

ONLY A GOD CAN SAVE US!
HEIDEGGER'S LATER PHILOSOPHY

Nihilism

Heidegger's overall motive is to overcome 'nihilism', he locates nihilism to a Western 'forgetting of being' that arises in Greek philosophy and results in the destructive 'techno-scientific' thinking of modernity ...

Heidegger: 'The word of Nietzsche' (1943)

"Nihilism, thought in its essence, is .. the fundamental movement of the history of the West. It shows such great profundity that its unfolding can have nothing but world catastrophes as its consequence.

'The word of Nietzsche' (1943) ...

“Nihilism is the
world-historical movement of the
peoples of the earth who have
been drawn into the power realm
of the modern age. ...

'The word of Nietzsche' (1943) ...

"it is not only a phenomenon of the present age ... It belongs to the uncanniness of this uncanny guest that it cannot name its own origin."

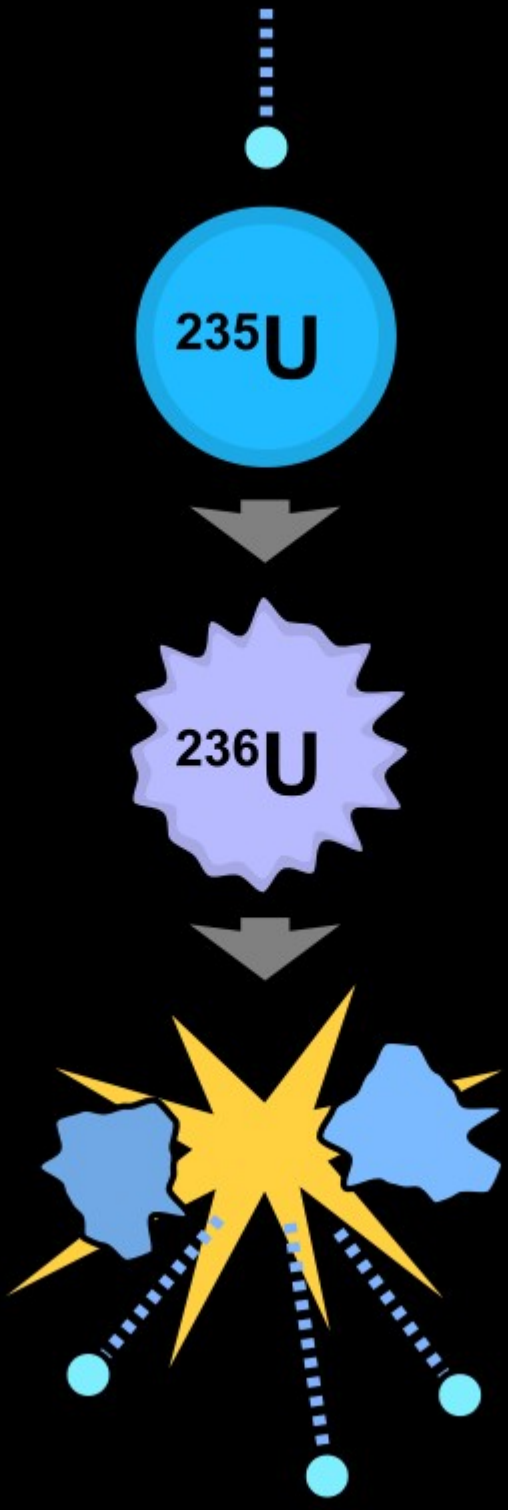
Heidegger's 'Question Concerning
Technology' (1954) and
discussion of 'machination' in
'Contributions to Philosophy'
(1936-8) examine
techno-scientific modernity as
nihilistic or 'destructive' ...

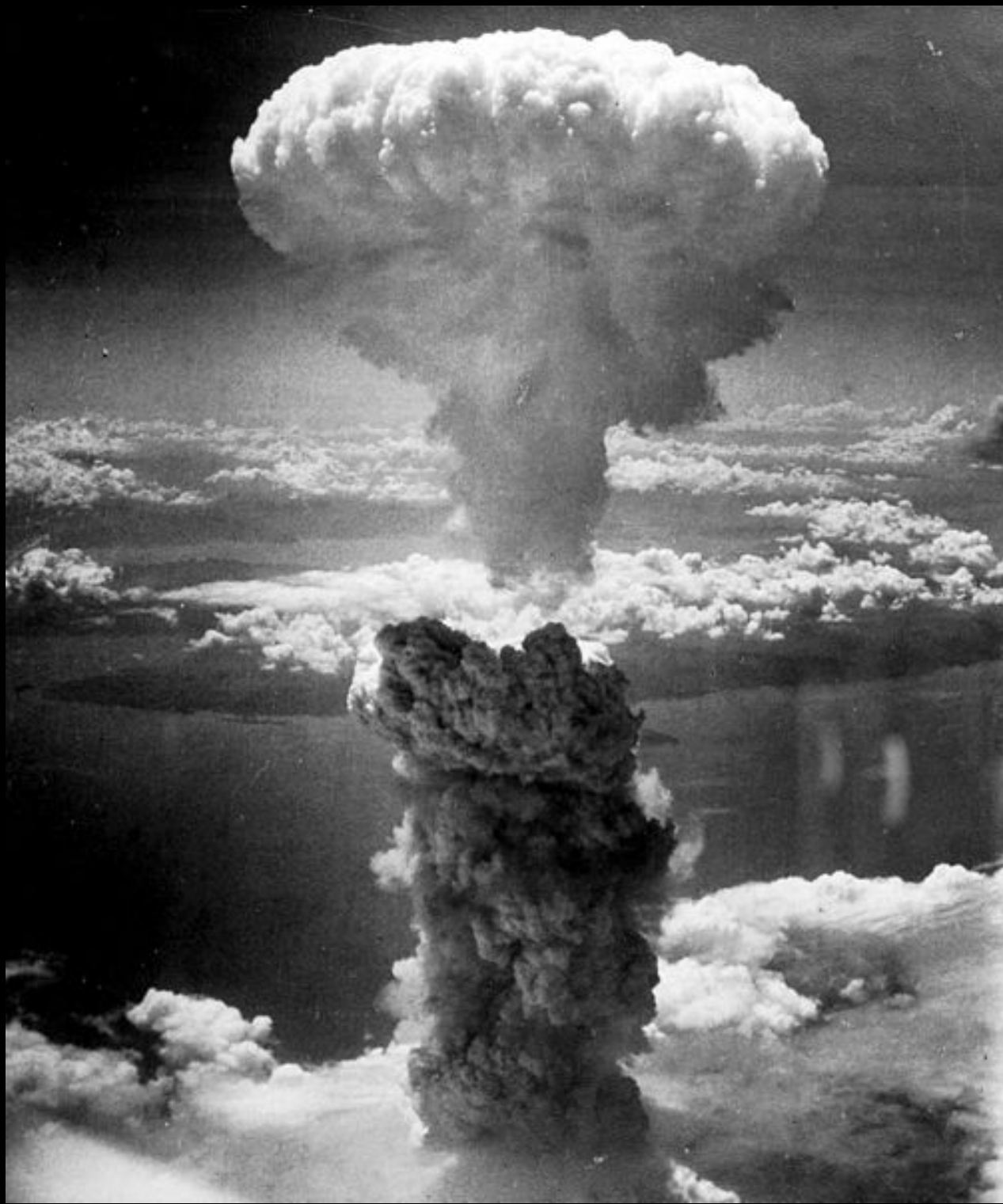
Destructive of our capacity for
encountering suchness (being) –
nihilism is thus a (modern)
‘destructive’ way of
living/existing that arises from
the techno-scientific order ...

Heidegger argues that the
essence of modern technology is
that it 'enframes'* nature ...

* Ge-stell; 'stellen' ... to set upon, challenge,
unconceal ...

Heidegger uses 'enframing' in the sense that modern technology treats nature as a 'standing reserve' that can be unlocked ...





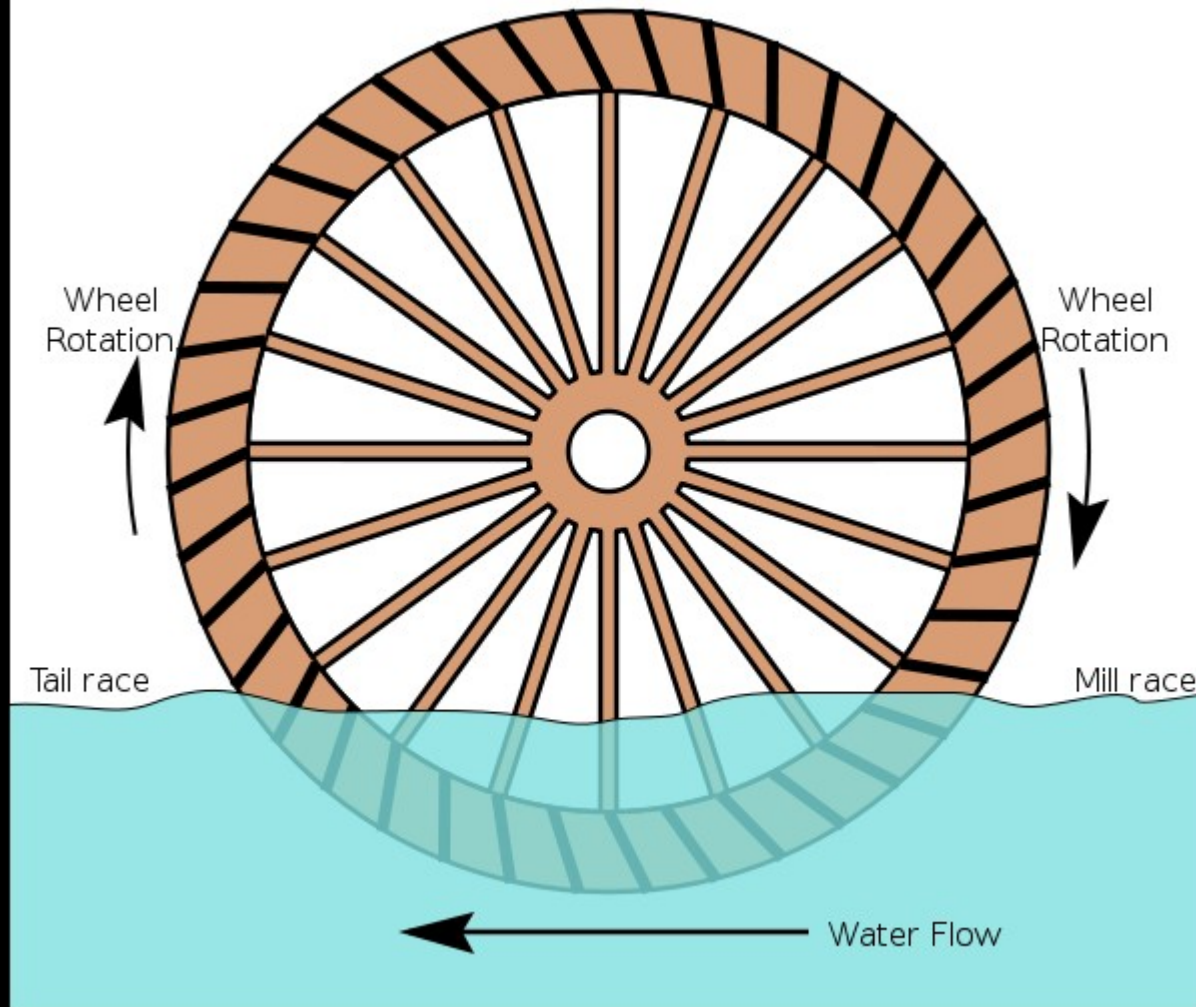
QCT, p.21

"In Enframing . . . unconcealment comes to pass in conformity with which the work of modern technology reveals the real as standing reserve."

“Modern science’s way of representing pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces ... modern physical theory of nature prepares the way first not simply for technology but for the essence of modern technology.”

Following Heidegger, contrast a
traditional water-wheel with a
modern dam ...

Undershot water wheel



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nature (e.g., a river) is
treated in the abstract as
'force', 'potential energy',
etc., which 'unlocks'
electricity, and no longer as
something 'present' in itself ...

nature is treated as as a
theoretical entity, or object of
scientific knowledge and becomes
an 'instrument' or means to an
end and not an end in itself ..

nature has no meaning or value
outside of our 'technical' use
of it .. and this applies to
human-beings, as well (e.g.,
'human resources') .. see Francis
Bacon's 1620 'novum organum' ..

“Human knowledge and human power
come to the same thing, for
where the cause is not known the
effect cannot be produced. We
can only command nature by
obeying her, and what in
contemplation represents the
cause, in operation stands as
the rule.”

'Who is Nietzsche's Zarathustra?', 1953

" ... we modern men are ensnared in the singular error ... that knowledge can be obtained from science, and that thought is subject to the jurisdiction of science. But that which is unique in what a thinker is able to express can neither be demonstrated nor refuted logically or empirically ... **it can only be made visible in questioning thinking.** What is then seen always appears as that which is always worthy of questioning."

'Dasein'

(there being; open to being)

Being and Time, p.5

*(all page references to Stambaugh/Schmidt translation,
SUNY Press 2010)*

"The being of being
is not itself a
being."

Being and Time, p.5

" .. understanding the problem of being consists in avoiding .. determining beings as beings by tracing them back in their origins to another being – as if being had the character of a possible being."

" .. insofar as being means the being of beings, beings themselves turn out to be what is *interrogated* in the question of being. Beings are, so to speak, interrogated with regard to their being."

Being and Time, p.5-6

“Being is found in thatness and whatness, reality, the objective presence of things, subsistence, validity, existence [Dasein], and in the “there is”.”

Being and Time, p.6

“Regarding, understanding and grasping, choosing, and gaining access to, are constitutive attitudes of inquiry and are these themselves modes of being of a particular being, of *the* being we inquire ourselves in each case are ...

Being and Time, p.6-7

"Thus to work out the question of being means to make a being — one who questions — transparent in its being .. This being, which we ourselves in each case are and which includes inquiry among the possibilities of its being, we formulate terminologically as *Dasein*."

Being and Time, p.8

“Being is always
the being of a
being.”

Being and Time, p.11

"Dasein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings.

Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being.

.. Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Dasein."

**Overcoming nihilism:
Beyng & Event**

'Only a God can save us' (Der Spiegel interview, 1966)

"To the mystery of the planetary domination of the unthought essence of technicity corresponds the tentative, unassuming character of thought that strives to ponder this unthought [essence]."

Contributions to Philosophy (of the EVENT) p.8
(trans. Rojcewicz & Vallega-Neu
Indiana University Press 2012)

" ... beyng can no longer be
thought on the basis of beings
but must be inventively thought
from itself."

The 'event' has two senses: the
'advent' of **beyng** (suchness),
and the shift in human-being
from 'rational-animal'
(Aristotle) to dasein (open to
beyng) ...

“Future thinking is a *course* of thinking, on which the hitherto altogether concealed realm of the essential occurrence of beyng is traversed and so cleared and attained in its most proper character as an event.”

Only a 'new' kind of thinking
will overcome nihilism, a
non-analytic thinking that
allows beyng (suchness) to be
'unconcealed' or 'revealed' in
each spontaneous (free)
encounter ...

Thus the way out of nihilism is
to engage in '**questioning**
thinking' ... such thinking is
not, however, a kind of
answer-seeking, but a mode of
'dwelling' and 'unconcealing' ...

Contributions, p.10

“Questioning arouses immediately the suspicion of amounting to an empty, obstinate attachment to the uncertain, undecided, and undecidable. Questioning appears as a backtracking of “knowledge” into idle meditation.”

Contributions, p.10

" ... in questioning reside the tempestuous advance that says "yes" to what has not been mastered and the broadening out into ponderable, yet unexplored, realms. What reigns here is a self-surpassing into something above ourselves. **To question is to be liberated for what, while remaining concealed, is compelling.**"

Letter on Humanism, 1949

“Thinking acts in so far as it thinks. ... Thinking ... lets itself be claimed by being so that it can say the truth of being. Thinking accomplishes this letting.”

Letter on Humanism

"In written form thinking easily loses its flexibility. But in writing it is difficult above all to retain the multidimensionality of the realm peculiar to thinking."

Letter on Humanism

"But if the human being is to find his way once again into the nearness of being he must first learn to exist in the nameless.

.. Before he speaks the human being must first let himself be claimed again by being, taking the risk that under this claim, he will seldom have much to say."

Only a god can save us!

" ... philosophy will be unable to effect any immediate change in the current state of the world.
... **Only a god can save us.** ... by thinking and poetizing we prepare a readiness for the appearance of a god, or for the absence of a god in our decline
... "

