George Pattison, The Later Heidegger, London: Routledge, 2001.

Chapter 1

Is there a later Heidegger?

The danger and the turning

In December 1949 Martin Heidegger, banned from lecturing in the University of Freiburg on account of his involvement with Nazism, gave a series of four addresses to 'The Club' in Bremen, a gathering of business and professional people who, for the most part, had no great interest in or understanding of philosophy, but who were happy to turn out to hear a man known as their country's most influential living philosopher. In these lectures Heidegger spoke of the danger hanging over the present age. This was already the era of the Atomic Bomb and the beginning of the Cold War, in which the possibility of a catastrophic nuclear exchange was a continuous threat to the peoples of the world, and especially to those of Central Europe. Perhaps Heidegger's non-philosophical auditors may have heard in his words a reference to that situation, and perhaps he was himself happy to use the rhetorical force of such an allusion to win a hearing for his argument, but the danger with which Heidegger

was chiefly concerned operated on another level altogether. This danger was neither Russian Communism, nor American capitalism, nor the prospect of all-out war between them, but, in Heidegger's own formulation 'The coming to presence of Enframing is the danger.' (QT: 41) What did he mean? In order to answer this question, let us look, firstly, at what Heidegger means by the odd-sounding term 'enframing'.

'Enframing', in Heidegger's sense of the word, is not unconnected with the world of technology for whose darker possibilities the Atomic Bomb was, at that time, the most potent symbol. Nevertheless, as Heidegger many times insists, enframing is not itself anything technological. Very provisionally, we may say that it is something like the mind-set underlying modern technology. However, 'enframing' is not only manifested in such things as atomic bombs, televisions or washing-machines, but is equally present in culture and everyday life. When we talk of 'the culture industry' or 'quality time' or of being 'consumers of the countryside' we are revealing the influence of enframing on our way of thinking. And, quite apart from such threats as nuclear war and environmental degradation, the 'danger' of which Heidegger spoke would still, in his terms, remain. For the danger is in enframing itself, not in the success or failure of the technology that it sustains or in the malign application of that technology.

As the mind-set that underlies the rise of technology and that permeates our daily habits of speech and thought, enframing is Heidegger's term for a way of objectifying our world and our experience (including our experience of ourselves) in such a way as to make what is enframed available for our use, manipulable and transformable in the service of designated goals and purposes. Put like this, it may sound as if enframing is merely shorthand for the human ambition of achieving dominion over nature. That is how it may seem both to those who are the agents of enframing and to many of those who see themselves as its enemies. However, as Heidegger understands it, the roots of enframing in some sense precede 'man', and certainly precede 'man' as conceived by post-Renaissance humanism. Humanism, with its slogan 'Man, the measure of all things', is not the cause of the situation but its expression. The origin of

enframing does not lie in any human act, but, Heidegger says, hails from a destining of primordial Being.

With this enigmatic assertion we are already confronted with two of the key terms of the later Heidegger, 'destining' and 'Being', and we are already face to face with the problems of translation that have dogged the reception of Heidegger in the English-speaking world. 'Destining' translates the German term *Geschick*, which has the twofold meaning of 'destiny' and 'suitability' or 'capacity' – and Heidegger intends both of these meanings to be heard in his use of the word. 'Destining' is therefore not simply a destiny or fate imposed on the world from outside, but suggests a self-adaptation on the part of Being to the way the world is, making its self-giving and self-disclosure suitable to the capacities of those who receive it. It is therefore a two-way process. But what is 'Being' that is the source of this destining? Being is, of course, a key word in the Western philosophical vocabulary, the meaning of which has been widely debated and contested. For some philosophers it has been virtually a synonym for God, whilst others have spoken of it more as the substratum of the world, or the most abstract of all possible categories. I shall look more closely at Heidegger's use of the term in the following section, noting for now only the general point that, for Heidegger, the question of Being is the question that most of all needs to be thought about by philosophers, the question that decides how things are for us and for our world.

But if enframing is a destining of Being, and is therefore a self-adaptation of Being to our capacities, where does the danger lie? Surely whatever comes to us from Being must reflect the way things are and, therefore, be in some sense true? So it may seem; yet, whilst Heidegger says that enframing comes from or is an event within Being, he also says that it shrouds Being in oblivion. In other words, when we are immersed in seeing the world as enframed, there is a real possibility that we fail to see or to understand what it is for Being truly to be.

What then is to be done?

Such a question may seem like a natural response to any perceived danger – but what if it already betrays a humanistic, action-oriented perspective that is itself an expression of enframing?

However, if waking up to the danger we're in is not a call to action – what is it? A call to thinking, maybe: and, if the danger is ultimately rooted in Being, that must mean a call to attend thinkingly to what is going on in Being itself. Heidegger liked to quote some words of Hölderlin: 'Where danger is, grows also that which saves'. The implication of these words is that, if becoming aware of the danger of the oblivion of Being directs us to attend more urgently to the question of Being, then, paradoxically, the danger itself may in the long term prove to be of service to Being. The paradox is that precisely because enframing prevents us from seeing Being, Being is protected from us. Neglected, even abandoned, Being is left to itself. Yet, Heidegger's argument continues, for this to happen, or for the situation to be understood in this way, enframing will have to be seen for what it really is, and therefore the danger will have to be seen for the danger that it is. However, because this cannot occur as the result of human planning, willing or doing (since these are already compromised by their entanglement in enframing), it can only occur as the outcome of an event within Being itself, and 'When and how it will come to pass ... no one knows. Nor is it necessary that we know.' (QT: 41) Our task is not to secure for ourselves a clear and distinct knowledge of Being but 'to be the one who waits, the one who attends upon the coming to presence of Being in that in thinking he grounds it. Only when man, as the shepherd of Being, attends upon the truth of Being can he expect an arrival of a destining of Being' (QT: 42).

What is to be looked for, then, is a turning, a reversal, that is both a turning in Being and a turning in humanity: in Being in that its oblivion is transformed into a safekeeping, in humanity in that we are transformed from *homo faber*, man the maker, Lord of creation and Master of the Universe, into the Shepherd of Being, the one who waits. 'Perhaps,' Heidegger muses, 'we stand already in the shadow cast ahead by the advent of *this* turning' (QT: 41).

What the business and professional people of Bremen made of this we do not know, but, if there is a single issue that can be said to constitute the centre around which the thinking of the later Heidegger revolves, then the question and expectation of this 'turning' would have a good claim to consideration. For, from the 1930s onwards, Heidegger is continually preoccupied with the

danger that he sees as threatening modern civilisation and with the hope that there might yet be a new event within the history of Being itself that would, in some as yet undefined way, save us from the danger and from ourselves.

In focusing on this theme of the turning we have already run on ahead of ourselves. In arriving so quickly at 'the centre' of the later Heidegger we have put in play terms and topics that remain unexplained, and we have, inevitably, left much out. Nothing has been said so far about the later Heidegger's paramount concern for language, or about the role of language in enabling the turning of which he speaks to come to pass – yet some commentators would say that the philosophy of the later Heidegger is nothing if not a philosophy of language. And there are other themes, too, that we have not broached, or that lie submerged and unremarked in what has been said thus far. There is, then, a lot to do in terms of clarifying and amplifying these few introductory pages, and such clarification and amplification is, in essence, the burden of the remainder of this book. At the same time it is worth remembering that, at one level, the heart of Heidegger's later thinking *can* be reached quite quickly and stated quite simply (if not exactly perspicuously). For it is important to Heidegger that the kind of waiting upon Being to which we are called is not something that can only be reached or constructed as the result of a protracted and complex chain of reasoning or by the acquisition of new knowledge. Instead, he aims to make us look again at what we already know, to see what is already within the compass of our possible experience, but to which, intoxicated by the fantastic results achieved by enframing, we fail to attend. As Heidegger said many times, it is the simplest things that are hardest to think, and the nearest things that are most remote – yet it is just these to which his philosophy wishes to lead us.

The motif of the 'turning' is, I have claimed, central to the thought of the later Heidegger. But does the thought of the later Heidegger itself represent a 'turning': a turning-away from the existential analysis of Dasein that was the focus of *Being and Time*, and a turning towards the kind of ruminations upon the history of Being to which the lecture on 'The Turning' has already introduced us? And, if we are justified in speaking of such a turning in Heidegger's own career, what exactly does that mean? Does it mean that at a certain point

Heidegger simply abandoned the complex of questions and methods that found their fullest expression in *Being and Time*? Or does it mean that the same questions were carried over but subordinated to other, newer questions, or were subjected to different methodological treatment? How much continuity, and how great a discontinuity is there between the earlier and the later Heidegger? Are we in fact justified in talking about the later Heidegger at all? Or should we be ultra-cautious and follow those scholars who speak of an early, a middle and a late Heidegger? In any case, are these divisions, breaks and paradigm-shifts things that can be dated precisely or tied to particular works? So just what is meant by the later Heidegger?

Since an adequate answer to such questions would presuppose a substantive interpretation of Heidegger's work as a whole, I shall for now simply sketch some of the reasons why I believe that we are justified in speaking of the 'later Heidegger'. These amount to the view that there is a complex of themes, methods, topics and even stylistics that, taken together, define a distinctive body of writing that can be read and studied in relative independence from the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, and that this body of writing constitutes in its own right a particular (and a particularly important) position in the twentieth-century philosophical landscape. There are those, of course, who contest whether these writings can genuinely be called philosophical at all, a challenge to which I shall return in the final section of this book.

The earlier and the later Heidegger

In attempting to define more closely what is meant by the later Heidegger, we must identify both the continuities and the discontinuities that shape Heidegger's philosophical career. But we also have to ask why Heidegger 'turned', and to say what the philosophical motivations were that led him to direct his thought in the new ways opened up by his 'turn'. Let us take these points one at a time, beginning with the question as to the discontinuities that separate the later from the earlier Heidegger.

As Heidegger himself and many of his commentators since have stated, one crucial area of discontinuity concerns the way in which the question of Being is addressed.

Being and Time opened with a clarion call to philosophy to reopen the question of Being, a question that, Heidegger claimed, had been forgotten by contemporary philosophers. In such a situation, in which the question of Being is no longer asked, the very first challenge facing anyone seeking to reopen it is: where to begin? How can one ask such a big question without any kind of philosophical context in which to ask it?

True, says Heidegger, philosophy as it is now studied and taught in universities is not engaging with this question and can give us very little by way of a direct lead, but this does not mean that we are entirely without resources. After all, even philosophers still participate in the average, everyday discourses in which human beings talk amongst themselves about themselves. Now, human beings are precisely those beings for whom their own being is an issue, who can ask what it is for them to be, what their being *means*, and who are thus, essentially, describable as *Da-sein* (literally: 'there-being'), beings in whom the question of Being is brought out into the open, brought out 'there' into the public space of the world. Now even though human beings, Dasein, are for the most part immersed in the daily round and common task and are caught up in the idle chatter of average everydayness, what they say about themselves, their hopes, fears, plans and projects, does reveal to an appropriately attuned listener what their being means to them. Even if Dasein's everyday self-understanding is only the expression of the mumbling confessions of unfulfilled lives, we can deduce from these confessions what it is that Dasein considers would count as full and authentic Being, what Dasein has it in itself to be – even if, for the most part, it falls far short of realising its own possibilities. The disclosure of authentic Being that occurs when Dasein confronts its own finitude and death and resolutely accepts its utter immersion in the raging flux of time that carries it inescapably towards its death provides philosophy with a basis from which to sketch a horizon for the interpretation of Being as such.

This account became definitive for what became known in Germany as the philosophy of existence and subsequently played a decisive role in the shaping of French existentialism. In the most popular version of existentialism, as propounded by Jean-Paul Sartre, Heidegger's Dasein was identified more or

less unproblematically with the individual human subject, becoming an angst-ridden version of the Cartesian ego – 'Existentialism is a Humanism' as the title of one of Sartre's popularising works put it. The human subject, in this view, is defined by the fact that his existence precedes his essence. Rather than being determined by some pre-existing 'human nature' (as both Christian theology and scientific anthropology would have it), the individual is simply the sum of his own actions, actions issuing from a radical and undefinable freedom. Everything – absolutely everything – in our lives is what it is as the outcome or expression of a free act – 'there are no accidents', Sartre declared. Fairly obviously, despite humanism's long-standing affirmation of human freedom, such an account goes well beyond anything traditional humanism had dared to say. Sartre is uncompromising in his rejection of any objectivising or essentialising interpretation of the human situation, whether theological, scientific, sociological, psychological or philosophical. Our freedom – and that means our very identity – is rooted solely in an upsurge of nothingness, a vortex of indeterminacy in the midst of the congealed mass of Being-in-itself that is the world. However, this passionate advocacy of the primacy of freedom not only leads Sartre to oppose conventional theories of human identity, it also brings him into conflict with everyday moral discourse. Like Heidegger, Sartre regards human beings as typically evasive in face of their own possibility for free self-affirmation. We characteristically talk about our own behaviour and that of others in terms that blunt the razor edge of radical freedom. We ascribe our conduct or our attitudes, our achievements or our failures, to our nationality, our class, our gender, our upbringing or our lack of a private income. We might, for example, dismiss Sartre's whole philosophy as the expression of a pampered male bourgeois intellectual occupying a particular time and place in French cultural life. That, we might think, 'explains' Sartre. And if we catch ourselves behaving badly, we always have a set of mitigating circumstances to hand: I was drunk, I was tired, I was frightened, I was seduced, we say – meaning: I didn't mean it, it wasn't my fault. But that, says Sartre, is fake, or, as he put it, acting 'in bad faith'. The truth is that we are always responsible for everything, and even the Resistance fighter who has been tortured beyond the

point of endurance is responsible for betraying his comrades. There are no excuses. We decide, by our actions, each for ourselves, who we are and the values we live by.

Given that, in the popular imagination at least, Sartre owed his central insights to Heidegger, this seemed to be the outcome of Heidegger's own phenomenological analysis of the human situation in *Being and Time.* However, Heidegger himself did not see it that way. Although he was personally interested in the possibility of meeting Sartre, his repudiation of Sartrean existentialism was spelt out in the 1947 *Letter on Humanism*, a title deliberately referring to Sartre's own *Existentialism is a Humanism*, published the previous year.

Like Sartre, Heidegger is prepared to see the human situation in terms of ontological homelessness, meaning that on this earth we have no abiding home, since we are not embedded in the world as a part of nature. Instead we are, as it were, thrown into the world, into a life we did not choose but which, now we are here, we must choose or, in one of a myriad ways, evade. However, as Heidegger tells the story in 1947, this does not lead to the apotheosis of individual subjective freedom. For Heidegger, it seems, man's thrownness is part of a larger story: 'The human being is ... "thrown" by being itself into the truth of being,' he writes (1998: 252). Our abandonment is not an arbitrary fact, but is to be understood in terms of our abandonment *of* Being and, conversely, of our abandonment *by* Being. This situation confronts us with a certain danger, as we have seen, but it also contains the possibility of a kind of salvation. If, as Heidegger has it, existence is ek-sistence, Dasein's standing-out from a world, it is not simply standing out into the nothingness of freedom (as for Sartre), it is ek-sisting into the nothingness of *Being*, 'ecstatic inherence in the truth of being' (1998: 251).

Sartre had doomed us to the absurd situation of continually seeking to be the ground or foundation of our own Being, to act 'as if a man were author of himself' – although it is impossible to *be* our own self-author, since our freedom, because it is grounded in nothing, cannot establish anything objective. It is neither deducible from any chain of causality nor can it influence any chain of causality. Thus, for Sartre, man is 'a useless passion', whose freedom is bought

at the price of absurdity. In contrast to Sartre, Heidegger now sees our distinctiveness within nature, our radical freedom and the nothingness that is interconnected with it, as issuing in a more positive-sounding possibility: namely, to take upon ourselves the obligation to 'guard the truth of being, in order that beings might appear in the light of being as the beings they are.' (1998: 251) Our standing-out opens a possibility for us to become 'the shepherd of Being.' (1998: 251) At its simplest, then, the outcome is this: 'that in the determination of the humanity of the human being as ek-sistence what is essential is not the human being but being' (1998: 254).

In comparison with the global reversal in our customary philosophical and everyday ways of thinking that this turning from man to Being requires, Sartre's reversal of the priority of existence and essence seems somewhat regional and can be portrayed simply as a bid to replace the objectivising metaphysics of scholastic tradition with a metaphysics of subjectivity, or, to put it crudely, to replace God with humanity. Heidegger's call to us to become 'shepherds of Being', however, points (or so he claims) beyond traditional oppositions of subject vs. object, of humanity vs. God.

In thus drawing a line between his own thought and that of French existentialism, Heidegger is also drawing a line between the concerns that now govern his thinking and what preoccupied him in the days when he could be seen as the principal philosopher of existence. Then it was Dasein that stood in the centre of the picture, and it was as an issue in Dasein's self-understanding that the question of Being was asked. Now it is Being that stands at the centre, and Dasein is 'there' for the sake of Being.

In this way the question of Being, the guiding thread of Heidegger's whole philosophical labour, is transposed into a new key, and we hear of a 'history of Being', a sequence of destinings bestowed upon us from a more-than-human origin that lies beyond everything hitherto known to philosophers as 'Being'. In order to emphasise this Heidegger adopts the archaic spelling 'Seyn' for 'Sein'[1] or writes the term under erasure: ~~Being~~. Such usages emphasise that Being–*Seyn*–~~Being~~. is not a concept or substance, but belongs to a dimension that precedes all conceptualisation and all knowledge.

However, if the *Letter on Humanism* was the most concise and, outside Germany, the most rapidly disseminated testimony to Heidegger's turning, it can by no means be regarded as its beginning. Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s Heidegger had been giving series of lectures in which the trajectory of his changing path of thinking is, at least with hindsight, plainly discernible. Very important here is what was eventually published in 1950 as *On the Origin of the Work of Art*, whilst Heidegger himself placed particular emphasis on his Nietzsche lectures, given in the 1930s and 1940s (although, again, these were not published till 1961). Perhaps most significant of all is the work *Beiträge zur Philosophie: Vom Ereignis* (*Contributions to Philosophy: Concerning the Event*), written between 1936 and 1938, which, together with its companion volume, *Besinnung* (*Mindfulness*), might lay claim to be a 'summa' of the later Heidegger.[2]

Noting, then, that the critique of the philosophy of existence (justifiably or unjustifiably associated with *Being and Time*) in the *Letter on Humanism* was giving expression to a shift that was already well-established in Heidegger's thought, can we identify other differences between the earlier and the later Heidegger in addition to the reordering of priorities as between humanity/Dasein and Being?

Certainly we can discern a fairly clear and fairly widespread shift of thematic focus. *Being and Time* offered a phenomenological analysis of the human situation in terms of 'falling': idle chatter, anxiety, care, resolve, death, guilt and the decisive 'moment of vision' in which past, present and future are repeatedly synthesised into a horizon that enables *Dasein* to project itself upon Being. The later philosophy, by way of contrast, speaks less heroically, its pathos is that of resignation and expectation, and the human subject is no longer the existential hero, riven by angst and confronting nothingness, but the wanderer on forest paths, shepherd of Being, attuned to the joyous hymning of a spiritual homeland, bounded by the fourfold of earth, sky, death and the gods.

In the spirit of such changes Heidegger repeatedly redefines his own task, so that whereas in *Being and Time* and *What is Metaphysics?* (his inaugural lecture in Freiburg in 1929) he seems to be setting about a relaunch of metaphysics, by the early 1930s 'metaphysics' is itself being seen as part of

the problem, and Heidegger prefers to talk simply of 'philosophy'; however, philosophy too turns out to be problematic and by the late 1930s and early 1940s he is experimenting with the term *Besinnung*,[3] until, in *What is Called Thinking?*, he resolves on the simple 'thinking'.

Throughout all these changes, Heidegger's strategy is one of progressive self-critique and defamiliarisation, and yet there seems to be a constant, steady purpose: to break the grip of an over-technical 'school' philosophy that is permeated by the presuppositions of what Heidegger came to call 'enframing' and to provoke the student into a new and original encounter with the matter under consideration. And there are other, no less significant, continuities.

Earlier, we took at face value the rough-and-ready categorisation of *Being and Time* as belonging to the 'philosophy of existence' and, as such, a philosophical forerunner of Sartrean existentialism. However, already in the 1930s Heidegger himself is arguing that it was a mistake to read *Being and Time* in those terms. His project there, he claimed, was not an exercise in the philosophy of existence, nor was it intended as a nihilistic self-affirmation of twentieth-century alienation. Instead it was directed towards a fundamental ontology, i.e., towards Being, not towards humanity. Similarly, in the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger argues that the account of ek-sistence given in *Being and Time* was already conceived in terms of Dasein standing out ecstatically into the truth of Being, rather than into the empty abyss of existential freedom.

It is likewise easy to see an analogy between the later Heidegger's preoccupation with the oblivion of Being in an age of technological enframing and the effort made in *Being and Time* to re-open the question of Being in an age dominated intellectually by positivism and absorbed at an everyday level in the various modes of 'falling' (idle chatter, etc.). In each case the aim is a reawakening of the encounter with Being, even if this is seen from the point of view of the human subject in the one case and from the point of view of the history of Being in the other.

But there are other affinities and analogies between *Being and Time* and the later Heidegger. Take, for example, what Heidegger does with the expression 'there is' (German: 'es gibt', literally: 'it gives'), and the relation between time and Being.

Heidegger's interpretation of this everyday expression shows how our conscious, conceptualising representation of the world relies upon an assumed, background familiarity with Being – that 'there is' something at all – that is never itself thematised in non-philosophical consciousness. The 'there is', he suggests, points directly to just this prereflective acquaintance with Being, and to the situation that the world, that whole realm of beings that concerns us in our scientific enquiries and in our everyday lives alike, is given to us from a source that always eludes the penetrating gaze of rational enquiry.

It is precisely with reference to this expression that the *Letter on Humanism* argues that the germ of the whole later development of the understanding of Being is already present in *Being and Time.* Heidegger acknowledges that in *Being and Time* itself he wrote that 'Only so long as Dasein is, is there [*gibt es*] Being.' However, he now claims that 'the sentence does not say that Being is the product of man'. The Being that 'is there' only in and through Dasein is, he asserts, already conceived as essentially transcendent in relation to Dasein. Being is only 'illumined for man' in the light cast by man's own projects: i.e., it is our questioning and our doing that determine how Being will appear and give itself to us. 'But this projection does not create being' (1998: 257). Furthermore, since *Being and Time* understands Dasein in terms of its thrownness, such that Dasein is never the ground of its own Being, and since also it is only on the basis of this thrown being that Dasein generates its own projects, practical or theoretical as the case may be, 'What throws in such projection is not the human being but being itself, which sends the human being into the ek-sistence of Da-sein that is his essence' (1998: 257).

However, if in such ways we are able to trace lines of continuity running back from the later work to *Being and Time*, such that the later work appears more as deepening or taking further what was begun in *Being and Time* rather than as a 180° turn-about, it does not follow that what may indeed be latent in *Being and Time* is directly stated there as such. Again, Heidegger himself acknowledges that 'For all that, being is thought [in *Being and Time* – GP] on the basis of beings, a consequence of the approach – at first unavoidable – within a metaphysics that is still dominant.' (1998: 256) In other words, the revolution in philosophy that began in *Being and Time* had to start with the

conceptual situation bequeathed to it by the tradition itself. The apparent #8216;humanism' of *Being and Time* may, then, be understood as a concession to the presuppositions of Heidegger's audience, or, perhaps (if we are to believe the *Letter on Humanism*) to the fact that, although the deeper implications of *Being and Time* pointed beyond humanism, Heidegger himself did not fully grasp this, and first had to work through what he had inherited from the past before he could move beyond it.

Time, death and the rhetoric of superiority

A similar picture of continuity/discontinuity emerges if we look at the way in which Being and time are reciprocally defined in the earlier and in the later work respectively.

In 1962 Heidegger gave a lecture 'On Time and Being', the title of which intentionally reverses that of *Being and Time.* The implications of this reversal are not hard to see in the light of what has been said about Heidegger's shift towards a less anthropocentric view. In *Being and Time* itself Being is approached exclusively through historicity, that is, through Dasein's all-pervading temporality. Dasein's view on Being is given only in and through time itself in the form of a 'moment of vision' that enables Dasein to will the synthesis of past, present and future and so (and only so) 'to be'. Being, consequently 'is' for us only insofar as it is grasped from within the radical historicity of the moment of vision. Being is dissolved into time. Reversing the terms, however, yields a very different picture. If we think 'time and Being', then we are taking as our starting point a thoroughly temporalised understanding of the world – that of Heraclitus, perhaps, for whom we can never step twice into the same stream, since all things are perpetually in flux and for whom war is the father of all, meaning that conflict, contradiction and the lack of a conclusion are fundamental features of the world. To think *Being* within such a vision of the world, however, would be to introduce a restraint, to prevent temporality from dissolving into the kind of mere flux propounded by a pupil of Heraclitus who drew the conclusion that it is not even possible to step into the same stream once. It is, in other words, to refuse to allow temporality to be experienced or interpreted as meaningless: time is not mere time because 'there

is' (*es gibt*: it gives) time, such that time itself comes to us as a gift, as a way of being. Thus, whereas the hypothesis of radical historical relativism seems to result in an oblivion of Being, a dissolution of Being into pure flux (a standpoint identified with *Being and Time* on a nihilistic reading of that work), temporality is now conceived as revealing the possibility of a guarding and a protecting, a shepherding of Being.

Yet, if the thrust of 'time-and-Being' seems to be the opposite of 'Being-and-time', there is a certain correspondence between the two formulations. For both are concerned with how Being and time (or time and Being!) can be thought together without distorting or falsifying either. It is not so much a matter of establishing an order of precedence, but of finding a way of thinking both in the unity of their divergence and convergence. Both ways of putting the question show a concern with how meaning can be affirmed when existence is seen in thoroughly temporal terms, and how truth can be affirmed in the face of the consequent threat of historical relativism. It is important, therefore, that when the later Heidegger speaks, as we have heard him speak in the Bremen lectures, of the expectation of a new destining of Being, the fulfilment of this expectation and the advent of such a new destining would not mark the end of history in the sense of bringing history to a stop. At no point does Heidegger even suggest that any future destining of Being would exhaust the possible ways of Being's self-revolutions. Even if it has been a peculiar feature of modern Western thought to conceive of the world historically, and to conceive of history itself as a linear, teleologically determined process, the 'end' of our historical and historicising epoch would not be the end of time itself. Non-historical peoples and cultures also, and in a very real sense, live 'in' history. If – and we shall return to this question later – Heidegger really does believe in the advent of some kind of post-historical utopia, he never conceives of this eschatologically, i.e., as history arriving at some final state, as in some Marxist and Christian versions of the 'end of history'. Obviously, whatever follows such a utopia chronologically can be of very little immediate concern to us, especially as Heidegger speaks of the technological era we inhabit as being likely to continue for a long time to come. The theoretical possibility of the continuation of history after the advent of such a utopia, however, is important for our understanding of Heidegger's thought, since it underlines the point

that Being is not being thought in simple opposition to temporality, as when 'Being' is opposed to 'becoming', but Being is itself temporalised and has itself a history.

We find a similar pattern of continuity and discontinuity if we turn to a topic intimately connected with that of temporality, namely, death. The question of death is undoubtedly one of the pivotal moments in the thought of the early Heidegger. Certainly the popular impact of *Being and Time* owed a great deal to the sheer force of Heidegger's summons to a 'preparedness for death' as the key to authentic existence. In the *Contributions to Philosophy*, however, in the course of repudiating an anthropological or psychological reading of *Being and Time* (which he nevertheless acknowledges has a certain plausibility), Heidegger specifically rejects seeing the burden of that work as a 'philosophy of death' (GA 65: 283). All the same, the question of death remains central. In the *Contributions to Philosophy* itself Heidegger also insists that 'Only humanity "has" the distinction of standing and facing death, because the human being is earnest about Being (*Seyn*): death is the supreme testimony to Being (*Seyn*)' (GA 65: 230). Death opens up the question of Being (GA 65: 284).

It is therefore no surprise when we read that 'death' (or the vision of humanity as 'mortals') is one of the pillars of the fourfold of earth, sky, death (or mortals) and gods that is itself one of the most characteristic envisionings of Being in the later Heidegger.

The role of death in the later Heidegger is well represented by a talk he gave in 1961, when he returned to his native town of Meßkirch and gave a talk on the theme of 'home'. The climax of the talk came when Heidegger asked rhetorically *where* we should go to in order best to reflect on the mystery of our origin, our 'home' in the deepest of senses. His answer was that we should go to the graveyard, 'God's acre': *There* is where we may best practise a remembrance of things past that collates meaning out of the dispersion of temporal existence and the distractedness of modern city life. But such a call to reflective, recollective meditation is very different in tone from the summons to heroic resoluteness in the face of annihilating death found in *Being and Time*, although in each case the encounter with death is what most profoundly highlights the question of Being.

Moving away from substantive theoretical issues, we can also discern significant continuity in many characteristic features of Heidegger's general approach to philosophy.

Thus, Heidegger typically develops his own thought through a stated or implied opposition to what is taken to be a general and virtually unquestioned set of intellectual, indeed metaphysical, assumptions. For, as Heidegger sees it, the apparent oppositions of modern thought and culture betray an underlying unity. Such contraries as scientific positivism/philosophy of life, Aristotelian metaphysics/ Christian theology, Americanism/Communism turn out to share hidden presuppositions of which their various proponents are, for the most part, entirely unaware. Over against this profound uniformity, Heidegger's ever-repeated tactic is to question, to challenge, to provoke, to demand that we 'stop and think', that we question our presuppositions and that we abandon the assumption that we know what reality, truth, Being, human existence are and mean. Often Heidegger proceeds by means of revisionist rereadings of major figures of the tradition, presenting their thought in a new and unexpected light. At other times he resorts to vivid phenomenological descriptions of everyday situations and objects that startlingly defamiliarise our customary view of how things are. Also, notoriously, he conducts experiments with neologisms, etymologies and retranslations of Greek texts that often strike both naive and philosophically sophisticated readers alike as strange and even bizarre. Yet, if this is madness, there is method in it, for Heidegger himself points out that if the question really is how to break out of the constrictions of the prevailing metaphysical tradition, then we cannot argue our way out, since all the forms of argument we could possibly use are familiar to the tradition. We cannot argue our way out, we can only leap – and it is entirely consistent with the discontinuity introduced by such leaps that we land in strange and unfamiliar surroundings. On the far side of the leap, the word looks different.

Yet if all of this is most obviously true of the later Heidegger, it applies no less to *Being and Time.* Perhaps, for us, the shock of the new has in this case subsided, and *Being and Time* has aged into a defining classic of modern continental philosophy. Nevertheless, we should not blind ourselves to the extraordinary originality of that work, a work that, formally and in terms of

content, involves a head-long assault on the conventions of philosophical writing no less radical than the assault by Expressionistic art on the conventions of academic painting, or of Eliot's *The Waste Land* on the prevailing canons of British poetry.

Now, it is, of course, open to question whether the tradition is as uniform or as closed to new possibilities as Heidegger represents it. Nor is this just a matter of being fair to the tradition. It is also a question as to whether Heidegger is in fact making his task easier than it really is. Is his assumption regarding the almost monolithic uniformity of contemporary thought, culture and society a piece of corner-cutting on Heidegger's part, a piece of rhetorically brilliant but intellectually deceptive misrepresentation that facilitates Heidegger's own self-representation as the forerunner of a new epoch of thinking? Do the earlier and the later Heidegger's great simplicities cover up real, and philosophically important, complexities? We shall need to revisit this question at a number of points in what follows, but for now it stands simply as a question put to the earlier and the later Heidegger alike.

Not unconnected with this is the continual polemic running though Heidegger's entire intellectual career against what he sees as the vulgar, derivative, secondary understanding of philosophy and of life typical of his contemporaries. In his recent, influential biography, R. Safranski points out how easy it was for someone of Heidegger's conservative Catholic upbringing and education to see the whole modern world, the world shaped by Enlightenment values and ideas, as decadent and corrupt. However, this attitude of philosophical disdain for the multitude is shaped by many other sources in Heidegger's early development and subsequent career. There was, for example, his intensive reading of Luther, for whom the 'normal' life of the world, even when swinging along in a happy, comfortable way, was 'really' nothing but the expression of smug, self-satisfied, sinful humanity. And there was his encounter with Kierkegaard, who depicted 'the present age' as an age of mediocrity, of prudential reflectiveness and moral cowardice, an age of levelling, dominated by the will to conformity and the subservience of the individual to public opinion as mediated by press and the academy and passed on in the idle chatter that perpetually belittles all greatness and originality. And, of course, the

distinction of the philosophical way of life from that of the multitude, and the understanding of the philosophical vocation as an attempt to break loose from the customary and taken-for-granted but essentially unthinking discourse of the market-place, goes back to the earliest sources of Western philosophy and is very much to the fore in Heidegger's own exegetical lectures of the 1920s on Plato's *Sophist.*

When such sources are fed into the atmosphere of cultural pessimism following the First World War, an era when Spengler's *Decline of the West* became one of the most influential works in the German-speaking world, the ground is laid for a stance of contempt for modern mass society that was typical both of Heidegger and of many of his contemporaries. We shall occasionally touch on the question as to whether Heidegger was essentially a modernist or an anti-modernist thinker, and we should note now that the attitude being described is one that, in this era, was found amongst both modernists and anti-modernists. If Safranski emphasises the conservative Catholic strand in Heidegger's negative reaction to the contemporary world, similar complaints as to its mediocrity, conformity and general meaninglessness are no less frequent in the avant-garde artistic circles to which Heidegger's early work also spoke.

In *Being and Time* itself, Heidegger is careful to emphasise that when he speaks of the average, everyday understanding of existence as 'falling' he is not speaking in the manner of a Christian moralist or invoking any dogmatic idea of the fallenness of human beings. Yet it is hard not to hear something like a tone of moral judgment in Heidegger's account of 'das Man', especially, indeed precisely, because of the possibility of choosing instead the way of authentic existence.

Heidegger's contempt for the crowd is not, however, unqualified. At least, it is not simply a matter of the intellectual élite versus the unlettered many. More decisive, particularly from the 1930s onwards, is the contrast between the rootless, cosmopolitan life of the city and the profound but simple wisdom to which the thinker indeed aspires but that is also shared by, e.g., the Black Forest farmer. The contemporary city man is the 'ape' or 'dupe' of civilisation (1995: 6) yet Heidegger says of his own work that it is 'of the same kind' as that of the farmers. Complementing this valorisation of simple peasant life is

Heidegger's characteristic use of ordinary non-technical German terms or figures of speech, bringing out overlooked or forgotten aspects of their meaning in order to throw light on philosophical problems.

The farmers are, nevertheless, not philosophers, no matter how greatly Heidegger esteems their intuitive wisdom. And, farmers apart, the later Heidegger is no less insistent than the earlier Heidegger, that 'essential thinkers' are 'rare' – so rare perhaps that there can be only one in any generation? (Certainly, Heidegger's closest rivals to the crown of German philosophy, Cassirer and Jaspers, are not regarded by him as essential thinkers, and still less could any of his theological contemporaries, Barth, Bultmann or Tillich, come into the reckoning.)

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

Whether this is too harsh, and whether Heidegger's pathos of superiority fatally undermines the credibility of his thought, are questions to which we shall return, when we have been prepared for them by a more extensive exposition of that thought itself. However, by flagging such criticisms at this point, I hope to pre-empt the suspicion that, in attempting to expound Heidegger in his own terms, I am walking blindfold into the trap set by this most seductive of thinkers.

How, then, can we set about understanding the later Heidegger? How, when so much about his philosophical style might seem to discourage further engagement – and, certainly, to militate against any kind of straightforward

introductory 'guidebook' – how can his work be made accessible without eliminating everything that is distinctively Heideggerian from it?

And there is a further problem arising from the nature of the texts themselves. If the 'early' Heidegger can, more or less justifiably, be identified with one major work, *Being and Time*, the 'later Heidegger' is scattered across a range of works of different types on varied topics. Many of these are lectures and addresses of an occasional nature, not necessarily given to university audiences – although there are also university lecture courses, such as the lectures on Nietzsche of the 1930s and 1940s – and there are the two extraordinary books *Contributions to Philosophy* and *Besinnung*. What, then, should we take as most representative of the later Heidegger? And why?

I have chosen to focus this study on two principal texts. The first originated in a lecture which was subsequently expanded into a series of three lectures (1935–6) and then reworked as a book entitled *On the Origin of the Work of Art* (first published 1950). The lectures provided one of the earliest manifestations of the later Heidegger and, in a highly condensed form, do much to set out the agenda that was to dominate his course for the subsequent decades, providing important insights into the understanding of the relationship between philosophy and art and introducing important elements of the characteristic vocabulary and style of the later work. I have complemented this with the lectures given in Freiburg University in the Winter Semester of 1950–51, published as *What is Called Thinking?* These lectures have a singular place in Heidegger's career, in that they were the first lectures he gave in the university after the ban imposed by the denazification programme but also the last he gave as a salaried professor before his retirement. They therefore mark the final moment of his formal academic career and offer both a retrospective over what has concerned him in the preceding decade-and-a-half and also adumbrate what will continue to concern him in the 1950s and through to his death in 1976.

Yet neither of these texts, nor the two of them taken together, covers every single aspect of the later Heidegger, and to confine our view to what is contained in these texts in a strict sense would result in a very limited understanding of what is going on in his later thought. Heidegger himself insisted that the standard

edition of his collected works should bear the motto 'ways not works', a motto that evokes the supremely Heideggerian metaphorics of endless wanderings along forest paths: paths that trail off into impenetrable undergrowth, requiring us to retrace our steps, or that unexpectedly debouch onto clearings flooded with light, from where we are able to look around and take our bearings. In the spirit of such metaphorics I am not taking these texts as compendia that 'contain' the whole of the later Heidegger, but as paths on which we not infrequently encounter sign-posts leading to other paths, indicating questions, topics and aspects of the history of philosophy not immediately present in the texts themselves. In this way I hope both to have a sufficiently firm grounding in the texts to help the student using them as textbooks, and also to open a larger perspective for those with a more general interest in the later Heidegger.

It is, I believe, important in reading the later Heidegger to attempt such a larger perspective, and not to allow a single topic, passage or even word to be elevated to the status of interpretative be-all and end-all, as if what he did with the expression 'there is' or the word 'event' ('Ereignis') provided a single, simple key to the burden of the later philosophy. George Steiner once wrote that music could well serve to illustrate some of the fundamental traits of Heidegger's thought, and, although (as Steiner admitted) Heidegger himself did not claim this, the suggestion is useful, if we understand it in a very precise way. It certainly should not be taken as meaning that we are to allow the later Heidegger to work on us as an emotive and intoxicating wave of sound, a current of pure feeling, as some romantic theories of music might understand it. We should rather understand it in accordance with terminology that Heidegger himself does use, although not with particular emphasis on its musicological associations. This is the terminology derived from the German term 'Fuge'. This word does not have the exclusively musical connotations of the English 'fugue', but suggests a range of terms and meanings, such as the verb 'fügen' (to fit together, join, unite, ordain, will, direct, dispose, add), and the noun 'Gefüge' (joining, fitting together, structure, system, frame, articulation, joints, texture, stratification), that Heidegger uses to describe the overall organisation of his later thought. Applying the musical analogy, I suggest that the diverse writings that make up the later Heidegger are connected fugally. This, as I

understand it, not only undermines any attempt to read these writings as merely emotive-expressive, it also points to a kind of structure that resists incorporation into any linear progression in which the various parts are ordered hierarchically and in which discord and conflict are resolved into a final unity. Such a sequential, harmonic model might, arguably, be applicable to Hegel, and, given the analogies between harmonic progression and dialectic that are already hinted at in Plato, we might be tempted to think of this as the most relevant of all musical analogies for any work of philosophy. In the case of Heidegger, at least, this would be misleading. We cannot assume any final resolution of the varied elements of his later thought, but, equally, we should not conclude that it is therefore lacking in coherence. We should instead be looking for a coherence of a different kind.

These comments give rise to a reflection that may seem accidental and literary, rather than philosophical, yet which, nevertheless, indicates with utter precision a problem that any attempt to come to terms with Heidegger, early or late, must face. The reflection is provoked by the sub-title of the German edition of R. Safranski's ground-breaking biography of Heidegger: *A Master from Germany.* This alludes to the poem 'Fugue of Death' by Paul Celan, a Holocaust survivor. Celan and Heidegger admired each other's work, but when Celan sought an understanding with Heidegger concerning the latter's attitude to the Holocaust, all that was forthcoming was a painfully inconclusive visit. If death came, in the camps, as a fugally poetised 'Master from Germany', how did such death concern a philosopher for whom death was what supremely brings humanity to the encounter with Being? The force of this question is, inevitably, compounded by the biographical fact that, for a crucial period in his life, Heidegger was not merely a member of the Nazi Party but very publicly endorsed the way of Adolf Hitler as the way of the future for German academic life.

Before proceeding to our texts, then, we must pause to confront the bitter question of Heidegger's complicity in Nazism and, in particular, the question as to how significant his political error is for the philosophical understanding of his later work.

Notes

1 Is there a later Heidegger?

1 This raises the kind of problems that bedevil Heidegger's translators. William J. Richardson, for example, reverts to the Anglo-Saxon 'beon' for the occasions when Heidegger adopts the 'Seyn'-spelling (Richardson 1963). However, this is misleading, since 'Seyn' was still in use in philosophical works in the nineteenth century and would be seen and heard by Heidegger's contemporaries as a variant of 'Sein', whereas 'beon' would be incomprehensible without further explanation to most contemporary English speakers. In such ways Heidegger-in-translation is often made to appear perhaps more obscure than he really is – however, this doesn't help the translator who has to face the lack of any obvious English equivalent!

2 *Beiträge zur Philosophie* was only published in German in 1989 and, at the time of writing, its first English translation is still in preparation. *Besinnung* appeared in German only in 1998.

Because these are texts that are not likely to enter into the mainstream of English-language philosophy teaching for some time, I have not addressed them extensively here. However, the issues with which they deal overlap at many points with those we shall be discussing.

3 'Besinnung' itself is another term that defies easy translation. The easiest options, 'reflection' or 'recollection', are problematic in a philosophical context because of the very specific connotations of these terms, connotations that 'Besinnung' is precisely intended to avoid. What Heidegger means is a kind of thinking that is reflective, recollective, somewhat introverted, like the 'remembrance of things past' that comes upon us when we revisit a childhood scene and recall the vanished voices and faces.

2 1933 and after

1 Wolin gives an excellent anthology of primary sources relating to Heidegger and Nazism. Also useful is Ott 1994. Influential in starting the contemporary debate was Farias 1989, although this last is highly tendentious and has been subjected to an incisive critique by Lacoue-Labarthe 1990. Many commentators include passing discussions of Heidegger's Nazism, and extensive treatments are also to be found in de Beistegui 1998, Ward 1995, Young 1997, Zimmerman 1990 and, of course, Safranski 1998. Heidegger's remark about the Holocaust and the East Germans echoes a frequent complaint in post-war Germany – compare with more recent equivalences such as Russia in Chechnya = NATO in Kosovo.

2 See Tanabe 1986 and Pattison 1996.

3 On Heidegger's non-meeting with Celan see Safranski 1998: 421ff. Also Fóti 1992.

4 Wolin's retention of 'Volk' (unitalicised) in his English translation undoubtedly serves to emphasise the Nazistic character of the speech as a whole. However, there is not a generally satisfactory English word that covers all the connotations of the German term.

5 See Rockmore 1992.

6 However, it is somewhat ironic that, having castigated Heidegger (who, after all, was actually acquainted with some farmers) for his 'sixth-hand' knowledge, Adorno goes on to say that 'Here we find an ignorance of everything we have learned about rural people', citing a series of French novels and stories from Balzac to Maupassant – hardly 'first-hand' knowledge, still less 'social research'!

7 A broadly similar approach is taken in Zimmerman 1990. This is an excellent source for much of the material covered in this chapter and the next.

8 Young 1997, p. 21.

9 Although some argue that *Being and Time* itself endorses a technological-pragmatic view of the human subject. See, e.g., Haar 1993. Haar's view is summed up in his comment that in *Being and Time* Heidegger is 'blind to the earth' (1993: 19). Zimmerman, however, emphasises that Heidegger was already privileging the world of the craftsman's shop over against factory production in *Being and Time.*

10 See the discussion of Van Gogh in Chapter 4 below.

3 Technology

1 A more extensive discussion of these passages will follow in Chapter 4 below.
2 Here is another way (not Heidegger's) of making the point. Imagine you are to make a photographic record of a stained-glass window. What would be the 'best' image you could produce? Would it be the image produced by removing the window from its frame, placing it over a light-box in a studio, thereby ensuring equal and standard illumination across the whole surface of the glass? That might seem the most correct, least subjective view. But that is not how anyone ever actually *sees* the window. What people see is far more complex, and the interaction of light and shade is crucial to such 'normal' perception.
3 For a further discussion of Heidegger's use of the verbal form 'wesen', see Chapter 7 below.
4 See Stiegler 1998 for a discussion of the priority of technology in relation to humanity, a point that he argues with reference not only to Heidegger but also to the possible influence of early tool-making and tool use amongst prehominids on human evolution itself.
5 For a good discussion of Jünger, see Zimmerman 1990.

4 Seeing things

1 This may be translated 'Forest Paths'. However, it means more specifically the kind of path that turns out to lead nowhere, petering out or running into thick undergrowth.
2 It will be clear from what follows that I do not accept the view that Heidegger's turn to art reflects the aestheticism of Nazi politics, interesting as that idea is – partly, because, as will become clear, Heidegger's concern is, at one level, not with 'art' at all.
3 See Pöggeler 1994: 110ff.
4 See Derrida 1987.
5 In the best-known of such auctions of impounded works, held in Lucerne, Switzerland on 30 June 1939, a self-portrait by Van Gogh was the most expensive work on sale.
6 We shall attempt to grasp the full significance of this point later, in discussing Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin (see Chapter 7 below).
7 Heidegger does not pause to discuss this, but he will have been very well aware that, even when the material substratum of art is acknowledged and given its place in aesthetic theory, it was usual for the different forms of art to be hierarchically graded according to the extent to which this materiality was sublimated and subordinated to the 'meaning' element. Hegel's aesthetics is an outstanding example of this.

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First published 2000
by Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Pattison, George, 1950–
Routledge Philosophy GuideBook to The Later Heidegger / George Pattison.
(Routledge Philosophy GuideBooks)
1. Heidegger, Martin, 1889–1976. I.Title: Later Heidegger. II.Title. III. Series.
B3279.H49 P39 2000
193–dc21 00-020572

ISBN 0–415–20196–9 (hbk)
ISBN 0–415–20197–7 (pbk)
ISBN 0-203-13127-4 Master e-book ISBN
ISBN 0-203-17964-1 (Glassbook Format)