming, we can significantly contract the world of a chicken by merely providing it with a living space only the size of a beverage coaster. Regarding living spaces in zoos, Turner observes, we can house animals in primitive metal cages, or in caged environments “designed to more closely resemble the animal’s natural habitat.”[218] We run the risk of contracting worlds by the various ways in which we house animals in zoos and wildlife areas. Additionally, the zoo environment itself and the purpose of showcasing contracts the scope the non-human animals’ world by delimiting their purpose as being merely for the sake of human amusement and entertainment. Therefore, with our role as shepherds, we must take careful measure to not conceive of ourselves as lords but as guardians, to be circumspect regarding our ability to expand and

[218] Ibid., 163.

contract worlds, and to "preserve animals' mystery and to allow natural and authentic modes of their being to flourish."[219]

If there is a practical ground-plan for doing something about our environmental condition, then it must involve a tremendous amount of circumspection and imagination. It will require us to be 'thoughtful,' and to not seek easy answers which might lead toward machination. In conclusion, Sharon Harvey provides two practical guides for environmental problem-solving which are 'thoughtful' alternatives taken from Heidegger's work. Firstly, to *keep meditative thinking alive*. How we do so practically might be to "increase opportunities for artistic/poetic exercise in environmental awareness."[220] An example of awareness raising by means of art is presented in Stuart Grant's article "Performing from Heidegger's Turning." The project *Coastal Scales*—a collaboration between the EPA and various groups including Indigenous scholars and environmental scientists— "entails a series of mobile site-specific performances" which are performed in various geographic locations, including salt marshes, industrial graveyards, and semi-reconstituted scrubland.[221] With the use of performance art, one of

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[219] Ibid.

[220] Sharon R. Harvey, "Environmental Problem-Solving and Heidegger's Phenomenology: Addressing Our Technical Relation to Nature," *Environmental Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2009): 68, url: http://ezproxy.libraries.wright.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=phl&AN=PHL2148091&site=eds-live.

[221] Stuart Grant, "Performing from Heidegger's Turning," *Performing Ethos: International Journal Of Ethics In Theatre & Performance* 5, no. 1-2 (2015): 38, doi: 10.1386/peet.5.1-2.371.

the project's intent was to bring awareness to space and place, making known the strife between earth and world.

Another way to keep meditative thinking alive is to "exchange the predominate posture of power for voluntary humility."[222] Another might be to actively encourage and sponsor nature retreats. Perhaps high-ranking officials in the Oil industry might do well to go snorkeling or deep-sea diving in the Gulf of Mexico with the aid of a trained marine biologist before deciding to build another offshore drilling rig. A second 'thoughtful' alternative Harvey suggests is to *limit utilitarian and industrial approaches to nature*. Against machination, this might entail exposing "the drawbacks of cost-benefit analyses and risk assessment measures in their current forms for environmental problem-solving."[223] Another might be to "develop environmental auditing that includes meditative thinking."[224] Finally, in order to offset the understanding of science as solely a quantitative process by permitting "greater receptivity to the qualitative inputs of the social sciences for providing balanced environmental assessments."[225] We could argue for a *radical heterogeneity* in our environmental scientific assessments, preventing only one mode of scientific inquiry from hogging the microphone, and to promote multiple modes discoursing. The quantitative-scientific way of encountering is just one way of

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[222] Harvey, *Environmental Problem-Solving*, 69.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Ibid., 70.

encountering, and we would do well to not totalize and prevent the input of other disciplines within the social sciences.

VI. CONCLUSION

My thesis intersects with multiple areas of concern including environmentalism, humanism, technology, exploitation, and environmental-problem solving with the aid of Heidegger's philosophy. Particularly, my intention was to challenge the kind of environmentalism which charges humanism, and thereby technology, with being responsible for our current environmental condition. In the first section, I charted the "problem" of humanism, the notion that humanism is the root of environmental issues. Utilizing the insights of Hinchman, an alternative and proper conception of humanism was presented by locating it within its own historical and civic tradition. The humanism that the environmentalist attacks is 'homocentrism.' Humanism proper is concerned with those very issues and themes that the environmentalist shares, namely the disenchantment of nature, technocratic problem solving in political affairs, the worry over the totalizing power of Galilean physics, and the preservation of the humanities.

In the second section, I presented Heidegger's critique of humanism. Why? As a way of reformulating what it means to be human and the word 'humanism' so as to deflect the charges levelled by the environmentalist. Heidegger's critique does not render him an anti-humanist, rather it shows him to be more aligned with humanism proper as presented in section one: the concern of preserving human dignity and the concern over a totalizing mono-discourse. Homocentrism is Heidegger's target, but he is friendly

towards humanism proper, and ultimately towards environmentalism. In the third section, I followed along with Heidegger's thinking in *The Question Concerning Technology*, in which we arrive at the origin of the exploitative mood. The origin lies in a way of revealing granted by Being, yet man is complicit in the revealing. However, neither can be singled out for moral blame, and to do so is counter-productive.

In the final section, with the aid of various thinkers, I showed how Heidegger's thinking challenges environmental problem-solving. It was shown that environmentalists are victim to what they claim to be against, namely anthropocentrism, Cartesianism, technicity and machination. I also showed how Heidegger's philosophy provides for a better kind of environmentalism that attempts to outrun the shortcomings of modern environmental problem-solving. How? By promoting new modes of thinking which are careful, reticent, imaginative, and responsible. However, this other way does not deflate human significance: humans *are* an important being in Being's unfolding, though this does not result in exploitative anthropocentrism, but in a careful and responsible pastoral-centrism.

What is needed in environmentalism today is precisely the kind of 'thinking' that Heidegger proffers. The technocratic bureaucrat and eco-warrior alike would do well to pause and reflect on their presuppositions. Perhaps more so for the latter, for having taken the moral high-ground, they are less likely to reassess their position; they believe and are adamant that they are the purveyors of environmental wisdom and the univocal voice for tree and beast.

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