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of technics can make the impossible possible. [...] Nature and spirit [have become] objects of self-consciousness; the latter's unconditional domination forces both in advance into a uniformity from which metaphysically there is no escape. It is one thing merely to use the earth and quite another to receive its blessings and to be at home with the law of this receiving [...] by watching over the mystery of being and the inviolability of the possible. ('ÜM', 91'/OM', 109).

Is poststructuralist theory in North America beginning to catch up with its past? The 'past' I am alluding to can be described, at the risk of drastic simplification, as the problematizing of 'representation': in art and literature, in criticism and aesthetics, in theories of language, knowledge and history, in political and social thought. The problematic of representation has for some twenty years imposed itself through the writings of Derrida and Foucault, Lacan and Barthes, Deleuze and Lyotard. Their writings in turn promoted the rereading of a certain number of predecessors: Saussure, Freud, Nietzsche, Mallarmé, but also Plato, Kant, Hegel, Marx, etc. Such a list can, of course, be only indicative.

But the most glaring and symptomatic omission is clearly that of Martin Heidegger. Not that there have been no important texts written in North America seeking to reread Heidegger in relation to poststructuralist problematics: this is obviously not the case. What has happened, however, is that

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something of a cleavage has developed between the extensive rereading of Heidegger being conducted largely in the philosophical domain and what might be described as his literary-theoretical reception. Although there are signs that the situation even here is slowly beginning to change, it can hardly be denied that the concern with Heidegger in the area of 'critical theory' has been in no recognizable proportion to what one might have expected, given the importance explicitly attributed to Heidegger by Derrida, from his earliest writings on.\(^1\) And the influence of Heidegger on Paul de Man is hardly any less pronounced, for despite the latter's critique of Heidegger's Hölderlin essays, de Man's work never ceased to define itself through an unremitting *Auseinandersetzung*, or struggle, with the German thinker.

And since there can be no doubt as to the role played by Heidegger in problematizing representational thought, the lack of attention so far devoted to his work by critical theorists is symptomatic of a resistance, one which is not very difficult to explain, but which can nevertheless prove quite instructive to analyze. To engage the work of Heidegger necessitates an approach to the problem of representation quite different from that to which we have become accustomed. To put it succinctly: to read Heidegger seriously is to cease treating representation as though it were simply one 'theme' among others or even an exclusively 'theoretical' issue. Rather, the problem of representational thought imposes itself in an intensely practical way, calling into question conventional styles of academic writing, scholarly or critical. The bizarre terms and turns of phrase that mark Heidegger's German and prevent it from being translated straightforwardly into English (or into any other language I know of) have the salutary effect of compelling the reader to reassess the status and significance of established and familiar forms of discourse. For those readers not sufficiently fluent in German, access to Heidegger's texts must necessarily be by way of existing translations. It should be noted that these translations are often the work of devoted followers, who have invested considerable time and effort in them. The following remarks are therefore not to be considered as a critique of such translations but rather as a reminder of certain problems they nevertheless pose and which tend to blunt the *Auseinandersetzung* with established discourse that constitutes, I will argue, an indispensable component of Heidegger's distinctive way of thinking.

To translate Heidegger requires a knowledge which, in the English-speaking world at least, is rarely accessible to those who have not had some professional philosophical training. It is not entirely surprising therefore that even a cursory reading of the English translations reveals them to be informed by what might be described as the goal of 'conceptual rendition', that is, of rendering the conceptual content of individual terms and turns of phrase in the most rigorous, coherent and consistent manner possible. Along this way towards univocal terminology, however, what often gets lost is precisely the twist in the turn of phrase. The loss of such twists and turns results not simply in semantic impoverishment (which, after all, to some degree is the destiny of all translation). Rather, what is lost in translation, often without a trace, is a certain practice of language, in which colloquial, idiomatic phrases play a decisive role. The twists and turns taken by the most familiar, most banal, most household terms in Heidegger's writing yield an effect of uncanniness that in turn constitutes a powerful incitement to rethink things often taken for granted, such as the privilege generally assigned to technical terminology over everyday language in philosophical discourse. To efface such

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\(^1\) See the early writings on Husserl, *Of Grammatology*, etc.
uncanniness—by which the familiar is made strange, doubling itself, advancing and withdrawing at once—is to weaken considerably the force of this incitement. For it derives its impact from the shock of recognizing that the duplicities of ordinary language are not imposed upon it from without but rather are part of its innermost makeup. Only when the stability of the most familiar phrases and concepts can no longer be taken for granted, only when they reveal themselves to be possessed by unsuspected significations that no conceptual univocity can reliably predict or fully account for, only then does the reader sense fully the necessity of calling into question the conceptual matrix of modern representational thought: that of subject and object. For to call it into question, one must already be on the way elsewhere.

It is the incitement to venture along this way, and the force with which it imposes itself, that most translations of Heidegger, in English at least, tend to blunt. In varying degrees, to be sure. There is an enormous difference between the all-too-facile paraphrasing of Ralph Manheim and the far more scrupulous translations of David Farrell Krell. And yet in both cases the relation to ‘ordinary language’ that gives Heidegger’s German its uncanny power does not always appear in English with sufficient force. This is a problem that admits of no simple solution. The play of Heidegger’s language is extremely difficult to translate, and indeed impossible, if by translation is meant straightforward reproduction. But it is a problem that is liable to acquire increased importance as the necessity of a thinking confrontation with Heidegger’s work becomes increasingly manifest. This is the case today. Not merely because of the recent media event provoked in France by Victor Farias’ nefarious collection of anecdotes, Heidegger and Nazism. Of far more lasting significance are studies such as those published by Derrida (De l’esprit, 1987), Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (La fiction du politique, 1987) and Jean-Luc Nancy (L’expérience de la liberté, 1988). They form part of a long-standing and on-going effort of deconstructive thinking to delimit the authority of representational thought by exploring its consequences in areas that have hitherto been particularly resistant to such questioning, areas designated by the traditional, but increasingly problematic, titles: ‘history’, ‘politics’ and ‘ethics’. If such essential names are less and less able to be taken for granted, it is not least of all due to the work of Heidegger and to the questions opened (or reopened) by his writings. Not merely because the necessity of rethinking history, sociality and politics is clearly inscribed in Heidegger’s project. But also and perhaps above all, because his work emerges as a privileged place from which the question of place itself is put into play. The name that Heidegger assigns to this play, in which the question of determination joins that of institutionalization, is technè.

Lacoue-Labarthe has recalled the pivotal position occupied by the notion of technè in the development of Heidegger’s thought. It is in the discourse on technè, he asserts, that Heidegger seeks to think the essence of the political. Technè is always associated by Heidegger with another Greek word, epistémè, knowledge. It is, however, a particular kind of knowing:

When now man, in the midst of of beings (physis) to which he is exposed (ausgesetzt), seeks to gain a stand (einen Stand zu gewinnen) and to establish himself, when in the process of mastering beings he proceeds in such and such a way, then this proceeding against beings is supported and guided by a knowledge of


Thus, the knowledge that is technics is not addressed at making or producing particular things but rather at 'the unlocking of beings as such'. In this sense, techné is a form of poiesis that in turn is closely related to art. The text in which the determination of techné as poiesis is most fully elaborated is 'Die Frage nach der Technik'.

If I refer to this essay by its German title, it is because it confronts us with one of those problems in translation to which I have just alluded. In fact, there is probably no better approach to this text, in English at least, than by way of the patient exploration of precisely such problems. Let us begin, then, with the title. At the outset it presents the English reader with at least two difficulties. First, there is the term that designates the subject matter of the essay and which, as I have noted, commonly translated as 'technology': Technik. But with regard to the German, the English word seems both too narrow and too theoretical; too narrow in excluding the meanings technique, craft, skill and at the same time too theoretical in suggesting that the knowledge involved is a form of applied science. This conception of Technik Heidegger's analysis explicitly denies. Science, he argues, depends both in its principle and in its practice upon Technik rather than the other way round, as is generally thought. For this reason I prefer to translate the title with the less theoretical, but also less habitual, English word 'technics'.

The second difficulty of translation is perhaps more revealing, because more familiar and specific. It involves the German preposition used in the title, nach, which is rendered in the English text as 'concerning'. Now everyone who has read Being and Time knows just how Heideggerian the notion of concern or care (Sorge) is. The only problem is that Sorge has very little to do with the term used in this particular title. Nach, as any first-year student of German soon learns, has two primary meanings, each of which is quite straightforward when considered separately but which make a rather odd couple when forced to cohabit as here in a single word. These two meanings are 'toward' and 'after'. They coexist uneasily, not merely because the one is spatial and the other (predominantly) temporal but because they seem to move in different, if not divergent, directions: the one moving toward, the other following after. In at least one instance, this former sense will be explicitly and emphatically inscribed in the essay itself, when Heidegger uses the word 'nachstellen'—to pursue or hunt down—to describe the relation of modern technics to 'nature'. But both meanings will play a significant role in Heidegger's train of thought as it moves towards the question of technics, but only by going (and coming) after it in a certain way. Heidegger's approach to technics is thus situated in a certain aftermath. It goes after technics in order to show how, in a certain sense, technics itself follows something else, for instance, that which is called today 'nature' (and which the Greeks called physis). Or also, how technics in its modern form comes after another kind of technics more closely associated with the meaning the term has, or had, in ancient Greek.

The structure of Heidegger's essay itself reflects this aftermath. Of its three sections, the first is centered around a discussion of technics in general and its meaning for the Greeks; the second retraces the emergence of its particularly modern form;
and the third attempts to indicate its possible destiny or destination as it affects the future of the ‘quest’. Given the importance of this spatial-historical aspect of the term for the structure of technē ‘itself’, I suggest that the equivocal title be translated as ‘Questing After Technics’. For ‘Frage’, question, here as elsewhere in Heidegger’s writing designates something very different from a mere striving after an answer, in the sense of cognition or information. Rather, it involves a movement very similar to that of technē itself: an opening of oneself to something else in what is described as a ‘free relationship’ to that which is considered worthy of move? The question brings us to a second major difficulty in translation, involving another one which would seem to have its English equivalent ready at hand: what it is, such but Heidegger is really tends to Heidegger will argue later in the text, compels us to rethink the meaning of either of ‘genre or of essence’. As something that goes on, technics moves away from itself in being what it is. By determining the goings-on of technics as radically different from technics itself, Heidegger leads his readers in a quest after something that is not simply equivalent to technology, although it is that without which technology would not be.

Wesen, as Heidegger uses the word here and elsewhere, involves the moven of a phenomenon, its ‘cause’, not in the sense of a mechanical antecedent that would generate a certain effect but rather in that sense of indebtedness Heidegger attributes to the Greek word translated by ‘cause’: aitia. The Greek word, he asserts, designates a relationship of ‘being-due-to’ (Verschulatsein). This in turn involves not merely a privative or negative relation: to be ‘due to’ is to appear, to be ‘brought into play’ (ins Spiel kommen) thanks to ‘something else’ (‘FT’, 8-9).

Through this movement of being ‘due’, something is ‘brought forth’ (hervorgebracht), that is, brought from a kind of concealment out into the open. It is this process of bringing-out or bringing-forth that Heidegger associates with poiesis, usually translated as ‘making’ or ‘producing’. Through his reinterpretation of poiesis as Hervorbringung, Heidegger frees the assertion Heidegger’s argument is on its way. If ‘essence’ tends to imply a general concept or idea under which the phenomenon in its particularity may be subsumed, the goings-on of technics as Heidegger describes them exceed all such categorization. As something that goes on, technics moves away from itself in being what it is. By determining the goings-on of technics as radically different from technics itself, Heidegger leads his readers in a quest after something that is not simply equivalent to technology, although it is that without which technology would not be.

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notion from a dependency upon either an object (the product) or a subject (a producer). Instead, poiesis now can be considered less an act than a change of place or of situation, a move 'from a state of concealment out into the open (aus der Verborgenheit in die Unverborgenheit)’ (FT, 11). This movement, which the Greeks named alethia, has as its modern translation truth. The word here assumes a meaning very different from that of mere 'correctness', from the adequation of thought, considered as representation, to the object represented (adequatio intellectus et rei). The word that Heidegger employs to describe the move from concealment to unconcealment, from Verborgenheit to Unverborgenheit, is Entbergen. Since the goings-on of technics are determined by Heidegger to be a way of Entbergen, the understanding of this word is decisive, but also extremely difficult, as the English translators of the essay observe in a long and instructive note. 'Because of the exigencies of translation', they write, 'entbergen must usually be translated with “revealing”’. But this is less than half of the story:

Entbergen and Entberfung are formed from the verb bergen and the verbal prefix ent-. Bergen means to rescue, to recover, to secure, to harbour, to conceal. Ent- is used in German verbs to connote [...] a change from an existing situation. It can mean 'forth' or 'out' or can connote change that is the negating of a former condition. Entbergen connotes an opening out from protective concealing, a harbouring forth. [...] None of the English words used—'reveal', 'conceal', 'unconceal'—evidences with any adequacy the meaning resident in bergen itself; yet the reader should be constantly aware [of] the full range of connotation present in bergen... (FT, 11)

The question is thus clearly posed by the translators but hardly addressed by them. How is the reader to 'be constantly aware of the full range of connotations' if these connotations are so disparate and if this disparity to boot is effaced by the ostensible positivity and reassuring univocity of the word finally used: 'revealing'? What is the relation between revealing and 'harbouring forth', for instance? The former generally connotes a movement of unveiling or disclosure, by which something hidden or latent becomes manifest. It suggests a priority of the inward, which is revealed in its truth through the stripping away of the outward facade that has veiled it. 'Harbouring forth', on the other hand, is a movement from the inside out, as it were, in which self-identity is subordinated to and determined as a change of place. Moreover, there is a curious contradiction in the phrase, one which makes it the most suggestive of those given by the translators. To harbour something—a grudge, for instance—is to protect and cherish it, to keep it secure. But to harbour forth is to venture into a certain insecurity, precisely by leaving the harbour, which is a shelter (etymologically, a military shelter, from the Icelandic, herbergi). In the translators' note, this aspect of leaving shelter becomes a mere condition of what they describe as 'Heidegger's central tenet', namely, that 'it is only as protected and preserved—and that means as enclosed and secure—that anything is set free to endure, to continue as that which it is' ('QCT', 11, Note 10). But the ambiguity of the word renders any such effort to subsume it under a putative 'central tenet' itself extremely tenuous. What is 'revealed' by the word, as the translators them-

8 'Univocity' (Eindeutigkeit) and 'contradiction-free unity of judgment' are described by Heidegger as the goal of scientific (i.e. cognitive) thinking, which in turn 'emerges ever more univocally as a decisive function and form of the goings-on of modern technics', in particular of its drive to 'place into safety' (Sicherstellung). See Heidegger, Der Satz vom Grund, 1957, 201. English as The Principles of Reason, 1991, 123.
selves indicate, entails not so much a process of 'protection and
preservation', much less one of 'enclosure and securing', but
almost the contrary: a loss of shelter, an abandonment, a dis-
closure. Were 'protection and preservation' the primary goal, it
is difficult to see why anything should ever 'harbour forth', that
is, leave home, to begin with. For such a movement to be able
to take place, the home must already be somewhat insecure. A
shelter, by definition, can never be entirely air-tight. As the mil-
itary etymology suggests, where there is a shelter, a harbour, a
safe place, it is always in response to or in anticipation of a dan-
ger, a threat.

This aspect of the word becomes strikingly apparent when
we consider the colloquial meaning of the German term that
serves Heidegger here as root; Bergung. It signifies not merely
'shelter' or even 'rescue' but also the salvaging of what remains
after an accident or a catastrophe. In short, Bergung is never an
absolute point of departure. It comes after (nach) something
else. I therefore propose to translate Entbergung as unsecuring,
which, whatever else it may do, at least preserves the unset-
tling sense of the initial, initiating outbreak by which some-
thing gets under way.

At the same time, this translation suggests something that is
by no means obvious in Heidegger's analysis (although it is
implied there, albeit not without contradiction). If the goings-on
of technics are part of a larger movement of Entbergung, under-
stood as the ineluctable, irreducible path of unsecuring, then the
unsettling effects of technics cannot be considered to be an
exclusive aspect of its peculiarly modern form. Rather, the dan-
ger associated with modern technics is—as Heidegger explicitly
asserts—a consequence of the goings-on of technics as such and
in general as a movement of unsecuring. The danger is there
from the startling start, and technics must be conceived both as
a response to this danger and also as its perpetuation. As unse-
curing, technics starts out from a place that is determined by
that which it seeks to exclude. Insecurity is its enabling limit,
although it is a limit that must be effaced in order for the place to
be secured. What Heidegger's analysis of the goings-on of tech-
rics as unsecuring discloses is above all the necessity of this dis-
simulation, which in his argument assumes the form of the
twofold distinction through which these goings-on are articulat-
ed: first, that which distinguishes technics in general from its
Greek other, physis; and second, that which distinguishes mod-
ern from premodern technics. Let us take a closer look at these
two determining distinctions:

1. Technē und physis are both forms of poiēsis, i.e. of bringing-
forth, but with a decisive difference. What goes on as physis pos-
sesses its outbreak (Aufbruch), its setting-forth, 'in itself (hen
heauto)', whereas what is brought-forth as tekhnē has its open-
ing-up 'in another (en allot)', in the craftsman or artist ('FT',
10-11). This difference allows Heidegger to assert that 'physis is
indeed poiēsis in the highest sense' ('FT', 10), 'highest' because
of the immanence of its opening. Physis is thus presumably a
higher form of poiēsis than is technē, which lacks this self-
enclosed immanence. On the other hand—and with Heidegger
things are never simple—that which is thus described as intrin-
sic to physis immediately breaks up that interiority. Accord-
ingly, the innermost principle of 'nature' is its impulse
to open itself to the exterior, to alterity. Thus, it begins to look
as though the 'truth' of physis is nothing other than technē,
which, by virtue of its very heteronomy, emerges as more natu-
ral than nature itself.

2. Heidegger, to be sure, says nothing of the kind, not
explicitly at least. But the examples he uses in drawing the sec-
ond, and this time, intratechnical distinction—between tradi-
tional and modern technics—argue for some such interpreta-
tion. The example of traditional technics is drawn from the
sphere of preindustrial agriculture, that is, from a form of cultivation through which technics cooperates to bring forth ‘openings’ initiated more or less spontaneously but which require external intervention in order to come forth fully. Heidegger exemplifies this distinction by pointing to the semantic evolution of a single German word: bestellen. In the technics that prevails in traditional, preindustrial agriculture, the peasant ‘bestellt’ the field, whereby ‘bestellen’—tilling, working—still means cherishing and taking care of (hegen und pflegen). The peasant’s work does not challenge nature, does not goad and drive it forth and thus transform it into a mere source of energy, which as such can be extracted and stored (‘FT’, 14). But in the era of industrialization, nature is no longer bestellt—worked and cultivated. It is gestellt, literally, ‘placed’, but in the very particular and somewhat ominous sense of being cornered, entrapped, maneuvered into a place from which there is no escape. With this change of place (which also involves a change of pace, an acceleration), the word bestellen assumes its more familiar, contemporary meaning, that of ‘placing an order’ or ‘ordering a place’ (but also that of ordering someone to appear at a certain time and place). Nature is placed on order. The ostensibly spontaneous or at least self-contained order of places that for Heidegger characterizes nature in regard to traditional technics is shattered and replaced by a different kind of ‘order’: the placing-of-orders that tends to dislocate and level all preestablished orders of places:

The hydroelectric plant is not constructed in the current of the Rhine as was the old wooden bridge that joined bank with bank for hundreds of years. Rather, the river is obstructed (verbaut), dammed up in the power plant (Kraftwerk). The river is what it is now, as river, because of the goings-on of the power plant. (‘FT’, 15-16)

Traditionally a way of bringing-forth, technics has now become a driving- or goading-forth: exploiting, extracting, expelling, in-citing. Hervorbringung has changed into Herausforderung, a goading, exacting challenge to go out, but which at the same time is also a Herausforderung, not just an exacting but also an extracting of that which henceforth counts only as raw material.

The shift in the movement of unsecuring is marked by a change in direction. Instead of being brought ‘up front’—her-yor-gebracht means, literally, brought hither to the fore—the goings-on of technics become demanding, exacting, outward-bound (her-aus-fordernd). In this sense, the centrifugal thrust of modern technics can be regarded as continuing the goings-on of premodern technics, or indeed of technics as such, which, from the outset, we recall, were heterogeneous, other-directed. The demanding extractions of technics are ‘setup (abgestellt) in advance to promote something else (anderes zu fördern) (‘FT’, 15). But that something else is no indeterminate other. Rather, it is subject to a stringent economy of the same which operates according to the criterion of commensurability and accordingly strives to achieve ‘the greatest possible use at the smallest expense’ (‘FT’, 15). But this economy is not that of the capitalist maximization of profit, which it admittedly resembles (and which Heidegger would doubtless contend it includes but also surpasses). It is merely the pretext for ‘regulating and securing’ (Steuerung und Sicherung), and these in turn, Heidegger argues, constitute ‘the major traits’ of the exacting goings-on of modern technics. Since, however, such goings-on remain a form or way of Entbergung, of ‘unsecuring’, the specifically modern aspect of technics, the obsession with securing, with placing into safety, can be seen as a response to the unchanged unsecuring in which technics as such continues to take part. The
translation of Entbergen as unsecuring thus foregrounds what I take to be the decisive question that emerges from Heidegger’s quest: how a movement of unsecuring comes to evoke as response its diametrical opposite—the frantic effort to establish control and security. The effort is all the more ‘frantic’ or ‘furious’ (rasend) because it is constantly goaded on by the unsecuring tendency of technics as such. That such goings-on, involving the effort to control and secure, should at the same time still be a way of unsecuring—Entbergen—is what must be accounted for.

The turn, as I have already mentioned, is indicated by the shift in the meaning of the word bestellen. The root of this word is, of course, stellen: to set, to place, to set in place. If spatial categories are indispensable in Heidegger’s problematizing of ontological difference from Being and Time on—the most obvious instance being that of Dasein, but this is only one of many—what emerges with increasing clarity in his discussion of technics is the importance not just of space but of place. Heidegger’s examples set the tone. The bridge spanning the river, joining one bank to the other, suggests an orderly arrangement of places. Technics takes its place as that which assembles the disparate in a fixed and stable order. The bridge, Heidegger asserts, is ‘constructed into the Rhine’, unlike the hydroelectric plant, by which the river is obstructed (verbaut).

Ever since Aristotle’s Physics, ‘place’ has been defined in terms of immanence, stability and containment, as ‘the innermost motionless boundary of what contains’. In the goings-on of modern technics, by contrast, this ‘innermost boundary’ is forced, driven out of its motionless state. It begins to move. To be sure, this was already true of ancient technics, which was a way of unsecuring, of unsheltering, of displacing. In its modern version, however, the principle of containment no longer serves as the self-evident prerequisite of order. Instead, place as container breaks up and in so doing discloses the problematic consequences of an ordering that can no longer be taken for granted. This is why I translate Bestellen in Heidegger’s text not simply as ‘ordering’ (as in the English translation of the essay) but as the placing of orders. For what is at stake in the goings-on of technics is not simply an order, in the sense of a disembodied command or demand, no mere Forderung, but an Herausforderung, a driving-forth out of which a different kind of topography emerges. To name this distinctive topography of modern technics Heidegger uses the word Gestell, which in ‘ordinary usage...means some sort of apparatus, e.g. a bookcase’ (‘FT’, 20), but which can also signify ‘skeleton’. In the English translation, the word is rendered as ‘enframing’. Although this takes the collecting, assembling function of the Gestell into account, it effaces the tension between verb and noun that resounds in the German and that points to the strange, indeed uncanny, mixture of movement and stasis that distinguishes the goings-on of modern technics and upon which Heidegger places considerable emphasis.

This tension resounds in the word proposed by Lacoue-Labarthe to render Gestell: installation. I would like to suggest another possibility, one that has the virtue of pointing towards the lexical ‘root’ of Gestell, stell: emplacement. If I prefer this word to ‘installation’, it is because it signifies not so much the setting-up of an apparatus as the set-up tout court, ‘the assigning or appointing of a definite place’. What is at stake is not the placing of something but the staking out of place as such. This is why the military connotation that emplacement shares with installation is in this context anything but irrelevant. A
they are secretive inasmuch as they inevitably tend to efface their own heterogeneity. They set in place, but the fixity of such place-setting turns into a placing of orders that can never stop. The more technics seeks to place the subject into safety, the less safe its places become. The more it seeks to place its orders, the less orderly are its emplacements. The more representational thinking and acting strive to present their subject matter, the less the subject matters, the more it idealizes itself as pure will, as the Will to Will.

One need not look very far today to find confirmation of this spiral. Rarely has the complicity between technocracy and voluntarism been as manifest as it is today. All the more pertinent therefore is Heidegger's concluding discussion of the enabling limits of emplacement. These limits derive, paradoxically, from the fact that, as emplacement, technics cannot stop. It goes on. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, Heidegger contends that it is precisely technics which challenges us to rethink 'what is usually understood as "Wesen" (essence), to think it in another way' ('FT', 30). In what way? As something that is on-going (währt) and that grants (gewährt). What it grants is destination, the Geschick, the send-off that opens the way of unsecuring. With regard to modern technics, this can only mean that as emplacement, places and placing can no longer be taken for granted. Rather, they must be taken as granted, that is, as the consequence of a granting that cannot be reduced to or derived from a subject. At most, subjectivity responds to this granting, which, in giving, opens up a way that can never be entirely secured. It is a grant that can never be matched. For this reason, the challenge grant of technics exhorts, goads forth, sets on its way. And since it is a way of emplacement, it goes nowhere, neither forward nor backward, nor even sideways, but simply on, on-going from place to place, always in place, never in place.

This perhaps is why, in questing after technics, Heidegger finally finds himself led elsewhere, in another direction, toward that poièsis, that bringing-forth, which recalls the goading-forth of technics and yet is sufficiently different from it to permit an Auseinandersetzung with its goings-on. In this confrontation, unsecuring and securing converge in a happening (Ereignis) that is all the more singular for never fully taking place. Because of this uncanny, duplicitous, ambivalent singularity, the questing after technics never arrives at the stable acquisition of knowledge. Or at least it cannot be measured in terms of cognition.

The alternative to the calculations of technical rationality, to its inability to abide (with) limits, is not, however, simple irrationality. It is rather a certain sensitivity, a certain coming to... But to what? From where? At the least to a mode of thought that can never be reduced to emplacement or comprehended in its terms. In this sense, the goings-on of technics find their truth in the displacements that mark the encounter with poetry and with art in general. But can we take such an encounter for granted, especially if it is no longer contained or restrained by the canonical emplacements of aesthetics and criticism, by forms that are unraveling? Does not the set-up of modern technics disrupt and upset these other settings—those of poetry, art and aesthetics—as well?