THE WITHDRAWAL OF BEING AND THE DISCURSIVE CREATION OF THE MODERN SUBJECT

- AN EXAMINATION OF THE MOVEMENT FROM 'BEING' TO 'NON-BEING' THROUGH A CONSIDERATION OF HEIDEGGEREAN AND ARISTOTELIAN NOTIONS OF BEING

By Susan Roberts

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ABSTRACT

The Withdrawal of beings and the Discursive Creation of the Modern Subject – An Examination of the Movement from 'being' to 'non-being' Through a Consideration of Heideggerean and Aristotelian Notions of Being

This work considers what it means to 'be' human and seeks to show that it is in the activity of 'being' human that our individual identity lies, because this is the activity that determines what we are and what we will become. Aristotle asked the fundamental metaphysical question, "is a human being idle by nature?" and concluded, from his realisations concerning the dynamic nature of reality, that he is not. Accordingly, the metaphysical vision of 'being-human' that Aristotle articulated, which is considered and applied in this work, in contrast to the static notions of being presented by Heidegger and Christian scholasticism, presents an understanding of man as a potentially dynamic and internally active being, capable of maintaining himself by being attuned to reality and thereby contemplating God.

It seems most timely to explore Aristotle's understanding of 'being-human' because much postmodern thought seems to be concerned with locating the 'self', or explicating its disappearance in terms of an emancipation from form, or as the exposure of some form of illusion that has kept us all living the lie of selfhood. However, the 'absent' postmodern self finds a place in Aristotle's metaphysical vision, because not only did Aristotle recognise the significance of actively 'being' human, he also recognised that through deprivation and incapacity some forms of being can go out of existence or become something else. And it appears that our postmodern form of unconscious existence constitutes such an altered form, determined according to a deprivation of actively 'being', i.e., by 'non-being.' The determining movement of 'non-being', which emerges from the ontological gap created by failing to 'be', is considered throughout this work, particularly with regard to developments in language and technology, because it is through our single-minded engagement in external productive activities, which are incidental to 'being-human', that we have avoided the inner contemplative activity that inheres in human 'thinghood'.

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Susan Roberts

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PREFACE

The Withdrawal of beings and the Discursive Creation of the Modern Subject -- An Examination of The Movement from 'being' to 'non-being' Through a Consideration of Heideggerean and Aristotelian Notions of Being.

This work examines the different ontological views of Heidegger and Aristotle and considers how they relate to our postmodern understanding of reality, particularly with regard to human 'thinghood'. To a lesser degree, this work also takes account of historical developments which support or challenge their respective views. And, since ontological questions inevitably raise theological questions, these, too, will be considered as they arise within the ontological context. The fact that the word 'ontology' is a 17th century construction that we project back on to Aristotle's metaphysics, which he himself regarded as a work concerned with theology, shows the inter-related nature of the subject areas through which we approach reality.

From an Aristotelian perspective, 'being human' is seen as a meaningful and actively receptive orientation towards a reality that is both dynamic and effecting. The expression and maintenance of that receptive orientation is acknowledged to be ontologically significant. Because, whilst perception is an intrinsic aspect of human 'thinghood' - Aristotle understood it to be the determining activity of all ensouled beings – it is also effortful. Aristotle recognised that activity determines identity, as does its lack, which means that our identity follows from the activities we engage in, or fail to engage in. In this metaphysical investigation into the meaning of 'being human', which is guided by that Aristotelian understanding, 'being' emerges as a verb rather than as a noun, i.e. as an activity that we are 'being', rather than as a fixed entity that we present. And so far as Aristotle is concerned, the essential activities of the human soul involve perceiving and contemplating reality.

Whilst the importance of maintaining an open, contemplative orientation towards reality is the common message of mystics, this work does not consider them, because our modern perception of the mystical view seems to regard such an intimate attachment to the real as something superadded to our nature, rather than as its underlying condition. However, evidence of our diminishing engagement with reality seems apparent, as does the ontological diminution that that neglect has wrought. For not only have the derivative, socially constructed ontologies of modern culture come to eclipse the given, intrinsic reality of the natural world, to the extent that the one now threatens the other, but the functional nature of those constructed ontologies has led us to see everything in terms of utility and instrumentality, including ourselves. So significant is our diminished ability to 'see' what is real that philosopher, Josef Pieper suggests that our very integrity as human beings has been put in doubt. The significance of that diminished perception is more than simply epistemological. Because by not holding ourselves open to perceive, experience and be 'acted upon' by reality to the full extent of our being, our ontological constitution, as conscious, individuated beings, appears to have been affected, as both consciousness and individuation now appear to be more imagined than real. Confusion over our identity appears to be very much the leitmotiv of postmodern culture, which, on the one hand welcomes the technological enhancements of human evolution, whilst on the other, suggests that the very notion of a 'self' is a figment of our imagination, a construction of an outmoded discourse.

This work considers the pre-eminent matter of being, raised by Aristotle at the very beginning of western philosophy, at a time when Greece was adapting from an oral culture to a literate one, and to the analytical thought processes that literacy not only enabled, but, to a degree, necessitated. However, the pre-Socratic philosophers, or 'truth-tellers', who contributed to that philosophical development were essentially oral thinkers. 'Prophets of the concrete', as Eric Havelock calls them, who used forms of expression that were also forms of experience. Thus, in the first questioning of reality it was experience that was privileged and not thought. And it is this primacy of an experienced reality that seems to underlie Aristotle's metaphysical vision.

More than two thousand years later Heidegger suggested that the question of Being had been forgotten in the West. And, in raising that question, which was now divested of its setting in an experiential reality, Heidegger drew attention to, what he perceived to be, the encroaching determinism of technology. Heidegger recognised the ontological significance of technology because he saw in the movement of its impending approach the reciprocal movement of departing Being. Although he did later come to the view that man could, perhaps, through authentic thinking reach an accommodation with technology by thinking about it differently. However, it is Heidegger's valuable insight regarding the true nature of technology, as a developing aspect of our own nature, that helps to illuminate the extraordinary depth of Aristotle's first reflections on Being. Because, by casting our eyes back from what has since unfolded in the prodigious development of the western world, we can discern the true capaciousness of the Aristotelian soul. For, what has unfolded in that development derives from the ontological resource inhering in 'being human', which, so far as Aristotle is concerned, are resources intended to further intrinsic teleological potential rather than external possibilities, which hold no such teleological significance.

In this work both Aristotle's and Heidegger's considerations of Being are considered, as is the historical journey that separates them. And, in endeavouring to conduct an historic overview of the ontological terrain between these two modes of thinking, it is sought to trace out, albeit roughly, the reciprocal movements of technology and 'being'. The word 'technology' is not applied in a strict technical sense here, but more as an umbrella term, encompassing historical and social developments as well, following the ancient Greek meaning of 'techne' as "any skill in doing". Because, whilst science and technology appear the most obvious counter force to human 'thinghood' today, the significant power countering human 'thinghood' is socially derived. For, the essence of the movement underlying all these developments, historical, social and technological, is towards the achievement of external goals and purposes. However, both these movements, the one furthering external developments and the other 'being', although moving in opposite directions, stem from the same ontological source and utilise the same ontological resources, which is why the former movement is seen here as a potential counter force to the activity of 'being'. Whilst Aristotle recognised certain fundamental activities of the soul as underlying human 'thinghood', he also saw that there are externally focused actions concerned with history and sophistry that are incidental to the activities of human 'thinghood', and for that reason are close to 'non-being'. And it is this movement of 'non-being' – the counter-movement to 'being', that this work seeks to trace out in the historical and productive concerns that predominate modern culture. The essential point is that whilst incidental activities by their very nature do not further or sustain human 'being', since their purpose is something else, they could come to obstruct it. Such activities do not become ontologically significant unless their incidental nature becomes determining, i.e., unless the focus of our ontological energies is turned towards their furtherance to the detriment of our

own. Aristotle recognised that deprivation has its own creative potential and that it, too, can produce form. And what is suggested here is that in the historical movement that has shaped modernity, human existence has come to be determined more by what it lacks than by what it naturally possesses. For, the ever increasing materiality, productivity and social functionality of modern existence all derive from an externally directed movement that seeks meaning in the historical aspirations of modern society, whilst withholding such significance from any notion of intrinsic potential – in essence, life appears to have become institutionally ateleological.

A problem encountered in trying to elucidate the trans-historical significance of Aristotle's ontological thinking is the occlusion caused by centuries of mistranslation. In introducing Aristotle's ontological vocabulary in the first chapter some of those difficulties are considered. The translations referred to in this work tend to avoid Latin scholastic terminology and instead translate directly from the Greek, which, whilst producing some unfamiliar terms, retains the dynamic nature of the originating impulse. Stress is also placed on the importance of understanding Aristotle's metaphysical neologisms, which relate to active 'thinghood', if the underlying dynamism of his thought is to be apprehended. This chapter also considers Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's works, particularly with regard to a number of Aristotle's key philosophical terms. Not only his neologisms, but also the term for 'thinghood' – 'ousia', derive from his perception of a dynamic and changing cosmos. However, this is not Heidegger's perception. And, consequently, the notion of inner activity contained within those terms is not conveyed in Heidegger's reading of them. Early on in his career Heidegger presented an interpretation of Aristotle's basic philosophical concepts concerning human 'thinghood' and its way of 'being-in-the-world'. That interpretation, which draws heavily on Aristotle's political works, seems intent on establishing a social 'being-in-the-world-with-others' as the basis for a fundamental ontology. This is in contrast with Aristotle's emphasis, as set out in his philosophical works, that the activity of individuation forms the basis of man's 'being'. Heidegger's more 'social' interpretation of Aristotle's understanding of human 'thinghood' is significant as it sustains his historical understanding of Being, and is considered throughout this study in its various aspects.

In the context of our increasingly technological way of being-in-the-world, chapter two considers the relationship between being and consciousness, it being a growing realisation that thought and decision making, which are generally considered to be our identifying, individuating features and to constitute our grounding orientation to the world, may have no need for conscious awareness at all. What is, thereby, called into question is the presumed autonomy of the decision making process. And, perhaps, what is also highlighted is Aristotle's observation that it is possible to go through life asleep. The significance of consciousness is considered very little by Heidegger; he seems to take the view that thinking is capable of freeing itself from the burden of accumulated historical thought. For Sartre, however, consciousness is more problematic and directly related to the issue of being. What Sartre usefully articulates, in this regard, is an understanding of 'non-being' – as a movement contrary to being - that arises within the human world. In contrast to Heidegger's view of an absolute external nothingness, Sartre's perception of a negating movement emerging out of the creation of human reality recognises an ontological significance relating to man's consciousness. And, whilst Aristotle and Sartre have differing views concerning the nature of human 'thinghood', they both see man, primarily, as an active 'being', albeit concerned with different activities, and not in terms of any fixed essence.

In chapter three Aristotelian 'knowing' and Heideggerean understanding are considered and contrasted as primordial ontological orientations to the world. Heidegger's later thoughts regarding the possibility of authentic thinking are also considered in the context of his historical overview concerning the question of Being, i.e., how Being has 'chosen' to present itself throughout different historical epochs. In the second half of the chapter an attempt is made, in conjunction with Nietzsche's nihilistic thinking, to trace out the movement of 'non-being' from its origins in metaphysical deprivation in Aristotle's ontology, to Nietzsche's proposals for overcoming it, through adopting an unhistorical way of being in the world. This chapter also briefly considers historicism, as evidence of the ontological significance of history. However, this movement is not considered as an autonomous, external power, but in the context of metaphysical deprivation, i.e. as a development that has grown from the ontological movement of 'non-being'.

The fourth chapter focuses on Aristotle's philosophical thinking regarding human 'thinghood'. For Aristotle, the activity of 'being human', although intrinsic to what we are, is also effortful, which, in a sense, means that it can fall away if not deliberately sustained. Perception and contemplation emerge as the fundamental activities of the actively engaged soul, because by holding ourselves open to contemplate reality, we allow reality to act upon us and, thereby, maintain our individuated natures. Aristotle did not identify history as a counter-movement to 'being', but he did point out history's incidental nature, and explicitly referred to it in terms of 'non-being', along with sophistry. Aristotle also recognised in reality a spectrum of being, and saw in the constant change of the cosmos a world in which beings themselves change, as they become more or less what they are, and even change into other forms of being. And, with regard to such changes, Aristotle recognised deprivation as a creative force, pointing out that sickness comes into being as a result of the deprivation of health. For the ancient Greeks history was not a philosophical pursuit and human potential could not reside there. Rather, life was perceived to be meaningful in itself, which meant that the 'telos' of human existence lay not in external achievements, but in the realisation of the potential inhering within.

Chapter five considers Heidegger's presentation of Being as a matter for the understanding of Dasein, since, for Heidegger, such an understanding is inherent to Dasein – ontologically it underlies it. Perception and contemplation, however, are not deemed of ontological significance by Heidegger, because reality is not recognised as being operative in any way. Rather, what is of primary significance concerning Dasein's way of being in the world is being authentically historical, i.e. choosing authentic possibilities for life distinct from those accepted by the 'they'. However, Heidegger's attempt to establish a fundamental ontology around such a way of being in the world failed, and he later came to the view that metaphysics is inadequate to the question of Being, being historically compromised. Heidegger's views concerning those metaphysical limitations are also considered in this chapter. Although Heidegger recognised that the paramount concern of the ancient Greeks had been with Being, he believed that they had failed in adequately formulating it as a question. For, he believed that authentic questioning is the way to an understanding of Being.

Chapter six considers Aristotle's dynamic ontology in the context of a postmodern appraisal of reality. Whilst 'non-being' is a difficult concept to point to, since it only really exists in relative terms, it seems an entirely apt one to apply to the postmodern subject. For, whilst the bare fact of our existence enables us to be directed in a multiplicity of

activities and functions, none of them seem to raise us above a socially constructed reality. In specific terms, the postmodern subject's sense of loss is traced to a diminution in both the capacity for reason and the expressive aspect of language. For the individual's capacity for 'intrinsic' reason, which formerly steered him in the world, appears to have become eclipsed by a social, functional reason which makes all such determinations on his behalf. Language, too, has developed into the tool of an analysing mind serving social needs, rather than expressing the reality 'known' by the perceiving soul. Following on from these changes in man's orientation to the world, the emergence of 'Social Being', as a distinct ontological entity, is also considered. For it is as aspects of a larger ontological entity – the Social – that our mode of being is now most easily discerned. And whilst this is an adaptation that emerged from, i.e., materialised out of, an alternative way of being in the world - a way that had become less perceptive of reality, it is now reinforced and maintained by a coercive form of social dominion entirely focused on ensuring its continuance. Such continuance is ensured by directing all energies on external accomplishments which have no teleological significance for human beings, because the substance of the 'Social Being' depends directly on, and draws its sustenance from, the individual's undirected and unutilised ontological resources. To the ancient Greeks such a way of being in the world would have been described as 'apaideusia' - ignorance of the universal and greatest goods in life which nurture the soul and perfect the individual. And, accordingly, such a way of life would have been considered the very opposite of what was intended by culture and education. Whereas Aristotle's metaphysics envisages a dynamic cosmos, relational and teleological, of which man is a part, social science derives from an image of man which denies him any such potential. Rather, he is perceived to be conceptually limited and intellectually dependent on a social form of Being. And it follows from this image of social superiority that any unhistorical aspirations individuals may have are deemed to be inherently irrational and, therefore, in need of correction.

As technology is now offering us radically "new horizons of human possibilities," which promise to free us from our former biological and intellectual constraints, it seems worthwhile considering whether these expanded horizons actually constitute 'being human' at all, as understood in the internally active Aristotelian sense. Contrary to assertions from 'trans-humanist' movements such as the 'Extropy Institute' that "ancient philosophies of life have little or nothing to say about fundamental issues confronting us as advanced technologies begin to enable us to change our identity as individuals and as humans,"[1] the significance of these issues can only be properly addressed in a philosophy that acknowledges that reality may have something to impart, and that potential resides within human beings as they are and not in what technology can effect. Because what the promise of such "new horizons" actually disguises is the constrained, conformist and fragmentary nature of the modern subject. For those horizons are not ours, but belong to what we have produced, which we erroneously assume to be the same thing. This work takes the view that the determining force driving technology is not scientific but social. And that the humanistic antipathy towards science is misplaced, because the delimiting force so far as human 'thinghood' is concerned is actually socially derived, and drawn from a humanistic perception of culture which sees no potential inhering in individuals qua individuals, but only in so far as they conform to predetermined social ideals. It was Julian Huxley's suggestion that the 'trans-humanist' initiative would begin unpleasantly, since its first task would be to destroy all ideas and institutions that did not share the view that "true human destiny" is a matter for human construction. To the ancient world, however, such a

[1] Max Moore, Chairman, Extropy Institute http://www.extropy.org/principles.htm

suggestion would have been nonsensical, not because they did not have the technological capability to effect dramatic changes in reality, but because such constructed changes would be recognised as holding no transformative potential. Having a far deeper metaphysical vision than us, they were able to see that man's significance and potential lies in realising his nature, and not in endeavouring to transcend it.

Fundamental realisations in science, at both the micro and macro level, have reopened the question concerning the nature of reality itself. They point to the fact that reality is animate and constantly changing and that we are inextricably related to it. So profound is the revolution in scientific thinking in this regard that Ilya Prigogine calls for "a new dialogue with nature". Such a view appears to be entirely in line with philosopher, Thomas Nagel's suggestion that any correct theory of the mind/body relation would require us to "radically transform our overall conception of the world" and acquire "a new understanding of the phenomenon now thought of as physical." Whilst it is not proposed to follow these scientific realisations to any degree, what this awareness of an animate and informed reality perhaps indicates is that we enjoy a much closer, more symbiotic relationship with the natural world than previously realised. And that, perhaps, as Aristotle suggests, our orientation towards reality has a significance beyond the purely epistemological. Because, according to Aristotle, the destiny of human existence is not conveyed in man's emergence from nature, but in his ability to move towards it.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 Heideggerean and Aristotelian Notions of Being

This work brings together Heideggerean and Aristotelian notions of Being in a consideration of the different modes of ontological thought they entail, it being hoped that through such an examination some light may be thrown on the problematic nature of our postmodern orientation towards reality. The reason for doing this is because it is felt that we are becoming increasingly detached from our given reality – nature, the primary reality that we have not created, that is not a product of language and culture, but, rather, serves as a material reserve for our ever-increasing technological development.[1] This estrangement is viewed here in philosophical terms, because ontological consequences would seem to follow from it, consequences that raise fundamental questions about what it means to 'be' human.

It is on the question of what it means to 'be' human that these two philosophers, who both regard Being as a matter of the most profound significance, differ. They differ not on inessential details, but fundamentally. For, whilst Aristotle regards the fulfilment of human 'thinghood' as an active form of completion, or entelechy, arrived at through our consciously engaging with the world, contemplating and seeking to know its divine principles, Heidegger takes a less metaphysical view.[2] So far as Heidegger is concerned, not only has metaphysics failed to disclose being, but such thinking has actually been responsible for preventing it from being experienced. In his thinking in this regard, Heidegger was no doubt influenced by the theology of Luther and his rejection of Aristotelian metaphysics.[3] Heidegger rarely expresses his religious convictions in his lectures, but early on in his career presents himself as a Christian theologian attempting to serve God through his works. At that time, according to John van Buren, the young Heidegger regarded himself as "a kind of philosophical Luther of western metaphysics."[4] In his exploration of Aristotle's ontological thinking Heidegger seems more attuned to the expression of being in language than to its operation in reality, which is the governing, metaphysical sense intended by Aristotle. As a result, in Heidegger's presentation of Aristotle's ontological thinking the underlying religious significance of the activity of 'being-at-work' in contemplation does not emerge, because the engagement with an operative reality that such effortful activity enables is not discerned. Rather, Heidegger regards Aristotle's ontological terms as something to deconstruct. For, he saw in them the

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[1] John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995), 4 Searle contrasts 'intrinsic' reality, essentially nature, with 'institutional', or 'observer relative', reality, i.e., reality that we have constructed with language and thought. The second reality originates with us and is derivative of the former 'brute' reality.

[2] Throughout this work 'being' refers specifically to the activity of being, understood as a verb and not a noun. Neither 'existence' nor 'existing' are adequate alternatives, because whilst numerous beings may exist and be in the state of existing that does not necessarily indicate that they are engaged in the immanent activity of 'being'.

[3] John van Buren, 'Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther', ed., John van Buren and Theodore Kisiel, *Reading Heidegger From The Start* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 170

[4] Ibid., 173

false conceptuality adopted by the Christian church which, he believed, had distorted primal Christianity.

Luther was, for Heidegger, the theologian who gave voice to the true Christian experience, as expressed in terms of horror, dread, guilt, suffering, anxiety, care and falleness. And many of these terms, which Luther emphasised in his teachings, were adopted by Heidegger in his attempt to construct an ontological justification for the Christian life of suffering.[5] However, the plausibility of the Lutheran demand for such anguished experience depends upon the reality of an absent God, and the consequent denial that he is knowable within the realm of human experience. Clearly Aristotle's metaphysical vision of a divinely inspired and animated universe, knowable to man through the act of contemplation, clashed with Luther's interpretation of a diminished reality and of man's impotence within it. However, the denial of the accessible divine immanence at the heart of Aristotle's metaphysics was made easier by the inconspicuous nature of that other aspect of Aristotelian reality that brought such immanence to attention - human effort. For, according to Aristotle, in order to be aware of the true nature of reality requires the effort of conscious awareness, as perception is not a passive state, it is the work of the soul and calls for us to pay attention. The productive, worldly exertions favoured by Luther are the very antithesis of the ontological effort Aristotle addresses, which is indiscernible and produces nothing.[6] Thus, two very different notions of human work lie at the base of these two different perceptions of being human. For Luther, man orients himself to the world through his belief, he may be productive but ontologically he is impotent, whereas the Aristotelian perceiver produces nothing, but is empowered.

In his later thinking Heidegger expresses a preference for the God of theology over the God of philosophy, on the basis that the Christian God alone inspires awe and can be worshipped. However, what is not acknowledged in those contrary presentations of divinity, is their affect on man's place in reality - on his way of 'being' in the world. In Aristotle's divinely inspired teleological cosmos man's place is ontologically determined according to his 'being', which in turn is determined by the inner activity inhering in the form of his existence. In the Christian world no such inner activity is recognised as there is deemed to be no ontological actualisation beyond the fact of existence. And, accordingly, the concept of 'inherent act' inherited from Aristotle's metaphysics is interpreted in external terms simply as a notional inner aspect common to all activities. In a world determined by external movement rather than internal activity in which even the activity of contemplation descends to an activity of the will[7], man's appropriate orientation towards the worshipful God comes to be seen not in terms of his natural accord with reality, but as revealed in the functions he performs in accordance with his status within the church. And

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[5] John van Buren, Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther', 170

[6] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2002)

[7] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Vol 46 180.1, 180.2 . 182.1[451 – 456], "*In essence the contemplative life is a life of mental activity, but what stimulates us to live in this way is our will which activates all our powers including mind. Contemplation is hindered by strong passions which distract our attention from mind to sense. One can't at the same time be occupied with external activity and free for contemplation of God.*"

ultimately what unfolds in Luther's theology of suffering is not only a rejection of the natural world, but also a rejection of man's intuitive way of knowing it. As a result, man is not only estranged from his ontological source, but left burdened with an ontological potency he cannot actualise. For Luther, however, "human being is always in non-being,"[8] irredeemably trapped in a deprivation which he cannot overcome. Such a theology is founded on two distinct though inter-related elements – human impotency and demonstrable work, both of which are antithetical to Aristotle's vision of human 'thinghood'. And what Heidegger endeavours to provide in support, is an ontological justification for Luther's view of a diminished human 'thinghood'.[9]

For Aristotle human 'thinghood' is grounded in potency. This means that we are not ontologically fixed and complete entities, but need to work on ourselves in order to fully 'be'. For Heidegger, by contrast, being human is essentially a productive, historical affair – our potential relating to what we can produce rather than what we can fully be. Since, following Luther, it is through our external works, i.e., our accomplishments, that we evidence and constitute our being. For, the world as given is not our world, according to Heidegger, it is simply the material reserve out of which we fashion and appropriate the human world. These contrasting notions of inner work and outer work establish not simply two different ways of 'being in the world', but two different worlds, one focused on 'being' and the other on 'doing' (under the guise of 'historical being'), both of which are acknowledged in Aristotle's metaphysics. For, although Aristotle recognised that the primary way of 'being' in the world for human beings is by contemplating and perceiving, i.e., by being engaged with reality, he also saw that there are other incidental ways of existing. In these other incidental ways, which Aristotle described as 'historical' and close to sophistry or 'non-being', the focus is externally rather than internally directed, on producing rather than on 'being'. Accordingly, from the perspective of Aristotle's metaphysics, our modern, productive way of existing could be articulated in terms of 'non-being'. And, consequently, regardless of whatever environmental or moral problems our single-minded focus on material productivity may have caused, at the heart of the matter is the issue of what it means to 'be' human. That ontological question inevitably calls on us to consider whether the externally oriented, productive stance we have adopted has so fundamentally changed our nature that our very ability to perceive this shift has been compromised. We continue to exist, but the meaning of that existence is seen to be exclusively in accordance with a functional system of meaning which we have created and imposed upon the world, and nothing intrinsically real.

This shift, from active 'being' to productive existence, would seem to reveal a change in what we understand by rationality. As increasingly what passes for 'rational behaviour' seems to demand that we expend our energy on socially determined goals which not only realise nothing of our individual potential, but actually harm our environment. For Karl Mannheim, writing in the 1930s, the most obvious explanation for such 'irrational'

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[8] Luther's 'Lectures on Romans' , quoted in John van Buren, 'Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther' in *Reading Heidegger From The Start* : 169

[9] Ibid., 173

behaviour was that man had developed a 'second nature' which regarded such social objectives as primary. And this occurred because his rational intuition had diminished to something merely functional. Certainly, for Aristotle, the choice of such a deprived form of existence would have been highly irrational. To the ancient and medieval mind the intellect was seen to have two indivisible aspects: speculative and practical, or intrinsic and instrumental; for the intellect both perceived reality and produced its own. And, although, we now tend to think of reason purely in terms of logic, as a function of the mind, its synonym 'sensible' reminds us of that forgotten perceptive element. The reason rationality is here considered along with 'being' is because they appear to be inextricably linked as underlying facets of human 'thinghood'. And whilst the question of Being may no longer concern the West, as Heidegger famously observed, our presumptions regarding our rationality are increasingly being questioned, in the light of growing environmental and cultural challenges, to which we seem unable to rationally respond. The apparent lacuna in our rationality concerns its intrinsic or speculative aspect, i.e., that element of the mind, or soul, which is concerned with and, in fact, dependent upon, our perception of reality. And it is this ontological dependency on reality, underlying both rationality and being, which is explored in this work.

Both Aristotle and Heidegger contribute to that exploration through their common realisation that human well-being is dependent on Being. For Aristotle that realisation is reached through a deep consideration of the nature of reality, and expressed in his appraisal of the 'thinghood' of beings which, for Aristotle, is the primary meaning of 'being'. Heidegger approaches the question of Being from his realisations concerning the inadequacy of modern thought. And a consistent theme in his work is the call for an authentic mode of thinking that will enable this pressing question to be heard. The two most fundamental aspects of Aristotle's ontology are:- 1., his realisation that 'being' is internally active, hence his neologisms indicating that, and 2., that in the case of 'being-human' that determining inner activity concerns the perception and contemplation of reality. In order to bring those two related aspects to light, reference is made to Aristotle's philosophical works, i.e., the 'Physics', 'Metaphysics' and 'De Anima' where the metaphysics of 'being' is explained. What is believed to be an early work, the 'Protrepticus', is also considered, as it gives a wide overview of Aristotle's philosophical vision.[10] In his works on ethics, both the 'Nicomachean' and 'Eudemian', Aristotle sets out the work of the contemplative individual, actively in touch with a dynamic and divinely inspired reality. Aristotle's neologisms – 'energeia' and 'entelecheia'- which articulate the work of 'being-human'- are used extensively in all the above works. However, these terms, which are generally regarded to be pivotal in his philosophy, occur only a handful of times in his other, non-philosophical works. The point is directly relevant here, because in his attempt to elucidate the meaning of Aristotle's ontological terms, the main texts Heidegger refers to are not drawn from his philosophical opus.

[10] All references are to *Aristotle's Protrepticus*, trans., Anton-Hermann Chroust (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 6. The *Protrepticus*, meaning 'persuasive' or 'hortatory', is a reconstruction of the existing fragments of Aristotle's persuasive work, the original complete composition, attested to by a number of ancient authors, having been lost. Chroust draws on the work of Ingemar During, 'Aristotle's Protrepticus: An Attempt at Reconstruction' (1961)

Whilst the question of Being concerned Heidegger his entire life, in the early part of his career, prior to the publication 'Being and Time', that question was considered in the context of religious phenomenology and Aristotelian ontology, which were the subjects of study that interested him then. The lecture course on the 'Basic Concepts Of Aristotelian Philosophy', delivered in 1924, which is considered in this chapter, reveals Heidegger's thinking at that time regarding the fundamental meaning of 'being-human'. In his later works, in the 1950s, Heidegger came to focus more on the connection between being and thinking and delivered a number of lectures on this topic just before his formal retirement from the University of Freiburg in 1952. 'What Is Called Thinking?', 'Discourse On Thinking', and 'The Principle Of Reason' are three such publications considered here. In these works, written against the backdrop of an ever-encroaching technology, Heidegger endeavours to trace out the possibility of an authentic relationship between man and being. For Heidegger, the possibility of such a relationship resides in a form of thinking that is distinct from the scientific, technological thinking of our modern way of being in the world. The form of thinking that Heidegger promotes is intentionally open to Being, or, at least, to its possibility. The intellectual approach that Heidegger articulates in these later lectures has been variously described as passive, meditative and even, mystical; Heidegger, himself insists that – "*a releasement toward things*," is meditative.[11] In other later works, such as "The Thing", there is also evidence that Heidegger's 'workshop' view of the world diminishes and that he starts to see the world less in terms of what is available for use. However, nature's ontological insignificance remains a consistent aspect of Heidegger's thought, as only in man does Being find an opening for its manifestation.[12]

The metaphysical form of 'being-human' presented by Aristotle, which sets out the activities and capabilities intrinsic to human 'thinghood', is rejected by Heidegger early on, and preference given instead to a more situational, politicised form of 'being-in-the-world'. Accordingly, the potent capability Aristotle recognises as residing in our essential nature, as a capacity to 'be-acted-upon' is interpreted by Heidegger in purely instrumental terms. For Heidegger, it is in its outward expression in productivity that Dasein is seen to express and sustain its ontological potential: "Heidegger's claim is that the primordial sense of being for Aristotle is production".[13] Heidegger presents the productive capability that sustains the situational being of Dasein as ontological by interpreting the significance of Aristotle's ontological notion of potency solely in terms of a force for producing, which is an inversion of the ontological meaning of 'ousia', or 'thinghood' intended by Aristotle.[14] So far as Aristotle is concerned, 'ousia' denotes a form of 'thinghood' determined and maintained not by what it produces using reality, but as determined by the reality that it allows to act upon it. Although producing is incidental to the activity of 'being-human', it does attain ontological force if it becomes our determining orientation towards the world,

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[11] Heidegger, *Discourse On Thinking*, trans., John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), 54

[12] Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, trans., Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 63

[13] Walter A. Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 14

[14] Heidegger, *Interpretations of Ancient Philosophy/Aristotle Metaphysics Θ*, trans., Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Indiana University Press: Indianapolis, 1995)

i.e., if we become more determined by what is incidental to our being. In which case, the ontological significance of productivity derives directly from the deprivation it wreaks upon the activity and capabilities of 'being-human'. For, as Aristotle recognises, deprivation too is a source of form. If the work of 'being-human' is seen to be exclusively historical and productive, what is thereby ignored is our intrinsic relationship with the natural world which is the fundamental relation underlying the contemplation of reality. However, the ontological significance of that displacement only becomes evident when man's historical, productive way of 'being-in-the-world' begins to reveal itself as determining. As producing ceases to be something that we have the power to do, and emerges as what we are.

Heidegger frequently remarked that metaphysics had failed to bring Being into view. By which he meant that it had failed to raise the question concerning being. However, as Sartre recognised, such a question contains its own answer, since only a metaphysics of 'non-being' could pose such a question. For only a being determined by its lack of 'being', "capable of being its own nothingness", could question the presence, or, rather, the absence of Being.[15] Sartre saw that being and consciousness are linked, as are non-being and unconsciousness. He also saw that non-being entered the world with human reality, and that the instrumental relations that disseminate that reality are not its cause but its product, as instrumentality, both in thought and deed, emerges as an expression of a particular questioning consciousness that has come to comprise our essential nature. Sartre's thinking, although secondary in this work, is highly significant so far as our understanding of modern man's 'being' is concerned. For what Sartre understood, as a result of his realisation that consciousness and being are linked, is that if 'to be' is to mean something more than 'to exist', the distinction between actively being and inactively existing must reside within us. A further important contributor to this work is the philosopher Josef Pieper. Pieper's significance derives not so much from his extensive knowledge of Greek and Medieval Christian philosophy, but from his ability to apply that knowledge in his examination of contemporary society. For, Pieper recognised, through the realism that shaped his vision of the world, that if philosophy is to have any value, it must engage with reality, i.e., with the totality of human existence.

This work is interested in the thinking of Heidegger and Aristotle only insofar as that thinking reveals something about reality and about man's relationship with reality today. Influences, developments and histories that are extraneous to the philosophical act of engaging with reality are not considered here. This work is not intended to be a historical study of the thinking of Aristotle and Heidegger. Rather, its intention is philosophical - to engage with the question of Being as they present it, and to see, as Sartre suggests, how our conduct evidences the presence or absence of 'being'. If, following Aristotle, we accept that the governing sense of being is in beings 'being' a certain way and thereby maintaining their being, then our way of being in the world would seem to be the place to look for a fundamental ontology. And, if as Aristotle also says, history is incidental to that

[15] Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans., Hazel Barnes (London: Routledge, 2003), 69

governing way of 'being', then that is the way that history must be viewed in that exercise. In this work reality is viewed as being ontologically significant in two distinct ways. Firstly as a materialisation of our historical, productive way of being in the world, what Sartre describes as 'human reality', by virtue of which 'non-being' entered the world. However, reality also has a primary meaning when seen from its intrinsic perspective. And it is in this prior sense that reality is seen as providing a founding context for understanding Aristotle's metaphysics. Because, according to Aristotle, beings actualise and maintain their being by 'being' by being open to the forms of reality extant in the natural world. Whilst Aristotle's doctrine of cognition, which makes reality primary, is often dismissed as naive, those judgements tend to come from a disappointed epistemological perspective which has nothing to abstract from such an ontological engagement with the world. When that doctrine is viewed from an ontological perspective, however, as a way of engaging with reality that expresses and sustains our 'being', the situation looks very different. The belief in our ontological invulnerability is founded on a faith in our powers of reason and confidence in the historical progress of society. However, in both those respects our beliefs are now being questioned, which would seem to suggest that it is timely to reconsider Aristotle's thinking on 'being' as he set it down at the very beginning of western civilisation.

Through a consideration of these contrasting notions of being, it is intended to consider three main points:-

1. That the ontological significance of Being resides in what we are 'being' and not in what we do, i.e. that 'being' is an intrinsic relation anterior to thought and inhering within us, and not an instrumental one pertaining to how we utilise reality or choose to deport ourselves.

2. What is manifested in the productive movement of history is not 'being', but 'non-being'. It is an activity incidental to 'being', but one that has become determinative as our orientation towards the world.

3. As a result of our mode of 'being' in the world shifting from an intrinsic relation to an instrumental one, i.e., by making an activity incidental to 'being' primary, ontological consequences would seem to have followed from it. These changes, which are considered throughout this work, but particularly in chapter 6, raise significant questions concerning human consciousness and individual identity, and point towards an increasing degree of technological determinism in our lives. The most obvious explanation for such changes would seem to be that beneath the evident sociological and epistemological changes there is a more fundamental, albeit less discernible, ontological one.

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to establish the ground for engaging with these thinkers by setting out and drawing together a number of preliminary matters. These matters concern our understanding of nature and our own place within the world. For we tend to forget, when surrounded by our own creations, that we, too, are natural beings. Heidegger withheld being from animals, as he believed that it was through man's unique

ability to stand out from the natural world that he stood in a relation to Being. For Aristotle, however, all 'ensouled' beings are caught in the governing sense of being through their capacity for actively 'being', with which they are endowed. Today we rarely speak of the soul and tend to see it as a religious term that we have outgrown. And yet, to be an 'ensouled creature', as Aristotle describes us, is not the same thing as we mean by possessing a mind; for the former has a natural capacity for reality which the latter has forgone. And what is most significant about that distinction is that the mind cannot, through its own powers and determinations, overcome the ontological deficiencies wrought by an inactive soul. And it is this shift from soul to mind, from contemplation to discursive thinking that is reflected in the ontological thinking of Aristotle and Heidegger.

Another concern of this chapter is ontological terminology. Aristotle constructed fundamental terms to express his metaphysical vision; and the manner in which Heidegger interpreted those terms came to influence his own ontological thinking. It is therefore proposed to consider Heidegger's exploration of that ontological terminology as he explains it in 'Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy', prior to the consideration of his thinking on Being. However, first it is proposed to consider Aristotle's ontological vocabulary and the various problems associated with its interpretation. This chapter considers these matters under the following subheadings:-

1. Aristotle's Ontological Vocabulary

2. Heidegger's Interpretation of Aristotle's Basic Concepts

3. The Ontological Significance of Nature

1.1. Aristotle's Ontological Vocabulary

Aristotle wrote his metaphysics on the cusp of the worlds of myth and logic, with a prescient wariness of the power of language. An astute and devoted observer of nature, Aristotle tapped the depths and significance of every day experience, observing the profundity within the 'ordinariness' of all living things.[16] He saw that the forms of reality which make things what they are are not distinct ideas, but forms of activity in which beings participate, thereby maintaining themselves in their 'thinghood'. These activities are not productive, but intrinsic to the being of the ensouled creature, because it is as 'beings-in-motion' that they express and maintain their relationship with the world. This notion of intrinsic activity is an important one, without which teleological principles don't really make any sense, because if there is nothing 'to be' it is hard to see how there can be anything to become. In Aristotle's teleological cosmos, beings do not have purposes, in the modern external sense of goals to achieve. Rather they are purposes, and express their purposeful existence by actively participating in reality. However, this notion of intrinsic

[16] Ayreh Kosman 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 205, 196 Kosman describes Aristotle's investigation into 'being' as, *"a question of great importance and profundity, but its origins are quotidian"*.

activity is precluded by the inert terms into which Aristotle's philosophy has been translated. For translations such as 'substance' and 'actuality' convey nothing of the dynamic reality from which Aristotle drew his terms, and, consequently, convey nothing of the inherent dynamism to which they were intended to point.

Inevitably, all translations are made against the backdrop of the prevailing vision of reality; words cannot be given meanings which don't cohere with the acknowledged paradigm of knowledge, they would be meaningless. It, thus, seems that it is our prior allegiance to reality that determines how we translate and apply language, shaping it to fit what we have already determined as being real. A particular problem attending the translation of Aristotle's philosophy, which goes to the very heart of our understanding of 'being', is that our modern vision of reality, and therefore our ability to 'be' within it, has contracted from what it once was. That contraction is the achievement of conceptual language and thought which, through reshaping our intellect, has reshaped our perspective of the world. The challenge therefore is to give meaning to terms describing a relationship with a reality that we no longer acknowledge exists. The aim of metaphysics is to articulate our underlying relationship with reality. However, since such a relationship is beyond the grasp of conceptual thought, it inevitably eludes all attempts to reduce it to a conceptual structure or system. And, consequently, the difficulty is that when our apprehension of reality radically alters, as we come to accept new concepts, such a metaphysical relationship can fall from view, being beyond the linguistic reach of our contemporary reality. What was obvious and natural to the Greek and Medieval mind lost its self-evident nature as we came to think differently, i.e., conceptually, about reality. Galileo's mathematically derived universe, and its dependence on the law of inertial motion, which denied the process of inner change to all beings within it, could only have been 'discovered' within a changed worldview that made an inert world feasible. And such a changed worldview could not take place until the human intellect had been sufficiently reformed by conceptual thinking to 'see' it. [17] For, whereas Aristotle's philosophy describes the world known to common sense and individual experience, the world presented by Galileo shuns both. Accordingly, the shift from the one to other, from intuitive 'knowing' to conceptual knowledge, required a fundamental alteration in our perception of the world, a new philosophy, and a new approach to being.[18]

The distinction between reality and what language can say about reality is specifically referred to in Aristotle's Metaphysics. What is, thereby, underlined is the fact that our ability to 'know' reality exceeds our ability to demonstrate it, which means that our intrinsic capacity to receive and know reality cannot be measured by our instrumental ability to represent and replicate that reality. [19] It seems that our faith in the intrinsic

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[17] A. Koyré, *Metaphysics and Measurement; Essays in the Scientific Revolution* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1968), 3

[18] Ibid., 5

[19] Aristotle *Metaphysics*, 1027b 17, "The intertwining and dividing are in thinking but not in things, and being of this sort is different from the being of what is in the governing sense, and must be set aside, because such thinking does not reveal any nature that is outside this sort of being." All references to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* are to this translation unless otherwise stated.

capability of the mind to 'know' reality in the absence of demonstration has been lost and that we can now only 'know' what we can prove. And, therefore, whilst Aristotle's metaphysical terms point to a dynamic reality, if such a reality is not permitted within a paradigm that can't prove it, it is not surprising that in translation those terms lose their inherent dynamism. On the contrary, against a rigid conceptual backdrop it is easy to see how static mistranslations persist. For, although they render Aristotle's philosophical thought nonsensical by obliterating its guiding dynamism, they offer no challenge to the determining inertia of the accepted paradigm.

A further, though related, problem attending any attempt to disentangle Aristotle's thinking from the mistranslations that have occluded it, is the longevity of Aristotle's influence on western thought. Having dominated the curricula of European universities for centuries, a whole corpus of work has developed around a mistranslated Aristotelian tradition. And, for the sake of maintaining the continuity of that tradition, some translators prefer to continue the misunderstandings on which it is based, rather than draw attention to the misinterpreted terms.[20] Scholars have variously referred to the 'Metaphysics' as "uninterpretable"; "a sprawling, formless, horrendous monstrosity";[21] "a hopeless muddle in which no ingenuity of conjecture can find a certain order of thought."[22] It has even been suggested that certain works deemed 'immature' be removed.[23] Writing in 1651 Hobbes describes the Latinized version of Aristotle's thought then being taught as 'vain', 'absurd' and 'essentially meaningless'. He goes on to suggest that what is being taught is not in fact philosophy, "the nature whereof does not depend on an author", but 'Aristotelity'. It would, therefore, seem that continuing to translate Aristotle in such terms is of doubtful philosophical value. Rather, as Hobbes notes, it keeps Aristotle's thought outside philosophy and maintains him instead as a 'historical figure'. So far as Aristotle is concerned, philosophy is a natural pursuit, not a scholarly one. For the practice of wisdom is an activity of the soul, derived from its openness to reality and has nothing to do with scholarship. And the purpose of philosophical language is to encourage us in that pursuit, by pointing us towards a reality that is not occluded by the every day use of language, i.e., to alert us to the underlying truth beneath. For idiomatic expressions and common ways of putting words together conceal, by their very familiarity, the unthinking assumptions philosophy tries to get beyond. Aristotle approaches the problem of the occlusion of every day language by using familiar terms in unfamiliar locutions, often running words together and overlapping meanings, in an attempt to point to things that have not been reduced to standard expressions. However, if the translating goal is conforming to idiom rather than adhering to the actual text, the 'barbaric' truth of Aristotle's innovative circumlocutions is lost. And the metaphysical terms are thus compromised, as they are made subservient to

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[20] Richard McKeon, Selections From Medieval Philosophers, vol 2, quoted in *Aristotle's Physics*, trans., Joe Sachs (Sante Fe: Green Lion Press, 2000): 5

[21] David Lachterman,' Did Aristotle Develop? Revue de Philosophie Ancienne VIII, 1 (1990), 5', quoted in *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans., Sachs (Sante Fe: Green Lion Press, 2002): xxvii. The comment is not Lachterman's, but that of a nameless 18th scholar.

[22] Paul Shorey, 'Classical Philology XIX, 382, and XXII, 422', quoted in *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans., Joe Sachs, ibid., xxvii

[23] Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies: Toronto, 1951), 35, 53-55

the dominant conceptual scheme of knowledge, which Aristotle specifically demarcated from the realm of truth rendered by reality alone. In 'The Essence Of Human Freedom' Heidegger considers the philosophical misunderstandings perpetuated by 'traditional', 'erroneous' translations. With regard to chapter 10 of Book IX of Aristotle's 'Metaphysics', which is concerned with the ontological meaning of 'being true', Heidegger rejects the traditional translations provided by Schwegler, Jaeger and Ross. He rejects them because he believes that they err in considering 'being true' to be a question for epistemology and logic rather than for ontology, and, consequently, fail to engage with the "central book of the *Metaphysics*." Heidegger's own interpretation of this chapter will be considered later. However, with regard to the rejected translations, Heidegger asks, "how could the real theme of the chapter be so crudely and stubbornly overlooked? The commentators and those who cite them have, to be sure, also read the chapter and interpreted it. Certainly, but there is reading and reading. The question is whether we read in the right way, i.e., whether we are adequately prepared for seeing what is in front of us, whether we measure up to the problematic or not, whether we understand the problem of being and truth and their interconnection in a sufficiently primordial manner, whether we are thus able to move within the horizon of the philosophy of Aristotle and Plato. Or whether we rush at the philosophical tradition with worn-out philosophical concepts and their pseudo-problems."[24] It would, thus, seem, according to Heidegger, that right reading has more to do with our apprehension of reality than our adherence to idiomatic language.

What it is difficult for us to discern, when so much social ontology is constructed by language, is that although language is necessarily the medium through which we convey our thoughts and realisations about reality, there is an underlying intrinsic reality beyond the containment of language, certainly beyond the analysis of conceptual language, (poetry may get closer), to which language can only point. And this is the aim of Aristotle's philosophy: "to guide the 'hearer' or 'reader' in **his contemplation of things.**"[25] According to Aristotle, the underlying aim of all philosophic endeavour, past, present and future, is the question what constitutes and is responsible for the 'thinghood' of things.[26] And, therefore, his aim in the 'Metaphysics' is to explore "the kind of knowledge that contemplates what **is** insofar as **it is**, and what belongs to it in its own right,"[27] which is a study that includes the sources and the highest causes of 'being'.[28] In order to conduct such a study Aristotle found it necessary to create two neologisms - 'energeia' and 'entelecheia' - to convey the intrinsic activity of 'thinghood'. These inherently dynamic terms are crucially important for understanding Aristotle's ontological thought. And, together with the third word 'ousia', which was a term already extant in Greek before Aristotle developed it for philosophical use, make up the most important terms in his philosophy.

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[24] Heidegger, *The Essence Of Human Freedom*, trans., Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2005), 62
[25] Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1954), 138
[26] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1028b 3-5
[27] Ibid, 1003a 21
[28] Ibid, 1003a26

i.) Ousia

In his historical lexicon of 'Greek Philosophical Terms, F.E. Peters explains that 'ousia' has a number of different meanings in the Platonic dialogues. Sometimes meaning existence as opposed to non-existence, as in 'Theaetetus', 185c, 219b; it is applied to the existence of sensible things in 'Theaetetus', 186b; and in the 'Republic', 509b it refers to the mode of the 'really real'; and in 'Phaedo' 65d, 92d, and 'Phaedrus' 245e, Plato uses it in a way similar to its Aristotelian usage as 'essence'. For Aristotle the reality depicted by 'ousia' is the central problem of metaphysics and indeed of all philosophy, because " 'what is being [on]'? really comes down to 'what is ousia'?" Since, first and foremost this is what being is. In considering which component of reality has the best claim to 'ousia' out of the following four – genus (genos), the universal (katholou), the substratum (hypokeimenon) and essence (ti esti), Aristotle selects 'essence' – what a thing is; "not as a predicational entity, but as the immanent formal cause in compound beings." This choice for 'ousia' fulfils two prerequisites, 1., it is separate – 'chōriston', and 2., it is, as embodied matter, individual. [29] As Joe Sachs, points out, what is important about being separate relates to a reality that can sustain itself in that manner, i.e., is able to hang together as a whole, intact and on its own. And, for that reason mathematical forms are not separate, because they can't be at work maintaining their isolated state.[30]

In ordinary Greek 'ousia' means wealth or inalienable property. It is one of the primary terms of Aristotle's metaphysics and usually translated as 'substance'. However, this is a mistranslation, because whereas 'ousia' conveys a superabundant and self-sufficient reality which cannot be reduced to its attributes, 'substance'- understood as what stands under its attributes, but is not constituted by them - names something that is empty and devoid of meaning without them, i.e., it isn't more, but less.[31] Accordingly, an unqualified translation of 'substance' is more than simply inaccurate, since it completely inverts the meaning of 'ousia', conveying something empty and dependent, rather than something full and independent.[32] Sachs translates 'ousia' as 'thinghood' – "The way of being that belongs to anything which has attributes but is not an attribute of anything, which is also separate and a **this.**" [33] "Whatever has being in this way is an independent thing, "[34] having fullness and self-sufficiency. George A. Blair translates 'ousia' as 'reality', but explains that the reality of the Greeks was not derived from the static 'thingness' or 're-alitas' of medieval Latin, but from dynamic 'beingness'. However, what both these translated terms, the 'thinghood' of Sachs and the 'reality of beingness' of Blair, seek to retain is the animated nature of reality perceived by Aristotle, which clearly is lost in its translation as static 'substance'. As Joseph Owens points out in his detailed study, 'The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics', 'ousia' is the primary instance of Being from which all others

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[29] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms* (New York: New York University Press, 1967),149-150

[30] Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, lviii

[31] Ibid, 1038b 25 – 28; 1039a 1 - 3

[32] See A. Schwegler, 'Metaph Arist., III, 215': quoted in Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1954): 139

[33] Aristotle, *Metaphysics.* 1023b 38 -39; Sachs Lviii

[34] Ibid. 1029a 27 – 28

flow and upon which all other beings depend: "it is the very core of Being." And for that reason Owens asserts that this is the most important instance of Being to maintain in any translation if its true meaning is to be kept. As he explains, the word 'ousia' is derived from the verb 'to be', but has the ending of an abstract noun to be something like 'beingness'. However, its meaning is not conceptual but concrete, as the 'beingness' it points to is that of the dynamic and self-organising world.[35] The translations 'essence' and 'substance' both derive from the Latin and came to represent different aspects along the spectrum of 'being', although initially their use was interchangeable. 'Substantia' was derived from Aristotle's logical works and came to represent changeable being' i.e., what could be changed via its accidents. 'Essentia' was used to express pure and unchangeable being, and came to be applied to God.[36] In this work 'ousia' is understood to convey the dynamic aspect of reality emphasised by these translators, and therefore the term 'substance' is rejected. Sachs' translated term 'thinghood' is used instead. Although in many ways 'ousia' appears synonymous with form, it also holds implications for the material aspect of 'thinghood', which are absent from inert 'substance', and the concomitant view of docile matter held in the middle ages. Such a static view regards form as something imposed on passive matter, without necessitating any activity, or doing, on the part of matter itself.[37] In this regard, both George A. Blair and Mary Louise Gill speak of Aristotle's radical insight in recognising that form is not a superimposed structure, but in a sense is what matter is actually 'doing,' - its 'being, in effect.[38] If form is seen as the activity that a being is 'being', or is capable of 'being', then matter contains the ability of that being to realise that activity and therefore its being, which means that matter, too, has ontological significance. And, because matter has the potential to act otherwise than in accordance with its given form, i.e., it is able to do something else, it has the power "to seriously threaten[s] the intrinsic unity, and hence the substantiality, of the object to which it contributes."[39]

ii).Energeia

Just as 'ousia' has been reduced to the static concept 'substance', 'energeia' and 'entelecheia' - Aristotle's two dynamic neologisms, both came to be translated inanimately as 'actuality', even though they were coined at different times. These terms were needed to convey the inner activity of 'being', without which a being cannot 'be' what it is. By

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[35] Sachs, *Metaphysics*, xl

[36] Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 143

[37] John McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 72 McCumber states that both Aristotle and Aquinas recognised that '*matter was bounded, made into a 'this-something' and so individuated, by the action of form*'. However for Aristotle the boundaries of the entity produced by that composite of matter and form are determined by the activity of form and matter, because '*the form of a composite is individuated by holding together the elements which compose its material side and would otherwise fly apart. This activity is not a gaining of geometrical attributes by the form but the replacement of whatever boundaries those elements already have in the surrounding environment with the boundaries set by form.*' It is a process more than an event.

[38] George A. Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia; "Act" in Aristotle* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1992), 45

[39] Mary Louise Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3

engaging in and maintaining that inner activity, which in the case of human 'thinghood' emerges as the active reception, or contemplation, of reality, human beings have the possibility of actualising, or transforming, their 'being'. Clearly Aristotle needed neologisms to convey the meaning of this activity, because the effortful awareness that it requires is not something that we are generally aware of. It is outside our usual sphere of activity, because we are not generally conscious of ourselves, or aware of any need to be, and therefore we do not readily have words to describe such an active state. Although the notion of inner activity is contained in both neologisms, their meaning is different. The prefix 'en' means within and 'erg' refers to work; accordingly, 'energeia' means 'to act within', to 'be busy within', "to be internally active."[40] As Blair explains, to create this word Aristotle uses a very rare active voice of an active verb, thereby underlining both its active force and its internality, and emphasising that the word points to the activity itself and not to anything the activity might produce: "the internal activity [is] the work."[41] By so acting, Blair suggests that "Aristotle has gone out of his way to avoid having the word interpreted as 'actuality' or as a kind of static modality of being." Because what Aristotle is looking to convey is a "working that doesn't work **on** anything, but is just being active inside the agent."[42] Ayreh Kosman, too, in his work, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', points to the centrality of activity – 'energeia' in Aristotle's metaphysics. And suggests that the ontologically primary issues that 'energeia' and 'dunamis' disclose relate to self-identity and being.[43]

Like Blair and Kosman, Sachs also suggests that 'energeia' should be regarded as the central element of Aristotle's philosophical vocabulary, since its meaning is at the heart of all his thinking. Sachs translates 'energeia' as 'being-at-work' and points out that because the term relates to an ultimate idea, it is not definable by anything deeper or clearer, but can only be grasped by examples or analogies,[44] which Aristotle provides in the 'Metaphysics'. 'Energeiai' are activities like seeing, knowing, contemplating and understanding that are complete at every moment, because their goal is contained within the activity itself. Such self-contained activities are distinct from motions or processes that are not complete at every moment, because their goals lie outside the activity and relate to what that activity produces, like building a house, or losing weight. It appears that these activities of the soul express and preserve our human 'thinghood'; they are not superadded to our completed natures, but are actually constitutive of our nature as individual human beings.[45] Polansky regards 'energeiai' as psychical activities associated with immediate cognition and perception and, as such, activities that are "proper only to the souls of animals." They are 'complete in themselves' and, therefore, distinct from the progressive

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[40] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle*, 19

[41] Ibid, 29, Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1050a 21 trans. Blair

[42] Ibid, 19

[43] Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001),196

[44] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Sachs, Bk ix, chapter 6

[45] Learning is not an activity of the Aristotelian soul, because it is not complete at each moment. See Ronald Polansky, 'Energeia in Aristotle's Metaphysics IX', in. *Aristotle's Ontology*. ed., Anthony Preus, and Anton, John, P, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 211

movements pertaining to 'kinêsis', which can be broken up into parts, because the apprehension 'energeiai' involve is instantaneous: "the cognitive apprehension by way of the form does not itself take time; the perception or thought of a motion is not itself a motion."[46] 'Energeiai' are a special kind of activity that operate not so much in accordance with what we do, but through what is done to us. And, in that sense, can be seen to straddle the distinction between being and becoming, because through 'being acted upon' change comes to be effected within an entity.[47] This neologism was created early in Aristotle's thinking and used extensively in the 'Protrepticus', in which Aristotle sets out his philosophical vision. In that early work Aristotle uses the term to distinguish those who are internally active with their souls, who are living, i.e., engaging in 'energeia', from those who merely possess souls, who are only said to be living because they possess the possibility of changing into that activity: "and 'living' more properly refers to **one who is awake** than to one who is sleeping, and to one who is **internally active** with his soul than to one who merely has a soul. That is, we call the latter one 'living' because of the former one, since the latter one is the kind of thing that can **act or be acted on** in the former way."[48] What Aristotle seems to be pointing at, through this emphasis on an inner effortful activity, is a conscious engagement with reality. In the 'Metaphysics' he emphasises that 'energeiai' are always in the present, and in the 'Nicomachean Ethics' he describes in some detail the experience of such a conscious relationship with the world. According to Polansky, "these psychical *energeiai* always include some self-awareness. We apprehend objects by means of the form without the matter; cognition involves receiving, and in a way being, the form of the object. Hence, to cognize the object through its form is also secondarily to cognize the very '*energeia*' itself, since its being is intimately tied to its object."[49] Our modern words 'conscious' and 'conscience', which come from the Latin 'conscire' meaning 'to know something with oneself, would seem to reflect the forgotten element requiring the presence of oneself.'[50] Accordingly, to be 'conscious' would seem to require something more than simply knowing or being aware of something. It is also necessary to be aware of oneself at the same time, and for that reason would seem to denote an experience that can only occur in the present. We cannot be consciously aware of ourselves in the past or in the future, for there we only exist in our memory or our imagination.

iii).Entelecheia

'Entelecheia' means to maintain oneself in a state of completed 'energeia', or inner activity. Its etymology points to "a fusion of the idea of completeness with that of continuity or persistence."[51] Literally 'having oneself within', or 'as an end', the completion being in the activity qua activity and not as the result of anything produced or concluded by the activity. Blair points out that there were already a number of Greek

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[46] Ibid., 220
[47] Ibid., 221
[48] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia "Act" in Aristotle*, 23, Aristotle, *Protrepticus* 33- 38 trans. Blair
[49] Polansky, 'Energeia in Aristotle's Metaphysics IX', 221
[50] John Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 132
[51] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs li

words in existence meaning 'being at an end', but clearly these did not convey the teleological aspect as a process, which was what Aristotle needed for the activity of 'thinghood', as an activity that makes possible the instantiation of form. 'Entelecheia', however, does not denote activity in the momentary way that is 'energeia', but is a process which 'energeia' can lead into if sustained. Sachs translates it as, 'being-at-work-staying-itself', made up by a combination of 'enteles' meaning complete, or full-grown, and 'echein' meaning to be a certain way by the effort of holding on in that condition, (from which Aristotle also derives 'hexis' – 'the stable soul'). At the same time, Sachs suggests that Aristotle is punning on the word 'endelecheia', which means persistence, by inserting 'telos', i.e., completion. Accordingly, "its power to carry meaning depends on the working together of all the things Aristotle has packed into it."[52] Aristotle came to see that 'being human' is a kind of process - 'entelecheia', but initiated by activity - 'energeia' - "the one who is asleep is said 'to live' because of being able to change into this process by which we call living 'being awake."[53] The term 'entelecheia' was coined to describe the process of actualising the potency to 'be', which we initiate by holding ourselves present in activity, i.e., in an active relation with the world. Translating it statically as 'actuality', or even 'being at an end', fails to convey the fact that the teleological aspect of it is in activity: "material is in potency because it goes toward a form but **whenever it is at work, then it is in that form**... For the end is work, and the work is a being-at-work, [energeia] and this is why the phrase **being-at-work [energeia] is meant by reference to work, and extends to being-at-work-staying-complete [entelecheia].**"[54]

As Blair explains, Aristotle's philosophical thinking was developing as he wrote and, consequently, terms like 'entelecheia' appear later, because it was not realised in the earlier works that they were needed. Also, certain works were rewritten in the light of this revised thinking and certain questions were repeatedly raised for consideration and reconsideration, particularly in the 'Metaphysics'. Bearing all this in mind, two of the most important aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, as far as the present work is concerned, come together in his thinking in 'De Anima', which concerns not just the human soul, but the cosmos as a whole. Aristotle saw the soul as being capable of both moving and perceiving. These were two sides of the same relation with reality, whereby the soul was acted upon in its perceptibility.[55] There could be no motion without perception and no perception without motion. And, ultimately, what emerges is the realisation that the perception and contemplation of reality is the 'being-at-work' of the human soul, and both the source and cause of the teleological possibilities residing there.

Aristotle's theory of motion also deploys the term 'entelecheia'. Although, it is not here concerned with the activities of the soul, which are complete at each moment and possessed only by natural 'ensouled' beings, but with motions or processes that have goals outside themselves. This is because Aristotle saw motion as any kind of change whether in

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[52] Ibid., li
[53] Aristotle, *Protrepticus* trans., Anton-Hermann Chroust (Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1942),17
[54] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1050a 21 trans., Joe Sachs
[55] Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans., Joe Sachs (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press, 2004), 416b 30

'thinghood' or not.[56] And, whilst he reserved the term 'entelecheia' for "complex organized states which persist, holding out in 'being' against internal and external causes tending to destroy them,"[57] he recognised motion "as a complex whole, an enduring unity" in itself, through which a thing's potential for movement and change is actualised, i.e., actualised as a motion and not as a 'being-at-work'.[58] Accordingly, in the context of a thing moved, 'entelecheia' applies to the completed movement qua movement and not to the thing itself. As Aristotle explains in the 'Physics', "the being-at-work-staying-itself [entelecheia] of what is potentially, whenever, being fully at work, it is at work not as itself but just as moveable, is motion." [my emphasis] What Aristotle is drawing attention to here is that the movement in question relates to that thing's potentiality not to its 'being-at-work' in 'thinghood'. He continues with an example, "By the 'just' I mean this. Bronze is potentially a statue, but it is not the being-at-work-staying-itself of bronze as bronze that is motion for the being-bronze itself is not the being-potentially-something."[59] The 'thinghood' of bronze is simply 'being bronze'; its 'entelecheia' qua 'thinghood' therefore encompasses any activities it needs to engage in to prevent its deterioration or change. However, in shaping bronze into a statue its potential to be made into a statue is being put to work, which clearly is no part of its 'thinghood'. For putting potentials into action as potentials is not following 'thinghood', but pursuing motion. Accordingly, 'entelecheia', in this example, exists qua the activity of sculpting the statue, but not qua the 'thinghood' of the bronze. This is a perplexing 'being-at-work', as Aristotle notes in the 'Metaphysics', "motion is a being-at-work but incomplete because the potency of which it is the [complete] being-at-work is itself incomplete. And for this reason it is hard to grasp what it is for it is necessary to place it either as a deprivation or as a potency or as an unqualified being-at-work, but none of these seem admissible so what remains is what has been said, both that it is a being-at-work and that it is the sort of being-at-work that has been described, which is difficult to bring into focus, but capable of being."[60] Aristotle is here pointing towards a 'being-at-work' that moves the potency of something not further towards its 'thinghood', because that would be an activity initiated in 'energeia', but in another direction which makes it look like deprivation, because it is not thereby expressing or maintaining its 'thinghood', like bronze being endlessly shaped and reshaped into different statues. Kosman describes the character of a motion as 'auto-subversive', "a motion is, so to speak, on a suicide mission". This is because "a motion is fully realizable only posthumously; while alive, it has not yet fully achieved its being."[61]Although the two ways in which Aristotle uses 'entelecheia' are perplexing, it should be remembered that one relates to the activity, or process, of 'thinghood' and the other to the activity of a motion qua motion.

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[56] Aristotle, *Physics* 201b 18
[57] Sachs http://www/iep.utm.edu/a/aris-mot.htm accessed 06/09/2006
[58] Ibid, 9
[59] Aristotle, *Physics*, 201a 28;
[60] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1066a 20
[61] Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', 203

1.2. Heidegger's Interpretation of Aristotle's Basic Philosophical Concepts

'Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy' was published in 2002. The work, which constitutes volume 18 of Heidegger's collected works, contains the previously unpublished text of the lecture course on Aristotle that Heidegger gave at the Philipps – Universitat Marburg in 1924. There is no complete manuscript of the lecture course; only the beginning and the concluding parts, which comprise about one third of the total, have been preserved. And, therefore, transcripts from a number of Heidegger's former pupils were referred to in an effort to reconstitute the missing parts. Heidegger was shown the completed manuscript prior to publication, but did not thoroughly check the work. However, the tone of Heidegger's early thinking on Aristotle was set two years earlier in a course of lectures given at Freiburg, entitled 'Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle'. Heidegger added as a heading to that lecture manuscript a motto, "in order to characterise the intention of the interpretation." The motto comprises several short quotations from Kierkegaard and Luther, taken from works condemning a theology that glories in the reality of a present God and the arrogance of a speculative metaphysics presuming to know him.[62] The following is from Kierkegaard's 'Exercises in Christianity': "philosophy, as abstract, floats in the indeterminateness of the metaphysical. Instead of admitting this to itself and then pointing people (individuals) to the ethical, the religious, and the existential, philosophy has given rise to the pretence that humans could, as is said prosaically, speculate themselves out of their own skins and into pure appearance." [63]

The title, 'Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy' was derived from the contents of the surviving handwritten manuscript of the course, and also from the notes provided by students. However, it is noteworthy that the working title for the text, as it was being prepared for the Gesamtausgabe, was 'Aristotle: Rhetoric'. This choice of alternative title is relevant, because, as the editors point out, what Heidegger accomplished in the lecture course was "the interpretation of the being-there of human beings with respect to the basic possibility of speaking-with-one-another, following the guide of Aristotelian Rhetoric, but also a series of further texts of Aristotle are taken as the basis for this interpretation."[64] Those other texts are primarily drawn from the 'Politics' and 'Nicomachean Ethics'; with references also being made to the 'Metaphysics' and 'Physics', and also to Aristotle's works on logic. However, the prominence attributed to Aristotle's 'Rhetoric', as Heidegger's guiding text, is entirely appropriate. For in that work Aristotle naturally focuses on language, and its persuasive potential. He there makes the point that rhetoric is not about individual man, but concerns classes of men, governed men. The aim of rhetoric is to persuade people confronted with various choices of action when there is nothing else to guide them. It is not concerned with their individual knowing of reality, which is a matter for metaphysics. As Aristotle points out, the more correctly people handle their individual concerns, in which they are guided by other faculties, the further removed they

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[62] John van Buren, 'Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther', *Reading Heidegger From The Start*, 167

[63] Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, trans., Richard Rojcewicz (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001),137

[64] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Indiana University Press: Indianapolis, 2002), 273

are from rhetoric. [65] In the opening pages of that work Aristotle states that the persuasive tactics he is elucidating concern general matters and the universal lines of argument appropriate for them. And later he admits that even though it is unworthy to pay attention to the way words are delivered, with rhetoric it is necessary, because "the whole business of rhetoric has to do with appearances." [66] What this would seem to indicate is that whilst Heidegger could situate his notion of 'being-there' in the context of beings 'speaking-with-one-another' in Aristotle's 'Rhetoric', Aristotle, who understood human 'being' in terms of individual and individuating 'thinghood' , would regard such a collective mode of being as incidental to the governing sense of 'being'. For Aristotle 'being' is not primarily a question of 'being-with-others', but of 'being' as oneself.

In considering the early lectures Heidegger gives on Aristotle's metaphysical terms, what emerges is an interpretation of those terms which endeavours to trace out a route from Aristotle to the present. Heidegger tries to effect this, not only by conflating 'ousia' with 'parousia' and thereby rendering being historical, but also by attempting to embed Aristotle's individualistic metaphysics in a wider politicised, situational context. By insisting that shared speaking with others in society is of primary ontological significance Heidegger seems to be presenting that social coalescence as our governing way of being in the world. And, whilst it is no doubt the case that speaking with others is an every day activity, that is not the governing sense of 'being' that Aristotle sets out in his philosophical works. For Aristotle is concerned with what being is, not with what beings do. In his earlier lectures on 'The Phenomenology of Religious Life', Heidegger examines Paul's letters, and was no doubt influenced by Paul's aspiration of a shared way of thinking, common to all men, that they "all speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."[67] However, in attempting to provide an ontological justification for such a unified vision, and explicate 'being-in-the-world-speaking-with-others' as man's primordial way of being, Heidegger draws, not on Aristotle's ontology, but on technology. As Walter Ong points out, rhetoric is an art created by writing and could not have been produced in an oral culture. Rhetoric is the product of 'techne', i.e., "any skill in doing and, more specifically, a kind of professional competence as opposed to instinctive ability (physis)."[68] Such a diagnosis becomes obvious when the work of the rhetorician is examined. For his power over the untrained derives directly from the fact that, unlike them, he uses language for his own purposes. And in order for him to be able to do that, language must first have materialised and been made available for use. Whereas in natural speech language disperses, leaving reality to be engaged with afresh, the substance of rhetoric persists in time, becoming the subject of work and study. And, because it persists in time, the material presence of organised and persuasive language begins to affect the forms of thought prevailing in that society. As we begin to think more from language than from reality.

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[65] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans., W. Rhys Roberts (Dover Publications Inc: New York, 2004), 12
[66] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* bk III ch 2 1404
[67] Paul I *Corinthians* ch1,10 – authorised King James version
[68] Peters F.E., *Greek Philosophical Terms* (New York: New York University Press, 1967),190

There is a new start in thinking here, as we begin to think and speak more from accumulated thought forms than formerly, which raises the question whether what is developing through such thinking is to be understood in terms of being, or in terms of a deprivation of being? Is this historical development an expression of our being human, or an expression of the beginnings of externalised power, as language emerges as a tool for use? Whilst it is clear that Heidegger sees being in a historical context, and actually attempts to extract something primordial from the mode of 'speaking-with-others' outlined in the 'Rhetoric', in his later works he comes to recognise that in technological language a form of language has developed that is alien to human 'thinghood'. So far as Aristotle is concerned, language is founded on the experiences of the soul, which it derives from perceiving the world. The language of rhetoric, however, is not so derived, and, perhaps, points towards another, historical way of being in the world. Wilhelm von Humboldt's extensive work on the development of language and its affect on thought will be considered later. However, in examining that development, a useful distinction he draws, which would seem to be applicable here, is that between the expressive language of the soul and the more analytical language of the mind. These are not mutually exclusive categories, but the general point von Humboldt makes is that as the historical burden of accumulated thought increases, the form of language that comes to dominate is the technical, functional language of the instrumental intellect. For the intrinsic, perceiving intellect's interface with the world is blocked by the consuming counter movement of discursive reasoning.

1.2.1. Movement

Heidegger commences the 'Basic Concepts' lecture course by pointing out that nothing philosophical is being sought, a caveat he repeats a number of times in the first few pages. Instead, he seeks conceptual support from Aristotle for his own formulation of man's relationship with Being in term of Dasein. Heidegger recognises that what concepts make intelligible for others are general representations of things, but says that what he actually seeks is not that shared knowledge, but the concrete experience that gave birth to the concept. With regard to the concept of movement, Heidegger suggests that what must be asked is, "what did Aristotle have in mind when he thought of movement? Which moving phenomena did he have in view? Which sense of being did he mean in speaking of a moving being?" Adding that, "we do not ask these questions with the aim of gaining knowledge of a conceptual content, but rather we ask how the matter meant is experienced."[69] Thus, what is sought is not conceptual knowledge, but an understanding of the reality experienced by Aristotle that formed the basis for such knowledge. And here, perhaps, another important caveat should be added, concerning our ability to retrieve something of that experiential realm. Because, as previously pointed out, as a result of the shift in our orientation towards the world, our new way of being within it, we no longer experience movement in the way expressed by Aristotle.

[69] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 12

Heidegger suggests that Aristotle's investigation into movement "has a *fundamental significance for the whole ontology*: basic determination of beings as energeia, entelecheia, and dunamis."[70] However, he does not investigate that ontological significance. Notwithstanding his recognition of the fact that what Aristotle says about movement could have profound implications regarding our understanding of the nature of reality: "insofar as movement is a mode of the being-there of beings, it is possible that what we understand, in a fully well-worn sense by 'reality' is in fact to be fully determined."[71] In fact, despite having recognised movement as an ontological determination with far reaching implications concerning the 'how-there of beings', Heidegger seems to interpret such movement, not as inhering in beings themselves, but as a property that makes things available for use: "kinesis: presence of the ability-to-be-a-chest of this wood as such (related to the ability-to-be-a-chest)."[72] Such an interpretation of movement certainly seems to sit more comfortably with Heidegger's understanding of 'ousia', as everyday items available for use: "ousia is a being that is *there for me in an emphatic way*, in such a way that I can use it, that it is at my disposal."[73] It also fits with Heidegger's understanding of our "basic mode of being-in-the-world" as being concerned with manipulation and utilisation.[74] And, ultimately, Heidegger appears dismissive of Aristotle's theory of movement, suggesting that there is not enough time to understand Aristotle's research, let alone to take it seriously. "Aristotle says, movement is actuality, but the actuality of dunamis, of possibility, i.e., of non-actuality – actuality of inactuality: a contradiction – and he even lets it stand – antinomy, dialectic! That sounds very ingenious, but there is nothing to it except thoughtlessness, or perhaps something else: irresponsibility to history."[75] Dunamis, however, here means potency, not possibility. It refers to "the innate tendency of anything to be at work in ways characteristic of the kind of thing it is."[76] The relevance of this distinction between the potential and the possible is far-reaching, because whilst possibilities may be realised in history, the innate potency Aristotle is referring to is not such an achievement. The activities that actualise this potency produce nothing outside themselves, and are complete in each moment.

In 1931 Heidegger again considers the philosophical significance of 'dunamis'; this time in the context of the first three chapters of book 9 of Aristotle's Metaphysics.[77] Here Aristotle presents 'dunamis', or potency, in two ways: as a force applied in acting, and as a force received by being acted upon. In acting it is the potency of something else that is affected, whereas, in being acted upon it is one's own. These are not powers additional to being, but constitute what something is in itself; they are "indissociable from the essence of being", as Heidegger puts it. For Heidegger, the fundamental meaning of potency so far as Dasein is concerned relates to the external expression of 'dunamis', i.e., to what it produces

[70] Ibid., 222
[71] Ibid., 206
[72] Ibid., 254
[73] Ibid., 19
[74] Ibid., 263
[75] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 257
[76] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1050a 18
[77] Heidegger, *Interpretations of Ancient Philosophy/Aristotle Metaphysics Θ*, trans,. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek (Indiana University Press: Indianapolis, 1995)

through acting. Since, for Heidegger, "all the phenomena found under the title 'dunamis'" – capability, talent, skill, proficiency, being accomplished etc., are all gathered together in "ability". As Dasein is the "being on the way towards an accomplishment."[78] Heidegger sees in 'producing a work' a decisive determination of the existential being of Dasein, "a fundamental posture toward the world,"[79] and, by contrast, sees a lack of producing as a 'failing' of 'dunamis' - a sinking into 'unforce'. Heidegger regards the other form of potency, i.e., 'being acted upon', as synonymous with "impotence" and "deprivation". Because, for him, the potency that relates to the 'being-at-work' of a being relates to what it can bring forth and not to what it can actually be. In 'De Anima', however, Aristotle points out that 'being-acted-upon' should not always be considered in terms of destruction, because the 'alteration' that 'being-acted-upon' effects is sometimes a form of preservation. This occurs when what is doing the acting is in an active state and what is 'being acted upon' is not. For what results from 'being acted upon' in this way is a change in the one 'being acted upon' to an active condition and into that thing's nature. [80] It is this notion of 'dunamis', i.e., concerned with 'being acted upon', that is the more important one for book Θ because this meaning of 'dunamis' is concerned with the deep structural features of being.[81] The other meaning of 'dunamis' – acting on another - involves motion – 'kinêsis', which, as previously pointed out, is an activity that concerns potentials qua potentials, not in terms of thinghood.

1.2.2 Ousia

The ontological significance of the distinction between Aristotle's metaphysical understanding of 'being' - as an individual's inner activity directed towards the knowing of reality - and Heidegger's more political, situational presentation of Dasein – as man's way of 'being in the world together'- is lost in the conflation of the Greek terms 'ousia' and 'parousia'. Since the former denotes a being capable of ontological activity and the latter does not. This is a conflation Heidegger again makes in this work, insisting that "ousia is an abbreviation of 'parousia'."[82] For what is lost when the 'thinghood' of 'ousia' is swallowed up in the entity that is 'parousia', is the internal activity of 'being' that constitutes that 'thinghood'. Whilst the Aristotelian sailor – a 'parousia' – may steer a boat, and undertake other doings, his thinghood, i.e., 'ousia', and the activity he needs to keep on 'being' in order to be it, are not discernible in these external activities, which, in fact, are motions. Aristotle makes this very point in 'De Anima', contrasting the cutting activity of an axe, which makes the axe what it is, with the steering activity of a sailor in a boat, which is not intrinsic to what he is.[83] If a fixed entity's 'parousia' is made the starting point for a study of being, how can 'being' as an activity that determines the state of being

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[78] Ibid., 85
[79] Ibid., 125
[80] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417b 3-17
[81] Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 204
[82] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 25
[83] Aristotle, *On The Soul*, trans., Joe Sachs (New Mexico: Green Lion Press, 2004), 406b 10. References to 'De Anima' are to Sach's translation entitled, 'On The Soul' unless otherwise stated. References in this work use the more familiar title 'De Anima' to ensure conformity with other references.

of that entity be examined? This is an important distinction, lost in the conflation of these two terms. However, it seems that such a conflation is necessary for Heidegger in order to be able to provide a historical context for Being. Heidegger suggests, in the lectures on 'The Phenomenology of Religious Life, that "the quality of being historical is predicated of an object." Heidegger regarded the historical as a 'core phenomenon' which denoted the quality of an object changing in time. And therefore in order to be historical it is first necessary to be an object, which means to have the quality of becoming in time: "each characterization or use of the sense of 'historical' is always determined through this *foreconception of the object*. The *object* is historical: it has the particularity of proceeding in time, of changing."[84] The difficulty with human 'thinghood', however, when understood as Aristotle presents it as 'ousia', is that its becoming, its 'telos', is not a determination of history. And, therefore, it would not seem to qualify as a suitable object for history. However, Heidegger insists that human beings are historical objects: "the application of the historical to human reality, too, will be a determination of the object-historical. The human being itself is, in its actuality, an object in becoming, standing within time."[85] In order for human beings to qualify as historical objects it is necessary for any avenue to non-historical, or trans-historical, becoming, which recognises ontological realisations, to be closed. And this is effectively achieved by viewing a person's capabilities solely in terms of their external activities, or doings, i.e., as a 'parousia'.

Heidegger's historical presentation of being would seem to derive support from his interpretation of Aristotle's fundamental ontological concept – 'ousia'. For Heidegger, there are two distinct, but related aspects to the interpretation of this term:- 1., the kind of beings identified by 'ousia', and 2., the mode of being 'ousia' thereby signifies. For, as Heidegger suggests, bearing in mind that 'ousia' had a meaning in ordinary speech prior to its being adopted for terminological use, it is reasonable to assume that the prior 'ordinary' meaning, which continues to persist, conveys something essential about the nature of the term.

1. According to Heidegger, the ordinary meaning of 'ousia' identifies as beings - property, possession, possessions, goods and estate: "it is noteworthy that *definite* beings – matters such as possessions and household goods – are addressed by the Greeks as *genuine* things", because, "if we examine this customary meaning, we may discover what the Greeks meant in general by 'being'." Clearly 'ousia' designates concrete beings. The task, therefore, is to discover how that concreteness relates to the how of being: to "a being in the how of its being."[86] In considering our relationship to the things designated 'ousia', Heidegger suggests that the emphatic way in which these concrete things are present to us is in their everyday availability for use. And he, consequently, extends the term to include 'pragmata' – general things – things that we can utilise.[87] What Heidegger, thereby, establishes is that the basic meaning of 'ousia' relates to things that are 'present', i.e.,

[84] Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans., Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti Ferencei (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 23
[85] Ibid., 25
[86] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 20
[87] Ibid., 19

available to us to use.[88] "The how of being refers to being there in the manner of being-available."[89] This interpretation of 'ousia' in terms of presence: "by ousia nothing else is meant but constant presence,"[90] is one that persists in Heidegger's thinking. "By being we mean nothing else but constant presence, enduring constancy. What the Greeks address as beings proper is what fulfils this understanding of being as being-always-present."[91] However, what Heidegger occludes by his emphasis on presence and use is the inherited aspect of the things to which 'ousia' relates, i.e., the fact that their initial belonging to us is not derived from our claiming them for use. We don't take them. Rather, they are given to us. And whilst we may now appear to have the power of disposal over 'ousia', to make of it what we will, it didn't come to us through such power. As Sachs pointed out earlier, in ordinary speech 'ousia' refers to "inalienable property, the inherited estate that cannot be taken away from one who is born with it." The relevance of this point appears more significant when it is realised that, philosophically speaking, 'ousia' is more concerned with form than with matter. Both are involved in 'thinghood,' but what something is 'being' is determined more by its form than its matter. For, according to Aristotle, form is not a static structure, and certainly not a skin that can be shed, but an internal, organising activity that maintains a being as it is. However, when the concreteness of 'ousia' is seen to reside exclusively in material things available for use, out of which, according to Heidegger, "we scrape out the facticity of our existence",[92] then the significance of prior form is obscured. For then 'ousia' is simply reduced to a material resource on which we can impose our own form, and the form that it was previously 'being' is ignored. Walter Brogan, in his interpretation of Heidegger's understanding of the relationship between 'techne' and 'physis', suggests that beings of nature can be utilised as materials for products not because of the way in which we perceive them, but because "such beings must have this 'not' as a characteristic of their way of Being."[93] This seems a curious interpretation of the being of natural beings, since there seems to be no ontological gap between their abilities and their activities, and, therefore, it is difficult to see what they are capable of 'not' actually being according to their 'thinghood'. So far as Sartre is concerned, such beings manifest no lack of being, since it was through human reality that 'non-being' entered the world.

2. In considering the 'beingness' aspect of 'ousia', i.e., the mode of being it identifies, rather than the sorts of being to which it refers, Heidegger refers to chapter 8 of Book V of the 'Metaphysics', in which Aristotle describes what 'ousia' points to philosophically. Here, Aristotle explains that 'ousia' is attributed to independent things and is also responsible for the 'being' of a thing and that it means - "what it is for something to be."[94] It is this last meaning, 'ti en einai' – 'what it is for something to be' - that Heidegger seems to regard as supplying a historical basis for Dasein. This is because he interprets this active

[88] Ibid., 24
[89] Ibid., 19
[90] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 37
[91] Ibid., 37
[92] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 19
[93] Walter Brogan, *Heidegger and Aristotle*, 40
[94] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* book v Ch 8 1017b 25

phrase as referring, not to what something is currently and continuously being, but to what it has already been: "It refers to 'being', that is, the 'what-being as it was already.' It means a being in itself, that is, with respect to what it was already, from which it stems in its being, with respect to its *descent*, its having come into being there."[95] Heidegger says of such a being that it is so determined, "with an eye to *what it was.*" And adds, with regard to human being, "I see a being that is there with respect to its being, in the way that it is there as *coming from out of* ...I see a being that is there genuinely in its being when I see it in its *history*, the being that is there in this way coming from out of its history into being. This being that is there, as there in this way, is *complete;* it has come to its end, to its *completeness.*"[96] For Aristotle, however, both beginnings and endings occur in nature not in history, provided no deprivation takes place: "for whatever is the end-product of the coming into existence of any object, that is what we call its nature."[97] The word Aristotle uses to convey completeness - 'entelecheia'- does not refer to completion as a state already achieved, or possessed, such that a being can be seen to be at its end, but as an activity of complete 'being', i.e., continuing to 'be'. In applying the active phrase, 'ti en einai' – 'what it is for something to be', Aristotle is referring to the past tense of 'is', but this is only to convey progression: "the progressive signifies the continuity of being-at-work". Such a reference has no temporal significance. Sachs suggests that Aristotle makes it simply because it is only in the past tense that the progressive aspect can be made unambiguous.[98] The activities that constitute 'historical being' concern producing – the "accomplishing of a world", as Heidegger generally describes it, and, consequently, are more properly designated motions – 'kinêseis'. A motion relates to an entity, not by virtue of what it is, but "in so far as it is able to be something other than it is," because a motion is the realisation of a potential qua potential.[99] It is not in motions, but in activities – 'energeiai' that a being fully realises its ability to be. As Kosman points out, "activity, properly understood [is] the key to the elucidation of the nature of substance-being (and therefore of being in general).[100] As previously stated, not only does Aristotle explain that the activities concerned with 'being' are complete at each moment, i.e., are not historical, but he also specifically excludes history from being, making the point that, like sophistry, it is concerned with appearances and, therefore, close to non-being.

In 'parousia', Heidegger's preferred 'synonym' for 'ousia', 'ousia' is stabilised, made present and fundamentally altered. As what is a resource for 'being' becomes a reserve for 'doings' – the substance of historical being, or, as this work would argue, the substance of 'non-being'. In effect, 'ousia' becomes a resource for living historically, rather than life a resource for being, as 'being' becomes grounded in a certain way of existing– a historical way of 'being-in-the-world'. However, this inversion is concealed in the conflation of 'parousia' and 'ousia', because the ontological resource that 'ousia' designates in

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[95] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 24
[96] Ibid., 26
[97] Aristotle, *Politics*, trans., T.A. Sinclair (London: Penguin, 1992)
[98] Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, lix
[99] Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 197
[100] Ibid., 201

Aristotelian metaphysics comes to be interpreted in historical terms, as its dynamic inner movement comes to be seen in the external accomplishments of 'parousia'. Thus, movement is retained, but externalised, and its meaning becomes completely inverted. Heidegger, later, in a lecture on Nietzsche, speaks of 'ousia' as a "constant reserve of what presences that is immediately at the disposal of the will,"[101] which would seem to be what a relationship determined by "availability for use" would ultimately point towards. Heidegger goes on to say of this 'constant reserve' that it "is secured that it may be used as a secure resource for every aspect of man's life."[102] However, if 'ousia' is a resource for being rather than for doing, the 'constant reserve' that is secured by stabilising it would seem to eliminate from view the 'energeiai' which constitute its ontological significance. And what is produced instead is the necessary reserve for man's future 'enframing' by technology. [103]

The focus of this lecture on Nietzsche – 'The Word of Nietzsche: God is dead' – is the loss of the suprasensory world, the killing of God and the "doing away with the world that is in itself." Of "what is done away with", Heidegger says that it "becomes different in its being", but does not seem to include man within that altered reality, even though he acknowledges that because of this event, "man also becomes different." This is because he does not see man as a being that is in itself. And, therefore, although Heidegger acknowledges that that destructive event changes man, the fundamental, ontological nature of that alteration is not discernible in Heidegger's situational being. For Heidegger, the history of metaphysics regarding being has been a failure, because it has not thought being in its truth: "nowhere do we find such experiencing of Being itself. Nowhere are we confronted by a thinking that thinks the truth of Being itself and therewith thinks truth itself as Being." Heidegger concludes that there is this lacuna in metaphysics because being has not been thought of as 'presencing'. Consequently, the truth of Being has remained wanting, in effect withheld by metaphysics which, thus, emerges as a history of concealed being. What, then, is the presence that metaphysics has failed to disclose? According to Heidegger, what has not been disclosed is something that thought has passed over and neglected to think about. In order to heed it, Heidegger offers a comparison between the deranged man, a believer, who seeks God, and those who do not believe, "who no longer seek because they no longer think."[104] The thinking Heidegger is alluding to here is a questioning thinking. It is the thinking that prompts the seeking of 'presencing'. Heidegger is not interested in finding 'presencing' as a natural intuition. For the 'presencing' he is concerned with does not emanate from reality and is not accessible through perception Rather, for Heidegger, our primary relationship with the world originates in something prior to intuition, in a pre-conscious realm of 'being-in-the-world' in which meaning derives from the prior concern we hold. "The way of access is the concerned preoccupation of 'getting around' and not a free-floating and isolated perception

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[101] Heidegger, 'The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead', in *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans., William Lovitt (New York: Harper Row, 1977), 84

[102] Ibid., 102

[103] Ibid., 84. Lovitt sees in the 'constant reserve' the prototype for the later 'standing reserve' of the 'enframing' technological world

[104] Heidegger, *Nietzsche: God is Dead*, 112

of a thing."[105] It seems that, for Heidegger, thinking authentically with regard to being is connected with believing. And that the correct way to adhere to the reality of 'presencing' is to anxiously and impotently await the kairological event of 'parousia'. Because it is in the helpless facticity of his thrown existence that Dasein is brought to the extreme of his impotence, which is a precondition for knowing God.

As has been pointed out, 'parousia' is not a philosophical term for Aristotle. However, its philosophical significance is briefly considered here because, in his interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger uses it extensively, particularly in the context of 'presencing'. The term is used by the neo-Platonist Plotinus in the 'Enneads', which is a work from the 3rd century that became highly influential in Christian philosophy. The term arises in the 9th tractate, 'On The Good, Or The One', in the context of the presence of the One: "The One is known not by reasoning, which is necessarily an exercise in plurality, but by the presence (parousia) in us of unity."[106] In his quest to seek the One, Plotinus advises the seeker to find simplification and renunciation; he advises against looking to the world, perceiving it to be an alien place in which we spend "a life taking no pleasure in the things of the earth."[107] The significance of Plotinus so far as this work is concerned, derives from his perception of the world as a place for the soul escape, as he condemned all sensible matter as evil.[108] In Plotinus' thinking, the cosmos consists of two opposing worlds, the sensible, and the noetic, with only the latter being the concern of the man who seeks God. His thinking in this regard is clearly diametrically opposed to Aristotle's, but also to Plato's. Because, what he seeks to effect is a way to know God without the Platonic 'paideia' re-orienting the soul to the cosmic order.[109] Plotinus did not value the cosmos as a divine revelation and therefore saw no need to trace an ascent to God through a prior acquaintance with reality. As Iamblichus, another neo-Platonist, recognised, that notion did not derive from the fact that reality had been transcended, but from the excessive rationalism of the Platonic schools that sought to exalt the powers of the mind beyond their natural limit, which was a movement Iamblichus, strenuously resisted. Whilst it wasn't Plotinus' intention, Iamblichus foresaw that a view of the soul that did not recognise its embodied nature, and held it to be distinct from the natural world, would inevitably lead to the desacralization of the cosmos, which would cut man off from his divine source.

In his later works concerned with meditative thought, Heidegger draws on the thinking of a number of mystics, including Plotinus,[110]whose ontological thinking has been considered very similar to his own.[111] However, in the early work being considered here, in which he is concerned with illuminating a fundamental ontology, Heidegger is attempting to

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[105] Gesamtausgabe 20, 1979, 'History of the Concept of Time', trans., Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985),257;190 quoted in Theodore Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought*, (New York: Continuum, 2002): 181

[106] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 83

[107] Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans., Stephen MacKenna. (London:Penguin, 1991), 549 VI. 9.11

[108] Gregory Shaw *Theurgy and the Soul* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1951),29

[109] Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1951), 11

[110] John D. Caputo, *The Mysitical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (New York: Fordham University Press,1986), 35

[111] John Macquarrie, *Heidegger and Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1999),118

establish a conceptual link between Aristotle's metaphysics of being and the believer's search for God. In his own search for a fundamental awareness concerned with 'presencing' it seems that Heidegger is trying to trace back a conclusion of thought to some primordial realisation. For, it must be remembered that Heidegger has explicitly rejected any intuitive notion of presence from that search. However, to abstract facts from reality requires not only a mechanism capable of isolating phenomena from the natural milieu in which they arise, but also the establishment of a separate world in which to place them. Such a mechanism is itself a historical creation, the inevitable product of a mind focused primarily on thought rather than on reality. For, in order to create a home for such abstractions, the prior links to the natural world need to be broken. Men need to be isolated from reality and from each other, which is a rupture that can only be effected through the interiorizing of language and the creation of the conceptual world that such a rupture makes possible. And such interiorization, along with the introspection and protracted self analysis which inevitably follow, can only be widespread in a world dominated by writing and conceptual thought. In primary and oral cultures such developments are inconceivable.[112] Accordingly, there is no primordial place to trace back such abstractions to. And neither is there some primary self responsible for such conceptual thinking.

In the teachings of Luther the two most notable aspects of interiorized thought stand prominent: an isolated, insecure self, existing impotently in a Godless, denatured world. For Luther the reality of the physical world is to be beheld through the higher reality of Christ's crucifixion. This historical event casts a pall of suffering over the entire human existence and provides the historical lens through which reality is to be observed. And it is this historical lens that Heidegger deploys in his attempt to bring a pre-conscious realm of 'being-in-the-world' in to view. Because, according to Heidegger, it is from his 'historical situatedness', rather than in acts of consciousness, that man derives his understanding and exposition of meaning. [113] Man's created nature and his autochthonic capacities, thus, come to be of less ontological significance than his existence in Christ. Since, for Luther, it is a new person, a new creation, who emerges as a believer in God: "In creatio nova God creates anew the person (who has without this new creation only the esse naturae), and makes this person a part of the 'new, spiritual world,' that is the church."[114]

In his attempt to make man's 'situational being' – as characterised by concerned preoccupation - primary, Heidegger discounts the prior significance attributed to man's situatedness within nature. The situation that concerns Heidegger is not one that involves any notion of natural intuition or perception, which, for the Greek and Medieval world, is man's ontologically significant interface with reality, without which the mind cannot think. Rather, for Heidegger, man's situatedness pertains to history, and to the historical being that resides there. Writing later, in 'Being and Time', Heidegger explains that the essence of Dasein's 'concerned preoccupation' resides in 'care': "Dasein when understood

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[112] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Routledge, 2000) 149

[113] Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought*, 99

[114] Sammeli Juntunen, 'Luther and Metaphysics: What is the Structure of Being According to Luther?' in *Union with Christ*, ed., Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 136

ontologically is care." And, 'care' Heidegger defines as, "Being-ahead-of-oneself". Heidegger derives this definition of 'care', which determines the situatedness of man's being in the world, from his conclusion that Dasein's potential for Being relates to possibilities that he can be aware of and achieve: "In each case Dasein has already compared itself, in its Being, with a possibility for itself."[115] In casting back the historical possibilities of Dasein's factical existence onto an imagined primordial way of being in the world, Heidegger is assuming that a 'self-projective' futural understanding of Being is primary. However, man's primordial relatedness within pre-literate cultures reveals a far less assertive and introspective self, with little concern for such historical accomplishments. According to Walter Ong, such a degree of self awareness requires a certain demolition of the pre-existing world. "It calls for isolation of the self, around which the entire lived world swirls for each individual person."[116] Such a self emerges "not just from thought, but from text-formed thought", which is quite a late historical development arising within a deeply conditioned, essentially modern, consciousness.[117]

In the ontological reorientation Heidegger attempts to effect, it is the substance of history, in the guise of being, that Heidegger seeks to make determinative. Heidegger recognises the immanent historicity inherent in modern life, which gives life a certain familiarity with itself, and endeavours to give this primordial significance. He also recognises the imperative of historical thinking, and suggests that it be yielded to and 'gone along with', since, for Heidegger, it is this mode of being-in-the-world' i.e., 'being historically situated, that is primary. In attempting to establish the primacy of such situational thinking, Heidegger suggests that 'pre-reflective understanding' is ontologically prior to perception, and that it is only through man's concerned preoccupation with getting around in the world that he has access to reality. It is questionable, however, how much concern Dasein can muster without the prior perception of any reality. According to the Greek and Medieval view of the mind, such concerned determinations are arrived at as a result of activities of the active intellect, which itself is unable to act without the prior reception of reality. For, "the 'image' of the real precedes and underlies the 'plan' of all realization."[118]To such realist thinkers, man knows because he is ontologically oriented to know; it is not what he does by virtue of his concern, but what he is predisposed to do. It must be remembered that Heideggerean concern is allied to seeking and questioning, and consequently what Heidegger seeks to establish as primary has no intuitive element. Accordingly simple perception that just 'floats around' without futural direction with regard to its historical possibilities is inadequate for the pre-reflective understanding that Heidegger is seeking here. The realist's understanding of the mind's relationship with the world is transposed in Heidegger's thinking, as he places man's interface with reality in the active intellect's interpretation of reality, with the receptive intellect then receiving the reality so interpreted. In the context of the environing world that means "what is truly

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[115] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. (Oxford: Blackwell 1962) ss 41-42

[116] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 54

[117] Ibid., 55

[118] Pieper, *Living The Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 144

given immediately is not what is perceived, but what is present in concerned preoccupation, the *handy* within the scope of our reach and grasp." [119] Thus, for Heidegger, man does not so much read reality as inscribe his own historically determined meaning upon it.

1.2.3 Energeia and Entelecheia

According to Heidegger, "energeia is perhaps the *most fundamental being-character* in Aristotle's doctrine of being." And, recognising that the term contains the root word 'ergon' – 'work', he asks, as does Aristotle, "what is the 'ergon' of human beings, the 'genuine achievement' and the 'concern' in which human beings as human beings live in their being-human ?" [120] In answering this question, however, Heidegger does not look to Aristotle's philosophical works for which the term was coined; it is referred to in the Metaphysics 167 times. But seeks clarity regarding its presumed connection with speaking by consulting the 'Politics' and 'Rhetoric' where the term is barely mentioned; it occurs only twice in the 'Politics' and 13 times in the 'Rhetoric'.[121] Heidegger asserts that what he is attempting to procure is a concrete view of what Aristotle understands by the being and 'being-there' of human beings. However, that seems questionable, given that Heidegger has chosen to examine the term outside its intended metaphysical setting. Rather, as van Buren suggests, what Heidegger appears to be attempting is a dismantling and re-presenting of Aristotle's metaphysics along the lines of his practical works, in accordance with the Aristotelian terminology preferred by Luther and Kierkegaard.[122]

From consulting these political works, which deal with how man lives in association with others and how he is able to wield power within society, Heidegger reports that a fundamental character of the 'being-there' of human beings is "*being-as-speaking-with one another* through communicating, refuting, confronting."[123] For Heidegger, announcing and speaking appropriate the given world and, thus, come to constitute the world that we designate 'the surrounding world' which we, as 'beings together', live in. Heidegger seems to be saying that it is how we speak about the world that entirely comprises our mode of being within it. And, further, that it is what such speaking establishes – 'the accomplished world' – that entirely constitutes the realm of our being. It seems that our work as human beings is not to perceive and contemplate the given world, by holding ourselves open to it, as Aristotle suggests, but to create our own historical form of existence within the world that we have appropriated. For, as McCumber points out, when Heidegger speaks of 'being-in-the-world', "what is being described is not world itself, as what has been there all

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[119] Gesamtausgabe 20, 1979, 'History of the Concept of Time', trans., Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 264; 194f, quoted in Theodore Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought* (New York: Continuum, 2002): 181

[120] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 31

[121] George A. Blair *Energeia and Entelecheia: 'Act' in Aristotle* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1992), 8-10. Blair sets out the number of times 'energeia' appears in works of Aristotle:- Physics 74, De Anima 67, Metaphysics 167, Nicomachean Ethics 145, Eudemian Ethics 33, Politics 2, Rhetoric 13

[122] John van Buren, 'Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther', 172

[123] Aristotle, *Politics*, 33

along, but certain aspects of Dasein's current inherence in its world."[124] In order to present the work of being human in this way, Heidegger does two things:-

i). He interprets our direct interface with the world not as one of perceiving reality, but of listening to our interpreting selves: "Hearing, which corresponds to speaking is the fundamental mode of 'perceiving' – the genuine possibility for aesthesis – perception."[125]

ii). He diminishes the significance, particularly the religious significance, of contemplation. He does this by severing the causative link Aristotle establishes between pleasure and contemplation. As a result, pleasure is seen to be a basic disposition of life and not the result of the work of contemplation.

i). Perceiving To Hearing

In order to shift the work of 'being' from 'knowing' reality through perception, which, for Aristotle, is the primary activity of the soul, to 'being-with-one-another-speaking', which for Heidegger, "is not something that is brought to human beings, but is rather *the* being-possibility,"[126] Heidegger suggests that perceiving is actually hearing: "whether or not seeing in connection with contemplation reveals the world in the genuine sense, it is still *hearing* because it is the *perceiving of speaking*, because it is the possibility of being-with-one-another."[127] In order to effect this shift, from perceiving to hearing, from reality to language, a diminished view of perception is necessary.

It is an obvious element of the perceiving process that we order, or place, the things we perceive against a coherent background, i.e., we perceive in a meaningful context. Husserl recognised this ordering aspect, or categorial intuition, as something additional to simple sense perception, and regarded it as being located in the orientation of consciousness. Heidegger, whilst recognising the same double aspect, places its locus not in oriented consciousness, but in 'situated existence', "where", according to Theodore Kisiel, "the question of sense and the truth of being posed by the structures of intentionality and categorial intuition is to receive its answer in some as yet insufficiently named confluence of the world, self, time and language."[128] By replacing consciousness with situatedness, individuality is made a confluence of external factors. And, in assigning a historical trajectory to that unconscious existence, a form of unconscious being is embraced as the exemplary mode of being human.

Heidegger situates our perception of a meaningful context outside consciousness and transposes the order of these two aspects of perception - the 'founded' object and the 'founding' backdrop, thereby making the founding backdrop primary. Heidegger doesn't accept that it is perception that provides that founding context against which objects appear meaningful. Rather, he sees such meaning as an interpretation we attribute to the world

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[124] McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*, 227
[125] Heidegger, *Basic concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 32
[126] Ibid., 40
[127] Ibid., 72
[128] Kisiel, *Heidegger's Way of Thought*, 100

through our power of discursive knowing. Perceived things are seen to be knowable because of our concerned preoccupation with the world; it is that pre-existing human concern that makes objects meaningful. For Aristotle, however, perception comprises both these aspects - the founded object and the founding context. Since, 'aisthesis' – sense perception – is always concerned with the reception of organised wholes; it is not about receiving isolated elements of sense data. And it also includes the primordial thinking that makes perception possible in the first place. As Aristotle explains, "since we also distinguish each perceptible thing from every other, then there is also something by which we perceive that they are different. And this is necessarily perception, since they are perceptible things. This also makes it clear that the flesh is not the final sense organ, since then the thing that distinguishes perceptible attributes would have to be in contact with them in order to distinguish them."[129] In Heidegger's thinking what Aristotle designates as a single activity of perception bifurcates into two differentiated modes of apprehension - object and context, both of which are pre-determined in accordance with the meaning that we have attributed to the world. And what is ontologically significant about that is the division it creates between man and the rest of the natural world. Man no longer shares the world with his fellow perceivers, but just with those who are capable of interpreting it. And what is lost by drawing such a discursive distinction is not only our fellowship with the rest of the ensouled world, but also our own connection with an uninterpreted operative reality. Since, for Aristotle, 'to know' is not to interpret or to abstract, but to perceive and 'be acted upon'. The speculative, or receiving, aspect of man's reasoning nature depends on his perception of reality. It is his soul's capacity to receive the world, rather than his mind's ability to interpret it, that bestows upon him the ability to know anything at all.

Heidegger seems to derive support for his claim that perceiving is really hearing from Aristotle's assertion in the 'Politics' that man alone of all the animals knows the just and the unjust, and that he alone has language. However, Aristotle does not connect the two observations. And in the 'Nicomachean Ethics' he makes the point that man knows the just and the unjust through his own perception of reality, not from listening to others. Aristotle describes the polis as the place where men share their common views; he doesn't say that it is where they derive their understanding of reality from. For Heidegger, however, it seems that it is only in the polis that man is truly being human: "the polis is the being-possibility that itself lies enclosed and traced out in advance in the human being's genuine being."[130] And it seems to be this linguistic 'being-possibility' – the 'being-as-speaking-with-one-another', that Heidegger endeavours to trace back to 'being' as the work of 'being human'. So far as Aristotle is concerned, however, the work of 'being human' appears more individualistic and resides in man's personal relationship with reality. In the 'Nicomachean Ethics', Aristotle favourably quotes Hesiod as saying, "good in his turn is he who trusts one who speaks well", but "altogether best is he who himself has insight into all things."[131] For it is through the power of insight, exemplified in Aristotle's contemplative hero, that man knows the just and the unjust. And, in this contemplative endeavour, Aristotle

[129] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 426 b12-14
[130] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 35
[131] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b 10

explicitly states that others are not needed.[132] It is the 'spoudaíos' – the serious, contemplative individual, who knows with his own judgment what is right. Further down in the same passage Aristotle draws a comparison between the political life and the contemplative one and identifies the contemplative life as that which is best. He dismisses the political life as being too superficial, since its focus is on external goals and achievements, whereas the contemplative has no goals beyond himself. From such an analysis, Aristotle suggests that "we divine that the good is something of one's own and hard to take away."[133] It, therefore, seems that for Aristotle it is the intrinsic reality of the given world, rather than the views expressed by others, which informs the perceiving, contemplating man of what is truly just and worthwhile.

For Heidegger, the world in which a human being is a being and does his work is not the given world, because, for Heidegger, man is not properly a being in that world. Rather, it is in the world that he has made, that he has appropriated through language, in which he asserts and, thereby, preserves himself that man truly has his being. And what emerges from an examination of these two distinct worlds: the given and the appropriated, are two distinct ways of apprehending 'logos'- one way speaks through reality and the other through language, i.e., through what language discloses. Heidegger speaks of these two modes as follows:- 'The logos of Human Beings and the soul of Animals as Peculiar Modes of Being-in-the-world and of Being-with-One-Another." And, in considering the phenomena "That Lie at the Basis of the Separating of logos from soul", Heidegger asks, "in what sense is the world there for humans: how is it brought to self-showing through logos?" In posing this question, he points out that he is asking it from the position of 'The Being There of Human Beings as soul", i.e., as the being that 'knows' the self-showing of logos. And answers that the "encounter-character of the world for the being of human beings" from the perspective of soul, "is the character of what is beneficial and harmful, taken together: what is conducive and what is good."[134] The point Heidegger seems to be making is that all animals- all 'ensouled' creatures - man included, enjoy this rather reductive 'encounter-character' perspective of the world. However, he also seems to be saying that for man to experience the world beyond such a crude assessment is not an achievement of the soul, since he shares that with animals, but of language, through what it discloses in discourse: "we must ascertain the nature of speaking in order to see which being determinations of human being are contained in logos."[135] This is a different view of logos, something beyond 'self-showing': "Logos: to speak with another about the world, to bring it into being uncovered."[136] This appears to be logos as interpretation: "this speaking is not what implicitly stands out in the initially as such, but there are already basic modes of the interpretation of beings in their being-there."[137] The implication is that a deeper level of meaning becomes accessible through 'logos' as interpretation.

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[132] Ibid., 1177a 27
[133] Ibid., 1095b 25
[134] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 37
[135] Ibid., 35
[136] Ibid., 253
[137] Ibid., 253

The given world is presented by Heidegger as an 'everydayness', which man only manages to break through when he does something advantageous with it, such as when he finds something available for use. For Heidegger, the 'everyday' is not the ontologically significant realm for the work of 'being-human'. Rather, it is in the world that he creates that man accomplishes his being. Although Heidegger touches on the distinction between the 'self-showing logos' and the 'interpreting logos' in the Marburg lectures, it is in the lectures he gives at Freiburg eleven years later, entitled 'An Introduction To Metaphysics', that he speaks more fully about the world that being appropriates and accomplishes through the unconcealment performed by language. "It is through world that the being first becomes a being."[138] "And world is what is accomplished by the power of unconcealment;" i.e., through the 'interpreting logos'. As it is the unconcealing power of language, performed in man's achievements, that establishes being. Heidegger sees man caught in a primordial struggle for unconcealment and accomplishment: "It is this conflict that first projects and develops what had hitherto been unheard of, unsaid and unthought." The battle is then continued by the creators, poets, thinkers and statesmen as they, through their work, capture the world from the overwhelming chaos. Heidegger seems to see man existing on the edge of a chaotic natural world from which he can only manage to wrest himself and thereby accomplish his being through interpreting that chaos and utilising what has been claimed in his own projects, of which he is one. However, the being that man makes of himself through unconcealing and utilising nature seems to result from an orientation to the world that seeks to dominate rather than contemplate. As the struggle that Heidegger describes is that of historical man attempting to establish his own surrogate reality, to create his own 'telos' out of the raw materials of the natural world: "this world building is history in the authentic sense." The work of being human, thus, emerges as an ongoing battle against nature, as man constantly strives to assert and maintain himself. This struggle, however, is not so much a struggle to 'be' as 'to be historical', since in constantly asserting himself man seeks to stand out from the natural world, and preserve himself in the world that he has created. So far as Aristotle is concerned, however, it is 'being' unhistorical that is effortful. For, this is the work that resists the draw of history, it is the 'being-at-work' by virtue of which one continues to actively, consciously, 'be'.

As already seen, for Heidegger the 'being-there' for human beings resides in the world they share through language, through speaking to one another. However, in the 'Metaphysics' Aristotle draws a distinction between the knowledge of reality that is attained by language and shared with others, and the governing sense of being that he is seeking, which is the primary sense of 'being' that concerns all living beings. The implication being that it is the latter world, concerned with being rather than with shared knowledge, which is the most metaphysically significant for all beings. The governing sense of being also involves the knowledge of reality, but this knowing is not arrived at by language, through speaking with others, but is a work of the soul. Aristotle explains the difference as follows: "the intertwining and dividing are in thinking but not in things, and being of this sort is different from the being of what is in the governing sense (for thinking

[138] Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, 61

attaches or separates what something is, or that it is of this sort, or that it is this much, or anything else it might be)."[139] Of the way of being arrived at by thinking and speaking, Aristotle says that it does not reveal any nature that is outside itself and for that reason should be set aside. As "what must be examined are the causes and sources of being itself, as being." They reside in reality and not in how we communicate, refute or announce reality in the mode of 'being-together-speaking.' Aristotle later repeats the point, that metaphysics is not concerned with the being that is thought about and discussed, "it is not of being in this sense that the sources are being sought, but of being that is outside and separate." [140]

ii). Pleasure and Contemplation

The other way that Heidegger moves 'being' away from Aristotle's governing, active sense towards a situational, historical 'being in the world' is through his restrictive interpretation of contemplation, which, for Aristotle, is the key activity of 'being'. Heidegger does this by diminishing both its religious significance and its effortful nature. As a result, contemplation is seen to be little more than a bare physiological awareness, or a theorising at best. The essential point being that it remains rather mundane. In both of his works on ethics Aristotle links contemplation with divinity.[141] As both a necessary presence and the underlying reason for the activity itself, divinity and contemplation are indivisible. Heidegger, however, sees nothing religious in this activity. And, in fact, he doesn't really see it as an activity at all, just "an outré form of reflection." In explaining away the happiness contemplation is said to lead to, he says, "pleasure is, put succinctly, nothing other than the determination of the presentness of being-in-the-world, which is there in finding-oneself as such." For, according to Heidegger, "pleasure is in itself already there with being, as living", which would seem to suggest that nothing is to be gained by contemplating. Aristotle draws a direct connection between pleasure and living life, but that doesn't mean that pleasure is already given with life. On the contrary, Aristotle says that happiness is not a condition of life, but the end at which human beings aim, which would seem to suggest that it is both effortful and fulfilling. "Happiness is a certain way of being-at-work, and it is clear that being-at-work is something that happens, and not something that is present like some possession"[142]

As has been seen, Aristotle and Heidegger do not share the same view concerning human 'thinghood', as evidenced by their differing conceptions of 'ousia'. And it is this ontological difference that lies at the root of their contrasting views concerning pleasure and contemplation, and the effect of these on human 'thinghood'. For Aristotle 'ousia' denotes a way of being that can be fundamentally altered, i.e., as a matter of thinghood: "change within the same form to more or less is alteration."[143] Some qualities are not simply attributed to a thing, but actually constitute what it is, and when they change so

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[139] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1027b 20 - 1028
[140] Ibid., 1065 2a-21
[141] Kenny, Anthony. *Aristotle on the Perfect Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)
[142] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1169b 30
[143] Aristotle, *Physics*, 226b 3

does 'thinghood'.[144] For Heidegger, however, given his conflation of 'ousia' with 'parousia', 'thinghood' is not something that is vulnerable to ontological change, only its relations with the world can be altered. The significance of this distinction becomes apparent when Heidegger considers the effect of the dispositions of pleasure and pain. Such dispositions Heidegger describes as modes of being of living beings whose basic structure is 'being-in-the-world', dealing with the world, dealing with others, i.e., he is considering those dispositions in the context of 'parousia'. Heidegger suggests that 'the being-character' of living things means 'being-in-a-world.' And that this is meant in two ways, one internal and the other external. [one following 'ousia', the other 'parousia'] Although, as Heidegger acknowledges, the Greeks recognised no such distinction:-

1."The being of this living nature is determined in its form – eidos – as the dunamis of being-in-the-world, thus, on the one hand as eidos as the being-determination itself of beings."

2. "*As encountering from out of the world:* the living thing is in the world in yet a second sense, in the sense of belongingness-to-the-*world.* This means that I belong to the world in such a way that I can be encountered by another within the world, like a chair."[145]

Heidegger then goes on to 'sharpen' this second determination, [which has the shape of 'parousia'], and to apply to it the disposition of pleasure, which, for him, is a basic disposition of life: "pleasure is a determination of living beings that *is given with living-being as such.* More precisely, pleasure is nothing other than a *fundamental determination of being in the world*, insofar as being-in-the-world is the sort of being that I at the same time have." By 'having' Heidegger means 'being-aware-of'. Since, for him, pleasure means 'finding oneself', 'having an explanation as to one's being in the world'. For Heidegger, happiness is "no so called pleasure, but a [basic] *determination of being in itself as living.* [146] For "pleasure as disposition is the mode of having itself of a being that is there." And, "living is thereby characterised as being-in-the-world, living as being-in".[147]

When Aristotle addresses the significance of pleasure, however, it appears to be as a disposition affecting a being in the world in the first sense, as 'ousia' i.e., as a being of a living nature determined by its form and potency. Aristotle doesn't see pleasure as a basic determination given with life, but only according to a certain way of living. And in this regard he draws a distinction between the different ways of living that people enjoy. Because, according to Aristotle, men do not all have the same nature or the same best active condition, nor even seem to; they do not all pursue the same pleasure either, though they all pursue pleasure.[148] For Aristotle pleasure is a way of 'being at work' that only internal activity can summon: "without being at work, no pleasure comes about."[149] In the 'Protrepticus' Aristotle makes the point more strongly, stressing that not all those who

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[144] Sachs, *Aristotle's Physics*, 243
[145] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 162-163
[146] Ibid., 163
[147] Ibid., 165
[148] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1153b 30
[149] Ibid., 1175a 20

enjoy life enjoy living, only those who are living it a certain way, i.e., who themselves are a certain way. From which it follows that pleasure, in a sense, is effortful, since we are responsible for the active condition that brings it about.[150] And the effort required concerns the active soul -'hexis' – holding on in that active condition, contemplating reality.

In Book 10 of the 'Nicomachean Ethics' Aristotle describes that contemplative work: "when the thing perceiving and the thing perceived are at their best, there will always be pleasure when what acts and what is acted upon are present to one another. So long as the perceptible thing and the power that discerns or contemplates it are such as they ought to be, there will be pleasure in their being-at-work."[151] For Aristotle perceiving is not a passive affair, but an active condition and, if it is properly, i.e., consciously, engaged in, then pleasure can follow from it. Heidegger, however, transposes that active relation with reality and states that pleasure does not follow from the fulfilment of seeing, i.e., from seeing the world in the right way, but the other way round and that "my possibility of finding myself in such a way is grounded in my being as being-in-the-world." According to Heidegger, "[Pleasure] is not something like a possibility in the particular dealing itself, it is no 'hexis' – active condition of 'aisthesis' – sense perception, such that because my seeing in the right way and my seeing the fitting object, pleasure occurs through the fulfilment of seeing. It is not a result of these circumstances, but rather the other way round. This possibility of finding-oneself-thus-and-so is grounded in my being as being-in-the-world, not a result of determinate circumstances."[152] Thus, "pleasure itself is not a mode of being that appears occasionally, pleasure is in itself already there with being as living," which is partly true. Pleasure is given with living, but Aristotle's point is that actively living is not always there with life, because possessing a life and actively living are not the same thing.

In his early lectures on religion Heidegger sought to show how the primal Christian experience had been distorted when expressed through the medium of Greek conceptual thought. He was particularly concerned at Augustine's adoption of the Greek concept of 'fruitio Dei' – the enjoyment of God in contemplation - which he believed brought about a "theorizing or occularizing of the whole intentional configuration of primitive Christian experience." The problem is obvious, if God is present to be enjoyed now in contemplation, what is the believer waiting for in anxiety and insecurity? As John van Buren observes, the result is that "the kairological temporalizing-sense of primal Christianity is brought to a standstill."[153] For, when the absent God becomes a present one, "simultaneously, the original relational sense of care, anxiety, situational understanding, and preaching is dimmed down to the ocular aesthetic relation of beholding, contemplating, theorizing, enjoying."[154] What Heidegger feels is lost, when "kairological time is levelled off into chronological time," is the anxious, wakeful waiting of the believer, as he gets lulled to sleep, and, thus, back to the every day, by the tranquilising

[150] Ibid., 1105a 25-26; 1114b 21-23
[151] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1174b 30
[152] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 164-165
[153] John van Buren, 'Martin Heidegger, Martin Luther' in *Reading Heidegger from the Start*, 165
[154] Ibid., 166

effect of the beatific vision revealed in contemplation. And, more importantly, thereby closes himself off to his, for Heidegger, more authentic, historical relation with God. However, this touches on Aristotle's point concerning the effortful nature of contemplation. It is not possible to fall asleep and be a contemplative, because in the act of contemplating the soul is drawn from its depths. It isn't an activity that the contemplative is doing, that he can perform mechanically, but one that he is 'being' responsive to. And the pleasure the contemplative experiences whilst contemplating reality attests to the veracity of that calling, which is a calling that did not originate with the Greeks, but comes from pre-historical times. "It belongs to a store of traditional wisdom whose root goes deeper than historical time, and perhaps further than the human domain."[155] The true significance of contemplation lies in what it says about reality, and about us as part of that reality. For Heidegger, however, reality does not appear to have such depths. When he opened his lecture course entitled 'Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle', in 1922, Heidegger began by reciting Luther's condemnation of 'the pagan master Aristotle'. The condemnation ended by suggesting that "Aristotle's Physics, Metaphysics, De Anima and Ethics ... should be completely discarded along with the rest of his books that glory in natural things."[156] For Luther there is nothing in creation worthy of contemplation, and, consequently, he suggests that intuition and contemplation be given up in preference to looking to the future, to "what is not yet." In Heidegger's works there is no suggestion that he looked with appreciation on the natural world. He certainly saw no ontological significance in it, and believed the world set up by work to be "more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we believe ourselves to be at home."[157]

The significance of consciousness in relation to 'being' will be examined later, following Sartre's realisations concerning the lack of consciousness that characterises 'non-being' – the form of being that he believes entered the world with human reality. In Heidegger's thinking, by contrast, consciousness seems to be assumed rather than questioned. However, when he considers the connection Aristotle draws between contemplation and pleasure, even though he dismisses pleasure as a basic disposition of life, he examines 'being-there' at this most fundamental level. "Being-there, insofar as it is living, is always being-there at the moment: there is no being-there in general. Being there is always: I am not a being that is, but rather one that I am."[158] For Heidegger it appears that the consciously aware 'I am' is a given of existence, indelibly attached to the facticity of life. According to Aristotle, however, the self-awareness implicit in 'I am' is chosen, and only occurs if we are at work so choosing. For then, "something in us is aware that we are at work."[159] Heidegger, however, rejects the notion that a being that is aware of itself orients itself in a certain way: "The possibility arises that a being that orients itself also has itself in a certain way. We must refrain from orienting the having-itself toward reflection. Reflection is but a certain

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[155] Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 1998), 14

[156] Kisiel. *Reading Heidegger From The Start*, 171

[157] Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art.*, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 43

[158] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts Of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 165

[159] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 9

outré form in which being-there is conscious of itself."[160] Although Heidegger did, in an early draft of 'Being and Time', formulate Dasein as "the entity which I am in each instance", that unitary, apparently intentional, formulation was later replaced in the final draft by the more general and less animate term – 'existence'. However, the shift in terminology does not appear that significant for Heidegger, because "I am" does not seem to hold any inner dynamic meaning; it isn't synonymous with 'I am being', as it is for Aristotle, and nor does it convey any dependency on conscious awareness or effort. Rather, Dasein appears throughout as a contained and situated, entity. And the factors, or movements, that contribute to it, being historical and cultural, emerge as vectors or purveyors of 'non-being', when considered in terms of Aristotle's governing sense of 'being' – the activity that I am 'being'. For, although such movements provide us with the material to demonstrate the historical fact of our existence, through the accomplishments they make possible, they reveal nothing of our way of being.

Given that Heidegger's understanding of 'thinghood' is comprised in the notion 'parousia' – a completed entity that moves about within a world of its own achievements, it is not surprising that Heidegger eschews any notion of ontological work. However, one of his manuscript notes summing up the lecture on Aristotle's 'Basic Concepts' seems to suggest an awareness of the possibility of just such work: "Parousia, ousia – basic explication: entelecheia, dunamis, energeia. With this Greek ontology first comes into its own. But that means: How, which being-there, always what, Which are we ? Everything shifts in the direction of this question. Being-there in general experienced as ontological task. One has [to do] with consciousness and person and living. Here everything breaks down c.f. Jaspers"[161] Heidegger reviewed Jaspers' work, 'Psychology of Worldviews' in 1919/21, shortly before the lecture course on Aristotle's basic concepts. And in that critique makes evident his view that an adequate philosophical account of human 'thinghood' must extend beyond the metaphysical; it must be historical. As Heidegger there explains, life is to be seen as an external achievement – a "creative formation" that human 'thinghood' accomplishes through "an act of going out of itself". He concludes his review by suggesting that "mere contemplation", which he later dismisses in 'Being and Time' as nothing more than a distraction, must go on to the "infinite process" of a "radical questioning which holds itself in the question".[162] Thus the appropriate orientation towards being becomes an achieving and questioning one, rather than a contemplating one. For Dasein the determining activity regarding Being is not 'being' itself, but questioning, for which a human 'being' first needs to be established, i.e., stabilised, as a questioner: Dasein – the being for whom being is in question. The contemplative, however, unlike Dasein, does not seek an answer, for he has no question. He doesn't seek to determine what language can 'unconceal', or an explanation for his 'being-there'. He doesn't seek anything other than the experience of reality itself, which is his 'being'. The contemplative can't receive any other answer to his 'being' without stepping outside of himself. He realises

[160] Heidegger, *Basic Concepts Of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 165
[161] Ibid., 258
[162] Heidegger, 'Comments on Karl Jaspers's Psychology of Worldviews', trans., John van Buren, Pathmarks, ed., William McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), quoted in *Heidegger's Way of Thought:* 159

that the only reality he has is that of his active soul 'knowing' reality. And because the contemplative doesn't have any stability outside that activity, he doesn't seek to maintain any historical 'thereness' or 'worldliness' concerning his being. Dasein, by contrast, has already determined its mode of being as 'being-in-the-world'. Dasein and the contemplative, thus, emerge as embodiments of contrary movements of 'being'. The former concerned with the productive force of history, through which it accomplishes its being, and the latter with the receptive potency of 'being-acted-upon' by an operative reality.

1. 3. The Ontological Significance of Nature

Nature is here understood, not in a static sense, merely as a collection of natural beings, but in the dynamic Greek sense of 'physis', which conveys the animating force of the cosmos as something both spiritual and teleological.[163] The later distinction drawn between matter and spirit and the idealisation of the latter were impositions of categorised thinking, following a Christian interpretation of the cosmos. However, such distinctions may no longer be tenable in the face of our quantum understanding of reality, which suggests that nature includes the subtle worlds of spiritual traditions: "in the view of quantum physics, all attempts to distinguish between nature and 'supernature' have lost complete credibility." [164] This work is metaphysical in its attempt to elucidate a relationship with reality beyond that constituted by thought. It takes the view that reality is operative, which is a truth idealism has served to obscure by elevating thought above reality. The language used, in attempting to outline man's interface with the world, draws on myth as well as philosophy, because man's true, i.e., ontologically full, relationship with reality pertains to an active, receptive form of 'being' which is perhaps most evident in the world to which myth refers.[165] As Bruno Snell explains in his work, 'The Discovery of Mind in Greek Philosophy', "mythical thought requires receptivity," whereas "logic does not materialise until man has become cognizant of the energy within him."[166] This primordial shift in our relationship with reality, effected by the cognisance of individual energy and power, is crucial, since it conveyed to man the notion of the individuality of his mind and marked the beginning of an externalised relationship with the world. What was thereby set in motion was not simply the establishment of an alternative externalised perspective of the real, but the potential for undermining the anterior relationship with nature, and our conscious participation in reality. It is virtually impossible for us, with the literary concepts which direct our reasoning, to imagine a way of thinking that is determined by reality rather than by language and the conceptual thinking that it inculcates. However, it is this very distinction that needs to be kept in mind if the ontological knowing that sustains us is to be

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[163] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 158. See Aristotle *Physics* II 193a; *Physics* II 194a

[164] Amit Goswami, *God Is Not Dead* (Wisconsin: Hampton Roads Publishing Co., 2008), 25

[165] Truth – '*aletheia*' is here understood as in the ontological doctrine of truth, as a way of 'being' prior to being known. Aristotle recognises the ontological truth of beings in the *Metaphysics*, 993b 30 "*so what each thing has of being, that too it has of truth.*" The primal truth from which verbal truth is derived – See Buber 'The Lie Against Being', in *Good and Evil* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 107

[166] Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Dover Publications Inc. 1982), 224

distinguished and preserved from epistemological knowledge, because epistemology, properly, i.e., philosophically, understood, involves "the apprehension of order in the domain of human knowing."[167] The concepts derived from categorised thinking pertain to how we talk and think about reality, but not about reality itself. And it is because our anterior, ontological relationship with reality could not be articulated in the conceptual language of the linguistically derived epistemological orientation that it became invisible to a mind that recognised only instrumental relations. What is being identified here is the largely forgotten distinction between intrinsic and instrumental reason. This distinction is important to this work and is referred to throughout, particularly in relation to Heidegger's thinking regarding authentic thought. Intrinsic reason is the reason that sustains us as distinct human beings, and is dependent on our perception of reality. It precedes instrumental reasoning and makes it possible. It also precedes human self-knowledge and makes that possible. For Aristotle, and the early Medieval Christian church, the intellect is empty without reality and only knows itself through knowing what is real. Thus the hierarchy of ontological knowing runs from reality through the intrinsic reason of the perceptive intellect to the instrumental reason of the active intellect to self-awareness.[168] The fact that ontological knowing is intrinsic to what we are does not make it effortless. On the contrary, "a tremendous activity of the will is required if we are to be determined only by reality in our knowing," This is because our thoughts and imaginings intrude in that relation and need to be silenced if reality is to be heard. For, in order to become perceptive, "we need to force ourselves out of the picture."[169] And it is precisely because Aristotle's metaphysics draws attention to the effort of 'being' human that his ontological thinking is so instructive in this regard.

Whilst any notion of participating in reality through such intuitive 'knowing' has long disappeared in western thought, such an understanding was observed by anthropologist Levy-Bruhl amongst the 'imunu' of New Guinea, and numerous other 'primitive' cultures, at the beginning of the 20th century: "To the mind of the primitive there is existent and permeating ..in all the diverse forms ..one and the same essential reality, .. one and multiple, .. material and spiritual... continually passing from one to another, and by means of it may be explained the existence and activities of all forms of being, their permanence and their metamorphoses, their life and death. This mystic reality which permeates everywhere and which is felt rather than represented, properly speaking cannot be put into conceptual form like the 'substance' of our metaphysicians."[170] Levy-Bruhl goes on to say that in such a world spiritual reality is not idealised, but concrete and embodied, although not always visible, or tangible.[171] The movement and change Levy-Bruhl describes as inhering in a dynamic experiential reality are essential aspects of Aristotle's metaphysics of 'being qua being', the emptied out metaphysical concept 'substance', rejected by Levy-

[167] Louis-Marie Regis, *St Thomas and Epistemology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1946), 3
[168] Josef Pieper, *Living The Truth – Reality and the Good*, trans., Stella Lange (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989), 135
[169] Josef Pieper, *Living The Truth – Reality and the Good*, 135
[170] Lucien Levy-Bruhl, *The 'Soul' Of The Primitive*, trans., Lilian A. Clarke (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1928), 16
[171] Ibid., 113

Bruhl, being a Medieval misinterpretation of Aristotelian 'thinghood'. Levy-Bruhl points out that it is not that the 'primitive' mentality does not recognise distinctions in nature, it does, but such distinctions are not heeded because the more powerful perception is of the homogeneity of reality, forming a "seamless web of actuality that surrounds them."[172] However, it appears that this powerful perception of homogeneity diminished as man became more concerned with the reality created by his own conceptual thoughts than that received by his perceiving soul.

The modern notion of having a 'mentality' i.e., a state of intellectual ability which is not dependent on an exterior situation, is itself dependent on a particular view of reality that denies any ontological dependence: "it emerges from an ambivalent possibility of turning toward conceptual relations or of remaining in relationships of participation, **prior** to representation it is strikingly engaged in being: it **orients** itself to being."[173] What Emmanuel Levinas seems to be saying here is that participation in reality and engagement in 'being' run together and constitute a relationship that is not only prior to conceptual relations, but capable of being deliberately maintained as such. The presumption of logocentrism is that societies that are not logical are pre-logical. However, the findings of Levy-Bruhl, which influenced Levinas, are that this is not necessarily the case, and that the logic of western civilisation is more a chosen orientation than a necessary one. And what appears to be particularly significant in the distinction between logical and non-logical modes of thought, is that our relationship with nature is directly affected by the orientation towards reality that we adopt, with non-logical societies continuing to recognise an affinity with nature as the ordering principle of their lives, which we, in logical societies, feel we have transcended.[174]And it is this ontological blind-spot, hidden within us, behind the modern presumption of the demonstrability of all knowledge, which Aristotle's metaphysics usefully brings to light. For, as Aristotle points out not all truths can be demonstrated, some, such as metaphysical truths, need to be pointed at another way. And it is the truths that can't be demonstrated that precede and make possible those that can.

It would be wrong to discount the significance of Levy-Bruhl's findings on the grounds that western civilization has evolved a more sophisticated culture and that, therefore, these primitive societies remain outside our history and our philosophy. On the contrary, as Heidegger points out, in 'The Essence Of Human Freedom', it is precisely the pre-philosophical awareness of being that is the ground for philosophy itself, because, "philosophy's understanding of being expresses what man is in his pre-philosophical existence."[175] The reason for emphasising this pre-philosophical relationship with the

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[172] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 67

[173] Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre Nous*, trans., Michael B.Smith and Barbara Harshav (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2000), 50

[174] To the ancient Greek mind there was not the clear distinction between sensation and thought that exists today; *'noesis'* – 'the operation of nous' - which is often translated simply as 'thinking', actually had an intuitive element and is certainly not to be found in the thinking of discursive reasoning. It conveyed a *"psychic awareness that goes beyond sense data and perceives less tangible things."* However, whilst going beyond sensation, it needed sensual awareness to be activated. See F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 121

[175] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, trans., Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002) , 33

world is because this is the relationship to which the first philosophers, or 'truth tellers', as they were called, referred. They realised that attempting to convey the innate dynamism and order of the world was fraught with linguistic difficulties. And that notwithstanding what was communicated in discourse, man still needed to listen directly to the 'logos' which sounded in 'physis'.[176] According to Heidegger, writing eleven years after the Marburg lectures, the philosophy of Heraclitus reveals "proof of the inner bond between logos and 'physis' in the beginning of western philosophy,"[177] which would seem to indicate that Heidegger's later appreciation of what may be revealed to man by the 'self-showing logos' had expanded from the earlier view expressed in the 'Basic Concepts' lectures. (However, the rest of the lecture makes clear that, for Heidegger, it is the 'interpreting logos' that establishes the world of being for man, because without such interpretation what shows itself appears as chaos.) Heidegger reports that, according to Heraclitus, 'true hearing' has nothing to do with our ears.[178] Rather, it has to do with our being 'followers' – those who recognise, i.e., are present to, the truth inherent in reality itself. According to Heraclitus, those who are not present in that way "hear but resemble the deaf." For, "they are present yet absent."[179] It is this absence within presence, this ability to be essentially absent whilst ostensibly present, that this work seeks to explore. For, it seems that our way of being in the world, our being present or being absent to reality, determines how we understand the world and ourselves within it.

Whilst clearly man is distinguished from the rest of nature by the fact that he has language, Heidegger regards man's ontological relation with Being as emanating directly from this distinction, thereby disenfranchising the rest of the natural world from it. According to Sartre, however, it is man's capacity for non-being that distinguishes him from the rest of the natural world, because creatures lacking in consciousness are necessarily purely actual, as they do not have the capability of incorporating nothingness into their way of being in the world. Thus, the distinction Sartre draws between man and animals relates to consciousness, not to being. Heidegger, however, seems repulsed at the idea that we share any familial relation with the rest of the natural world, regarding "our abysmal bodily kinship with the beast" as "scarcely conceivable."[180] In his lectures on 'Parmenides' in 1942, he reacts almost with hostility to Rilke's suggestion that animals have retained a connection with Being that we have lost. This is a distinction Heidegger returns to again a few years later in 'Letter on Humanism' in which he emphasises the essential coupling of 'humanitas' with thinking, "to think the truth of Being at the same time means to think the humanity of homo humanus,"[181] which would seem to name a creature devoid of any animating principle, who is uniquely maintained in Being by virtue of language and thought, and not by virtue of its underlying relationship with the natural world. According

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[176] Heidegger, *An Introduction To Metaphysics*, 129, See F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms.*, 110. *Logos* has a number of meanings: speech, account, reason, rational, definition, faculty and proportion. For Heraclitus "*Logos* is an underlying organizational principle of the universe."
[177] Heidegger, *An Introduction To Metaphysics*, 126
[178] Ibid., 130
[179] Ibid., 130
[180] Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism' ed., David Farrell Krell, *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 1993), 230
[181] Ibid, 254

to Heidegger: "thinking overcomes metaphysics by climbing back down into the nearness of the nearest,"[182] because, "everything depends upon this alone, that the truth of Being come to language and that thinking attain to this language."[183] In 'Identity and Difference', written ten years later, Heidegger repeats the ontological distinction between man and the rest of nature, recognising that whilst they all have a place in Being as beings, only man, "as the being who thinks, is open to Being."[184]

It appears that for Heidegger, man's essence: "where he is claimed by Being," is in the dwelling of language, "only from this dwelling 'has' he 'language' as the home that preserves the ecstatic for his essence. Such standing in the clearing of Being I call the ek-sistence of man. This way of Being is proper only to man. Ek-sistence, so understood, is not only the ground of the possibility of reason, ratio, but is also that in which the essence of man preserves the source that determines him."[185] Heidegger here seems to be suggesting that man, 'homo humanus', having sloughed off his superfluous and degrading animality, has the unique ability to maintain the source that determines him because he is able to stand in the clearing of Being - 'Ek-sistence' naming his standing out in the truth of Being, which is a possibility man alone has through language and reason. However, by ontologically elevating reasoning man above non-reasoning nature what is ignored is the fact that nature, through the 'energeia' of its 'being', is able to nourish and move our perceptive souls in a way that artefacts and other products of thought are not. Rilke is not setting animals above man in knowledge or intelligence, but simply in their ability to maintain their 'thinghood' by 'being.'

> "With all eyes the creature sees the open
>
> Only our eyes are reversed and placed wholly
>
> around the creature as traps, around their free exit.
>
> What is outside we know from the animal's visage alone"

In his critique of Rilke's 8th Duino Elegy, Heidegger suggests that the poem is a hominization of the animal, and a corresponding animalization of man. What particularly disturbs Heidegger about this poem is that it seems to him that Rilke is elevating the animal above man: "Rilke does not take the 'a-rational creature' according to the usual view, as lower, i.e., less potent, compared to the higher more potent human being."[186] But Rilke's point is not to view the animal as a kind of super-man, as Heidegger suggests, but to recognize in the animal a potency that has not been constrained by instrumental reason. Heidegger doesn't seem to see this because his conception of being is tied to questioning,

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[182] Ibid, 254

[183] Ibid, 246

[184] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans., Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 31

[185] Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', ed., David Krell, *Heidegger's Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, 1978), 227

[186] Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans., Andre Shuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992),154

which is an activity of such reason. Heidegger identifies in the distinction Rilke draws between the eyes of the creature and our eyes "an opposition", and "an inversion in rank". And for Heidegger it is man who should be assigned the higher rank, "because he has the word, man and he alone, is the being that looks into the open in the sense of aletheia."[187] Whereas, "according to Rilke the animal sees more than man does for the animal's gaze is not trammelled by any objects." Heidegger interprets Rilke's words in psychological terms suggesting that he is attempting to elevate the unconscious over the conscious, assigning priority to the "free animal over the imprisoned essence of man."However, Rilke's 'prioritising' does not relate to knowing being, but to 'being' itself. The "seeing into the open" of which Rilke speaks is surely the activity of the animal's 'being', as the 'energeia' of its 'thinghood', maintaining itself as what it 'is'. However, for Heidegger, "man and he alone sees into the open – though without beholding it. Only the essential sight of authentic thinking beholds Being itself." Only man is deemed capable of seeing, because he alone has the essential sight of authentic thinking, but this would appear to conflate 'being' with 'knowing being'.[188] "The animal does not glimpse into the open in the sense of the unconcealed." "The sign of this essential exclusion is that no animal or plant 'has the word'." [189] Not having the word would seem to exclude animals from knowing 'being', but not from actively 'being'. Such knowledge is not an aspect of an animal's 'thinghood', and therefore it can 'be' at work 'being' what it 'is' without knowing that it 'is'. Certainly, as far as Aristotle is concerned, perception is the defining characteristic of all animals, man included, which elevates them above 'mere living things' to a 'certain kind of life.' And surely, prior to his 'knowing being' man is in 'being', because he 'is' before he knows he 'is'. The ontological principle of truth recognizes a reciprocity between truth and 'being' as an intrinsic principle of reality that exists prior to man's realization of it; the Greek understanding of 'aletheia' relating to beings as well as to knowing. As Heidegger acknowledges in 'On The Essence of Human Freedom': "[it] has been clearly demonstrated that the Greeks saw truth primarily pertaining to beings themselves, i.e., that they took being-true as the proper being of proper beings."[190] However, Heidegger suggests that what the Greeks meant by this they did not show, because, "they did not develop this question to the level of the fundamental question," and because 'pseudo-questions eventually covered it up. Nevertheless, the Greek understanding of the proper being of beings would seem to be relevant to this poem. For, the essential point Rilke seems to be making is that we do not 'see' reality, and therefore cannot 'be' in the sense that an animal can, not because an animal is necessarily imbued with the capacity to see more than man, but because the animal is maintaining itself in its 'thinghood', and in that sense could be considered to be 'being-true' to its 'being', whereas man, due to the self imposed constraints of discursive reason, is not. Animals don't have truth in the dual sense that man has it, i.e., as a matter of 'being' and as a matter of knowing, but they do have it in the former ontological sense by 'being true'.

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[187] Ibid, 155

[188] Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth.* Trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952) Aquinas draws the distinction between knowing truth and knowing that one knows it.

[189] Heidegger *Parmenides,* 159

[190] Heidegger, *On The Essence Of Human Freedom*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002), 74

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Consciousness and Technology

This work suggests that human beings have withdrawn from Being as a result of their failing to actively 'be'. To explain what is meant by this ontological failing, it is necessary to consider what is understood by consciousness, for it seems that 'being' and consciousness are inextricably linked. As Sartre was aware, it is not possible to consider how 'being human' manifests in conduct without examining the conscious, or unconscious, elements of that behaviour. For, if our actions are not accompanied by consciousness, it is difficult to see how they can be our own. And, if the actions that emanate from us are not determined by us – by a consciousness that we possess - it would seem that they are determined by something extraneous to us as a result of something that we lack. According to Sartre, it is our capacity for consciousness that makes us vulnerable to 'non-being', because through that capacity we have the ability to draw nothingness into our very mode of existence. And, thus, through that power we have the potential to live in a way determined by what we lack. Sartre observed such 'lacking' behaviour in a number of common situations. Perhaps the most typical one for modernity is that of the officious functionary who zealously acts, indeed overacts, his part, losing himself in ostentatious activity, in an attempt to eradicate any idea that his being might run to something more than function. Heidegger, too, came to see in the endemic functionalism of modern technological society the expression of a lack. He speaks of this lack not only as a force that has come to constitute our essence, but one that also organises society. However, whereas Sartre sees in human consciousness 'consciousness of itself as a lack', i.e., as an embodiment of 'non-being, Heidegger's interpretation of human 'thinghood' in terms of 'parousia', would seem to preclude him from fully recognising the ontological significance of 'non-being'.

Whilst there is much confusion about what is meant by 'consciousness', and, generally, its presence is more presumed than questioned, it is here understood as something more than simple awareness. And, therefore, it cannot be considered merely as part of the autonomic system, like digestion. Although consciousness has generally been presumed to be, at the very least, the underlying ground of our thinking, maintaining that view is becoming increasingly problematic. For it seems that, "one does one's thinking before one knows what one is to think about."[1] As psychologist Julian Jaynes emphatically states, in his extensive study of the phenomenon, consciousness has no instrumental purpose: "[It] is not involved in the performance of skills and often hinders their execution. It need not be involved in speaking, writing, listening or reading. It does not copy down experience .. and need not be involved in the learning of skills or solutions, which can go on without any consciousness whatever. It is not necessary for making judgments or in simple thinking. It is not the seat of reason."[2] Jaynes' essential and thought-provoking message is that a civilisation does not need consciousness. In functional terms it can evolve without it, and,

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[1] Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (New York: Mariner 2000), 39
[2] Ibid., 47

in fact, probably 'evolves' more efficiently and rapidly without it. For, the equation between function and consciousness is a false one, the trap of productive thought produced by a model of the mind based on a machine, which fallaciously assumes that increasing instrumentality must be synonymous with increasing consciousness. Whereas, in reality, the opposite is true, as common experience reveals: it is precisely when we are most engrossed in functional tasks that we are our least conscious. However, whilst we do not need consciousness 'to do', we do need consciousness 'to be', for 'being' is necessarily a conscious activity. Hence Aristotle's emphasis on the need for effort so far as our inner activity of 'being-at-work' is concerned. And whether or not 'being' and consciousness constitute the same activity, they both appear to derive from the same effort. For, crucially, consciousness, too, involves the presence of oneself, and in that sense it is effortful, because we actually need to summon our self to reality in order to be conscious. Our blind spot around consciousness is highly significant so far as our understanding of 'being' is concerned, because we can't 'be' fully human without it. And it is by deluding ourselves that consciousness is omnipresent in our neural processes, that we do not notice that it very rarely is, and make the error of presuming that by replicating those processes we can create consciousness.[3]

The reality that now surrounds us is largely socially constructed, or 'institutional', as John Searle describes it. What this means is that our relations with each other and with the surrounding natural world are primarily determined by prior social interpretations, kept in place by social institutions and processes that necessitate that interpretation. The perspective of that determining interpretation is a functional one – it is 'observer relative', according to Searle, which means that the significance attributed to reality is entirely relative to us - the observer, i.e., it is determined by social and technological need. Such a utilitarian conception of the world would seem to derive from a certain orientation towards reality, from a technological, or instrumental, mode of thought. The productivity derived from such instrumental thinking originates in the concepts and ideas of the practical intellect and does not require the contemplation of nature.[4] And neither would such thinking seem to require consciousness. For, whilst we can be conscious of a particular tree that we can touch and see, we cannot be conscious of the concept 'tree' as there is simply no thing to be conscious of. As Jaynes points out, not only is consciousness "not the repository of concepts; it does not usually work with them at all."[5] What this would seem to suggest is that in our utilitarian thinking about reality we are not only precluded from actually 'knowing' that reality, as a result of the instrumental stance that we have adopted, but that the 'observer-relative' culture such thinking has produced, which is now the determining paradigm for our relations with reality, is an unconscious one.

Perhaps, the thinker who has most dramatically expressed this shift in our orientation towards reality, perceiving in the determining force of modern culture nothing less than a new form of evolution, is biologist Richard Dawkins. In 1976 Dawkins launched his theory

[3] Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 375
[4] Aristotle, *De Anima*, Book III ch 5
[5] Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, 31

of cultural evolution and coined the term 'meme' to designate a "unit of produced cultural information." So far as Dawkins is concerned, "for an understanding of the evolution of modern man, we must begin by throwing out the gene as the sole basis of our ideas on evolution."[6] For, according to Dawkins, man's 'evolution' is now more determined by the imitative thoughts propagated throughout society than by the intuition and instincts of his animal nature. A 'meme' denotes anything from a tune, an idea, a style of dress or building, the essential point being that it has been produced and propagated by thought, and is therefore capable of imitation. Dawkins created the name 'meme' because he recognised that not only are genes not the only replicators, but that they are not even the most successful ones for modernity: "Our dominant form of replication is now cultural not biological."[7] Replication by 'memes' is achieved by the conceptual language that creates and transmits them. It is 'historical' and "looks like highly speeded up genetic evolution but really has nothing to do with genetic evolution."[8] However, just because memes are created and disseminated by language, it should not be assumed that we consciously construct them, or that we can determine their development, because, according to Dawkins, we can not: "Once the genes have provided their survival machines with brains that are capable of rapid imitation, the 'memes' will automatically take over." For, the alarming point that Dawkins is making, which he acknowledges is one that we have not previously considered, "is that a cultural trait may have evolved in the way that it has, simply because it is advantageous to itself."[9] However, whilst it seems quite shocking that our culture, or indeed any culture, could unconsciously create such an alienating force, there seems to be ample support for the case for 'memes'. Not only fellow evolutionary biologists, but also neuroscientists, philosophers and those with a wider view of social development have come to concur with Dawkins fundamental point, which is that our modern perception of the self is very much a cultural creation. Certainly for Foucault it is a foregone conclusion that man will disappear as soon as knowledge finds a new form.[10] Dawkins, however, remains optimistic because he believes that man has the power of conscious foresight: "we are built as gene machines and cultured as 'meme' machines, but we have the power to turn against our creators. We alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators."[11] However, given that our instrumental orientation to the world emanates from what we are, it is difficult to see what ontological resource we could draw on to effect such a rebellion. Instead of possessing the power of conscious foresight capable of reversing this development, it would appear that any such powers are determined by our anterior, ontological, relationship with reality. And, contrary to Dawkins' optimism, the illusion of reason's determining power appears to be one that science is now laying to rest. As it seems that rather than our actions proceeding from prior 'decisions' we have made, the reverse is actually the case. Actions are, in fact, initiated prior to thought, or conscious awareness, in anterior processes, with reasoning following as

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[6] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006),191
[7] Ibid., 191
[8] Ibid., 189
[9] Ibid., 200
[10] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 1994), xxiii
[11] Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 201

a later justification. As Tor Norretranders admits, this presents a state of affairs that, "obviously runs deeply counter to our everyday image of what being a human being involves."[12] For, clearly, the implication is that the decision is really an illusion,[13] as "consciousness is out of the loop" of the decision-making process.[14] What this seems to point to is that, contrary to Dawkins, we cannot escape our creator, whether we are primarily determined by genes or 'memes'. For it is our orientation to the world and not our conception of things that determines what we are, and what we become, which would seem to suggest that we are, in some way, ontologically dependent on reality.

Whilst Heidegger recognised in the governance of technology something entirely new, distinct from the industrialisation that had gone before, his view of man as primarily cultural rather than natural, with historical possibilities rather than 'trans-historical' potential, limits the ambit of Dasein's ontological response to the challenge of technology. For the rapid propagation of our 'meme' dominated culture seems to signify a ruptured relationship with nature, which the Heideggerean distinction between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' historicizing does not address. As was seen earlier, in his consideration of the ontological significance of 'dunamis' – potency – it is in producing that Heidegger sees human potential properly, i.e., historically, fulfilled. In his later works, Heidegger seems to take a less deterministic view of technology and suggests that we can prevent technology from affecting "our inner or real core" by thinking about it in a different way, i.e., meditatively. According to the later Heidegger, we can reach an accommodation with the technological reality we have fashioned by comporting ourselves as beings who say both "yes" and "no" to it. And, thus, attain the power to deny technology the right to dominate us and lay waste our nature.[15] However, effecting such a detachment from reality supposes an ontological freedom we may not have. For, if it is in his 'being' rather than through his thinking that man is related to reality, in electing to adopt a meditative stance with regard to technology, through "persistent and courageous meditative thinking", what is being altered is not an underlying ontological relation but a superficial psychological one. It isn't through our power of acting that we become meditative, but through our potency to be acted upon by reality. Contemplation is not one mode of knowing amongst others, selected for the benefits it can bring, but an intuitive relation with reality intrinsic to what we are. [16] It has to do with the purely perceptive approach to reality, "one altogether independent of all practical aims in active life." For, "contemplation is a form of knowing arrived at not by thinking, but by seeing." [17]

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[12] Tor Nørretranders , *The User Illusion*, trans., Jonathan Sydenham (New York: Penguin, 1999), 220

[13] Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near*, 191

[14] Benjamin Libet, Physiology Professor at University of California at Davis quoted in *The Singularity Is Near*, Ray Kurzweil. Daniel Dennett describes the process in similar terms in *Freedom Evolves* (New York: Viking 2003). Physicist Danah Zohar makes the same point in *The Quantum Self* (London: Flamingo, 1990), 163

[15] Heidegger, *Discourse On Thinking*, trans., John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 54

[16] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theolgica, II II 180, 4, quoted in Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 1998): 94

[17] Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 73

In the later 'meditative' stance that Heidegger adopts, he appears to be attempting to effect a new ontological relation, as confirmed by his assertion that what may be attained by adopting 'meditative thinking' is a new autochthony "out of which man's nature and all his works can flourish in a new way." Heidegger sees man establishing a new ground, a new foundation, which will enable him to dwell in the world in a totally different way, if he is able to think about his relationship to technology differently.[18] Although Heidegger acknowledges that technology holds back a hidden meaning, he doesn't see that meaning divulged in us, through our way of being in the world, i.e., actually in the reality that we embody. Rather, his response to the undisclosed reality of technology seems to be shaped more by idealism, regarding its significance, primarily, as something we can think about, and meditate on. To such thinking we are seen to remain outside the realm of ontological change, and imagined to be sufficiently empowered intellectually to be able to elect a mode of thinking capable of diminishing technology's determining force. For the realist, however, the mind is not seen to wield such power, because the intrinsic correlation between mind and reality exists prior to any actual cognition. The human mind is ordered towards the realm of existing things not as a result of its own doing, "but by virtue of its very **being**, which is not its own creation." And, accordingly, "this orientation of the human mind toward reality precedes any of the mind's own choices and decisions." Our orientation towards reality is not one we choose intellectually, but naturally follows from our perception of it, because "reality in itself is oriented toward man's perceiving mind, without the mind's contribution, and simply by virtue of its very **being**, which man has not bestowed on it."[19]

If, through technology, we are becoming increasingly determined by homogenising patterns of thought and behaviour, as our realisations concerning fading consciousness and increasing conformity would seem to suggest, it is questionable how much a historical, situational presentation of Being can bring into view regarding the ontological significance of that alteration. For, if our being is deemed to be situational in a historical sense rather than a natural one, i.e., of man's own making, what is thereby occluded is the operative nature of reality. The impetus behind technological power, whilst acknowledged by Heidegger to be an aspect of Being,[20] conceals its essential nature of 'non-being', i.e., as an activity that does not constitute or maintain the 'being' of 'thinghood', in an ontology that does not acknowledge the primordial activity of 'being'. And instead sees nothingness in terms external to Being, rather than embodied in being itself as 'non-being'. However, in order to recognise the difference between 'being' and 'non-being', it is necessary to draw an ontological distinction between 'being' and existing, because the distinction is hidden in the fact of existence and cannot be revealed by language. For, to say of something that it 'is' reveals nothing about its way of 'being'. Although Heidegger did recognise a dynamic aspect to the being that is Dasein, this historical movement, because it pertains to

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[18] Heidegger, *Discourse On Thinking*, 53
[19] Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 62
[20] Heidegger, 'The Age of the World Picture' trans., William Lovitt in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper &Row, 1977), 115

'parousia' rather than to 'ousia', relates to activities done by a being, rather than to the activity of 'being' itself.

2.1 The Pre-conceptual Reality of Being – Sartrean Non-being and Heideggerean Nothingness

In 'The Essence of Human Freedom' Heidegger asserts that man has a pre-conceptual awareness of being. However, when he examines the character of that pre-conceptual awareness, what emerges is a fragmented domain of beings demarcated by the word 'is', far removed from the dynamic, seamless actuality recorded by Levy-Bruhl. Heidegger suggests that this domain is divided up into the following different ways of being – 1. "The earth 'is', i.e. as a planet it has 'actuality', it exists". 2. "The earth is heavy – so-being". 3. "The earth is a planet – what-being." 4. "It is the case that the earth moves around the sun: being as being-true."[21] For Heidegger, our pre-conceptual awareness of being seems to consist of an apprehension of different modes of existence, such as 'existence', or 'being-present', 'what-being', 'so-being' and being as 'being-true'. For Sartre, however, our pre–conceptual awareness of being would seem to be less divided, since we are not primarily concerned with distinctions in modes of being, but with how the world contrasts with our own state of being within it. According to Sartre, not only is our pre-conceptual awareness of 'being-in-itself', which is the reality that we are not, "a comprehension that is not accompanied by a fixing in concepts and elucidations,"[22] but it arises in us as our awareness of ourselves as a lack. That is, our own 'being' is necessarily implicated in our pre-conceptual awareness of being. For, Sartre suggests, "in its coming into existence human reality grasps itself as an incomplete being." And it grasps itself in such a way through its pre-conceptual encounter with other beings, which reveal to it, by their 'complete' presence, its own distinct lack. Apprehending oneself as a lack would also seem to indicate a pre-conceptual awareness of one's ontological potential, for we can only experience a lack, or deprivation, of what is potentially our own. What is potentially our own does not concern what we can produce or add to reality, but what we can add to ourselves within that reality. We are without what is our own, according to Sartre, because we have made a lack of ourselves, through our internalisation of nothingness.[23] And we must be aware of our 'lacking' in order for us to be able to ask the question concerning Being. Because, by asking that question, Dasein is already effecting a nihilating withdrawal from what has been put into question and, thus, detaches itself from Being.[24] As Sartre sees it, "for man to be able to question, he must be capable of being his own nothingness,"[25] to be the origin of non-being. And, in fact, Dasein effects a nihilation in two distinct ways. For, not only does it wrench itself from the order of being in order to place itself within reach of a determination with regard to what is being questioned, but by

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[21] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 29

[22] Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans., Hazel E. Barnes (London: Routledge, 2005), 19 'Being-in-itself' is defined as "Non-conscious being. It is the being of the phenomenon and overflows the knowledge which we have of it. It is a plenitude and strictly speaking we can say of it only that it is." 650

[23] Ibid.,111

[24] Ibid., 47

[25] Ibid., 69

questioning that being, Dasein places what is being questioned outside 'being' "in a **neutral** state, between being and non-being."[26]

The recognition that 'non-being' is actually embodied by man is of crucial importance for understanding man's ontological vulnerability, and a distinguishing feature of Sartre's existentialism. So far as Sartre is concerned, 'non-being' arises in the world in and through the instrumental relations man establishes as a result of what he 'is' – through the nothingness that he embodies, and not simply through what he does: "man is the being through whom nothingness comes into the world."[27] Because, according to Sartre, the activity of 'non-being' – the nihilating of being - is within us. And, therefore, what we do, or produce, through our instrumental perspective of the world, is a manifestation of the inner lack that we are 'being'. And, consequently, "we are no longer dealing with these relations of **instrumentality** by which, according to Heidegger, objects in the world disclose themselves to human reality." Rather, "Every negatité appears as one of the essential conditions of this relation of instrumentality."[28] 'Negatités' is a term coined by Sartre to refer to those human activities that involve negation at their very heart, as part of their integral structure. They are not empirical activities, but pertain to what we are essentially, and thus manifest our being, or, rather, lack of it. And, therefore, what Sartre is pointing out is that our technological orientation towards the world arises as a result of our own negating inner 'being'- our 'non-being'.

What Heidegger failed to recognise, according to Sartre, is the very internality of nothingness, i.e., that man embodies it. And, he failed to see it because he did not see the essential connection between Being and consciousness - that man's relationship with reality is anterior to his cognition of it. For Sartre, "any study of human reality must begin with the cogito." [29] That is, the cogito considered ontologically not epistemologically, as what it 'is', not what it knows: "consciousness is the knowing being insofar as he 'is', not in so far as he is known." [30] For Sartre, the knower exists before knowing, i.e., before what it knows, and its being is consciousness. And, therefore, it is "by abandoning the primacy of knowledge" that "the being of the knower" is discovered.[31] And, that knowing being, prior to its knowing, exists as a lack. Thus, for Sartre, man's consciousness is consciousness of itself as a lack. And this consciousness as a lack arises because "the **cogito** is indissolubly linked to being-in-itself, not as a thought to its object – but as a lack to what defines its lack,"[32]which would seem to indicate an intrinsic, ontological relationship with reality by virtue of what we are. And since 'being-in-itself' informs man of his lack, through the exemplar of its completeness- it being "all positivity" - this would also seem to indicate that man possesses an inherent, pre-cognitive awareness of his potential and the completion it points towards. And, thus, the pre-cognitive awareness that

[26] Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 47
[27] Ibid., 48
[28] Ibid., 48
[29] Ibid., 109
[30] Ibid., 7
[31] Ibid., 12
[32] Ibid., 113

connects us ontologically with reality and informs us of our own potential would appear to be one and the same. Sartre sees human consciousness as, necessarily, unhappy because man is haunted by a totality he cannot reach. And, according to Sartre, nature cannot supply that totality because it combines within itself the incompatible characteristics of the 'in-itself' and the 'for-itself', which would seem to suggest that the man who steps into the 'being-for-itself' is stymied from the very start. For, as Sartre suggests, 'non-being' entered the world solely through human reality, which is a reality that originated with the breaking of the former totality.[33]

In 'What Is Metaphysics?', Heidegger's inaugural lecture at the university of Freiburg, he considers the question of 'nothingness' and its relationship to 'non-being': "the nothing is the negation of the totality of beings; it is nonbeing pure and simple."[34] For Heidegger, Dasein experiences nothingness in transcendence when it is held out beyond beings: "being held out into the nothing - as Dasein is – on the ground of concealed anxiety is its surpassing of beings as a whole. It is transcendence."[35] Dasein experiences nothingness in transcendence through such states as boredom and anxiety. And it is through nothingness, rather than by any intrinsic ontological relation, that Dasein is able to relate to other beings. Heidegger points out that the act of negation the intellect achieves in its intellectual activities is a derivative one, and, consequently, of a different order to pure nothingness or, 'non-being'. For, according to Heidegger, whilst the transcendent nothingness is ontological, the act of negating is an achievement of the intellect: "we assert that the nothing is more original than the 'not' and 'negation' - and that the possibility of negation is an act of the intellect." However, for Aristotle, and for Sartre, the ontological significance of 'non-being' is not outside of us, but pertains to how we are being. This ontological significance relates to the intellect, not by virtue of what it is achieving, whether negating or affirming, but in terms of how it determines our anterior relationship with other beings. For, prior to the negating that Heidegger is observing here, which is an activity of the instrumental intellect, thinking and dividing, there is the ontological negating of not perceiving reality- the intellect's anterior act of simply looking, or, rather, not looking.[36] Because, beyond the instrumental, achieving intellect there is another aspect of the intellect, the speculative or receptive part, responsible for 'perceptive knowing', which Heidegger does not seem to recognise. For whilst he later describes the meditative thinking effected in 'releasement' as 'an openness to beings', he dismisses man's potential to 'be acted upon' by them. For Heidegger, such a meditative stance is not a response to reality's call, but, in essence, an instrumental determination by the mind seeking a resolution with technology. Heidegger regards 'being-acted-upon' in terms of deprivation - as a failing of force, preferring 'producing' as the appropriate ontologically significant meaning of 'dunamis' so far as being human is concerned. However, this rejection of the notion of 'being-acted-upon', coupled with his general disdain for any shared ontological

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[33] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 110

[34] Heidegger, 'What Is Metaphysics ?' ed., David Krell, *Heidegger's Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, 1978), 97

[35] Ibid., 106

[36] Pieper, *Leisure – The Basis of Culture*, 11

relationship with the rest of nature, would seem to preclude his recognition of a further significant aspect of nothingness beyond the transcendent. This is the nothingness that we embody by virtue of our orientation towards the world, because between the transcendent notion of nothingness and the intellectual achievement of negating is the failing in being – the nothingness embraced in 'non-being'.

For Sartre, 'non-being' is not transcendent, but entered the world through the human reality created by instrumental reason. And, consequently, for Sartre, the primary ontological significance of nothingness touches man at his very core, because between transcendent nothingness and intellectual negating there is an ontologically significant 'non-being' that affects man's 'being'. For, man negates not just epistemologically, but ontologically. And he evidences such negating by his questioning of being: "For man to be able to question he must be capable of being his own nothingness; that is, he can be at the origin of non-being in being only if his being – in himself and by himself – is paralysed with nothingness."[37] Man questions being because he no longer knows it, and through such questioning nothingness enters the world. "The Being by which Nothingness arrives in the world is a being such that in its Being, the Nothingness of its Being is in question."[38] According to Sartre, and contrary to Heidegger, it is impossible to throw the multiplicity of negations existing within the world "back into an extra mundane nothingness, since they are dispersed in being, are supported by being, and are conditions of reality. Nothingness beyond the world accounts for absolute negation; but we have discovered a swarm of intra-mundane beings which possess as much reality and efficacy as other beings, but which inclose within themselves non-being. They require an explanation which remains within the limits of the real." [39] Staying within the real is possible for Sartre, because he sees that being and non-being are complements and essential aspects of reality: "one could view them as two equally necessary components of the real without making being 'pass into' nothingness."[40] But, to recognise nothing as an aspect of the real, and to see it embodied in man as 'non-being', it is necessary to see in man's relation with reality something beyond, i.e., anterior to, the cognitive relation. As Sartre sees it, it is Heidegger's fear of the trap of "I think" that persuades him to avoid any appeal to consciousness in his description of Dasein – the being for whom Being is in question. And, instead, he establishes Dasein's primary relationship with the world as 'care', "that is, as escaping itself in the project of self toward the possibilities it **is**." However, any attempt to establish possibilities before consciousness, Sartre regards as problematic: "This attempt to show **first** the escape from self of the Dasein is going to encounter in turn insurmountable difficulties," because, "we cannot **first** suppress the dimension of 'consciousness', not even if it is in order to re-establish it subsequently. Understanding has meaning only if it is conscious of understanding. Otherwise the whole system of being and its possibilities will fall back into the unconscious."[41] For man's possibilities are hidden from him without consciousness. From unconsciousness he can only think in terms of productive, historical possibilities,

[37] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 69
[38] Ibid., 47
[39] Ibid., 45
[40] Ibid., 40
[41] Ibid., 109

external creations and achievements, which, as Aristotle points out, are incidental to 'being' and, consequently, close to 'non-being'.

2.2 Truth and Being

If it is our orientation towards reality that informs, shapes and sustains us ontologically, and, thereby, establishes the basis for our epistemological orientation towards the world, then our detachment from the natural world, and our creation of a surrogate institutional reality, would seem to necessitate ontological consequences so far as 'being' human is concerned. Consequences that we can't avoid by thinking differently about the world we have created, because our mode of thinking is predetermined by that anterior ontological relation that we have established, whether intentionally or by default. We can only think differently by 'being' differently. As Aristotle explains, 'being human' requires conscious effort, because for us perception is not effortless; we have to hold ourselves open to reality in order to know it. And, therefore, far from being "free to decide what we wish to become," as new developments in biotechnology would seem to suggest, 'being' human expresses a responsive orientation to the world, which underlies and sustains our nature and cannot be supplanted by anything else, without our ceasing to 'be'. For, as Aristotle notes, names and appearances are not adequate replacements for absent powers; it is what we are actually 'being' that is crucial for sustaining our identity as human beings.

Today we tend to conflate the notions of productivity and activity, assuming that the more we produce, the more active we are being, essentially because with our functional perspective of the world, it is difficult to think of activities in terms that don't achieve or produce anything. Aristotle, however, drew an important distinction between the two. In the 'Nicomachean Ethics' he distinguishes 'techne', which is geared towards production - 'poietike', and action - 'praktike', which is not.[42]And in the 'Metaphysics' points out that inner activity that produces nothing is superior to externally focused activity that does. The activities of the soul – contemplating, understanding, knowing and seeing – though 'inner', conscious activities that produce nothing, are focused on the external world. Since, for Aristotle, the distinguishing feature of the soul is its perception of reality. On the other hand, productive activities which derive from instrumental or productive thinking are not concerned with external reality, but derive from the active intellect, which is the form producing aspect of the mind. Whilst the primordial reality of nature is known to the soul directly, as the active forms of such reality 'act upon it', the 'produced' or 'institutional'[43] reality of our derivative ontologies, being essentially a linguistic, conceptual construction, is not. There, therefore, seems to be an underlying distinction in our 'knowing' relationship with the world, between perceptive 'knowing' and conceptual knowledge, with only the former requiring us to be related to, or 'in touch' with, what is known. 'Knowing' was originally understood as an intimate, experiential relation with reality and, hence, it was touching rather than seeing that constituted true 'knowing'.[44] From which it follows that the Latin understanding of wisdom – '*sapientia*'- which indicates a knowing derived from

[42] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 191
[43] John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 4
[44] Buber, *Good and Evil* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), 56

tasting', was applied to things of nature, which could be perceived. By contrast, beings of reason, which could not be known in the same way, being "consequent upon reason's consideration of nature", were more "properly the subject of logic."[45] For, concepts cannot be 'known' in the same way as primary reality; they can't be touched and experienced, only approved and assimilated. It seems that as less of our world is a 'perceived world' we have come to be more governed by an order constructed by the mind than the order of the natural world. Our appreciation of the ontological significance of perception has also diminished, as we have come to regard the act of perceiving as little more than the means for collecting data for analysis by the mind. And in the rigid dichotomy thereby established between sense and reason, intuition seems to have fallen out of the cognitive process, rendering us oblivious to the overarching significance of our perceptive capabilities, not only for determining our orientation to reality, but also for maintaining our 'thinghood'.

The largely ignored ontological distinction between beings of nature and artefacts recurs throughout this work. Because the reality conveyed by the forms of nature expresses an ontological fullness and a living dynamism, or 'presencing'[46]on which the inner activity of 'being' human depends; and which cannot be artificially replicated by any social ontology that we may produce. There is an ontological distinction between man's works and natural beings, the significance of which resides in our orientation to the world. For, natural beings are beings in the primary sense of 'thinghood', whereas the only 'life' artefacts have is in the mind of their creator.[47] To the ancient and early medieval mind the works of creation ontologically supersede those of the human mind. According to Pieper, so significant is the creation in underpinning all of Aquinas' metaphysics that it goes unmentioned, as the most fundamental assumptions generally do. It is the 'unfathomable' and 'ever-full' nature of the created works of the natural world – their very plenitude of being – that makes them ontologically significant and distinguishes them from the lesser works of man. For the greatness of man's works is determined by how closely they compare to nature. Since, by comparison, human creations "soon run dry".[48]

So far as Aristotle is concerned, the governing activity of the soul is perception, which unlike thought, is dependent on the surrounding reality: "a man can exercise his knowledge when he wishes, but his sensation does not depend on himself – a sensible object must be there."[49] For, whilst we can conjure up images for the imagination to think about, we cannot perceive without perceptible objects actually being present to us. The natural world would, therefore, seem to have an ontological importance beyond that of sustaining our economic and social development. For, it is only in our encounters with a reality that we have not constructed that we have the possibility of an experience with something beyond our thoughts. It is only the otherness of that independent reality that is capable of drawing from us something beyond our former expectations, and of demanding from us an

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[45] Thomas Aquinas, 'In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Commentaria', ed., by Cathala Turin, quoted by Henry Veatch, in *Realism and Nominalism Revisited* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1954): 12

[46] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Joe Sachs, (Santa Fe: Green Lion Press, 2002), 1049b 20

[47] Aquinas, 'Expositio in evangelium Joannis', quoted in *Living the Truth*: 45

[48] Pieper, *Living The Truth*, 59

[49] Aristotle, *On The Soul*, trans. Joe Sachs (Santa Fe: Green Lion Books, 2004), 417b 18-23.

ontological response beyond mere thought. For the product of such an encounter is not given solely in the response we make to it, i.e., in the theoretical interpretation we provide, but in the new reality that we refract as a result. [50] As previously seen, the boundaries of an entity are not fixed, but in a constant state of engagement with the surrounding active reality.

If man's experience of an independent, intrinsic reality diminishes, because he does not make efforts to perceive it, and, therefore, is not 'acted upon' by it to any significant degree, he will not be 'informed' or animated by the dynamic wholes which constitute the natural world, of which he is a part. As a result, his way of being in the world will alter and he will move away from the way of 'being' that "constitutes the most proper being of beings."[51] And, further, as his way of 'being' in the world moves away from the intrinsic activity of 'being' human, it moves away from the true way of 'being' and what follows from such 'untruth' is distortion. For, "untruth is not simply non-truth, but exists where something is lacking in truth. Untruth exists where distortion predominates."[52] Heidegger's statement here follows from his consideration of chapter 10 of book 9 of Aristotle's 'Metaphysics'. Heidegger describes this consideration as a "thematic discussion of the being-true of (proper) beings, not of knowledge."[53] And what is being described here is the ontological doctrine of truth, which was recognised in the realism of the Greeks and came to be expressed in the Middle Ages with the phrase, "all that is real, is true", or, more frequently, "to be and to be true are equivalents."[54] This was a statement, "not only about reality as such but no less about the nature of man," and was an expression of western thought for almost two thousand years. According to Josef Pieper, "the quintessence of western traditional thought since earliest Greek times" was comprised in this doctrine, which "was uncritically absorbed as part of Christian teaching in the Middle Ages." And, the reason it was so readily absorbed was because the seemingly 'unrealistic' principle of the truth of all reality was regarded as an anthropological statement that explained something important about human nature. It is therefore not surprising that in the hubris of Renaissance Humanism the doctrine was mocked and finally eliminated altogether, being completely erased from philosophical memory. As Heidegger points out in his examination of what he regards as the central book of Aristotle's Metaphysics, this doctrine now appears so alien to us that recent commentators have suggested that the book must have been misplaced, and that Aristotle's real intention was to discuss truth in the context of propositions, rather than in the context of 'being'.

The Greek word for truth, 'aletheia', is problematic for us. For it has an ontological meaning pertaining to how things are and how they act, which we have forgotten, and not just a propositional meaning, relating to what we can say about them. It relates to what we touch and affirm, and not just to what we assert by predication. What this indicates is that truth names a direct relationship with reality, intrinsic to the way things are, i.e., to their

[50] John E. Smith, *Experience and God*, 25
[51] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 61
[52] Ibid., 63
[53] Ibid., 61
[54] Josef Pieper, *Living The Truth*, trans., Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989),13

way of 'being'. As Aristotle explains, "So being in the sense of the true and not-being in the sense of the false is – if something **is**, it is present in a certain way and if it is not present in that way it is not." [55] The nature of this present or absent truth relates to pre-propositional truth – to the truth within reality itself, i.e., to the being of reality, which, as Aristotle states elsewhere in the 'Metaphysics', can't be demonstrated, but must be pointed at another way. So far as 'being-human' is concerned, this does not mean that other ways of existing cannot be constructed and followed, they can. But, because they are not the way of truth, as they are not intrinsic to human 'thinghood', they cannot be the proper way of 'being' human, and consequently following them will lead to ontological consequences. As Martin Buber points out, there can be no 'knowing' truth without 'being' true, because "human truth is a verification of man's being true."[56] Buber sees evidence of an ontological understanding of truth in the psalms and in myths and draws on them to illustrate the contemporary significance of this doctrine. For, as Buber recognises, the ontological meaning of 'being-true' and 'being-false' has a determining significance so far as 'being human' is concerned, since 'being human' is premised on 'being true'. And, therefore, as Buber reports, of those who choose to live a way other than the way of truth it is said that "their nothingness has become their reality, the only way they have is their nothingness."[57] The point being that truth is not an intellectual goal or attainment, or any form of addition to life, but pertains primordially to the proper way of 'being' in the world.

The substance of the doctrine is, perhaps, best illustrated by the Zoroastrian myth of Yima, particularly as the destiny of the eponymous leader mirrors our own. Yima was the first man, created immortal and made shepherd of the world. However, he becomes so focused on power, particularly the delusion of his own creative powers, that he offends the gods and loses his immortality. His offence is "to be a lie," to manifest the primal lie: "the lie against being." Buber points out that many commentators, whilst convinced of Yima's hubris, are unable to find evidence of any lie in the story. For, to see the existential lie that Yima has committed, it is necessary to understand the ontological predisposition towards reality in which man is made, i.e., that he is bound in truth to recognise its given nature. Yima commits, "the inner untruth against God and himself," [58]for he commits with his very existence, "the lie against being,"[59] by not living in accordance with that ontological predisposition, and instead sets himself up as self-made. What stems from this story is that whilst we may choose how we wish to see the world, this choice has ontological consequences, and not just for our own existence, since it determines our future relationship with reality. By living the 'being-lie' we fall victim to 'non-being' under the illusion that it is Being: "he who prefers the lie to the truth and chooses it instead of truth intervenes directly with his decision into the decisions of the world conflict. But this takes effect in the very first instance at just his point of being: since he gave himself over to the

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[55] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051b25
[56] Buber, *Good and Evil*, 113
[57] Buber, 'Against The Generation Of The Lie' – Psalm 12', *Good and Evil*, 9
[58] Lommel, 'Zarathustra's Religion' (1930): 46, quoted in Martin Buber, *Good and Evil* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997): 110
[59] Martin Buber, *Good and Evil*, 112

being-lie, that is to non-being, which passes itself off as being, he falls victim to it."[60] Although falling victim to 'non-being' emanates from a chosen way of being in the world, that choice exerts a determining force through the alternative reality it materialises.

Whilst Plato and Aristotle had different views on the nature of form, Aristotle being of the view that forms had to actually instantiate reality and be participated in, they agreed on the need for reality to be experienced in order for it to be known. It was this recognition of an intimate, spiritual dimension to knowing, for which reality provided the essential 'insight', which prompted Plato to write the 'Seventh Letter', angrily dismissing the notion that truth, which is a property of reality, could be set out in a text.[61] What underlies Plato's message is the same realisation that prompts Aristotle to stress that living and knowing are, in a sense, the same, since they are activities that we engage in for ourselves and cannot be delegated to somebody else. Whilst epistemologically we may benefit from the knowledge acquired by another, ontologically we are on our own. In the same vein, Plato drew on an Egyptian myth in the 'Phaedrus' to express his concerns regarding the development of the technology of writing, fearing that it would distance man from a direct experience of truth: "if men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls they will rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves but by means of external marks."[62] Plato's concern is clearly ontological and cannot be countermanded by functional advantages, as Hubert Dreyfus suggests: "if [Plato] had foreseen that by writing we would gain a wider range of communication, and a whole new cultural memory, he might have had a more favourable view of the trade-offs involved,"[63] For, there is no actual memory if no-one remembers, and neither is there a 'wider-range' of communication, or indeed any communication, if no reality is actually communicated. What Dreyfus is conflating here are two incommensurable notions of knowledge, the social and the individual, the presumption being that they serve the same need, but they do not. Society's knowledge is essentially instrumental, and, as such, can be accumulated, stored, replicated, altered and disseminated at will. The knowledge possessed by an individual, on the other hand, constitutes what they are and what they will become. It has an intrinsic quality which cannot be shared. Our memories do not simply supply what we know, they establish who we are. This is the essential meaning behind Plato's words. Plato is considering man in the context of his way of being in the world. He is thinking of what is intrinsic to him and of his essential relationship with reality. Thus, "the eternally modern point" that Plato is making is to question the value of improvements in technology that purport to "facilitate man's participation in reality and truth," but actually do just the opposite: "they hamper and even possibly destroy that participation."[64]

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[60] Martin Buber, *Good and Evil*, 112

[61] Plato's *Seventh Letter* http://etext.library.edu.au/mirror/classics.mit.edu/Plato/seventh_letter.html pages 12 – 13. Accessed 16/05/2007

[62] Plato, 'Phaedrus 274c5', quoted in Pieper, *Love and Inspiration – a study of Plato's Phaedrus*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (London: Faber & Faber, 1962): 101

[63] Dreyfus, *On The Internet* (London: Routledge, 2003), 92

[64] Pieper, *Love and Inspiration*, 101

This notion of ontological vulnerability that Plato is alluding to appears incomprehensible to the modern world, because we do not appreciate our incomplete nature, or realise that we are grounded in potentiality, and consequently need to make efforts to fully 'be'. The fact that the notions of 'possibilities' and 'potential' are used more or less interchangeably, generally in the context of projected incidental advancements, has caused a blurring of these terms, distracting us from the significance of our potential. It is confused with logical possibilities which have nothing to do with our 'thinghood'. Because, whilst possibilities present themselves as optional extras, additions that we are free to choose or leave, our potential is something that we cannot forego. It is what we are, and in that sense, can be burdensome. This, perhaps, becomes apparent in the case of the addicted gambler, (an example Sartre uses in the context of negating behaviour). The anguish of the gambler stems from the realisation that he has lost something intrinsic to what he is. He mourns the lost part of a self he wasn't conscious of before, and knows that that loss cannot be compensated for by any other possibilities, because they cannot give back to him what he has lost.

The fact that we are grounded in potentiality doesn't indicate anything static, or inert. Quite the contrary, because, as Edel explains, potentiality "is a ground because it is a ground for some activity, that is, it is in virtue of this property that the thing participates in that activity. Hence to call it a ground is to refer not to its static, but to the thing's dynamic character. Ground thus implies the potentiality, and is not a reduction of it; potentiality or the can-be of things is as ultimate and irreducible as actuality."[65] Thus, the 'can-be' of human nature is part of its dynamic reality, the ground of its 'being' that can only be actualised in inner activity. It concerns what we may 'be' and not what we may produce. Accordingly, whilst the Extropian desire to "transcend our biology" stems from the very real ontological impulse to become more than we are, we cannot, solely by our own devices, achieve any such apotheosis. For our potentiality points to a dependency on reality and to an orientation that pays it full attention. We cannot, therefore, "decommission the force that made us and decide what we wish to become."[66] We can only choose whether 'to be' or not, because our productive orientation towards reality is not the route to transcendence, but to 'non-being'.

Without effortful perception, which is the governing activity of the soul, not only is our encounter with the world diminished, but so too is the reality in which we exist. As our effort has moved away from contemplating the reality of the natural world to producing our own derivative ontology, we have come to view all of reality as essentially related to our productive needs, rather than as possessing a teleology of its own. And, with such a functional perspective, the ontological significance of the determining force of technology diverting that teleology, including our own, is lost. For, from such a limited view point we are unable to see anything in man beyond the realisation of superficial historical possibilities. The problem seems to be that we identify ourselves so much with the

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[65] Abraham Edel, *Aristotle's Theory of the Infinite* (New York: Kessinger reprint, 1934), 36

[66] E.O. Wilson, 'Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge', 1998, quoted in Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near*:195

instrumentality of our thinking, that we do not see that such thought, far from being a neutral tool for us to deploy at will, is itself a determining orientation towards reality, and the one on which we have modelled most of our concepts, theories and institutions. As David Bohm points out, "thought is, in essence, the active response of memory.. and is basically mechanical not intelligent because it imposes its own generally irrelevant and unsuitable order drawn from memory."[67] By contrast, "the perception of whether or not any particular thoughts are relevant or fitting requires the operation of an energy that is not mechanical," because perception draws the attention away from thought to reality. Bohm calls this energy 'intelligence' because it has the "ability to perceive a new order that is not just a modification of what is already known in memory." And suggests that, "if intelligence is to be an unconditioned act of perception, its ground cannot be in structures such as cells, molecules, atoms etc.." It is beyond any knowable law: "the ground of intelligence must be in the undetermined and unknown flux that is also the ground of all definable forms of matter."[68] All of which suggests that the ground of our intelligence is located in the primary reality we access with perception, and not in the patterns of determining thought and calculation that have shaped our modern orientation to the world, and provided the models for our developing artificial intelligence. [69] And, consequently, far from being a superior development, "the deliberate process we call reasoning is the thinnest veneer of human thought."[70]

2.3 Truth and Genealogy

The primary limitation perceived by Extropians, Transhumans, Futurists and those who regard technology as offering an escalated development of human potential, is the body. Accordingly, they suggest that to "attain higher peaks" we need to "break out of the human chrysalis," because "our bodies restrain our capacities."[71] However, our bodies also provide us with the medium for having any world at all. Our bodies are us, they are our way of knowing the world and of being individuated, not through the matter they contain, but through the activity that that matter makes possible, which in turn effects changes within us. Increasingly technology seeks to avoid our physicality, it being a hindrance to the efficient, i.e., speedy, communication of information. However, this disdain for physicality is not the initiative of the postmodern world. So far as Nietzsche is concerned the "despisers of the body" are all of us who refuse to live according to our instincts, and instead seek to "make all being conceivable," by making reality bend and accommodate itself to our way of thinking, rather than stretching ourselves out to know it.[72] What Nietzsche is pointing to is our forgetting the importance of perception and instinct, facets of our animal nature which have been overshadowed by the dominance of rational thought in society. And what Nietzsche exposed in his genealogical challenge to enlightenment

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[67] David Bohm. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge, 1988), 50, 52
[68] Ibid., 52
[69] Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near*, 375
[70] Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988),15
[71] Max More, founder of Extropian Institute, quoted in *On The Internet*, Hubert Dreyfus (London: Routledge, 2001): 1
[72] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans., R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1969), 136

rationalism was that what was being sought was not reality or truth, but power, in the form of the anchoring consensus of values agreed by the power base of society. And what the apparent absence of truth revealed by Nietzsche signifies, so far as the ontological doctrine of truth is concerned, is an absence of 'being'. For, what one has of truth, one also has of being, because, on an ontological level, the two are synonymous.

What Bernard Williams recognised in his genealogical exploration of 'Truth and Truthfulness', is that the question of truth, which Nagel suggests, "now runs through practically every area of enquiry," can be characterised as gathering around one of two poles, the pole of commitment, on the one hand, or that of suspicion on the other. Commitment is to the tradition or order which acknowledges and aspires to the reality of truth, even if it can't explain why. Whereas suspicion surrounds the historical practices engaged in by those traditions, which have been exposed as essentially biased and self-seeking, thereby debunking the illusion that professional opinion and qualified commentators are, because closer to the established structures of knowledge in society, necessarily any closer to truth. For, as Kuhn points out in his iconoclastic work on science, established paradigms of 'knowledge' in society are used to manipulate, distort and even block discourse which does not concur, thereby ensuring the primary goal, which is not to find truth, but to maintain the status quo. However, an important question Williams alludes to, given the realisations of genealogy, is whether anything can survive the genealogical challenge, because if all histories and practices are caught up in a vortex of deconstruction, does anything intrinsic remain intact? What here seems to be revealed is the problem attached to our modern conception of 'authority', because at either pole, whether it be that of commitment, which is committed to authority, or that of suspicion, which is suspicious of it, the notion of authority accepted or rejected is essentially an external one, viewed as something essentially synonymous with power and constraint: "the power or right to control," as we currently understand it.[73] Consequently, for the genealogist, all expressions of authority come to be seen to be as biased and as ideologically self-serving as any other established power structure. However, for the Greeks 'authority' was not concerned with the exertion of external power, but with the development of inner potential. Authority was not a source of constraint, but of growth, as conveyed in our modern term 'author' which is derived from the Latin 'augere' – which means both 'to originate' and 'to increase', or augment. The two Greek terms that conveyed the notion of authority are 'arche', meaning a ruling source or beginning, and 'telos', which is the completion that is an end in itself.[74] The essential point being that it is through the ontological connection a being maintains with its source, which is not external to it, but intrinsic to what it 'is', that its potential unfolds. However, if that superior connection is not recognised and sustained, not only does our potential remain unfulfilled, but, as a result of that lapse, movement occurs in the opposite direction towards 'non-being': "when a singular being is detached from the connection it had with the Superior dimension of being (its form) it loses its unifying form

[73] Collins English Dictionary – Millenium Edition (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1999)
[74] G. M. Edwards, *An English-Greek Lexicon* (London: Cambridge University Press,1912),13

and is totally dissolved into the subordinate realm." This is its 'downfall', its "passage to nonbeing", its 'corruption' (*'pthora'*).[75]

The genealogical challenge has been continued and popularised by postmodern thinkers like Michel Foucault, much to the frustration of analytic philosophers and ahistorical thinkers like Frank Furedi and John Searle, who remain attached, to some degree, to the ideals of the Enlightenment, and its regard for the pursuit of a realisable concept of truth. This frustration emanates, not so much from the intellectual challenge of the genealogist, but from the elusive nature of the challenger. Because, as Alasdair MacIntyre points out in his consideration of genealogy, it is in the very nature of any address that there is an encounter between writer and reader, and therefore some unspoken yet recognised commitment is implicitly acknowledged by the genealogist, notwithstanding his proscriptive rhetoric; his presence appearing to be a truth which he cannot disclaim. This would seem to suggest that there remains a persistent intrinsic presence of meaning and purpose in us, regardless of what we say, and however much of our history we undermine. It resides in what we are, and emerges in all our encounters, being a 'trans-historical' aspect of our metaphysical nature. And, as such, it cannot be contained in historic practices which record and facilitate only the instrumental and productive activities of our lives. Accordingly, when the genealogist dismantles the past practices and historical constructions that maintained a particular version of an instrumental 'truth', what is revealed is not some remaining vestige of uncompromised truth, but nothing at all. The point being that the genealogist, by unearthing the false, does not find truth, but nothing at all, because truth is not primarily an epistemological achievement that can be stored, but an ontological relation from which we have become dislodged. As Buber pointed out earlier, "human truth is a verification of man's being true," as our ability to 'know' truth emanates from our 'being' true.

However, we are not born genealogists, but become critical of the foundations of our culture through our experience of it. Whilst Foucault may have expressed a preference for Nietzsche the genealogist, and been uninterested in his work on Zarathustra and 'Will to Power',[76] it is necessary to see, as Nietzsche did, that these are but different aspects of the same picture. And, far from leaving the selective Foucault free from Nietzsche's "metaphysical baggage," it leaves the genealogical summation of human nature unbalanced. Accordingly, it is necessary to take "recourse, as Nietzsche did, to quasi-transcendentals such as human instincts or human nature,"[77] in order to "provide an account of the construction of modern individuality," because otherwise, the account that emerges is silent on the question of what is intrinsic to 'being' human. And it is precisely the misdirection and externalisation of this intrinsic active element, which can only be articulated metaphysically, that is responsible for the emergent modern individual questioned by genealogy. For the significance of the Nietzschean notion of 'Will to Power'

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[75] Konrad Gaiser, 'Platons Ungeschriebene Lehre', 188: quoted in Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995):215

[76] Michael Mahon, *Foucault's Nietzschean Genealogy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 2. Mahon suggests that recourse to metaphysics is not necessary.

[77] Ibid., 3

resides in the fact that such power is what we 'are', it is not simply an external power that we wield. And, if it is denied that there is anything intrinsic to 'being' human, that denial then prompts the question of what the genealogist is committed to in his quest to unearth untruths, and how he recognises them when he finds them. Whilst genealogy originated with Nietzsche, his commitment to the reality of truth was unmistakable. In 'The Anti-Christ', which was written at the end of his active life, he said, "truth has had to be fought for every step of the way .. Greatness of soul is needed for it," for "the service of truth is the hardest service."[78] It is also worth emphasising that in 'On The Genealogy of Morals', which is the work that commenced the genealogical oeuvre, the task Nietzsche set himself was that of uncovering the instrumentality of 'truth', the work being a self-proclaimed polemic against prejudice. It is therefore entirely fitting that Nietzsche should open that work with an address to what is intrinsic in us, pointing out that we remain unknown to ourselves, because "we have never sought after ourselves." For, instead of experiencing life, we have been more concerned with the productive activity of "bringing something home" and, as a result, this has become "our eternal destination." [79]

A genealogy is a narrative that tries to explain a cultural phenomenon ethologically by looking at how social influences have been transmitted through general learning capacities.[80] However, so far as our relationship with truth is concerned, that approach is hampered by the fact that it cannot discern the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental activities, because it can't distinguish 'being' from doing, and therefore cannot elucidate an intrinsic understanding of the phenomenon of 'being-true'. As John Searle points out in his work on social ontology, our instrumental orientation to the world is so pervasive that it makes it very difficult for us to perceive the intrinsic reality behind the institutional reality that we have created, because if we don't recognise what something is for, we tend not to see it. Bernard Williams makes a similar observation in his genealogical study, remarking that "if activities are seen to have value through their function, in the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental, a central question will be how the values derived can be regarded as intrinsic, as opposed to instrumental." Put simply, where does the intrinsic valuation come from if everything is viewed in functional terms? This is a fundamental point, which returns us again to the distinction Aristotle drew between non-productive activity, the 'being-at-work' of the soul which is intrinsic to 'being', and productive activity which is not. Because, according to Aristotle, "activity which does not leave the actor to produce an independent product (praxis) is superior to production (poiesis) which does."[81] And the reason Aristotle provides for elevating intrinsic activity above the instrumental is because intrinsic activity, i.e., 'being-at-work' is the necessary work of 'thinghood': "and so it is clear that 'thinghood' and form are being-at-work".[82] Accordingly, intrinsic activity is necessary to express and sustain 'thinghood'. And such inner activity, if sustained, points towards something everlasting, whereas productive activities produce only destructible things.

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[78] Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2002), 13
[79] Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy Of Morals*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3
[80] Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*, 21
[81] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1050a23-1050b
[82] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1050b 2

In support of his claim for intrinsic values, Williams quotes Robert Brandom, who makes the point that, "dispositions of truthfulness cannot be adequately explained in functional terms," because their value "always and necessarily goes beyond their function." And, according to Brandom, the same could be said for language: "linguistic practice is not for something [it is not] a means to secure some other end specifiable in advance. [it is] not [an] adaptation[s] to the environment, survival, reproduction, nor cooperation – though it may serve to promote all the above." [83] The development of language from expression to analysis is considered in chapter 6. However, what Brandom is here pointing to is the fact that language, like truth, is intrinsic to human 'being', notwithstanding any additional instrumental value that may be derived from it. Our need to express reality, like our desire for truth, stems from an ontological relationship with reality anterior to anything instrumental or productive. It stems from what we are and is not simply something that we produce or do. However, without an acknowledgement that there is anything intrinsic to human 'being' it would seem to be very difficult to prevent every human expression from dissolving into function, it being a further aspect of the ontological doctrine of truth that the more true something is, in and of itself, the less comprehensible it seems to the human mind.[84]

2.4 Being, Non- Being and Identity

It is surely apparent that 'non-being is not an intuitive notion. Certainly, as far as Aristotle is concerned, 'non-being' can only be brought into view when set against pre-existing Being and truth. In which case it emerges as a 'falling away' - the manifestation of the lie against Being, resulting from a deficiency in our primordial relationship with reality. Such a deterministic view of reality would seem to stand behind the equally unintuitive Aristotelian notion that actuality precedes potentiality, since this actuality pertains to the 'proper being' of beings, and, as such, continues to act as an ontological exemplar for 'being'. Aristotle's thinking in this regard will be considered in more detail in chapter 4. However, it is proposed to conclude this chapter by considering further aspects of 'non-being', particularly with regard to its relation to human identity.

Aristotle recognised in 'being' an active engagement with reality. And it is on account of his observations concerning the fundamental importance of actively 'being', "as the proper being of beings,"[85] and the ontological consequences indicated by not 'being', that it is suggested that the movement of 'non-being' be considered in attempting to explore our contemporary relationship with reality. 'Non-being', as previously stated, is to be understood in relative terms, as an external, productive expression of power, the very antithesis of the inner contemplative activity of 'being', and, as such, the productive force behind the determinism of technology. Aristotle recognised 'non-being' as an aspect within Being itself, and his whole metaphysics of potentiality and change depends on both 'being' and 'being other' to accommodate such changes. According to Aristotle change is effected

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[83] Robert Brandom, 'Making It Explicit' (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994),16-17: quoted in Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness*: 34

[84] Pieper, *Living The Truth*, 57, Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 993b

[85] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 66

not only by form, but also by the deprivation of form, with matter having the potential to become either, i.e., in accordance with form or in accordance with a deprivation of form.[86] And, just as 'being' in the sense of the true occurs if "something is present in a certain way," being in the sense of the false, or 'non-being', occurs if "something is not present in that way." In which case it is potentially available to change and become something else. Being present in the true way is the way of the 'being-at-work' of the soul, which Aristotle specifically distinguishes from the way something is present in potency.[87] As was pointed out earlier, Aristotle regards inner activities that do not leave the actor to be superior to productive, externally focused activities that do. And in the 'Metaphysics', he describes the way in which these superior activities are present. Natural beings, he says, are "those things which have no other work besides their being-at-work." And he goes on to describe their activity of 'being-at-work' as being "present in themselves (as seeing is in the one seeing and contemplation in the one contemplating)."[88]

The deprivation of 'being', or form, is 'steresis' – "the absence in something of anything it might naturally have. Deprivation is opposite to form."[89] 'Being qua being' is, for Aristotle, the active cause of reality, in a real sense, not a conceptual one. It is the way of being oriented towards reality in accordance with one's ensouled nature, and, accordingly, such an orientation can be distorted or destroyed by a deprivation. Sachs points out that in his recognition of the significance of deprivation Aristotle believed that he had surpassed the understanding and interpretation of reality achieved by Plato's academy, because he realised that the underlying nature of reality was not one thing, but two: form and its privation, linked by a third: matter. Form wants for nothing since it lacks nothing, privation doesn't want form because that is its opposite and will cancel it out, so "it is the matter which does the desiring." Aristotle likens matter's desire for form to a woman's desire for a man, or the ugly for what is beautiful, but qualifies these analogies by saying that you might liken matter's desire for form to such, "if it were not for the fact that matter is not in its own right something that is either ugly or female except incidentally."[90] This suggests that it is the pre-existing form actively informing matter which sets up the desire in matter for more of that particular form, thus encouraging matter in its active 'thinghood'. However, as has been seen, although matter can be conformed to form by the activity of engaging in 'thinghood', which is the 'being-at-work' of the ensouled being, if it is not so conformed, i.e., not so actively engaged, it can fall into potency to be otherwise. And, in that less active state, its desire for its formerly governing form does not continue, and change is likely to ensue. Independent things are put together by nature and maintain themselves as such if nothing external prevents or hinders them. Creations of 'techne', on the other hand, are made by productive thinking and need to be continually preserved by external interventions. For they have no inner sustaining principle of their own, and, in fact, exert themselves to break out of the 'unnatural' form imposed on them. Human

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[86] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1069b 30 and 1071b20

[87] Ibid, 1048a 32, 1048b 25 The activities Aristotle gives are understanding, perceiving, knowing and contemplating. 1050b 2

[88] Ibid., 1052b 2

[89] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs liii

[90] Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Robin Waterfield, ed. David Bostock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999),14

beings, however, are uniquely placed; they are natural ensouled creatures grounded in potency, and yet are also imbued with the power to change themselves, and indeed all of nature. As Aristotle expressed it, we have the ability to create a 'second end'. Thus, we can, in effect, create our own deprivation, which is a possibility that arises from our misconstruing our potential, assuming it to be a force to produce, rather than a potency to be acted upon. As far as Aristotle is concerned art exists to imitate nature, and for Plato, the overriding purpose of society is to ennoble nature. However, if the highest principles of human existence are seen to reside, not in the reality given, but in the 'superior' productive creations of the human mind, then there is a danger that the ontological order may become inverted, as man comes to see himself, and all of his potential, located within the ambit of his own creative powers, and, thus, loses his grounding in the natural world. Because, by locating himself in a technological 'telos', rather than his natural one, man creates a second nature for himself and thereby changes not only what he may become, but also his very mode of 'being' in the world.

In his work, 'Oppression and Metaphysics', John McCumber suggests that "the vulnerability of our identity to change," as a result of the movement of forms, is "a major largely buried concern of western philosophy."[91] It is a vulnerability which has been forgotten as a result of our mistaken understanding of matter, because, "as the history of western metaphysics progresses, matter becomes increasingly docile." McCumber suggests that this phenomenon of change has been largely ignored because in later substance ontologies, such as that of Hobbes and Descartes, the existence of bodies is taken for granted, as indeed it is for Heidegger. For, although Heidegger presents Dasein in terms of 'situational being' – a confluence of a number of factors, such as history, language and time, the movement, or movements, that determine Dasein are external to it. Dasein is affected from without, as its 'thinghood' is drawn from 'parousia', which is impenetrable to internal change. To conform to one's natural form, however, is not so much a submission to the order of a dominant form, but of actively 'being' like it, since in an Aristotelian cosmos matter and form are indistinguishable at the highest level. Although, as Mary Gill points out, to conform to a form other than the natural form of one's 'thinghood' requires an element of coercion, because the natural tendency of ensouled beings is to 'be' in accordance with their 'thinghood'. As McCumber recognises, identity is a much deeper issue than appearance, it concerns the activity of 'being' itself: the 'isness' that exists as the continuity beneath the superficial aspects. This is a highly significant realisation, because what it opens up for consideration is the prospect that we are not ontologically complete entities, secure above the flux of the cosmos. Rather, we emerge as participants in reality on the most fundamental level, since it is our orientation towards reality that determines what we are and what we will become. With potentially disturbing consequences, as McCumber explains: "the identity of an ousia [thinghood] is not merely a set of properties which allow us to recognise the thing on different occasions and to distinguish it from other things. It is that in the thing which holds it together. To think of it as leaving the thing and migrating elsewhere is not just odd, but paradoxical, and not just

[91] McCumber, *Oppression and Metaphysics*, 33

paradoxical but, in some cases at least, downright scary." However, prior to any form 'migrating', internal dissolution must already have begun to take effect, when the entity itself ceased to maintain itself in its form. Because, prior to any change in form, the matter previously conformed to one form must have ceased to be so conformed through diminished activity, and, as a result, to have lapsed further into potency, and, thus, increased the likelihood of change.[92] For the activity of form, "always comes into being from what is in potency."[93] Instability arises in human form when the intrinsic activity of 'being' is not maintained. And when that occurs, the end, or 'telos' of the unstable being becomes problematic: "when matter 'possesses' a privation (or rather when the concrete object is deprived), it is now what we in modern language would call 'unstable' and therefore its end is outside itself."[94]And, "if the 'end' is an internal activity, then when the being is 'in potency' its instability consists in the fact that it is not doing what it now 'should' be doing."[95]

As previously seen, Aristotle is quite clear that the question of identity is answered by activity: "it is the case both that each thing seems to be nothing other than its own thinghood, and what it is for it to be is said to be the thinghood of each thing." [96] It is the activity of the thing which reveals its form, since form is not a blanket static universal like species. It is the activity that is determinative and not the name, since the activity is the reality from which names are derived. Accordingly, the form must be at work upon the material in a way that makes the particular thing what it is. The form is actually in the thing and not passively participated in. For, we must actively 'be' human to be human 'beings' in anything but a purely nominal sense. And therefore, contrary to Michael Frede, it cannot be our histories that distinguish one form of 'being-human' from another, in anything other than a superficial sense, because we cannot mould matter to the form of 'being-human' by engaging in activities extraneous to that form.[97] As Aristotle points out, incidental activities, such as whether we are musical or not, which are the subject matter of our histories, have nothing to do with 'thinghood', and by virtue of that fact are close to 'non-being'. And, if our incidental activities don't constitute our 'being' for us as individuals, it is hard to see how they could constitute it vis-a-vis another. Certainly, our unique histories tell how our individual lives have been spent, but that information doesn't necessarily reveal anything about our 'being'. As pointed out earlier, regarding Sartre's gambler, our histories may shape and even constrain our freedom to act through the memories they impose on us. But in that case, is not being that history is contributing to, but 'non-being'. The metaphysical superficiality of our histories would seem to be further confirmed by the fact that the historical milieu is the 'primeval soup' of the 'meme', and other cultural products that propagate through us, but are not us. For, what appears to be becoming increasingly realised, by both scientists and philosophers, is that culture is "an

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[92] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1050a 16
[93] Ibid., 1049b25
[94] George A. Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: 'Act' in Aristotle* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1992), 99
[95] Ibid., 100
[96] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1031a 15
[97] Michael Frede, 'Individuals in Aristotle' quoted in McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*: 274

organic entity in its own right," functioning as "a distinct self-directed entity" with "a teleology of its own."[98] As pointed out earlier with regard to memes, the thought that 'our' culture could possess an agenda of its own and be able to proceed without us is a shocking one. It obviously prompts the most fundamental questions concerning the teleology of human 'thinghood' and what it means to possess a culture. In his work, 'Leisure The Basis of Culture', Pieper identifies leisure as the pivot around which culture properly moves. Leisure is not to be construed as play, entertainment, or taking a break from work, for leisure, according to Pieper, is "a condition of the soul". It is "a form of that stillness that is the necessary preparation for accepting reality."And, most importantly, "there can only be leisure, when man is at one with himself, when he is in accord with his own being."[99] All of which would seem to indicate that whilst culture is what we collectively create and help to develop, it is our recognition of our ontological dependency on reality that maintains our connection with that creation; and also that maintains that creation as something other than bare productivity.

It seems that we instantiate the form of 'being human' by our 'trans-historical' activities - those activities of the soul that are complete at every moment, like understanding, perceiving and contemplating, that produce no historical content to be recorded, compared, or accumulated. In the 'Metaphysics' Aristotle draws a distinction between these activities, "in which the end is present in the action," and those in which it is not, which he describes as motions. The examples Aristotle gives for 'motions' are losing weight', 'learning', 'walking' and 'house-building'.[100] The point being, that the latter activities have external goals and are completed by what they produce or achieve, while the former activities do not, and, in theory at least, are capable of being engaged in continuously. And when we are engaged in them, we are internally active in accordance with our form, which determines the whole individual by governing the material parts.[101] This suggests that our way of being oriented towards the world determines how we draw on reality. And the insightful analogy McCumber uses to show this relation is the development of a tree. For, just as a tree draws on its surrounding environment, the nutrients in the soil and the moisture in the air etc., to make the branches and roots that is its tree nature, any diminution in the active form of that tree would disable the process and stunt the tree that it is to become. Because, "the matter which the form unifies, is not merely brought together with other matter and arranged as if the growing tree found roots and branches in the soil and grafted them on to itself. Rather the form of a natural composite **actually generates its parts from other matter**."[102] [my emphasis] Thus, the unifying element of a thing's becoming is its 'being', which is constantly ordering matter in accordance with that active organising form; again emphasising our ontological dependency on our relationship with reality. The activity of our form makes the ever-changing matter we embody and ensoul a 'this', not just once, but

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[98] Louis Dupré, *Metaphysics and Culture* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 16

[99] Josef Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, trans., Gerald Malsbury (Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 1998), 30-31

[100] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048b 30

[101] Ellen Stone Haring, 'Substantial Form in Metaphysics Z, II,' Review of Metaphysics 10 (1956-1957): 495, quoted in McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*: 36

[102] McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*, 37

continually, as what constitutes us is drawn from our surroundings, which, increasingly, are of our own creation. This relates to the essential point Bohm makes regarding the pretended impartiality of thought, because not only does thought shape our orientation to the world, and, indeed, the world itself, by altering the activity of our form, but at the same time gives the false information that it does no such thing.[103] Through long inculcation, we have come to regard thought as our natural, primordial, and, essentially, neutral orientation to the world. And now find it difficult to think in other terms. However, thought is a bridge that we have constructed to reality to ensure that we only bring back what we can be certain of. And, thus, our possibilities for encountering Being are diminished by that determining need for certainty, and the duality it sets up between us and reality. Whilst for Aquinas, and the realist view of the world he embraced, thought is to be found within Being, as cognition follows from reality, it doesn't precede it, in the idealism of Descartes the situation was inverted as Being came to be regarded as locatable within thought, which means that Being was thereby reduced to something that can be accessed and contained by thought.

Aristotle's 'Metaphysics' sets out a hierarchical cosmos in a constant state of change and movement in which our activities determine what and where we are, and are not superadded to an already extant completed nature. It isn't so much that we have a relationship to particular activities, but that we are one, since what is in issue here is not what we are doing, but what we are 'being'. Because, "things do not possess motion as something additional to themselves they are or become things-in-motion."[104] And, consequently, "between the subjects and their activity... there is no relation, the second is the actuality of the first, the first the potentiality of the second."[105] The instantiation of form in matter is fundamental to Aristotle's 'Metaphysics', the 'ousia', or 'thinghood' of a thing being the way that form is instantiated: its way of 'being' or 'beingness' without its attributes. Thus, the activity that occurs in 'ousia' is internal to the entity and actually constitutes it, as distinct from the external activities, or 'doings', of 'parousia'. Heidegger's conflation of the terms, which has already been mentioned, as it "is a constant theme with Heidegger,"[106] is significant, because it shaped Heidegger's philosophical perspective of Being in terms of presence. And is of particular interest to McCumber, because, in his project of revealing what he believes to be the oppressive nature of 'ousia', McCumber seeks to show that in targeting 'ousia' Heidegger's real aim, although he didn't realise it, was 'beingness' and not presence. McCumber's aim is to adduce evidence in Heidegger's work of the determining presence of 'non-being', because he seeks to show that all of metaphysics has been concerned, whether aware of it or not, with the oppressive structure of 'ousia'. McCumber believes that the determining presence of 'non-being' in postmodern culture evidences the fact that metaphysics has now reached its end. And, whilst this work also sees evidence of the determining presence of 'non-being' in postmodern culture, it does not accept that it necessarily follows from that realisation that metaphysics is at an

[103] David Bohm, *Thought as a System*, 5
[104] Abraham, Edel, *Aristotle's Theory of the Infinite*, 34
[105] Ibid., 34
[106] McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*, 225

end, because the determining presence of 'non-being' can be seen as an aspect of 'ousia' itself. For, according to Aristotle, deprivation too is a creator of form, as things may become more determined by what they lack than by what they possess, i.e., by their 'non-being' rather than their 'being'. Change necessitates movements of 'being' and 'non-being' relative to different forms of existence, with some things becoming, or becoming more, and others becoming less, or ceasing to 'be' at all. And, in the context of postmodern culture, the determining movement of 'non-being' could suggest an alternative mode of human existence, one characterised more by incidental, historical activities that focus on the production of cultural and social goods than by those inner, individual activities constitutive of human 'thinghood'.

Tied to Heidegger's conflation of 'being' and 'presence', and no doubt instrumental in his thinking in this regard, is his rejection of the Aristotelian notions of animate and independent matter, and of the immanence of form in matter. For Heidegger, it is form that is crucial to a thing, matter is not regarded as being animate or of having any independence; for, reality is simply form "settling itself into the opening of disclosure."[107] And, consequently, there is no reason why any notion of inner activity could be considered relevant. However, Aristotle's view is not so much that matter is independent, but that it is innately active and potentially unstable, and therefore not totally under the control of form. An interesting suggestion McCumber makes in this regard, is to consider whether what Heidegger elucidates in his critique of western thought concerning Being, which essentially is a view of passive Being, can actually be seen as an aspect of the Aristotelian understanding of dynamic 'being'. He asks, "if Heidegger's critique of the Cartesian conception of the world is really directed at the post-Aristotelian concept of docilized matter, might it not be conducted in the service of something resembling Aristotelian ousia? In other words if the Heideggerean world does not exhibit the docile permanence of post Aristotelian ousia, does it exhibit features of the original Aristotelian concept? "[108] The answer suggested by this work is that it does, i.e., that the world does exhibit features of Aristotelian 'non-being', and that what Heidegger observed to be features of an essentially docile world that had forgotten Being and from which Being had withdrawn, could equally be viewed as features of a dynamic and changing reality, in which human beings, having failed to recognise and maintain their own dynamic 'thinghood', have fallen into a different way of 'being' in the world. For, the primary ontological feature now exhibited in postmodern culture appears to be the determining activity of 'non-being', i.e., that aspect of 'ousia' constituted by the potency to be otherwise than in accordance with the activity of 'being'.

McCumber calls the determining power of 'non-being' 'diakena', a neologism he creates by combining two Greek words, 'dia' meaning through and 'kenos' meaning 'nothing'[109] And suggests that such determinations of 'non-being' "are challenges to ousia – to the idea that the unifying force in a thing can never be an emptiness, but must always be the

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[107] McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression* 224

[108] Ibid., 220

[109] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 201 Kenón means void, vacuum

plenitude of a dominant form."[110] McCumber seeks to discredit 'ousia', or 'thingliness', as the metaphysical foundation of western thought, because he holds its "fixed determining structure" responsible for various oppressive structures in western history, such as colonialism and slavery. Essentially, he seeks to show that 'ousia' is inadequate as a descriptive framework for the fabric of our lives, and he believes that he achieves that by showing that 'non-being', or 'diakena', is responsible for postmodern being. McCumber finds support for that view from Heidegger, because he believes that in 'Being and Time' Heidegger, albeit unknowingly, since his metaphysical target was presence rather than being, "provides a philosophical articulation of the inapplicability of the concept of ousia to the human world." In McCumber's view, Heidegger achieves this "by showing that certain things, which cannot be described by ousiodic structure can be explained in another way, in terms of the gaps which grow and gather." In the alternative ontological model Heidegger puts forward, McCumber suggests that "some beings are grounded and shaped not by form but by nothing at all....they contain at their core nothing but an active shaping gap."[111] McCumber's essential observation here is that modern man is gathered together by the unifying force of nothingness or 'non-being', "which bring together and unify entities without possessing any nature of their own."[112] This occurs, he suggests, because "Dasein, the being that we are, does not have at its core a unified essence of form (as did both the ancient world and the modern subject)."[113] Instead, "at the center of ourselves we find not a single unifying form but a space." As already pointed out, whilst this work also recognises these determinations of 'non-being', it seeks to show that the active gathering of nothingness, observed by McCumber, does not represent a challenge to Aristotelian 'ousia' and an overcoming of metaphysics, but actually verifies Aristotle's dynamic understanding of 'being', albeit by pointed at it another way, essentially from the side of determining 'non-being', resulting from a deprivation, or lack, of 'being'. Because, what is a lack of 'being' regarding one form, provides matter for another, since as Aristotle, observed, nothing is every wholly one thing or another. Accordingly, it isn't so much that Dasein is gathered around, or shaped by, a transcendent space or nothingness, but, as Sartre recognises, that Dasein has produced its own ontological lack, because 'non-being' arises from within. McCumber believes that Aristotle did not have the realisation concerning 'diakena' because he had a passive view of the void and did not believe that it could achieve anything. However, Aristotle did not need to consider the determining power of an abstract absolute nothingness, because his spectrum of 'being', as the governing sense of 'being' in primary or given reality, already encompassed 'non-being' in the form of potential beings.[114] The point being that the motions and determinations resulting in varying degrees of 'non-being' emanate from, and are conveyed by, extant entities with a diminishing ontological quotient, as 'non-being' arises as a result of deprivations within us, for the movement of 'non-being' is a lack that we are producing.

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[110] McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*, 254
[111] Ibid, 229
[112] Ibid, 202
[113] Ibid, 208
[114] Brentano, *On The Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 28; see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1021b 20

McCumber's exploration of the determining power of 'non-being' is useful, and in many ways in accord with this work. However, the fundamental difference is that whereas McCumber believes that the Aristotelian notion of 'ousia' has been superseded by 'non-being', or 'diakena', this work sees 'non-being' falling within the spectrum of Aristotelian 'ousia', since that spectrum embraces all of reality, the given and the created. As Sartre observes, 'non-being' entered the world through human reality, which is the reality that not only constitutes our lack, but also forms the substance of history. Accordingly, determinations by 'non-being' do not represent a challenge to the notion of 'thinghood', or 'ousia', but perhaps indicate that our modern understanding of our 'thinghood' should be reconsidered. Since our existence now seems to be characterised more by producing reality rather than by receiving it.[115] For, what may appear as gaps or absences with regard to an individualistic view of human 'being' unified around a central core, or essence, could, alternatively, be viewed simply as emanations of a different form of being, with a different way of 'being', i.e., social being.

If, as Heidegger states, "metaphysics grounds an age" and tells us not only "what things we can know", but, more fundamentally, "what are things", then, a view of reality that has become deaf to the resonance of nature and feels more 'spiritually' attuned to its own productions, would seem to offer ample evidence of the evolutionary shift propagated by memes. However, such a shift will not be evident to a being whose spiritual milieu is entirely historical, like Dasein's. In his works on Being Heidegger remains resolutely in the realm of thought. Whether that thinking is 'authentic' or 'meditative', the crucial point for Heidegger is that the thinking concerning Being emanates from language – 'the house of Being'. And, consequently, he perceives and portrays man as purely a thinking being. Man, however, is a natural being, not mind alone, but sense and mind together. He is embodied, and requires both mind and sense for understanding, because "man's soul is only potentially intelligent and it needs to acquire knowledge through bodily experiences of the sensible world."[116] But, for Heidegger, as has been seen, Dasein's animality - that aspect of his nature that senses - appears, at best, inconsequential to his Being, at worst, a source of deep humiliation. In a number of works Heidegger draws an ontological distinction between man and the rest of the natural world. For he doubts whether the essence of man "primordially and most decisively lies in the dimension of animalitas at all." "Are we really on the right track toward an essence of man," he asks, "as long as we set him off as one living creature among others, in contrast to plants, beasts and God? " Heidegger doesn't want to abandon man to the animal realm, where metaphysics has placed him, because he doesn't see Being claiming man if his essence resides in 'animalitas'. Instead, for Heidegger, it is in thinking that man is claimed by Being: "thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man." And one day, Heidegger surmises, Being may become a thought provoking question. "Assuming that in the future man will be able to think the truth of Being, he will think from ek-sistence". Ek-sistence is special to man; it is a form of existence only man enjoys: "such standing in the clearing of Being I call the ek-sistence of man. This way of Being is proper only to man."

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[115] McCumber, *Metaphysics and Oppression*, 223

[116] Aquinas Summa.Theologica, ed. Timothy McDermott (London: Methuen, 1991), vol 95. I,

[117] Ek-sistence is historical: "only ek-sistent man is historical. 'Nature' has no history," because, Heidegger explains, "so much happens to man and to things human in the course of time"[118] What emerges from Heidegger's thinking concerning 'ek-sistence' is that it provides the ontological foundation for a form of being that is not concerned with individual 'thinghood', but with the historical achievements of a form of social being. It does this by providing, what Heidegger describes as a 'new start', a 'new movement', in which art and producing become determinative. And, in that new start, it is something exterior to individual human 'thinghood' that is being addressed and moved: "History is the transposing of a people into its appointed task as entrance to that people's endowment."[119] For Heidegger, nature lacks sufficient substance for Being and needs to be set aside, because Dasein, for the most part, dwells with 'things' invested with value and it is these that show Dasein's world more penetratingly.[120] Thus, 'worlding' is necessary for the creation of something ontologically significant. And the world that such work sets up provides something more essential than the mere 'surroundings' that link together the natural world, because it is equipment that gives Dasein's world a necessity and nearness, and provides the immediate relevance it previously lacked. [121]

Heidegger derives two important points from the special ontological status of 'ek-sistence' that call for further examination. He suggests that, "ek-sistence is the ground of the possibility of reason, **ratio**" and, also that it is "that in which the essence of man preserves the source that determines him." This would seem to suggest that both our ability to reason and our ability to preserve our ontological source depend on man's unique ability to stand out from the rest of the natural world. However, to the Greek and Medieval mind the possibility of reason was dependent on the mind's prior reception of reality, since all creatures were seen to be endowed with reasoning powers appropriate for their being. As far as this older understanding of the mind is concerned, there are two elements to human knowing, only one of which requires language. For, prior to the instrumental aspect of the intellect applying its active reasoning powers, the intrinsic aspect needs to be in receipt of a perceived reality. The ability to receive and contemplate reality depends upon the perceptive powers of the soul, which, according to Aristotle, is the distinguishing feature of all animals, including man. It, therefore, appears that what are being set out here are two distinct, though related, understandings of reason, one derived from reality – shared in by all animals, and the other from language – unique to man. Both aspects belong together in the human mind, for together they make it what it is. However, when separated they point to two distinct modes of ontological preservation, because the ratio when divorced from the informing intellect becomes simply a purposeless instrument. And what would also seem to be indicated by that rupture, even if Heidegger had not explicitly identified the

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[117] Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', ed., *Heidegger's Basic Writings*, 228
[118] Ibid., 239
[119] Heidegger, *Origin of the Work of Art*, 74
[120] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell 1962), 92 [56] References in square brackets refer to 8th German edition, 1957
[121] Heidegger, *Origin of the Work of Art*, 43

historical aspect of being as primary, is that different ontological forms are, thereby, being sustained, one natural and the other historical.

History seems to have become determinative when the natural world lost its relevance, perhaps because we no longer contemplated it. As Sartre points out, however, it is not historicity that defines us, but our ability to be historical, which is very different, because not all societies choose to be historical.[122] According to Heidegger, 'ek-sistence' "founds all history" and "begins at that moment when the first thinker takes a questioning stand with regard to the unconcealment of beings by asking: what are beings?"[123] For Heidegger, this moment establishes and secures for humanity its distinctive relatedness to "being as a whole."[124] However, the historical founding of the question of Being is not as neutral as it appears. It is not simply that history raised the inaugural question concerning Being and then withdrew to await the answer. Rather, history, through the movement it set in motion, which, for Sartre, is a movement characterised by a lack of self-awareness,[125] has provided, and continues to provide, its own determining response to that ontological question.

[122] Jean Paul Sartre, *Search For A Method*, trans., Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 167
[123] Heidegger, 'On the essence of truth', ed., David Krell, *Heidegger's Basic Writings*, 126
[124] Ibid., 127
[125] Sartre, *Search For A Method*, 29

CHAPTER 3 ONTOLOGICAL KNOWING AND THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORY

The present chapter examines the movement of history from two opposing ontological perspectives: as a movement disclosing Being and as a movement capable of countering 'being'. The chapter opens with a consideration of Heidegger's thinking regarding the questioning of Being, the historical nature of Being's disclosure, and 'releasement', or 'letting be', as the orientation Heidegger endorses so far as modern technology is concerned. The second part of the chapter looks at history from a different viewpoint. It considers the historical movement as a counter-movement to being, i.e., as 'non-being', and adduces support for such a view from the unhistorical understanding of being of the ancient Greeks and from the nihilistic thinking of Nietzsche. However, the substance of that counter-movement, as it unfolds in post-modernity, is considered in the final chapter.

3.1 Aristotelian Knowing and the Heideggerean Quest for Understanding

Heidegger famously remarked that "being had withdrawn from the West." A withdrawal, however, of supreme importance being "the most present in all our present," infinitely exceeding "the actuality of everything actual."[1] And the quest on which Heidegger implored the West to embark following this withdrawal was one of 'authentic questioning', to gain an understanding of the meaning of Being. Heidegger suggests that no question is more worthy of being pursued than that of our understanding of Being, "unless it be that of being itself."[2] And he goes on to accord to the "understanding of being" the "highest rank of our 'being-there", because, for Heidegger, our Being is a 'being-there', always historical and concerned primarily with understanding. Accordingly, the movement that constitutes Dasein is not 'being', but historicizing: "the specific movement in which Dasein is stretched along and stretches itself along is 'historicizing'."[3] Dasein is primarily historical because, as Heidegger sees it, "man's existence is essentially determined by 'spirit and culture' and thereby distinct from nature."[4] This emerges as a most significant distinction for Heidegger, because whilst he astutely observes the growing determinism of technology, he continues to distinguish this historical movement from that pertaining to cultural and social developments. So far as this work is concerned, however, it is the question of "being itself," which focuses on the reality of 'being' as man's natural, spiritual endowment, prior to his understanding of it, that is considered the more significant. Because if the question we "persevere with" is one of "understanding Being", i.e., of "raising the uniqueness of what Being names to a level of knowledge,"[5] as Heidegger suggests, we risk blocking the way to 'being' itself, which is anterior to any understanding we may derive from it. Such an occlusion occurs as a result of the focus of our energy being drawn to the activity of 'understanding' what has been thought and named, and away from the anterior activity of 'being' itself. The notion of 'energy' would appear to be entirely apt here, because it was just this vital potential that the medieval

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 9
[2] Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 83
[3] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 427 [375]
[4] Ibid, 430 [378]
[5] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 81

Christian writers used the word 'spiritual' to evoke. For the 'spiritual' they speak of does not denote a realm or an idea, or any form of understanding derived from questioning, but a lived experience gained through contemplating reality.[6]

For Heidegger, however, it is not the activity of 'being' that is of primary significance for human beings, but what Being discloses in language: "without such a disclosure of *being we could not be 'the human race.*"[7] In 1935, in a course of lectures entitled, 'An Introduction To Metaphysics', Heidegger considers, 'The Question of the Essence of Being', through an examination of what the word 'Being' names: "to experience and understand being as the most worthy of problems, to inquire specifically after being, means then nothing other than to ask after the meaning of Being."[8] Being is problematic for Heidegger because the word 'Being' appears empty and confusing. He suggests that its meaning has congealed over time, and consequently it is able to tell us nothing about being.[9] And, whilst it might be tempting to look to particular beings for assistance in understanding the meaning of 'Being', Heidegger advises against it. Because, according to Heidegger, particular beings are not adequate to an understanding of Being and will only distort it. And, anyway, so far as Heidegger is concerned, knowledge of the meaning of Being precedes any proper apprehension of particular beings: "how can a being be a being unless we understand 'being' beforehand."[10] Accordingly, Heidegger suggests that scrutinising the word 'Being' and questioning its meaning be adhered to, because in this question resides the crux of the spiritual history of the West. "For our being-there, indeed our understanding of being, even though indefinite has the highest rank, since therein is revealed a power in which the essential possibility of our being-there is grounded."[11]

The way Heidegger approaches an understanding of Being, through the questioning of the meaning of the word 'Being', differs from the approach to language taken by Aquinas and other Christian philosophers of the middle ages in two significant respects. 1.) The medieval philosophers recognised the limitations inherent in language as meaningful and were guided by them. For they saw in what language was not able to say something metaphysically significant. As Burrell points out, Aquinas' intention is to remind us of certain grammatical features of our discourse in order to make us aware of how we might use those features to show what something which transcended that discourse might look like. And, therefore, what might appear as limitations of discourse are actually invaluable in pointing out to us where we stand in relation to the knowing of higher things.[12] 2.), The fact that the word 'Being' directs us towards particular beings is not a failing, as Heidegger suggests, but an obvious indication of where to look for an understanding of being, because, according to Aquinas, it is from creation and the perfections inhering in it, that our awareness of God

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[6] Burrell, *Aquinas, God and Action*, 174
[7] Heidegger, *An Introduction To Metaphysics*, 84
[8] Ibid., 84
[9] Ibid., 77
[10] Ibid., 77
[11] Ibid., 83
[12] Burrell, *Aquinas, God and Action*, 42

arose:[13] "Since we came to know God from creatures and since this is how we come to refer to him, the expressions we use to name him signify in a way appropriate to the material creatures we already know." As Aquinas points out, in this life we don't know the essence of God, we only know him from his creatures: "it is the knowledge we have of creatures that enables us to refer to God, and so the words do not express the divine essence as it is in itself."[14] For Heidegger, however, creatures do not appear to have such revelatory capacity. In 'An Introduction To Metaphysics' Heidegger considers different realms of beings, which he demarcates according to how they confront or inspire us, but sees nothing of 'being' inhering in them. On the contrary, he suggests that in looking to particular beings, "metaphysics is mocking itself without knowing it." And this is because, "the much-vaunted particular essent can only disclose itself as such insofar as we already understand being in its essence,"[15] which, as Aquinas has told us, is what we cannot know. Aquinas also points out that "how we refer to a thing depends on how we understand it," which would seem to be borne out by Heidegger's references to particular beings, all of which point solely to the bare fact of their existence rather than to any inhering 'being'. It seems that for Heidegger, it is we who attribute 'being' to particular beings through the knowledge we acquire by questioning Being. Whereas for Aristotle, and for Aquinas, being travels from the opposite direction: it is the active aspect of reality received in perception that metaphysics seeks to convey through its articulation of an ontology of 'being qua being', which is why Aristotle needed neologisms to point out the activity of 'being' that language normally occludes. And also why the most significant beings for an understanding of Being are ensouled creatures, who, through the perfections they express, point towards the reality of a creator who is all 'being'. Burrell suggests that 'actus' is the master metaphor guiding Aquinas' grammatical treatment of Divinity. Aquinas dwells on it because, although linguistically 'to be' may not seem to offer very much, Aquinas insists that it is all we can assert of God, i.e., that to be God is 'to be'. And the value of that assertion derives from the fact that we can all understand it, because it is what we can all individually come to know through our contemplation of nature.

In contrast to the productivity of historical knowledge, Aristotle's unproductive ontological knowing appears incongruous. However, for Aristotle knowing is the very essence of human life: "it is the essence of a knowing life that is important, both that life consists of knowing and that knowing is actually lived. Otherwise, if we were to cut off and take knowledge by itself and not together it would make no difference whether another person knew instead of oneself, and that would be like another person living instead of oneself."[16] Living and knowing are equiprimordial, because for Aristotle 'knowing' is directed towards the internal goal of 'being' and not simply at the accumulation of facts, which means that 'knowing' is recognised to constitute an enabling activity and not just a productive one. Our need to engage in a knowing relation with the world is ontological. It individuates us, and,

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[13] Burrell concurs with Pieper that creation is the key for an understanding of Aquinas' philosophy and theology.

[14] Burrell, *Aquinas, God and Action*, 113

[15] Heidegger, *Introduction To Metaphysics*, 86

[16] Aristotle, 'Nicomachean Ethics 1244 b 28 – 34' quoted in Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle On The Perfect Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992): 49

consequently, cannot be delegated to the anonymity of consensus, since the knowledge of historical humanity is not our own knowing. Aristotle tells us that "all men by nature have a desire to know,"[17] that they effortfully "stretch themselves out to know." And, further, that our contemplation of the real is the source of our greatest happiness. However, this direct, intimate and vital relationship with reality is no longer acknowledged, and as a result, any modern epistemological quest must be prefaced by way of a methodology. Although, as Etienne Gilson points out, "the problem of grounding knowledge only becomes an obligation when realism is abandoned," because as long as one stays firmly planted within reality, a methodology has no meaning, since the presumption is that 'knowing' is the primary ontological relation.[18] Whilst for the ancient Greeks the way of 'knowing' originated in life, some way must now be artificially constructed from outside life, thereby emphasising the void that has opened up between us and the natural world, and revealing the fact that the locus of modern man is in a detached and 'self-subsistent' mind. This shift in our orientation, from the reception of a reality given to the demonstration of a reality conceived, was given form in Descartes' famous discourse on method, in which he castigated the metaphysics of Christian scholasticism for its naivety, being vulgar and unscientific and lacking a methodology. Descartes derived his method from mathematics, since it provided the unifying certainty lacking in common knowledge. However, for the medieval Christian philosophers reality was already united in its Being, prior to man knowing it, and therefore did not need to be united in the methodology by which it was 'known'. In applying his method, Descartes was inverting the ontological order, placing man above reality as its measure, and at the same time reducing the multitudinous nature of reality to a single epistemological measure of certainty, thereby effecting a radical intellectual mutation in man's thinking about what is real.[19] Thus, what Descartes created through his methodology was not a superior way of accessing a dynamic reality, but a way of establishing a form of demonstrable knowledge by rendering that reality static and inert.

Although man's innate capaciousness for divinity was expressed by scholasticism in the notion 'capax Dei', the metaphysical understanding of 'capacitas' became completely inverted during the course of Descartes' lifetime.[20] As what was originally understood as a receptive capacity came to be viewed as an instrumental capability or 'sufficient power', which was an inevitable change once man's perception of God shifted from the ontological to the intellectual, i.e., from the given to the achieved. As John Wellmuth explains in his study of the origins of scientism in Medieval Christian philosophy, the lost confidence in the power of the mind was the natural outcome to a trend of thought that was developing throughout the Middle Ages. It was a trend that, through its increasing demand for demonstrable knowledge, brought about an end to speculative theology, as what could not be proven became a matter for faith alone.[21] And in this regard, a particular problem faced by

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[17] Aristotle, *'Metaphysics* Ch 1 Bk 1' in Louise Ropes Loomis ed., *Aristotle on Man In The Universe* (New Jersey: Gramercy Books, Random House, 1943), 5

[18] Etienne Gilson, *Methodical Realism*, trans., PhilipTrower (Front Royal: Christendom Press, 1990),124

[19] Alexandre Koyre, *Metaphysics and Measurement; Essays in the Scientific Revolution* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1968), 21

[20] Jean-Luc Marion, *Cartesian Questions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999)

[21] John Wellmuth, *The Nature and Origins of Scientism* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1944)

the Medieval church was that presented by the Aristotelian notion that "no nature can nourish within itself a desire that it could not also satisfy by itself."[22] Because, what was thereby indicated was that man was, according to his nature, ontologically determined by his capacity for the divine, without the need for the intervention of supernatural grace. The 'problem' was resolved by Suarez's concluding that man's capacious nature did not extend beyond his reason. And, thus, achieving ontological satisfaction became an internal matter requiring the exercise of intellectual capabilities, rather than receiving anything from reality. By the end of the 17th century 'capacitas' was no longer acknowledged in receptive terms: "capacity (posse) defines a self-satisfied power whose self-sufficiency enables it to demarcate itself from unattainable supreme felicity."[23] However, at the same time as man's capacity for reality became limited to the extent of his intellectual capabilities, the dynamism of nature became similarly circumscribed. As 'physis', which conveyed 'dynamic nature', was not a notion comprehensible to Roman thought,[24] and came to be interpreted instead as inactive 'natura'- a purely material concept. And man, conceiving activity in exclusively productive terms, came to look to what was created in 'cultura' as the driving force of life.[25] Although man no longer saw himself as being penetrated by reality, he could produce it, and came to believe that his power of rational thought transcended the laws of nature as the ordering principle of the universe.

Throughout Heidegger's consideration of the question of Being what emerges is a priority attributed to the understanding of Being, acknowledged as the quest of authentic and original thinking. So far as Heidegger is concerned, such authentic thinking is an expression of man's essential nature which has been lost due to his productive activity, as the "will to action to make and be effective has overrun and crushed thought."[26] Although, in later works he takes the view that man has not yet come into his nature, and retains power over technology as a result of its unconscious emergence into the world.[27] Whilst emphasising the importance of authentic thinking in the quest for Being, it is unclear whether Heidegger believes that Being withdrew because it was not thought in an authentic way or whether it can not be thought about authentically because it has withdrawn? Heidegger's thinking elsewhere would seem to indicate the latter view, which would seem to re-emphasise the problematic nature of Being's withdrawal. However, what is suggested here, in line with Aristotle's dynamic view of 'being', is that man's 'productivity' and 'absent' Being emanate from the same movement or, rather, the same lack of movement. Because, by not being

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[22] Aristotle 'De Caelo, II,8,290 a 29-35:'quoted in Jean- Luc Marion, *Cartesian Questions*: 90

[23] Ibid, 94

[24] Seneca's letter to Lucillius 'The Letter On Being' (epistle 58) translated by Richard M. Gummere (London: William Heinemann, 1953 (Loeb Classical Library) 387; 389-391, "*How scant of words our language is, nay, how poverty-stricken, I have not fully understood until today. We happened to be speaking of Plato , and a thousand subjects came up for discussion, which needed names and yet possessed none; and there were certain others which one possessed, but have since lost their words because we were too nice* [ignorant] *about their use."*

[25] Louis Dupré *Passage To Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 39

[26] Heidegger, *What is called Thinking* ? 25

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

engaged in the activity of our 'thinghood', perceiving and contemplating reality, we have withdrawn from actively 'being' and lost our capaciousness for reality. For, "'knowing' means that the reality of existing things has been reached, it does not consist in the effort of thought,"[28] which means that the effort required for knowing is a receptive one, not a productive one. If our response to the 'call' of reality is to think in a primordial way, as Heidegger suggests, presumably our primary response to 'sounding' reality, which enables us to think in this way, is pre-determined by our ability to perceive and resonate with it, which is an ontological realization and not an intellectual one. Accordingly, it is our orientation towards reality and our capaciousness to receive it that is determinative of our engagement with Being. We must first receive and embody reality before we can articulate it, and to receive it requires an effortful, conscious act of perception. For, as Aristotle was aware, "without perception nothing thinks." And consequently, whilst it is Heidegger's view that "what is to be thought about" has withdrawn from man,[29] the thought of this work is that the 'withdrawal' is on man's part, that he has withdrawn his attention, for no reality can be shared or imparted to a being who places their attention outside the realm of the imparting reality.[30] Accordingly, it appears that the gap that emerges between Being and man is a space that has fallen vacant through our lack of 'being', i.e., our failing to act in accordance with our 'thinghood', which is an ontological deficiency remedied by reality, and not an intellectual one corrected by knowledge, or a new orientation in thinking. However, because for Heidegger Being is not disclosed in reality, but in language, he does not see any ontological vulnerability affecting man's ability to receive it. In Heidegger's view it is in questioning that man raises himself to a level appropriate for the reception of Being, whether or not Being chooses to disclose itself. For, according to Heidegger, to experience Being as a problem is the crux of the spiritual history of the west, since questioning and 'historical being' go together: "questioning is the authentic and proper and only way of appreciating what by its supreme rank holds our existence in its power."[31]

It appears, from an interview Heidegger gave to 'Der Spiegel' ten years before he died, that his concluding philosophical thoughts were concerned with the task of thinking, regarding it as "the action that has a dialogue with the world's destiny."[32] Heidegger found it significant that of all his philosophical works, 'What is Called Thinking', published in 1954 and delivered as his final course of lectures at Freiburg, before his formal retirement from the university, was the least known. The 'thinking' Heidegger is addressing, both in the interview and in the lecture course, is not the scientific, calculative thought that characterises the modern age: "the one-sided view which pays no attention to the essence of things,"[33] and is increasingly determinative of our contemporary reality through its willing and producing, but the "thought that is entrusted to us as our essential destiny,"[34]

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[28] Josef Pieper, *Leisure, The Basis of Culture*, 19
[29] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* 8
[30] Josef Pieper, *Belief and Faith*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963)
[31] Heidegger, *Introduction To Metaphysics*, 84
[32] Der Spiegel September 3rd 1966, published posthumously 31 May 1976
[33] Heidegger *What Is Called Thinking ?* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 34
[34] Ibid.,121

that has eluded man and "concealed itself from philosophy since its very beginning."[35] Such essential thinking–'Seinsdenken'– the thinking concerned with Being, Heidegger suggests has a two-fold relationship with Being, "as the response to the call from Being involves man's receptivity of Being and also Being's receptivity of man."[36] In the lecture course, Heidegger repeatedly returns to the observation that what is most thought-provoking in modern society, a society in which man is increasingly subjected to the power of technology, which he cannot control, is that man is still not thinking. What Heidegger attempts to draw out from this observation is an essential reciprocity that lies between the essence of thinking, as determinative of man's true, albeit as yet unrevealed, nature and the determining power of technological thought, which is responsible for modern man's Being - as a being who does not think. Heidegger sees in the 'enframing' nature of technology that human beings are "caught, claimed and challenged by a power that is revealed in the essence of technology," which means that human beings are structured by something other than themselves that they cannot control, and which relates directly to their inability to think in an essential way. As a result, man is "banished to a subordinate realm of revealing,"[37] which he does not recognise. Not that Heidegger regards this as a purely modern phenomenon. He considers there still to be a task reserved for thinking precisely because that essential task has "concealed itself from philosophy since its very beginning – a task of thinking which philosophy has not been up to and therefore has become a history of its death."[38] Heidegger distinguishes this essential thinking not only from scientific, but also from metaphysical thinking which he believes is incapable of penetrating the essential nature of such thought: "the thinking that thinks from the question concerning the truth of Being questions more primordially than metaphysics can."[39] For Heidegger the difficulty presented by metaphysical thinking is its representational nature: "metaphysical thinking departs from what is presented in its presence and thus represents it in terms of its ground as something grounded."[40] And he suggests that the form of that representation has been placed between the parameters of a grounding ontology on the one hand and a justificatory theology on the other, the former pertaining to what something is and the latter to the theory justifying its existence. Heidegger's onto-theological critique of western metaphysics will be examined shortly, it being particularly pertinent so far as the present work is concerned, because in Heidegger's view it is Aristotle who put the onto-theological distinction at the heart of metaphysics.[41] So far as Heidegger is concerned, the answer to the question concerning essential thought resides in man's nature, (as it does for Aristotle). However, in attempting to reacquaint ourselves with such essential thinking, to retrieve something of our true nature, Heidegger suggests that we have a problem, because what most needs to be thought about turned away from man long ago and consequently, "man is

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[35] Heidegger *What Is Called Thinking ?* 54
[36] Ibid., 34
[37] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 27
[38] Heidegger, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking' in *On Time and Being*, trans., Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 59
[39] Heidegger, 'Letter on Humanism', ed. David Farrell Krell, *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger* ((London: Routledge, 1993), 253.
[40] Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and The Task of Thinking*, 56
[41] Ibid, 56

not capable of really thinking as long as that which must be thought about, withdraws,"[42] and "harbours its truth within itself in concealment."[43]Thus, at the same time as he seeks to illuminate a matter for exploration, Heidegger makes questionable the very possibility of that engagement as a result of the destining of Being's withdrawal. Accordingly, the aim of the thinking task appears limited to awakening a "readiness in man for a possibility whose contour remains obscure."[44]

3.2 Releasement

The meditative suggestion in Heidegger's later works, particularly in the lecture course entitled 'The Principle of Reason', delivered at Freiburg in 1956, and the memorial address –'Gelassenheit' given in 1955, has raised questions concerning an apparent mystical direction in Heidegger's later thinking.[45] Whilst those questions are not directly relevant to this work, two obvious points challenging such a mystical interpretation are, because they identify integral aspects of Aristotle's notion of 'being', and are absent from Heidegger's thinking concerning Being; they concern, i) the work of the soul, and ii) the trans-historical reality of being.[46] In Aristotle's ontological thinking the essential connection between those two elements becomes apparent, as it is the work of the active soul which makes the trans-historical reality of being realisable. It is in the later movement of historicizing, however, that that natural connection is severed, as man's orientation to the world alters. Being then ceases to be a knowable reality, but is retained as a revered concept, causing a confusion to emerge over what is last and what is first, as the imperative of a progressive history persuades us to "place that which comes at the end in the beginning as the beginning."[47] Although, so far as Nietzsche is concerned, what comes last in this way should not come at all, because what that 'highest' concept really conveys is simply a general emptiness, "the last smoke of evaporating reality." And the challenge that then emerges, which Heidegger endeavours to meet, is how to establish the historical meaning of Being – "that which comes at the end" - as primary, i.e., anterior to the natural inclinations it dispossessed. In order to achieve that Heidegger maintains a resolutely futural focus, insisting that man has not yet come into his nature, and that the past has merely been an 'incubation period' for Being. And, therefore, so far as history is concerned, man has been nothing but a plaything for Being, unaware of its comings and goings.

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[42] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking ?* 7

[43] Heidegger, 'The Word of Nietzsche: God Is Dead', *The Question Concerning Technology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 110

[44] Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and The Task of Thinking*, 60

[45] John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (New York: Fordham University Pres,, 1986)

[46] Ibid., 119. For Eckhart, man is directly responsible for what unfolds in his relationship with being: "nothing other than we ourselves bear the responsibility for the fact that [the love of God] is concealed from us. We are the cause of all our obstacles." Q.117,17-9/Serm., 236

[47] Nietzsche, 'Twilight of the Idols, 4', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 481

In the lecture course, 'The Principle of Reason' Heidegger considers the historical nature of Being and how man's destiny with Being has played out since the beginning of western civilisation. The pivotal event in that 'play', which ended the 2,300 year 'incubation period' of sleeping Being, was Leibniz's formulation of the principle of reason – the 'principium rationis' - expressed in the term: 'nothing is without reason'. Whilst Heidegger is vague about the "history reigning in the long absence and sudden emergence" of the principle, he suggests that Leibniz could only discover it because it was already resounding. So far as Heidegger is concerned, what Leibniz formulated in that term was an interpretation of Being as it was proffered to him; it is Being seeking an expression of itself. Accordingly, the overriding dominance of this principle and its demand for reasons, which is a demand that "pervasively bepowers all human cognition" is not wrought by man, but by Being.[48] What Heidegger concludes is that Being is playing with man, that this is the mission, or destiny - 'Geschick' – of Being that has characterised the history of western thinking up till now. When the 'incubation period' ended in the 17th century Being didn't emerge into view, rather its withdrawal became even more decisive through the demand for reasons that then came to be imposed on human cognition. According to Heidegger, the problem with this demand, which is now normative in the domain of human existence,[49] is that it robs man of a way of being in the world that is not determined by representational thinking: "the unique unleashing of this demand threatens everything of human's being-at-home and robs them of the roots of their subsistence."[50]

In order to recognise that the principle of reason is really the principle of Being, since Being is speaking through the demand for reasons. Heidegger suggests that it is necessary to take a leap in thought. That leap involves a number of steps, involving not only the recognition of the fundamental ground enunciated in Leibniz's principle, and the incubation period preceding it, but also the hearing of a new way of ordering things, not in conformity with that principle. For this last step, Heidegger draws attention to a verse from a work entitled the 'The Cherubic Wanderer' written in 1657 by Johann Scheffler, a prominent Lutheran who wrote under the pseudonym Angelius Silesius. The significant line for Heidegger is, "the rose is without why; it blooms because it blooms." And what Heidegger endeavours to draw out from it is that although the blooming rose doesn't have a reason in the sense of a 'why', it does have a reason, or ground, in the sense of a 'because'. The distinction between these two understandings of ground, the one determined by thought, the other intrinsic to what a thing is, points to the fact that the rose, and "other earthly creatures live because of reasons and causes, but never according to reasons."[51] They have a ground, but the 'because' of their ground is not in language, it is a "non-saying" - empty and yet full of what can be said about reason as it pertains to them.[52] According to Heidegger, the distinction illuminated by this mystical poet is important because it reveals "that humans, in the concealed grounds of their essential being, first

[48] Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason* trans., Reginald Lilly (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 27, 30
[49] Ibid., 30
[50] Ibid., 30
[51] Ibid., 42
[52] Ibid., 43

truly are when in their own way they are like the rose – without why."[53] And by revealing that in the poem a different way is offered for an understanding of being human, a way not constrained by representational thinking. What is important to note, however, is that, for Heidegger, what is significant about the rose blooming without a reason being provided is not the fact that the rose is thereby doing what roses do and have done for millennia. It is not the reality, or the individual's perception of that reality that is relevant here. Rather, it is the revelation of that reality in Scheffler's poem that is of primary significance. Since, for Heidegger, it is through language that Being addresses itself to man, both in its revealing and in its concealing, because, according to Heidegger, it is through language that Being presents itself to thought. And, therefore, it is the thinking of the poet rather than the reality pointed to by the metaphysician that Heidegger considers the more instructive for our thinking.

Heidegger suggests that the mission of Being is both historical and playful, as Being reveals itself at some times and then hides at others, for reasons that remain inscrutable to man. For 2,300 years prior to Leibniz's enunciation of the principle of reason being was sleeping and, consequently, the essence of being concealed itself in that withdrawal. A withdrawal which, according to Heidegger, persisted throughout the history of ancient and medieval metaphysics, as the essence of being remained concealed from human cognition. However, since, according to Heidegger, Being's historical path has been characterised by both revelation and concealment, through the play of withdrawal and presence, what needs to be established is Being's capacity for withdrawal: "If we spoke of 'the history of being', then this way of speaking only makes sense if we think of history in terms of *Geschick* qua withdrawal."[54] Heidegger seeks support for his conception of 'withdrawing' Being in the first book of Aristotle's 'Physics'. For the ancient Greeks, however, the notion of "a history of being" would have been a contradiction in terms, since for them being is, by its very nature, unhistorical. It is because Heidegger views Being as historical that he can't see Being in "the deep abyss of the unhistorical". Rather, from his historical perspective, the unhistorical appears as a place of non-being, being unproductive and confusing. [55] Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's thinking in this regard is important for understanding Heidegger's perception of Geschick as withdrawal and, therefore, the quotation is given in full "Aristotle says that being is that which of itself is more overt. But what of itself is more overt is at the same time for us – that means, when it comes to the type and orientation of our ordinary perception – that which is less overt. For us what counts as the more overt is individual beings. Therefore one might be inclined to think that it is because of us humans that being – that which of itself is more overt – is for us less overt, and indeed is so to the benefit of beings. That being is less overt, so one is inclined to conclude, is to the debit of us humans. But this apparently correct judgment thinks too precipitously. What does 'to the debit of us humans' mean here if the essence of humans rests on the fact that it is claimed by being? That individual beings are what is more overt and being what is less overt – this can only be rooted in the essence of being, not in us –

[53] Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason* 38
[54] Ibid., 68
[55] Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History*, 161

'in us' meant in such a way that we place ourselves, as it were, by ourselves in a void without relation. For, we are never the ones that we are apart from the claim of being. *So it is not some characteristic of humans as conceived anthropologically that causes being to be less overt for us than individual beings. Rather, the essence of being is such that, as a self-revealing, being reveals itself in a way such that a self-concealing – that means, a withdrawal – belongs to this revealing.*"[56] [my emphasis]

Aristotle points out that what is less overt for us isn't that way because being has withdrawn from being knowable, but simply because it is less knowable for us. What this indicates is not something hopeless, not in any way 'to the debit of us', but a direction of the way in which we need to go, the effort we need to make. For, as Aristotle shows, the necessary movement is on our part, not on the part of Being. It isn't for Being to make itself more obvious by revealing itself to us, but for us to bring ourselves closer to it: "the natural road is from what is more familiar and clearer to us to what is clearer and better known by nature. *For this reason it is necessary to lead ourselves forward in this way*: from what is less clear by nature but clearer to us to what is clearer and better known by nature."[57] [my emphasis] Heidegger is dismissive of metaphysics because of what he regards as its preoccupation with beings, as a result of which, according to Heidegger, Being and its withdrawing nature, have been ignored. For Aristotle, however, the notion of a withdrawing Being would have made no sense, since there would have been nowhere for it to withdraw to. For Aristotle beings do not appear as alternatives to Being, but as the way to Being. Beings have an ontological fullness and an active way of 'being' that can only be known through being experienced; they exist, like the blooming rose, as exemplars of being itself. Burrell explains that 'knowing' process as follows - "What is 'in act', as Aquinas puts it, need do nothing further to become a cause. Its capacity for acting is inherent, although that power will not ordinarily be evident until some object which it can affect comes within range. At that point, the inherent activity shows itself, and the thing in question becomes an agent. The agent itself does not change in becoming an agent. It is the object acted upon which is changed: first, by being brought under the agent's sway; and second, in the manner that the object is thereby affected."[58] What we know acts upon us in our 'knowing', and the degree to which we know depends upon our capacity to know. Knowing is a consummating activity and is tied to the notion of personal development, as knowledge can only be assimilated in accordance with the measure in which it has been sought, which means that, essentially, knowing fulfils an ontological need rather than an epistemological one. For Aquinas, "it is the distinctively human activities of knowing and loving which offer a paradigm for understanding action more generally."[59] Because human activity is concerned with finding a way back to God, and of help in this endeavour, as Aquinas sees it, following Aristotle, is the fact that all existing things offer instances of 'being'. For Aquinas, the human capacity to know is founded on the ontological doctrine of truth, i.e., on the fact that human beings are naturally oriented towards other beings by

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[56] Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 70
[57] Aristotle, *Physics*, 184a
[58] Burrell, *Aquinas, God and Action*, 117
[59] Ibid., 116

virtue of the truth they intrinsically possess, and not in accordance with what may be projected on to them by an ordering, rational mind. [60] It was towards the end of the Middle Ages, as the power of the receptive soul waned and beings were seen as having little to convey, that representational thinking became determinative of man's cognisance of reality. Accordingly, the principle of sufficient reason became "the well-spring of the truth inherent in all things" because beings were no longer regarded as having any intrinsic truth. [61]

In modern German 'Gelassenheit' means 'calmness' or 'lack of concern'. It also has older meanings, being used by German mystics to mean, 'letting be', "letting the world go and giving oneself to God," and is usually translated as 'releasement' in order to convey something of this older, deeper meaning.[62] However, whilst the notion of 'releasement' is a distinguishing aspect of Meister Eckhart's thinking, in Heidegger's work 'releasement' takes on a more secular role. For, whereas, the mystic's concern with "letting be" has to do with the experience of a timeless now, Heidegger's unwavering concern is historical. It is the history of the West, with its 'epochal transformations' and 'future' that concerns him, and what he ultimately seeks in this address is a new ground for the production of lasting creations.[63] Heidegger considers the extent to which our capacity for thinking authentically has been circumscribed by technological thinking. The question is significant in this address, because here Heidegger states his claim that meditative thinking has a most important part to play in our life today, which would seem to suggest that, for Heidegger, our capacity for thinking meditatively remains intact: "even while we are thoughtless, we don't give up our capacity to think – in thoughtlessness we allow it to lie fallow." Heidegger believes that there are future possibilities for thought residing in man waiting to be awakened by 'releasement'; and the reason they reside in the future is because man has not yet come into his nature. Heidegger regards thoughtlessness as "an uncanny visitor" who comes and goes without our bidding. And seems to derive support for his view that thoughtlessness is not any failing on our part, from the fact that what has developed in modern technology is something beyond our will: "these forces, since man has not made them, have moved long since beyond his will and have outgrown his capacity for decision."[64] It is the lack of conscious decision making in our relationship with technology which Heidegger sees as offering us the possibility of escaping its determining power. Whilst other natures may have been utilised and decimated by those unleashed powers, Heidegger suggests that our own nature may remain intact: "our relation to technology will become wonderfully simple and relaxed," when we start to think about it in a new way. "I call this comportment toward technology, which expresses 'yes' and at the same time 'no', by an old word, *releasement toward things.*"[65] Through such a comportment, which

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[60] Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth*, 81

[61] Christian Wolff, 'Philosophia prima sive Ontologia paragraph 498', quoted in Pieper, *Living the Truth*: 24

[62] Heidegger, *Discourse On Thinking*, trans., John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, New York: Harper & Row, 1966, 54

[63] Caputo., *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought*, 227 ' Secular means having to do with the *saeculum*, the ages, the times' .According to Caputo, "there is in Heidegger a profoundly 'secular' character, despite all of Heidegger's talk of the 'gods' and the 'holy'.

[64] Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 51

[65] Ibid., 54

remains open to the mystery concealed in technological power, Heidegger suggests that we may effect a new way of dwelling in the world and start to produce new and lasting works. These possibilities appear open to us because, as Heidegger sees it, we are not responsible for the development of modern technology. And we evade that responsibility because the meaning of technical processes was not made by us.[66]

For Sartre, however, the reality that man produces is not simply the creation of a power that he wields, but an expression of what he is, which means that it originates in 'ousia' not in 'parousia.' The negating acts identified by Sartre, which are integral to the structure of human reality, are anterior to actual productive processes, they originate in human acts and expectations concerning man's engagement with the world. They underlie not just his instrumental perspective of the world and the instrumental relations that perspective has produced, but also his questioning of the world's meaning, because through such doubt human reality detaches itself from the world.[67] That denial of meaning is founded in history, in the emergence of a progressing human reality, and is sustained in a vision that sees man surpassing the world.[68] What Sartre recognised is that the movement sustaining Dasein's surpassing of the world and the movement sustaining that surrounding world as a separate 'organised totality', stable and available for use, is the same: "human reality can make being appear as organized totality in the world only by surpassing being."[69] That separating movement is a definitive one for both 'historical being' and the 'surrounding world', since, as Sartre recognises, such a 'historical being'- man "is always separated from what he is by all the breadth of the being which he is not. He makes himself known to himself from the other side of the world."

3.3 History and Non-being

For Heidegger Being is historical. According to Heidegger, since the beginning of western civilisation, as history has flowed from epoch to epoch, different aspects of Being have become present. Those presentations are recognisable as such because they have taken place before a people in the context of a developing culture and, thus, have come to form part of that culture's recognised and documented history. Throughout that historical unfolding man's task has been to passively await the possibility of Being's disclosure, since the 'play of Being' - the how and where of its revelation - is inscrutable to man. For Nietzsche, however, the history of the past two millennia constitutes a lie against beings, which the individual, himself, must overcome. To this end, Nietzsche attempts to make the individual feel uncomfortable with his way of being in the world, encouraging him to think and act against the grain of historical thought. Nietzsche has no interest in nations, states, societies or cultures, all of which he regards as operating as oppressive structures seeking to exploit the individual and deprive him of his energetic resources. For Nietzsche history is superfluous to being and, therefore, potentially hostile, because man's ability to grow into

[66] Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking* 55
[67] Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 49
[68] Ibid., 41
[69] Ibid., 41

"something great and truly human depends on his ability to be unhistorical,"[70] which means that his ontological potential remains his own. In this respect, Nietzsche's thinking is similar to Aristotle's, as both see man as a being naturally endowed with trans-historical potential and capable of experiencing existence to an extraordinary degree. They both, also, recognise the obstructive nature of history's counter-force operating against such enhancement, as it wields a power capable of causing that natural endowment to atrophy and degenerate.[71]

Whilst Aristotle does not speak at length on a metaphysics of 'non-being', he recognises its existence in activities incidental to 'being', such as those presented by history and sophistry. And in his dynamic ontology of 'thinghood' he not only emphasizes the importance of beings actively and effortfully maintaining themselves, but also points out that there are ontological repercussions for failing to do so, because deprivation, too, can create form. As previously pointed out, Aristotle's thoughts on 'being' concern what is potential, not what is possible. What is potential is distinguished from what is merely possible because it relates to what is already present according to a being's nature, or 'thinghood', and is so named as a potentiality because it stands in relation to a pre-existing power, whereas what is merely possible has no such inherent relevance.[72] This would seem to indicate that man's potential relates not just to maintaining his apparent nature, but also to the realization of its further, hidden potential.[73] In 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', Ayreh Kosman poses the question whether, from an Aristotelian perspective, we are human beings by virtue of abilities we possess, or only because of the activities we actually engage in: "is substantial being to be thought of on the model of an ability or on the active exercise of that ability?" Such a question occurred to Kosman as a result of his observation that the distinction between having a dispositional ability and realizing that ability in its exercise is "at work everywhere in Aristotle's thinking, but particularly critical to his analysis of 'soul' and the structures of animate life in general."[74] According to Kosman what is most notable in Aristotle's thinking is a view of potency that is not used up in producing, or in any form of external activity. Rather, it is a potential that is realised and, indeed, only realizable through the inner actualization of the inherent potency of a being 'being' itself. As Kosman says, "in the realization of the ability that an entity has..., in an entity's actively exercising its being, the ability is not consumed it is precisely preserved and made manifest, is called forth into the full and active exercise of its being, so that realization does not **replace** ability, but **is** ability, and is the occasion for the fullest and most real expression of the ability that it is."[75]

Although Nietzsche's nihilistic thinking is not overtly Aristotelian, in his concepts of 'Superman' and the 'Will to Power' he brings to light aspects of 'being' human which are

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[70] Nietzsche, *OnThe Use and Abuse of History For Life*, 15
[71] Ibid., 7
[72] Franz Brentano, *On The Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 28
[73] Ibid, 166, fn 69. Brentano, "*Just as motion constitutes a state of becoming, and realizes this state, for which reason it is actuality [**energeia**], so it also consummates it **as such** and is therefore called a consummate reality [**entelecheia**]. It thus produces a more advanced, higher, and as it were, more consummate state of potentiality.*"
[74] Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 206
[75] Ibid., 205

commensurate with Aristotle's dynamic metaphysical vision. Nietzsche's parameters are actually more apposite for modernity because the significance of the 'Will to Power' as a manifestation of ontological power is a realization only apparent in history, once the metaphysical buttresses that surrounded pre-historic life have been demolished.[76] It is, therefore, not surprising that Nietzsche saw himself narrating the history of the next two centuries. For he saw the inevitability of the entropic movement that was bringing about a world determined by disembodied historical power. Such a reality he realized would be revealed once the illusory 'truth' of society's supposedly 'foundational' values had been exposed. For Nietzsche, the approaching nihilism wasn't simply a questioning derived from the realization that formerly esteemed values were not as had been thought, but a recognition of the fact that the ontological effort invested in sustaining that prior valuation had exacted an energetic toll, inflicting "the pain of futility" in the realisation of "the lack of an opportunity to recover in some way." It is his disappointment at that wasted effort that leads the nihilist to a "consciousness of the long **waste** of strength.. as if one had cheated oneself too long...that Becoming has been aiming at **nothing**, and has achieved nothing."[77] Nietzsche saw that adhering to such values exacted an ontological price. It wasn't simply an intellectual choice divorced from life, but held teleological significance, because by adhering to false values life's energetic 'overplus' had been commissioned to follow a fruitless mission. Nietzsche's entire philosophy of 'Will to Power' stemmed from his observation that the highest will to live can not be consummated in bare existence, because a human being is endowed with more power than that required for simply existing.

Focusing on their mutual regard for nature and their shared antipathy concerning history, it is proposed to tentatively trace out the historical disclosure of the movement of non-being as it emerges in the thinking of Aristotle and Nietzsche. The general outline of that development reveals a shift in our orientation towards the world, from the active reception of a dynamic and operative reality to an instrumental orientation towards a mute and inoperative one. Essentially that movement is from realism to idealism, and eventually, and Nietzsche would say inevitability, to nihilism. Since, according to Nietzsche, the seeds of nihilism were sewn into idealism at the very start and began to emerge as idealism unravelled itself. The ontological significance of that historical movement, so far as 'being human' is concerned, lies in its countering of the activity of individuation, since the motion at the heart of individuation is unhistorical. Nietzsche believes that history's counter movement has been assisted by the 'police-like' nature of modern philosophy, as it has become politically administered through the ruling powers of the state. According to Nietzsche, such historical education, whilst delivering "the appearance of learning", actually permits no living philosophically, which prompts him to ask whether we are still human beings, or perhaps only thinking, writing and speaking machines?[78] The determining nature of modern culture is, certainly, more pronounced now than it was for Nietzsche. Nevertheless, he foresaw its increasing formative power and surmised that at

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[76] Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Birth of Tragedy*, ed., Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (New York: Cambridge University Press 1999),110

[77] Nietzsche, 'Will to Power, vol. I bk. 1 trans. Anthony M. Ludovici', *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924), 12

[78] Nietzsche, *On The Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 35

the root of that deforming historical development was a fear of the individual. Whether or not everyone seemed happy at the idea that the individual was being adapted for general requirements by being made useful for society, Nietzsche suggested that what was really being sought, whether this was admitted or not, was nothing less than a fundamental 'remoulding', "indeed the weakening and abolition of the individual." Nietzsche saw that what was preferred, and would in any event become inevitable unless the individual's ontological resources were restored to him, or recaptured by him, was nothing less than a change in ontological form. For in place of individual existence which was generally viewed as "evil, inimical, prodigal, costly and extravagant," Nietzsche recognised that there were hopes that man could be managed "more cheaply, more safely, more equitably, and more uniformly if there exist only *large bodies and their members.*"[79] Nietzsche believed that a fundamental philosophical error prevented history's degenerative nature from coming into view, and that concerned philosophy's failure to recognise man's mutable nature: "all philosophers share this common error: they proceed from contemporary man and think they can reach their goal through an analysis of this man. Automatically they think of "man" as an eternal verity, as something abiding in the whirlpool, as a sure measure of things."[80] As far as Nietzsche was concerned, however, man's nature is not so secure. Because to set man apart from nature and to attempt to found him within history is not just to deprive him of his instincts, it is to change him, to prevent him from becoming mature. And it is in that immature and malleable condition that society strives to maintain him, having recognised that it is the incomplete soul that is the more useful.[81]

The historical movement of non-being is considered under the following aspects:-

1. Origin
2. Process
3. Overcoming

1. The Origin of the Movement of Non-being

Michael Allen Gillespie suggests there are two distinct ways of understanding history: firstly, as an unfolding of events which constitute human civilization: 'res gestae', which is the view of late modernity, and secondly, merely as an account or witnessing of those events: 'historia rerum gestarum,' which is the ancient view. The fact that the modern notion of history recognizes the events themselves as the content of civilisation suggests, as historicity confirms, that human actuality is perceived to be historical. To the modern view history is tied to the notion of progress, as it sees a rational end to historical development, whereas for the ancient mind history had no such potential. For the ancients Being could not be known in history because it did not reside there, it was simply evidenced in the heroic acts that history recorded. Aristotle deemed history less philosophical than poetry, being related solely to the witnessing of events by virtue of

[79] Nietzsche, 'Daybreak 132', *A Nietzsche Reader*, 95
[80] Nietzsche, 'Human All-too Human 2', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 51
[81] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 718, ed., Walter Kaufmann, 383

which eternity manifested in actuality. For the ancients, history was viewed as the science "that brings the flowing to a standstill,"[82] but man's 'being' remained in the reality of the flowing and not in the historical standstill. As it was only by retaining one's connection with nature and withstanding the draw of history that one could properly be at all. According to Nietzsche, the Greeks resisted the force of the historical by constantly re-establishing themselves in the reality of their own experiences, thereby maintaining themselves within "the unhistorical and the superhistorical", which operated as "natural counter measures against the cancerous growth of history on life."[83] Gillespie describes the ancient Greeks' experience of Being as the "mysterious and shining forth of the incomprehensible and overpowering that produces conflict and disorder."[84] Yet, contemporaneous with that disorder were love, struggle, chaos and harmony, all gathered together into a unified whole by the determining order of nature. To the ancient world Being was seen to be both spiritual and natural as there was no division between the two. And, since spirit was presumed to exist everywhere, not as man's exclusive privilege, he was honoured to be associated with other 'spiritual' creatures.[85] However, when humanity came to be viewed as something distinct from nature, such an association was no longer tolerable, particularly as it was by virtue of man's self-aggrandisement that a spiritual distinction came to be drawn. Nietzsche recognised that "the 'pride' of mankind", which resisted any notion of association with other forms of life, had been derived from a speciously drawn spiritual exclusivity, and now rested on a necessary prejudice against nature, which historical man needed to maintain in order to retain his special status. However, retaining that special status is also dependent on a particular way of 'being' in the world, a way that is not only disengaged from reality, but actually speaks against it. For, according to Nietzsche, "the criteria which have been bestowed on the 'true being' of things are the criteria of not-being, of naught", which means that what is now promoted as "the 'true world' has been constructed out of the contradiction of the actual world."[86]

For Nietzsche it was Christianity, as a form of morality and civilisation rather than in its mode of primitive belief, that was responsible for the rupture with the natural world which had led to the ruination of human nature. Nietzsche saw "a hatred of nature" as the motive power behind the spread of Christian civilisation: "once the concept of 'nature' had been opposed to the concept 'God', the word 'natural' necessarily took on the meaning of the 'abominable'." And that means that "the whole of the fictitious world has its sources in hatred of the natural (- the real)."[87] At the beginning of the 18th century Voltaire invented the term 'Philosophy of History' to distinguish secular history from the theological interpretation of history that had preceded it. Since, according to Voltaire, it is not the will of

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[82] Michael Allen Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1984), 4, Plato, *Phaedo* 96a 7-9 *Cratylus* 437b

[83] Emil Fackenheim, *Metaphysics and Historicity*, 74, 72. Fackenheim echoes Nietzsche's individualistic sentiments, suggesting that any attempt at self-transcendence, "must be radically individual made by each person for himself." And further recognises that the doctrine of historicity, "implies a revolutionary concept of metaphysical cognition," requiring not cognition, but participation.

[84] Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger and the Ground of History*, 137

[85] Nietzsche, 'Homer's contest', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 32

[86] Nietzsche, 'Twilight of the Idols, 6', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 484

[87] Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, (NuVision Publications, LLC, 2007,15

God, but the will of man and human reason that is the leading principle of history. For Nietzsche, however, history and the secularism it shelters remain the creation of Christianity: "history is always still a disguised theology,"[88]which only appears to have freed itself from its theological origin. For Nietzsche secularism is as much a part of Christianity as nihilism is an aspect of idealism. He regarded the later emergence of these counter movements to be the inevitable result of the historical event that opened their way into the world, because in that inauguration man's centre of gravity was placed beyond life.[89] Whereas the cosmic cycles celebrated by the Greeks kept the meaning of life within its lived realm, the eschatological focus of early Christianity, which later transposed into the concept of a progressive and universal history, relocated that meaning beyond the margins of individual life. Consequently, individual energetic resources came to be harnessed and directed towards the furtherance of that ill-defined external goal. [90] Nietzsche recognised that the ontological demand that had been made of man at the beginning of the Christian era continued in the modern, albeit in a disguised secular form: "what people in earlier times gave to the church, they now give to science. However, the fact that people give was something first achieved by the church in earlier times not something first done by the modern spirit."[91] Nietzsche recognised that the ontological significance of the believer's orientation to the world was far reaching, and that only in the future would the true meaning of his estranged way of 'being' become evident. For the believer does not belong to himself, he has given up that relation and now needs someone or something to "use him up."[92]

Whilst the relationship between Christianity and history is outside the bounds of this work, an important distinction Karl Lőwith draws attention to is that between the notions of meaning and purpose. The distinction is significant because it demarcates the prehistoric and historical worlds and shows how, as Nietzsche asserts, man's changed orientation towards reality and his own life within it, which began with the development of Christian civilisation, has been sustained throughout history and its secular interpretation of human progress. For the modern world meaning derives from purpose, which is an association that entered the world with a changed orientation towards it. That new orientation looked beyond the actual facts of reality to an ultimate overriding purpose beyond, "it emerged from faith in an ultimate purpose", which for the Jews and Christians was salvation. And it is that notion of overriding, transcendent purpose that has been transposed onto secular history and is sustained by the notion of progress: "history too is meaningful only by indicating some transcendent purpose beyond the facts. But since history is a movement in time, the purpose is a goal."[93] Thus, the focus of history becomes futuristic and progressive, as it is the aspiration of future goals that serves to imbue the present with meaning. And however abstract and undetermined such future goals may be, that does not prevent them from

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[88] Nietzsche, *On The Use and Abuse of History For Life*, 55
[89] Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 59
[90] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans., Anton C. Pegis (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), ch iv, 66 "The truth about God to which human reason reaches is fittingly proposed to man for belief." One of the reasons given for this change in orientation is that some men "are cut off from pursuing this truth by the necessities imposed on them by their daily lives."
[91] Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, 55
[92] Ibid. 47
[93] Karl Lőwith, *Meaning in History*, 4

impacting concretely on present life, depriving it of any meaningful significance beyond its contribution to their future attainment.

2. The Process of the Movement of non-being

The movement of non-being, which is here seen to be constituted by man's historical way of being in the world, would seem to be supported by two essential, inter-related elements: belief and effort. For Nietzsche, to be orientated by belief, regardless of the nature of the belief, is to be without a 'centre of gravity' in oneself. This means that the meaning, or, rather, purpose of one's life is no longer located in oneself, but in one's contribution to a greater transcendent purpose of which one is a part. The nature of that contribution can loosely be described as effort or work, but signifies something far deeper than simply productive work. For what is demanded of the believer is more than the power he wields; he is called upon to put the totality of the power that he is into the service of that cause. Nietzsche saw in society's "glorification of work and the tireless talk of the blessings of work", and its "praise of impersonal activity for the public benefit" the means for controlling individual potential, and of ensuring that it was fully utilised in the service of the social good. This was achieved in a number of ways, all of which aimed at keeping people 'used up': "such work is the best police; it keeps everyone in harness and obstructs the development of reason and the desire for independence." For not only do such 'harnessed' occupations act as a framework for regulating human activity, they also ensure, by fully utilising intellectual and emotional capacities, that there is insufficient energy left for any form of reflection or meditation. To ensure the smooth running of such a system, which is necessary for the overall security and comfort of society, Nietzsche saw that people would regularly have to be given small goals to achieve "in order to permit easy and regular satisfactions." For this way their spirit would be entirely squandered as they would not think to seek anything more than these petty accomplishments.[94] Nietzsche didn't see any particular difficulties preventing society from operating in this way, or believe that any great coercive power would be required to achieve it, because he realised that belief underpinned modern man's orientation to the world and that society had, in effect, become man's vocation, and that he would regulate himself in order to serve it.[95]

In 'On the Use and Abuse of History for Life' Nietzsche considers how an excess of history can become burdensome. It is not that history is necessarily harmful to life, heroes from the past are often inspirational, but when man no longer has access to the unhistorical life has no living source from which to renew itself. And what emerges instead is a different form of existence. Nietzsche explains that in order for a living being to be healthy, it is necessary for it to live within a horizon, which is an unhistorical delineation.[96] For, as the ancient Greeks recognised, potential only becomes fully realisable when natures are sustained, which indicates an appraisal of form not as a limiting structure, but as an empowering reality. Accordingly, to live within one's form is not limiting but empowering, because it brings one's super-historical potential into view. And this was the original purpose of 'paideia', to

[94] Nietzsche, 'The Dawn 173, 179', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 82
[95] Nietzsche notes 1880-1881 *The Portable Nietzsche*, 75
[96] Nietzsche, *On The Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 12

enable natural potential to flourish. This is in sharp contrast to our modern, historical understanding of culture and education which, for the Greeks, would constitute no real education at all. Nietzsche suggests that we wander around like encyclopaedias of historical knowledge since this is what our culture values, whereas in reality there is no culture. Nietzsche insists that culture is dead because no genuine imperatives flow from it, and that what we call 'culture' is simply information about culture. In our attempts to accommodate ourselves to this superabundance of information, which "streams out of invincible sources always renewing itself with more," we have, according to Nietzsche, deformed our own natures. In fact we have replaced our nature with a 'second nature'[97] by allowing our ontological resources to be harnessed to serve ends other than our own. And although this disproportionate influence of history results in our developing an inner chaos which bears no relation to reality, Nietzsche suggests that not only does this not trouble us, but that we are actually proud of the feeling of 'inwardness' it gives us.[98]

3. Overcoming the Movement of Non-being

Although Nietzsche's philosophical vision seems uncompromisingly fatalistic, forecasting, as he does, the coming 'crisis' of European nihilism, he does recognise the possibility that individuals may be able to overcome the historical sickness and undo the 'unselfing' of history. In order to achieve this, it is necessary for the individual to find his own meaning, not to take what is offered by modern culture, but to reach his own determination according to the law of eternal recurrence. This law, which provides an alternative 'non-progressive' gauge for assessing meaningful action, and is the central constituent of Nietzsche's philosophy, poses something of a stumbling block for those who believe in the religion of progress and construe meaning only in such terms.[99] Because, by setting up eternal repetition as the sole measure for determining the desirability of events and experiences, Nietzsche is establishing a way of looking at life free from the 'all too human' purposes that have dominated linear notions of historical progress. What Nietzsche seeks to eradicate, through the circular imperative of the law of eternal recurrence, is not only the progressive notion that characterised the Christian era, when man believed that the world was guided by God, but also its secular successor which sees in history the rational progress of western civilisation. Nietzsche observed that despite the thousands of goals and thousands of peoples who have passed through history, "humanity still has no goal", and supposed that that was because, "humanity itself is still lacking."[100] And the fact that humanity is lacking suggests that the 'telos' inherent in human existence has been misplaced in ever-changing external goals whose accomplishment is ontologically insignificant.

Nietzsche recognised that the values that had been guiding Christian civilisation would be overturned by nihilism. He did not believe that nihilism emerged from any form of existential distress or physiological deprivation, but directly from truth itself. Because,

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[97] Nietzsche, *On The Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 12
[98] Ibid., 28
[99] Lowith, *Meaning in History*
[100] Nietzsche, 'Zarathustra', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 172

"having discovered its teleology"[101] it is truth that has, at last, revealed the false nature of those values which were erected over men as though they were commandments from God, when, in fact, they were simply 'social values.'[102] Thus, nihilism represents the final and necessary stage of false values and needs to be experienced, "before we can find out what values these 'values' really had." However, nihilism should not be thought of purely in negative terms, because, "nihilism does not stop at negation, it moves over to an affirmation of the world. A Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is."[103] That is, "an ecstatic affirmation of the totality of life and emerges from a religion of life, itself."[104] In order to be able to make such an affirmation, however, one's orientation towards life needs to be changed from what it has been moulded to be over the last 2,000 years. For, to be able to affirm life man needs to feel part of it and be able to recognise the artistry of nature working on him.

In his assertion of a Dionysian worldview, Nietzsche was not endeavouring to place rationality beneath animality, but to remind man of the rationality inherent in the natural cosmos.[105] He rejected the notion that man was descended from apes, but recognised that Darwin's thesis demanded a new conception of human existence and believed that such a new conception was provided by the self-creative potential exemplified in the figure of Dionysos. [106] Because, according to Nietzsche, the most beautiful form of strength is "that which employs genius **not for works** but for **itself as a work.**"[107] However, Nietzsche recognized that man's awareness of his inner potential was blocked by his mistaken belief that he was already complete and fully-developed, and therefore did not realize that he could develop new traits in himself. [108] He also saw that through the over emphasis of the power of reason man had forgotten the great intelligence and active, performative role of the body, which, "doesn't say 'I' but performs 'I'"[109] In Nietzsche's view it was the desire for knowledge over Being that had led to the inversion of the ontological order, as man sought to "make all being conceivable" by making "it bend and accommodate itself to mind,"[110] rather than develop himself to accommodate reality. For Nietzsche the over emphasis of reason was an historical process with material consequences which blocked man's way back to a more naïve perception, and the possibility of trans-historical 'self-making'. As a result, it was only possible for a person to remain truly alive and retain possibilities for real action by inhabiting, "the small living vortex of the unhistorical." However, the notion of trans-historical self-making only makes sense if there is a potential to realize beyond the accidental realizations of history, i.e., if there is a 'telos' to the act of 'being' which can not be realized in external goals and projects.

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[101] Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 5 ed., Walter Kaufmann
[102] Ibid., 7
[103] Ibid., 1041
[104] Ibid., 1050
[105] Lowith, *Meaning in History*, 4
[106] Nietzsche, 'Human, All-Too-Human', *The Portable Nietzsche*, 51
[107] Nietzsche, 'Daybreak (1881), 548', *A Nietzsche reader*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, (London: Penguin, 1977), 234
[108] Ibid, 235
[109] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans.,R. J.Hollingdale, 62
[110] Nietzsche, 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra' (1883), *A Nietzsche Reader*, 224

Nietzsche identified an age's super-saturation in history by its 'disrupted instincts', 'hindered maturity' and 'dangerous mood of irony', "through which the forces of life are crippled and ultimately destroyed."[111] As a result of which, historical man emerges impotent: a eunuch – neutered by the habituation of his own unresponsive nature. And the underlying reason Nietzsche supposed that this occurred was because people preferred to honour history than live, and actually despised the fact of becoming mature.[112] Certainly for Nietzsche the toll taken on human potential by modernity's focus on history and knowledge was obvious, because in individual terms that redirection of energy meant, "your self can no longer perform that act which it most desires to perform: to create beyond itself..., grown too late – despisers of the body have lost the ability to create beyond themselves are not bridges to the superman."[113] Nietzsche saw man as a rope, "fastened between animal and superman," suspended over an abyss. And the meaning of his life was to make this "dangerous going across."[114] However, Nietzsche also saw that men did not want to hear about this crossing, because they had instead something to make them feel proud: "they call it culture, it distinguishes them from the goatherd."

3.4 Culture and Metaphysics

In the Kassel lectures, given in 1925, under the general title, 'Wilhelm Dilthey's Research Work and the Present Struggle for a Historical Worldview' Heidegger stated his view that a major problem in western philosophy concerned the difficulty of attaining a sense of human life, meant ontologically not existentially. Heidegger regarded this crisis as a struggle for a historical worldview in which knowledge about history would determine our conception of the world and human existence.[115] Heidegger was attracted to Dilthey's Christian reading of the history of philosophy and shared his view that, in focusing on the inner self and historical consciousness, Christianity had gone beyond the limitations of Greek cosmology. And whilst both were perplexed at how to make the 'unfathomable living dimension' first discovered by Christianity philosophically accessible, Heidegger agreed with Dilthey that, "the reality of the inner world is that it is at once a historical world which as such can be understood."[116] Dilthey perceived the original 'lived experience' of Christianity to have been received in a social context: "lived experience itself became the focus of interest and the new object of knowledge of the new communities."[117] And concluded that a communal orientation to life is primary, not as a political or social reality but as an ontologically determining one. Certainly for Heidegger, the focus of that 'lived experience' came to be expressed in the 'factical life experience' of Dasein, which is a historically situated mode of 'being-in-the world', devoid of any notion of unhistorical individuation.[118]

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[111] Nietzsche, *On The Use and Abuse of History For Life*, 33
[112] Ibid, 49
[113] Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. John Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1969), 62
[114] Ibid, 43
[115] Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 358
[116] Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, 101
[117] Ibid., 101
[118] Ibid., 101

For Dilthey, who, like Heidegger, derived his determining historical perspective from his disappointment with metaphysics, the materializing and objectifying nature of modern culture appeared to be an entirely authentic expression of human 'thinghood': "culture functions as a framework for directing and understanding praxis .. in that it is an objectification of our emotional, volitional and intellectual psychic structure."[119] And the focus of his 'Lebensphilosophie' was that "life should be interpreted from itself,"[120] i.e., from what it makes manifest in time, through its external expression in historical productivity. Because, for Dilthey, the communal relations of lived experience constitute the entirety of what is articulated, and capable of articulation, in individual expression; the essential presumption being that we have no private inner worlds beyond that reflecting our productive existence. As Dilthey explains, "the creative act is no longer viewed as the articulation of the individual's acquired psychic nexus but as an expression of lived experience;"[121] 'lived experience' being the social phenomenon of human existence within a greater social whole. Thus the individual is seen to be not only situated in history and influenced by it, but entirely constituted by the historical. Dilthey saw that it is because culture is able to "materialise individual achievements" and objectify "human activity preserved in matter" that it is able to direct, not just human expression and activity, but also individuation, in the direction of a pre-determined cultural materiality. Thus the impulse driving the achievements and activities in society, which Dilthey saw preserved in the materiality of culture, does not emanate from within the reflecting individual as an expression of an active soul. Rather, the productive force behind the burgeoning cultural productivity of modern society stems directly from man's productive thinking, as objectified in an external directing structure. Whereas for Aristotle the soul was the organ of perception, and contemplative thinking our appropriate orientation towards the world, for Dilthey and Heidegger, human life is primarily a cultural phenomenon, which does not extend to the natural world. And what emerges from this 'formative culture', and its directing of human impulses, is the elimination of the active form of Aristotelian individuation, because individual activity has no purpose when "the historical world [is] the ongoing **product of communal human activity**."[122] [my emphasis] Such a coalescence of human activity appears to arise because, "the term 'life' no longer narrowly refers to the psychic nexus of an individual but to larger socio-historical systems of influences as well." Accordingly, "each life experience thus may be viewed as a function of larger contexts of life."[123] However, the elimination of individuation remains invisible to the historicizing impulse, because the multitudinous possibilities of communal action it yields appear as freedom: "historical consciousness is an appreciation of life's multidimensionality." The impression it gives rise to being that "it keeps life's vitality open,"[124] although obviously only in productive terms. Consequently, the pseudo vitality of historical consciousness is able to pretend a

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[119] Owensby, *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History*, 152

[120] Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Gesammelte Schriften', 5:370-371: quoted in *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History*: 170

[121] Owensby, *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History*, 148

[122] Owensby, *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History*, 123 [my emphasis]

[123] Wilhelm Dilthey, 'Selected Works,' Princeton University Press, 1989 5:224;'Gesammelte Schriften', Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 6:314: quoted in *Dilthey And The Narrative of History*: 148

[124] Owensby, *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History*, 171

transformative potential it does not possess, and falsely suggests that existence is enhanced by remaining unconcluded, thereby avoiding the "limitedness of every way of talking about it."[125] As far as Aristotle is concerned, however, the reason productive thinking appears limitless is because things are always open to change, and therefore so too is the thinking that endlessly reproduces them. Essentially, such an externally directed way of 'being in the world' is ateleological, and therefore always incomplete. Thus, whilst Dilthey's 'productive human communality' may give rise to activities adequate for the performance of the 'vital multidimensionality' of modern existence, those relations are themselves derivative of a produced 'historical culture' and accordingly cannot suffice for human 'being' understood in the dynamic Aristotelian sense. Such a historically determined perspective may enable Dilthey to claim that "only history brings to light the potentialities of human being."[126] But from an Aristotelian perspective the connection between history and human potential is a spurious one; not only do historical activities not further human potential, but in excess they suppress it, and for that reason are close to 'non-being'. What this means is that the ontological significance of history, whilst real, is not primary; history becomes ontological by default, as a result of a deprivation of 'being' in accordance with 'thinghood', just as sickness can become determining through the loss of health.

The main thrust of Dilthey's thought, which influenced Heidegger, was that history is ontological. And what that historical ontology seems to have established is a form of social being, set within a totalistic cultural milieu, in which man's primary relation is not with the intrinsic reality from which he emerged, but with the institutional reality that he has created. Essentially, it emerges as the ontology of diminished, institutionalised man - a culture of pure functionalism. Whilst Heidegger believed there to be a distinction between the ontical and the historical, he realized that establishing the significance of history could not be "marked out until we have clarified through fundamental ontology, the question of the meaning of Being in general."[127] However, a difficulty for modernity in endeavouring to clarify the meaning of 'being in general' within the historical milieu is that man is not grounded in what he produces, which is the substance of history and modern culture - the reality of modernity, but in the dynamic order of the natural world, which he believes he has transcended.[128]

The movement of history appears to be in the direction of greater materialization, and a slowing down of life. In which the pseudo vitality of historical possibilities conceals the truth that what is effected in such realized opportunities is not an aspect of essential 'being', but the accidental manifestation of various possibilities of power. According to Aristotle, man actualises his potential by acting in accordance with nature not by attempting to dominate it, the aim of 'paideia' being to ennoble nature rather than to supplant it. The 'good' which Greek 'paideia' aimed at promoting and securing was for the individual alone; it was his good because not only did it bring him happiness, but it also helped his nature to

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[125] Owensby, *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History* 171
[126] Dilthey, 'Schriften,' V. B.G. Teubner, 1924, xci: quoted in Fackenheim , *Metaphysics and Historicity*: 13 As Fackenheim points out, "Dilthey's statement is a metaphysical thesis not an empirical generalization."
[127] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 455 [403]
[128] Pieper, *Leisure The Basis of Culture*, 57

fulfil itself.[129] Whilst several factors are involved in sustaining such an individualistically focused culture, of primary significance is the continuing recognition that human potential inheres in man as a potency that he is. In the dialogue, 'Gorgias' Plato examines the art of rhetoric, which he regarded to be the power driving the state towards 'apaideusia' - ignorance of the universal and greatest goods in life which nurture the soul and perfect the individual. Plato saw that there were two forms or directions for society to take, firstly, 'paideia', meaning education or culture, but of a kind "the possession which no one can take away from man,"[130] and in that sense, the very antithesis of the modern cultural product, which man merely carries. And secondly, power, leading to a society based on the acquisition of external goods and influence. Each form of society is premised on a different view of human nature and human potential. The good society of 'paideia,' which seeks to assist the individual in perfecting himself, through realizing the arête of his own life, leads to friendship and community.[131] Whereas the society based on the 'supernatural' power of rhetoric has no such interest in individuals, and seeks only to manipulate and utilize them by convincing them of a false vision of truth, thereby persuading them to devote their energies towards its own furtherance.

The modern notion of history, following Hegel, sees reality as 'mind-related' and man as constantly achieving and progressing through that relation. However, in seeing man grounded in his own certain knowledge, Hegel did not recognize his ontological vulnerability, i.e., that man needs to perceive and know reality directly in order to maintain himself, because knowing is primarily ontological rather than epistemological. What Hegel may have perceived to be epistemological ascent, moving towards the consummation of reality in the absolute knowledge of the mind, is at the same time ontological descent. Because, having got "the individual clear of the stage of sensuous immediacy,"[132] that individual is no longer sustained by his perception of reality, such perception being a work of the soul and not of the rational mind, which needs no sustaining reality. However, when perception is seen to be little more than a 'pre-thought' exercise - a gathering of material ready for the task of thinking rather than the sustaining activity of the soul, its ontological significance inevitably comes to be occluded. As Nietzsche recognised, our theories of knowledge are not primarily about 'what **is**', understood in the dynamic sense demanded by reality, but satisfy a conceptual, atemporal 'is' which doesn't exist in reality, being only a reified construction of an abstracting mind. Nietzsche saw that what we articulate in epistemology is our prior orientation towards reality, our unacknowledged metaphysics, because it is our anterior relatedness to reality which predisposes us towards such epistemological thinking. Thus, he saw that the function of knowledge had become one of providing "the essential stability of human life," thereby acting as a kind of temporal

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[129] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia - The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol II, trans. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 44

[130] Plato, *Gorgias*, trans., Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

[131] Arête – virtue; belonging to the human soul according to nature. "*Without them we are like houses without roofs, not fully what we are.*" Aristotle, *Physics*, 246a 17-246 b3

[132] Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J.B. Baillie (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 2003), 35

anchor which man can control. [133]However, this 'stabilising' is a denial of the dynamism of nature, and therefore of man's own dynamic ontology and, more significantly, a denial of the active experience of 'knowing' the world, which pertains to the activity of 'being' human.

3.5 The Ontological Significance of Historicism

In its focus on change, the doctrine of historicism, which in essence asserts that man's being is created by the movement of history, [134] turns full circle, back to the Aristotelian vision of a dynamic, tangential universe, it being a premise of historicism that the movement determining society eludes the grasp of rational thought. Essentially what is overturned by this doctrine is the Enlightenment's vision of reasoning man, who could steer his own course in contrast with the rest of the natural world, which needed to be steered. Historicism suggests that man is both endowed with and limited by his history, that his world is essentially an historical one, and that he is shaped by a past he cannot escape.[135] Whilst clearly our lives are contextualized by the history from which we have emerged, the deeper message of historicism is that "human reality is intrinsically historical,"[136] and that "we cannot escape the dynamic power of effective history, which is always shaping what we are 'becoming,"[137] which inevitably calls into question the noetic goals of metaphysics, and indeed the relevance of philosophy itself as a meaningful human pursuit. Because, if all our philosophical aspirations, metaphysical or otherwise, are situated within a particular historical epoch, what is the significance of those aspirations beyond that epoch?

The power of a determining history is seen to work through its constraints on human knowledge, as the concepts and presuppositions which frame our assertions of objective knowledge disclose their own historically determined perspectives. And it is by revealing the formerly unnoticed historical context in which those claims are framed that historicism has been able to point us towards the previously unnoticed powers and purposes shaping intellectual expression. However, what historicism also brings into question is our understanding of what constitutes human knowing. For whilst historicism challenges epistemology by casting doubt on the verifiability of truth claims, not all assertions regarding truth hold themselves out as being verifiable. Plato's motivation for writing the 'Seventh Letter' was his realisation that truth isn't verifiable. According to Plato truth cannot be communicated by speech or writing, but can only be 'known' by direct acquaintance, because it is the potential knower's own insight that conveys it. However, in

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[133] Heidegger, *Nietzsche – Vol III Will to Power as Knowledge*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 125

[134] Carl Page, *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995),12

[135] Simon Blackburn, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 174. Historicism is defined as "*any belief in the necessity of historical processes, or belief that such processes are governed by laws, and are immune to human choice and agency.*"

[136] Carl Page, *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy*, 2

[137] Richard Bernstein, 'Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science Hermeneutics, and Praxis'(Philadelphia: Philadelphia University Press, 1983) 167 : quoted in Carl Page, *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy*: 50

order to gain such insight the person who seeks to know must make efforts, and he must also have an affinity for what he seeks. What Plato is describing here is our ontological relationship with reality and the form of knowing that constitutes what we are. According to Aristotle it is the indemonstrable nature of this truth that makes it primary, since all verifiable truths derive from this ontological relationship. What this indicates is that the true nature of metaphysical knowledge is an articulation of our relationship with reality irreducible to any system contrived by thought; it is a 'knowing' that we individually are, rather than a knowledge that we collectively have. And the significance of that metaphysical goal so far as historicism is concerned, is that it is not contextualised by the historical aspirations of any particular era, since its aim is by nature trans-historical. For such inner development, which is man's 'actuality', is not an achievement of history.

Historicism tends to be considered as a doctrine which has exposed the limitations of our knowledge. Those limitations pertaining not so much to the knowing process itself, but to how we verify and communicate what we know. That is, it is the epistemology of knowledge rather than the ontology of knowing that has become the subject of historicist scrutiny. However, whether history is viewed as an external force unilaterally shaping human destiny or merely a notable presence in all our theories of knowledge, the place of human agency within that historical movement is rarely considered. As Carl Page notes, "the metaphysical error pertaining to the demonization of history is to suppose that history's logic has an entirely non human source, that history's substance is divorced from the substance of human individuals. Its practical folly is to abdicate the sovereignty of human action in face of history's apparently separate, unmediable power."[138] What Page is alluding to is an ontological relation between human and historical reality. Because the source of history's apparently autonomous, external power is, according to Page, actually in the human domain, whether we are conscious of it or not. Page recognises that what unfolds in history is not entirely about the 'doings' of human action, viewed as the external actions of a complete entity such as 'parousia'. Rather, the substance of human reality arises from what we are and not simply from what we do. For 'ousia' has formative potential by virtue of what it is, or, rather, isn't, because deprivation, too, is a source of form. According to Aristotle, the essential, sustaining activities of 'thinghood' are not historical, as history is incidental to being. And. therefore, what manifests and accumulates as 'historical being' are accretions of disembodied power – formative movements of non-being. For, whilst "part of history's force must be explicable in terms of fully formed, self-conscious agency,"[139] that doesn't necessarily mean that the historical movement can be understood entirely in such terms. As Carl Page goes on to ask, "what if another part derives from the metaphysical constitution of individual human agents prior to the play created by their activity? What if some of the activities making themselves felt in history portend not so much to what the actors creating history may yet do but what they may yet be?"[140] What Page seems to have identified is the fact that our active metaphysical constitution, itself, wields ontological power. Accordingly, what unfolds in the production of history derives its ontological significance not from the

[138] Carl Page, *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy*, 43
[139] Ibid., 43
[140] Ibid., 22

transient nature of what is produced but from the human trans-historical potential that is thereby deprived. 'Dunamis' identifies the innate potency of anything to be at work in ways characteristic of the thing that it is, and it becomes active by 'being acted upon'. For what results from 'being acted upon' in this way is a change in the one 'being acted upon' to an active condition and into that thing's nature. [141] It is this notion of 'dunamis', i.e., concerned with 'being acted upon', that is the more important one for Aristotle, because this meaning of 'dunamis' is concerned with the deep structural features of being.[142] The other meaning of 'dunamis' – 'acting on another' and being productive, which is the meaning that manifests in history, involves motion – 'kinêsis', which is an activity that concerns potentials qua potentials, but not in terms of 'thinghood'.

The doctrine of Historicism and Aristotle's metaphysics of 'being qua being' emerge not as two distinct metaphysical theories, but as contrary movements stemming from the same energetic initiative, by virtue of which man can either realize himself in the trans-historical self making of the inner activity of 'energeia through its progression to 'entelecheia', or allow himself to be represented in a number of historical selves through the interpretative acts of history. As has been seen, 'entelecheia' is the neologism which refers to the active state of 'being-at-work-staying-complete' of internally active entities. But it also provides Aristotle's definition of motion, being concerned with motions or processes that have goals outside themselves. [143] This is because Aristotle saw motion as any kind of change whether in 'thinghood' or not. He recognised motion "as a complex whole, an enduring unity" in itself (just like thinghood), through which a thing's potential for movement and change is actualised, i.e., actualised as a motion, not as a 'being-at-work'.[144] Accordingly, in the context of the movement of a thing 'entelecheia' identifies a continuing state of change and movement. However, the ontological nature of this is perplexing, as Aristotle admits, because this motion appears as a 'being-at-work', but is founded on a movement contrary to that pertaining to 'thinghood': "motion is a being-at-work but incomplete because the potency of which it is the [complete] being-at-work is itself incomplete. And for this reason it is hard to grasp what it is for it is necessary to place it either as a deprivation or as a potency or as an unqualified being-at-work, but none of these seem admissible so what remains is what has been said, both that it is a being-at-work and that it is the sort of being-at-work that has been described, which is difficult to bring into focus, but capable of being."[145] It, therefore, appears that Aristotle's metaphysical vision is capable of absorbing the determinism of history as an ontological development within its dynamic teleological ambit, i.e., as an incidental movement contrary to the movement of 'being'. Yet, despite its incidental origin, that counter-movement ultimately emerges as a being in its own right, with its own determining orbit.

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[141] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 417b 3-17
[142] Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 204
[143] Aristotle, *Physics* 201b 18
[144] Sachs http://www/iep.utm.edu/a/aris-mot.htm
[145] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1066a 20

CHAPTER 4. ARISTOTELIAN 'BEING'

It has been argued that historical being is incidental to the active 'being' of Aristotelian metaphysics and that through its mobilisation of 'non-being' is capable of forming a counter-movement to that more primordial and essential form of 'being human'. It is, therefore, now proposed to outline the 'being-at-work' of Aristotelian 'ousia', the primary movement of human 'thinghood', which historical being seeks to oppose. However, when life's purpose is predicated on external goals and accomplishments it is difficult to envisage a teleology that does not involve historical progress, or imagine the expression of any individual potential that is not tied to those aspirations. Nevertheless, the task of setting out that primary, unhistorical way of 'being' is aided by the fact that the activities of the Aristotelian soul responsible for expressing and sustaining our 'thinghood' – seeing, contemplating and understanding, have no past and no future, as they are complete at each moment. Such activities produce nothing and therefore there are no past accomplishments to look back on or any future achievements to aspire to, for the 'telos' of such actions resides in the activity itself.

Aristotle recognised the fundamental reality of ontological change. For, he saw that in a dynamic cosmos in a constant state of movement, change is the essential element that allows that movement to be continuous. He also saw that in the case of an incomplete being grounded in potency, such as man, ontological change can lead towards our becoming more fully what we are, or less. He recognised that with regard to our becoming more fully what we are, this change is of a particular kind, because the perfection that it points towards is, in a sense, already in us, albeit as a potency. Accordingly, Aristotle likens this change to that made to a house that receives a roof, since that addition both alters and completes the structure. It seems that it is only by actively, i.e., fully, engaging with reality that we are able to wholly realise our potency to 'be', because only then do we have no potential for being otherwise: "it is possible for the same thing at the same time to be contrary things potentially, but not in full activity."[1] Because we don't really have a notion of an essential human nature and tend to view ourselves as more or less random collections of attributes appended to existence, we fail to recognise any ontological significance in our orientation towards reality. By contrast, Aristotle's notion of human 'thinghood' includes certain qualities or aspects which are integral to what 'being human' 'is' in itself, which is why 'being' and existence cannot be conflated. Because, 'being' holds a dynamic animated quality absent from mere existence, it is the continuing activity that sustains us ontologically: "the thinghood of each thing seems to be what it keeps on being in order to be at all."[2] And, so far as human 'thinghood' is concerned, that activity is perceiving. For, according to Aristotle, no animal can 'be' without the perception that animates it: "and since the soul of an animal (for this is the thinghood of an ensouled thing) is its thinghood and its form, and what it is for a certain body to be ... its activity.. will not belong to it without perception."[3] It follows that 'being' is meaningful in and of itself and,

[1] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1009a 35

[2] Aristotle, *Physics*, trans., Joe Sachs, Bk., 2 ch.3

[3] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1035b, trans., Joe Sachs (Santa Fe: Green Lion Books, 2002) In this chapter all emphasis added to quotations from Aristotle is not mine unless otherwise stated.

in a sense, it can fail, because, in anything that fails to maintain its 'thinghood', the resultant deprivation, or lack, regarding that inherent activity becomes a starting point for change:[4] "form and nature are meant in two ways, for deprivation is a sort of form."[5] Accordingly, things may belong to form or to its lack;[6] and whereas, "material is non-being only incidentally, deprivation is non-being in its own right."[7] The form that results from deprivation is necessarily 'non-being' so far as the original form is concerned, because deprivation means not 'being' that form. And, therefore, not to actively 'be' in accordance with one's dynamic 'thinghood' is to commence a movement towards 'non-being' relative to that 'thinghood', because in the absence of its constituting activity, the 'thinghood' of 'being-human' will begin to unravel. As pointed out earlier, 'non-being' is a relative concept, which only makes sense in relation to 'proper-being', i.e., the 'being' that is true. Thus, 'non-being' can be seen as a distortion from 'proper-being'. It is the way of 'untruth', and is only recognisable as a distortion, because there is a more primordial way of 'being' that is true.

In his exploration of the centrality of activity in Aristotle's 'Metaphysics' Ayreh Kosman raised the question of the ontological durability of a being not engaged in the activity of its 'thinghood' to the full extent of its composite nature. [8] Also, John McCumber, in his examination of the supposed 'structure' of 'ousia', called into question the fixed Newtonian perspective of the matter/form relation, because through such a rigid paradigm man is presented as, essentially, docile, passively receiving form rather than persisting in the activity of his own elemental nature. And Mary Louise Gill, in her recent work 'Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity', also considers the matter/form relation in Aristotelian 'substance', and the necessity for self-actualising activity if a being is to preserve its nature. Because, as Gill points out, "an organism's activity is much more than an expression of what it is, it is also the means by which the organism preserves itself from deterioration."[9] It is this tension within the form/matter relation, and the necessity for matter to continue to cohere to form by being active, that this chapter seeks to consider in the particular context of 'being' human. Because it seems that the 'activity of living' required for our persistence as human beings demands something more than the biological necessities of eating and begetting if that form of 'thinghood' is to endure. For Aristotle a human being is much more than simply a biological organism, for a body possessing a soul is merely in potency to live, but not necessarily actually living. Rather, "each thing is meant when it is fully at work, more than when it is potentially,"[10] which means that it is the active soul that actually conveys 'being human'. In the 'Nicomachean Ethics' Aristotle suggests that "an understanding of happiness might come about if one were to grasp the work of a human being", for which, "something particularly human is being sought." And

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[4] Aristotle, *Physics*, 190a25
[5] Ibid., 193b 20
[6] Ibid., 201A
[7] Ibid., 192a 5
[8] Ayreh Kosman, 'The Activity of Being in Aristotle's Metaphysics', in T. Scaltsas, D. Charles and M.L. Gill ed., *Unity, Identity and Explanation in Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001)
[9] Mary Louise Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 219
[10] Aristotle, *Physics*, 193b

to find it, "one must divide off the life that consists of nutrition and growth."[11] It, thus, seems that what is preserved by actively 'being human' is more than mere biological life, because nature pertains not just to living, but to a certain way of life, and, being teleological, concerns not only what 'is', but also the "for the sake of which" it is.[12] So far as Aristotle is concerned, nature is not what we move away from, but what we move towards.

It is, therefore, proposed to provide an outline of our changing orientation towards reality through the vision of Aristotle's dynamic metaphysics. Because, bearing in mind that the aim of metaphysics is to articulate a relationship with reality anterior to that constituted by the abstractions of thought, what is presented in Aristotle's ontological thinking, is a way of seeing the world dynamically, through its own activity, and not from the joining and separating of concepts about that reality. Aristotle's metaphysics was articulated in full recognition of the creative powers of discourse which he specifically sought to avoid, being wary of the premature clarity offered by definitions and interpretations. In his metaphysical investigations, which he described as an "inquiry after perceptible 'thinghood,'" Aristotle sets aside the names things bear, because names do not necessarily convey a thing's 'being-at-work', or its form, and may simply indicate a composite independent thing.[13] "For a soul and being-a-soul are the same thing, **but being-human and a human being are not the same**."[14] Aristotle also rejects the notion that an understanding of 'thinghood' can be derived from conceptual universals, because whereas both 'thinghood' and the universal are commonly referred to as "the underlying thing," and, "what it is for something to be," universal concepts relate to common properties in classes of things, and consequently do not signify a 'this', but only an 'of-this-sort'. Thus, according to Aristotle, "it seems impossible for any of the things meant universally to be thinghood. For in the first place, **the thinghood of each thing is what each is on its own**, which does not belong to it by virtue of anything else, while the universal is a common property, since what is meant universally is what is of such a nature as to belong to more than one thing."[15] It would seem, then, that the burden of 'thinghood' is an individual one and that we maintain both our individual identity and our dynamic nature by virtue of the same activity. And, since our independence is a given of nature: "independent things are put together by nature and in accordance with nature, it would seem that it is this nature that is thinghood,"[16] it is not surprising that as our constitution becomes more determined by the functional ontology we have produced than by the intrinsic reality given, our sense of individual identity begins to feel threatened. We no longer respond to the question of our identity with anything intrinsic to what we are, but according to our function, our social 'what-for'.

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[11] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b 20
[12] Aristotle, *Physics*, 194a 25
[13] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1043a 30
[14] Ibid., 1043b 5
[15] Ibid., 1038b 10
[16] Ibid., 1041b 28

4.1 Aristotle's Dynamic Ontology

It is suggested in this work that the oblivion we have fallen into with regard to Being is because we have forgotten how 'to be' and that our diminished understanding of Being is a reflection of our diminished activity of 'being'. Our diminished, essentially, static understanding of being would seem to derive from the diminished perceptions of the soul, since, according to Aristotle, knowing and understanding are dependent on the soul's perception of reality. [17] And what emerges from a study of Aristotle's dynamic ontology is that such a reduced understanding of reality is derived from an inferior kind of life, characterised by having a soul, but not using it. This is the result of merely possessing a life rather than being truly alive, because to be truly alive the body must actively engage with the soul, which is its superior principle:[18] "it is not the body that is the being-at-work-staying-itself of the soul, but **the soul is the being-at-work-staying-itself of some body**."[19] For Aristotle Being is a matter of nature or reality, 'physis' being a process that comprises everything there 'is' and also the order that everything is under, there being no dichotomy between God and nature, spirit and matter in the Greek world.[20] According to Aristotle, all beings are endowed with wisdom and teleologically determined 'to be' according to their nature: "Nature is an end and that-for-the-sake-of-which,"[21] because she acts "like a mother" and is a "co-cause with form."[22] This natural teleology is not concerned with the last things in time, i.e., eschatology, but with the ultimate and purposeful ones in development: "Not every last thing professes itself to be an end, but only what is best."[23] Because, the end to which each thing is ordered is always superior to the thing itself,[24] "if 'by end according to nature' we mean 'that which is perfected last,"[25]and is the purpose of its existence, "among all things that are for some end, it is for the sake of this that what precedes it in succession is done."[26] Thus the end is, in one sense, beyond life and, yet, mysteriously still in it. This isn't a mystery created by Aristotle's writing, but relates to the mysterious nature of reality itself, which Aristotle managed to bring to light. [27]

In the case of 'being-human', Aristotle explains that the end according to nature is the attainment of truth and the practice of wisdom, which is "the ultimate activity," and also, "the end for which we exist."[28] The form this attainment takes has nothing to do with gathering information, since learning is not an activity of the soul. Rather, it seems to point

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[17] Aristotle, *De Anima* 434b 8 "it is not possible for a body to have a soul and an intellect that can distinguish things but not have perception."
[18] Aristotle draws this distinction in the *Protrepticus*, *De Anima*, and in the *Metaphysics*
[19] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 414a 10
[20] Heidegger, 'On The Essence and Concept of Physis in Aristotle's Physics B 1', ed. William McNeill, *Pathmarks*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 183
[21] Aristotle, *Physics*, 194a 25
[22] Ibid., bk 1 ch 9
[23] Ibid., 184a 30
[24] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, 18
[25] Ibid, 18
[26] Aristotle, *Physics*, 199
[27] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle*, 103
[28] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, 18

to the truth that we can reach towards and touch through the 'practice' of wisdom, because reality is 'known' directly by the contemplative thinking that touches reality without the intercession of concepts.[29] It is in the 'Nicomachean Ethics', however, in his consideration of the origin of the virtues, that Aristotle, perhaps, comes closest to explaining the teleological source within us, and the goal of the 'practice' of wisdom. In his response to the question whether the virtues are within us, he answers both 'yes' and 'no,' explaining that although the virtues are in us, they only arise through active 'thinghood', i.e., by us being actively engaged in a right relationship with the world.[30] The word he chooses for the stable and virtuous soul is 'hexis' which means holding on in a certain condition by the continuous effort of inner activity. This right relation requires acting in accordance with reason, which doesn't mean deliberating as it has nothing to do with logic. It is not the order of our thinking which is to determine our actions, but the order of reality that we perceive when properly engaged with the world. The Greek term for this right relation is 'phronesis', translated by Christian scholasticism as prudence, the first and most important of all the cardinal virtues. Prudence precedes all the other virtues, because, according to Aquinas, man's true humanness depends upon "reason perfected in the cognition of truth" which shapes him inwardly, thereby determining his will and his actions. And, for reason to be perfected in such a way, requires nothing more than a "regard for and openness to reality" and an "acceptance of reality,"[31] because it is reality that is determinant. All man needs is the right attitude: "The attitude of 'silent' contemplation of reality: this is the key prerequisite for the perfection of prudence as cognition."[32] It is as a result of this relation, this perceptive orientation towards the world that the activity of our 'thinghood' fully and naturally arises within us, because the final cause of Being is part of the formal structure of natural things, it is part of what we always are potentially.[33] However, unlike the rest of ensouled nature, in which 'being-at-work-staying-itself' arises naturally if unhindered, in the case of 'being-human' some effort is necessary. For sleeping belongs to the human soul as well as waking and a conscious effort is required to effect the transition, which is why we are ourselves partly responsible for our active condition.[34]Aristotle's vision of human beings is not one of spiritual entities trapped in matter aspiring to transcend reality, but of individuated instantiations of form, whose work it is to become indiscernible from the pure activity of form, which is a task which cannot be done without matter, since, as Aristotle states in the 'Physics', all movement needs matter.

At the heart of Aristotle's dynamic 'thinghood' lies the ontological process of inner development. This process does not involve making history, peopling the universe, entering into relations, or any other extraneous existential acts, but concerns the very

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[29] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051b 35

[30] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, 49. As John Ayto explains regarding the origin of the word conscience and its connection with consciousness, "To *'know something with oneself'* implied, *'consciousness'*, but also an intrinsic moral awareness." 132

[31] Aquinas, 'Quaestio disputata de virtutibus in communi 9': quoted in Pieper, *Prudence*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, (London: Faber and Faber, 1959):16

[32] Pieper, *Prudence*, 25

[33] In the ethics Aristotle talks about right orientation – resisting distractions etc i.e., there is a nature to get to – this is the way out of the apparent circularity

[34] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1114b 22 Sachs

activity of 'being' human. For it is the act by virtue of which we maintain ourselves as human 'beings.' As Aristotle reminds us, "it is not the body that has lost its soul that is in potency to be alive, but the one that has it."[35] And, because Aristotle saw in 'thinghood' the primary significance of the activity of 'being-at-work', what his thinking also points to is the derivative significance of a lack, or deprivation, -'steresis', regarding that essential activity. Because, a being that is not engaged in the activity of its 'thinghood' is not ontologically secure, and can lapse into a diminished status. As pointed out earlier, according to Mary Louise Gill the activity of 'thinghood' a being engages in when "an organism acts on itself qua itself, as soul on functional body," is much more than an expression of what it is, "it is also the **means by which the organism preserves itself from deterioration.**"[36] The question that inevitably arises is what is this activity, what is the 'being-at-work' of 'being-human' which Aristotle has explicitly distinguished from the mere fact of human existence expressed in the named entity 'human being'? Aristotle recognised that we call something a something not when it is wholly that thing, but when it appears to be mainly that thing or its most important parts are. He also pointed out that things continue to bear names even when they are no longer engaged in the activity implicit in those names, thereby rendering their ontological status ambiguous, such as an axe that doesn't cut still being called an axe even though it is no longer 'being' an axe; which is why Aristotle insisted on looking behind names and fixed ways of thinking that bore no relation to reality. However, whilst with entirely functional objects changes in activity are easy to discern, this is not the case with ensouled beings and their inner activities. For, as Aristotle explains, not all activities are 'doings', some actually constitute us, they inhere in us, actively or potentially, and are intrinsic to what we are, and, consequently, are inseparable from our nature. As Gill points out, "the important difference between artifacts and organisms is that, in living things, user and implement are the same individual."[37] As Aristotle states in the 'Protrepticus', the body is the tool of the soul, "since that which is inferior is always the servant of that which is superior, the body must exist for the sake of the soul."[38] So "while the body is what has being in potency," the "soul is a 'being-at-work-staying-itself,'" and the two cannot be separated. Because the soul constitutes the being of 'being-human', it does not simply direct it, like a sailor on a boat. And, therefore, whilst an axe, like any artefact, is maintained externally, the body and soul are inseparable and, consequently, there is no way of expressing and maintaining 'being-human' except through the ensouled life that they together make possible. The 'being-at-work-staying-itself' of the axe – its 'entelecheia', is cutting, just as the 'entelecheia' of an eye is seeing. Aristotle goes on to say that the seeing of the eye, which is a perceiving part, is analogous to the perceiving of the whole'. For, just as an eye that doesn't see is not an eye, an animal that doesn't perceive is not an animal, because perceiving as a whole to a perceiving animal is as significant as perceiving as a part is to a perceiving organ. Aristotle would seem to confirm this constituting activity by pointing out that whilst it is not difficult to see that the soul is inseparable from the body when

[35] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412b 25
[36] Mary Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity*, 219
[37] Ibid, 219
[38] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, 21

analogies like a cutting axe or a seeing eye are used, "it would be difficult to see why the soul is not separate from the body if the soul were the being-at-work of the body in the way that a sailor is of the boat."[39] Because these are clearly separable entities, the sailor can leave the boat, but the cutting can not leave the axe, without taking the identity of the axe with it. What Aristotle is explaining is that the nature of our 'thinghood', or 'ousia', is constituted by activities, such inner activities being intrinsic to what we are. They are not the external motions of 'parousia', because they inhere in us and individuate us, they are not 'doings' but 'being'.

The soul is actually what the body is potentially, and therefore to ignore one's soul is to ignore one's true self, to be content with existence, but not to actively live. Brentano's observation of Aristotle's wide spectrum of being has already been noted, and what it indicates is that it is possible, if not inevitable, bearing in mind that everything is in a constant state of change, that beings move along an ontological spectrum towards greater or lesser degrees of 'being' in accordance with the activity of their 'thinghood'. Because, if we are not actively seeing, knowing, contemplating or understanding, we are not fully engaged in the activity of 'being-human', even though we may continue to have those latent capacities. All things that have material have the potential for change, i.e., to become more or less according to their 'thinghood', because their materiality holds within it the potential not to be actively conformed to that form: "One sense in which being and not-being is meant is by reference to the potency or 'being-at-work' of beings and their opposites,"[40] which means that 'not-being' arises when a being is not engaged in the 'being-at-work' of its 'thinghood'.

In exploring Aristotle's thinking on changing 'thinghood', and the possibilities it points towards, it is proposed to look more closely at three specific areas of his thought:-

1. **Motion, Potency and Act**
2. **Thinghood**
3. **Change**

All of which come together in a passage in the first book of the 'Physics': "The nature that **persists acts as a co-cause with the form** of the things that come into being, like a mother, while the other portion of the opposition might often be slandered as **not being at all** by one who fixes his thinking sternly upon it as a criminal. But since there is something divine and good and sovereign, we say that there is something opposite to it, and something else which inherently yearns for and stretches out toward it by its own nature. For them it follows that the contrary yearns for its own destruction."[41]Aristotle here recognises that movement can go in two opposing directions. Either towards form, which is the end according to nature and capable of accomplishment where nature persists, since nature acts as a mother and co-cause with form. Or, where nature does not persist,

[39] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 413a 10
[40] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1069b 10
[41] Aristotle, *Physics*, 192a 15

movement seems to follow the direction of 'not-being', which is, by default, the movement away from 'being' actively conformed to form.

4.2.1 Motion, Potency and Act

Aristotle says that there are two ways in which things are moved, by themselves or by something else.[42] And if by something else, it is on account of their being in something else that is itself moved in its own right, like sailors in a boat being moved with the boat. With regard to ensouled things, which have their own source of motion, Aristotle says, "it is necessary that something whose thinghood includes moving itself not be moved by anything else except incidentally."[43] Because, for ensouled things the movement that is initiated from within is part of their 'thinghood', such movement doesn't just express what they are, it constitutes it, and thereby maintains them. And, therefore, ensouled things must engage in inner activity in order to 'be' at all. By contrast, the movement that pertains to unsouled things is externally directly and emanates from productive thinking. It directs things in a way other than according to 'thinghood', since creations of 'techne' have no innate activities. And, for this reason, the external ordering of productive thinking can represent a challenge to the primary and necessary inner movement of 'thinghood'. For, the very integrity of ensouled things is lost when they become entirely externally directed, because they thereby lose an essential element of their 'thinghood'. As Aristotle points out, whilst, "one would say that the soul is moved by things it perceives most of all, if it is moved," the very ability to perceive and move in accordance with that perception is only possible as a result of the conscious activity of 'thinghood' that makes perception possible, which suggests that perception both needs inner activity and produces it.[44] When 'thinghood' is a simple elemental affair, requiring little expression for its maintenance, like bronze continuing to be bronze, notwithstanding its being shaped into statues, there is little, if any, tension or deprivation derived from the motion that shapes it. However, with ensouled beings whose expression of their 'thinghood' is more complicated motions that prevent them from fulfilling that expression may jeopardise the continuance of their 'thinghood', particularly in the case of human 'thinghood' where that expression requires conscious effort. As Sachs suggests, "Aristotle is emphatic that we are only open to the world by the effort of holding ourselves ready,"[45] because perception is a conscious and effortful matter, and, if we don't make that effort our 'thinghood' cannot be sustained.

According to Heidegger, Aristotle's theory of "movedness as ousia" is one of the most difficult things western metaphysics has had to ponder because its strange simplicity is derived from an essential insight: "It is a simplicity we seldom achieve because even now we hardly have an inkling of the Greek concept of being."[46] Aristotle's theory seeks to account for the activity and order of the cosmos through the ability of beings to act in accordance with their 'thinghood', and also via their potential to be other than they are

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[42] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 402b 25
[43] Ibid., 406b 10
[44] Ibid., 406b 24 -25
[45] Sachs, *Nicomachean Ethics*, xii
[46] Heidegger, 'On The Essence And Concept Of Being' ed. William McNeill, *Pathmarks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 216

ordained to be by form. For Aristotle, order and movement are not mutually exclusive terms, since in a cosmos in constant motion, activity is the expression and fulfilment of 'being' in accordance with that order. The theory is concerned with the actualisation of potencies and internal change, rather than with external spatial movements, which is our primary modern concern. However, to appreciate the concept of inner actualisation, whereby "the individual acts on itself qua itself,"[47] and thereby actualises its potential, it is necessary to see beings as innately active, busily maintaining themselves, rather than as spatially distinct, complete entities. Because, according to Aristotle, the form of a thing is not so much its structure as its active way of being organised. Aristotle describes two kinds of movement, or activity, because, "not all things that are said to be in activity are alike.. some of them are related in the manner of a motion to a potency, others in the manner of thinghood to some material." Those that pertain to human 'thinghood' are generally called 'activities' and are complete at every moment like seeing or knowing.[48] There are also processes, or motions, like losing weight or building a house which have external goals and are not complete at every moment, and therefore do not relate to material in the manner of 'thinghood', but in the manner of a motion to a potency, like the shaping of bronze. As Aristotle explains, "a motion done for the sake of something that is **not present in the motion is not an action**, or at any rate, not a complete one but **that in which the end is present is an action**. For instance one sees and is at the same time in a state of having seen...but one does not learn while one is at the same time in a state of having learned. One sort of action is called motion and the other being-at-work."[49] And, regarding those activities which are complete at every moment, the initial shift within us, from inertia to 'energeia', is an effortful one, as we move from a latent potential that we have, but are not using, to an actualised potential when we are.

Aristotle recognised the contemporaneous presence of actuality and potentiality in things, because in living creatures the end to which the being is ordered is already within it as a potentiality. That potentiality can exist within it as an unrealised state in which case it remains latent, or it can be realised and thus become activated as a potency, "things exist either only actually, or both potentially and actually."[50] If this were not the case everything would either be permanently inert or, alternatively, nothing would ever be, because there would be an impasse between constant motion and stasis, with nothing sharing in the nature of both. Joe Sachs gives the following example to illustrate how a potentiality can be actualised as a potentiality, i.e., moved from a latent state to an active one. If I am sitting on one side of the room, I could be said to possess two potentialities: 1. the potential to walk, and 2. the potential to be on other side of the room. When I stand up and start walking, both potentialities are actualised but in different ways. The first potential – to walk, has been actualised by the act of walking and is therefore no longer a potential, in effect it has been cancelled by its actualisation. However, with regard to the second potentiality - to be on the other side of the room, this has now been actualised as a

[47] Mary Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity*, 219
[48] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048b 28 - 35
[49] Ibid., 1048b 20
[50] Aristotle, *Physics*, 200b 26

potentiality because I am crossing the room. It is this change of state from what is motionless and inert to what is active that has transformed a latent, inert potentiality into an actualised one, although clearly it is still a potentiality, because I am not yet on the other side of the room. Whilst the distinction between these different potentialities, i.e., the latent one of the person sitting and the actualised one of the person who has made the effort to start walking, may not seem ontologically significant, since walking is an incidental activity, when transposed into the 'being-at-work' of human 'thinghood', and the inherent activity that needs to be actualised to maintain that 'thinghood', the significance of the distinction emerges. And it was from this distinction within potentialities that Brentano observed that Aristotle has "a special wide sense of real being, which comprises as well, that which potentially is."[51] Because what beings have in potential is the innate power to actively 'be': "Something is potential through nature if it can be lead to actuality by its peculiar active principle or its inherent natural power, provided that no external hindrance stands in the way."[52] As Brentano concludes from his analysis of Aristotle's theory, "there can be no further doubt about the sense which Aristotle connects with the word 'being' insofar as he comprehends under it not only fully actualised being, but that which is only potentially whatever it is, and strives towards and desires its form, as it were."[53] However, because beings that are capable of 'becoming' something through some process do not pass directly from 'non-being' to 'being', they must first acquire the potentiality to become, as an active potentiality. Just as to get to the other side of the room, I must first get up and start walking. Brentano calls this "a heightened state of potentiality with respect to the form which is the consummation of becoming."[54] And suggests that the position is as follows: "The state before the state of becoming must first be changed into the state of becoming so that the subject may thereafter be transferred into a state of consummate actuality." Thus Brentano seems to be setting out three progressive states: 1. The state before the state of becoming; 2. The state of becoming; and 3. The state of consummate actuality. From which it appears that the 'state of becoming', in which the potentiality of a being is actualised, i.e., moved from a latent potential to an actualised one, is the state of 'being-human', because this seems to be the state in which we make a conscious effort to 'be' in accordance with our soul, in effect we wake up. The bare fact of existence that precedes this state of becoming, which would be Brentano's state 1., is, by comparison, virtually a state of 'non-being', or, at best, a mere biologism. What Aristotle seems to be pointing to, via the notion of double potentiality, is that there is an ontological distinction between having a potentiality and applying it. A blind man cannot see and neither can the person with their eyes closed, but the latter has a potentiality the former lacks, which he can actualise by opening his eye. And, when he does so, it impacts not just upon himself, but upon the universe with which he is then visually connected, and it is that living, experiential connection that sustains him as what he is, i.e., as what he is 'being'. When the whole cosmos is in a state of flux, just staying what we are becomes an effortful stance

[51]Franz Brentano, *On The Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, ed., and trans., Rolf George, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 28
[52] Ibid, 34
[53] Ibid, 34
[54] Ibid, 37

and, whatever lowly status of 'thinghood' we enjoy, some energy will need to be expended to maintain it.

It has been pointed out that for Aristotle all activity in nature is teleological, and it is important to see that in yearning towards form matter is actually becoming form-like. It goes without saying that only natural beings can have 'entelecheia', or engage in 'energeia' as a matter of 'thinghood', just as only natural things have the potential to withstand entropy.[55] To interpret 'entelecheia' as actuality is to render form static and eliminate any notion of potentiality being realised in activity. The difficulty that then follows is that if the form of 'being-human' is perceived to be realised in the bare fact of existence, there is nothing for 'entelecheia' to point to beyond that actualised state. It is only when 'being-human' is recognised as an activity that the full significance of 'entelecheia' and Brentano's observation of double potentiality comes into view: "If there is a state of potentiality with respect to a form from which and by virtue of which the subject can immediately attain possession of actuality, and if there is a state of potentiality with respect to the same form, from which and by virtue of which the subject cannot immediately attain possession of actuality, then these two states are distinct and there is a double state of potentiality with respect to one and the same form."[56] In respect of the form of 'being-human', the states, or activities of 'energeia' and 'entelecheia' would seem to relate to the actualisation of its potentiality in two different stages, with the former moving into the latter when sustained. However, with regard to what the double state of potentiality is ultimately pointing to, i.e., to the 'state of consummate actuality' that awaits at the end of the process of becoming, Brentano adds, "it is peculiar to the state of becoming that that which is in the state of becoming has a potentiality to acquire the state of that which has become,"[57] because, in accordance with Aristotle's prioritisation of actuality over potentiality, what is being formed is always being formed in accordance with a pre-existing form. Brentano concludes his examination of Aristotle's theory by indicating that whilst a being in the state of becoming has, by virtue of its activity, actualised that potentiality to become, what it is to become may not pertain to material things and, consequently, may be beyond human comprehension.

What Aristotle is pointing at perhaps becomes clearer in the 'Nicomachean Ethics' where he suggests that man has the potential to share in divine power, "such a life would be greater than what accords with a human being, for it is not insofar as one is a human being that he will live in this way, but insofar as something divine is present in him, and to the extent that this surpasses the compound being."[58] Anthony Kenny points out that there are clear parallels between Aristotle's thinking in his Ethics, both the 'Nicomachean' and the 'Eudemian', and the divine principles Plato refers to in the 'Timaeus'. For, as Plato explains in that work, when a man is always occupied with ambition all his thoughts must be mortal and "he must be mortal every whit because he has cherished his mortal part." However, if he occupies himself with thoughts immortal and divine, and "attain[s] truth",

[55] Erwin Schrodinger, *What Is Life?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 71
[56] Brentano, *On The Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 39
[57] Ibid, 45
[58] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177b 25

then it is the divine part that becomes pre-eminent. For, "in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality, he must altogether be immortal, and since he is ever cherishing the divine power and has the divinity within him in perfect order, he will be singularly happy."[59] The essential point, though, is that no form of actuality can be approached without first actualising the potentiality to receive it, and that can only be achieved through the active expression and maintenance of 'thinghood', i.e., by actively 'being'. What appears to be implicit in Aristotle's thinking is not only that the full significance of 'being-human' is not actualised in the bare fact of created existence, where the potential 'to be' is latent, but neither is it actualised, other than as an actualised potentiality in the active 'thinghood' of 'energeia'. What this means is that 'being-human' is a process, and whilst one expression of 'energeia', i.e., one act of contemplation, does not complete us as human 'beings', since the "being-at-work of the soul must be in a complete life, for one swallow does not make a Spring,"[60] as Aristotle metaphorically puts it, that activity launches us on the way. It initiates us into the way of 'being' human, which is what we attain if we maintain ourselves in that activity. What Aristotle came to see, and presumably why he coined 'entelecheia' after 'energeia', is that 'being human' straddles both activities and processes; it is both the activity of 'energeia' and the process of becoming that is 'entelecheia', i.e., the state of sustained inner activity which is entered into through the initiatory act of 'energeia', because, "a thing can't be in process unless internally active."[61] What this seems to point to is that the form of 'being-human' is inherently active and once initiated into the process of 'entelecheia' by the inner activity of 'energeia' is then to be sustained there by that activity, just as the form of a swimmer requires a continuum of swimming to remain a swimmer. The change Aristotle is pointing to, from merely having a life to actually living it, requires our effort to step up to a new level of contemplative awareness, or consciousness, which we have the power or potency to achieve, "a being which 'has the power' is able to change into the 'process (movement')" by which we call him awake.[62] And it is only possible to remain in the state of 'entelecheia', "by means of the continual expenditure of the effort." And without that effort there is no end to attain, since, "entelecheia is the end or perfection which has being **only in, through, and during activity**."[63] However, it is a joyful, fulfilling effort that Aristotle is talking about: "**We are by being at work and the work is, in a certain way its maker at work**, so he loves the work because he also loves to be. And this is natural, for that which something is in potency, its work reveals in its being-at-work."[64] This doesn't mean that the process is the end; it can't be, because the process itself remains a potentiality, albeit an active one. Rather, the process points beyond itself to a further actuality that made the actualisation of that process possible, but at the same time the initiation into that process could not have commenced without the initiation of the preceding internal activity. As Blair indicated earlier, "process is an incomplete

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[59] Plato *Timaeus* 90 c trans. Kenny, *Aristotle On The Perfect Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 102

[60] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a 18

[61] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1047a 30b -2

[62] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle*, 25

[63] Sachs, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, li

[64] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1168a 5

internalisation of the end,"[65] but what is bringing about the process is already internally active. [66]

4.2.2 Thinghood - the Soul and Contemplation

As previously pointed out, for Aristotle 'thinghood' is not a mere biologism: form begetting form is not enough to secure 'thinghood.' And neither is the activity of 'thinghood' concerned with just any sort of activity, for incidental activities are really motions, since they are not part of 'thinghood'. And, therefore, according to Aristotle, such activities are close to 'non-being': "Each thing itself and what it is for it to be are one and the same, in a way that is not incidental," because, "being you is not being cultivated, since it is not by virtue of yourself that you are cultivated. Therefore **being you is what you are in virtue of yourself.**"[67] It, thus, appears that our self-constituting activity, that expresses and maintains our 'thinghood', cannot be delegated to, or, received from, anyone or anything else, since it is what we are by virtue of ourselves. And, therefore, even though it may be engaged in with others, the activity is an individual one. As previously pointed out, Aristotle also distinguishes the name of a thing from the 'being' of that thing, since ontologically it is the activity of the thing in reality and not what it is named in discourse which gives it its identity. And he does the same with universal concepts which attempt to classify the sort of thing something belongs to, but do not say anything about its perceptible 'thinghood'. Having eliminated those things that 'thinghood' is not – incidental activities, names and universal concepts - Aristotle makes clear that what is essential to 'thinghood' is engaging in the inner activity of 'being', i.e., 'being-at-work', because "thinghood is the cause of each thing's being."[68] Joe Sachs uses the example of a fish out of water to convey the Aristotelian view that 'thinghood' is primarily a matter of activity. For, like the axe no longer cutting, the fish out of water is no longer a fish because it is not 'being' a fish. If a thing were just its form, its 'being' would be fixed as pure act, like God's. However, because human beings are composed of form and matter they are composites, and have the potential to be otherwise by virtue of their material element: "material whilst not actively a this is potentially a this."[69] As previously pointed out, when Aristotle speaks of potentiality, he is not considering what is possible according to logic, but what is potential in reality, i.e., in accordance with a thing's natural potency to 'be'. For, as Brentano explains, what is potential in nature relates to a 'peculiar active principle', or, 'a thing's inherent natural power', the point being that it is what may naturally unfold if

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[65] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle*, 150

[66] Aristotle, *Physics* 111 3 202a 13 -21 This combination of activity and process was something of a conundrum for Aristotle as he explains, "And the conundrum is obvious, that process is in the thing that is undergoing process; that is, it is its having its end within it and comes about by what can make it change. **And the internal activity of what can bring about a process is not some other thing; it has to be the internalisation of the end of both objects** – that is, that of 'being capable of undergoing process; in what is acting internally. But it is **capable of internally activating what is in process** - so that the sense in which there is one internal activity for both is similar to the sense in which there is one interval between one and two and two and one ... these are in fact one and the same, even though their intelligibility is different. The same sort of thing applies to what is bringing about and undergoing a process"

[67] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1029b 13

[68] Ibid., 1043a 2

[69] Ibid., 1042a 28

there is no external hindrance standing in its way. Whilst externally the appearance of a being may be unaltered, like the fish out of water, without 'energeia', it is ontologically completely different, because it is not 'being-at-work' and therefore is not engaging with the cosmos in the same dynamic way as formerly, in essence it has become material for another form of being.

Matter is our capacity to be or not to be: "matter is a permanent principle which can be either according to form or to the privation of the form."[70] But the 'thinghood' of a thing is governed by its form, so we cannot be deprived of our active form and continue to 'be' in an Aristotelian sense, because if our form changes, through a deprivation or lack, then the requirements of our 'thinghood' do likewise and we become something else. For, 'thinghood' cannot be satisfied by external activities or motions, like crossing a room or playing a flute, because, as pointed out above, these are incidental activities that do not actualise our potency to 'be' according to form.[71] However, what matter comes to be is not entirely determined by form, "matter is potentially just because it may come to its form, and when it is actually, then it is in its form,[72] because, according to Aristotle, matter must meet form half way. And as Gill points out, because the elements of matter may seek to fulfil their own 'thinghood' in a simple context, the potential substance they provide for the designating form is not an expression of their simpler elemental 'thinghood', but of the coercive nature of the dominant form overriding the fulfilment of that more dispersed potential. For example, iron, whilst shaped into girders, begins to rust because it 'wants' to return to the earth from whence it came as iron oxide. For its 'thinghood' is its natural form that it endeavours to 'be' when not constrained by a motion that determines it otherwise. This means that for a being to be shaped, or ordered, according to a motion other than the activity of its 'thinghood' requires coercion or 'the dominion of a whole' as Gill puts it, because its 'being-at-work' naturally takes precedence over its potential to be something else. As Aristotle says, "it is clear that **being-at-work takes precedence over potency**. And I mean that it takes precedence not only over potency as defined, which means a source of change in another thing or in the same thing as other, but **over every source of motion and rest in general**. For nature, too, is in the same general class as potency, since it is a source of motion, though not in something else but **in a thing itself as itself**."[73] This point would seem to have some relevance concerning our modern technological culture, because if the productive acts we engage in do not emanate from any conscious inner activity, or necessitate any perceptive/contemplative relationship with a reality other than what we have constructed, it is difficult to see how they can be expressing 'being-human' at all. Rather, they would seem to originate from a source external to us and, accordingly, are not concerned with maintaining us as individuated natural beings, but with re-arranging our ontological potential in accordance with a more externally focused structure. As Gill points out, "if an active cause is vital for maintenance, there is a critical line to be drawn

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[70] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071a 10 – 11. See Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in The Aristotelian Metaphysics*, 405

[71] Aristotle describes incidental activities as close to non-being, because whilst they do not necessarily result in the realisation of a potency to be other than according to form, they could do.

[72] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1050a 15 -23

[73] Ibid., 1049b 5

between those entities whose source of maintenance is internal and whose source is external. And this is the chief line that Aristotle draws between organisms and artifacts. Artifacts are not self-preserving systems, but depend on external agents both for the full realisation of their being and for their maintenance."[74] What, thus, emerges is that by virtue of our potential to be conformed in a way not designated by nature, and, therefore, not in accordance with our "self-preserving system", we are capable of becoming beings entirely orchestrated by external motions, according to an inferior order of being, constructed and maintained by 'techne'. This is not the 'being-at-work' of human 'thinghood', since this secondary movement consists entirely of productive motions which do not have ends within themselves, unlike the superior activities of the soul. This possibility exists because, as Aristotle confirms, "everything that is potential admits of not being at work. Therefore, what is capable of being admits both of being and of not being, and so the same thing is capable both of being and of not being. But what is capable of not being admits of not being, and what admits of not being is destructible, either simply or in that same respect in which it is spoken of as admitting of not being, either at a place or with respect to a size or to being of a certain sort."[75] What also seems to be at risk here is our identity as individuated beings, since independence is maintained by the activity of 'being-work-staying-ourselves', which is a movement in accordance with the movement of nature: "Independent things are put together by nature and in accordance with nature, it would seem that it is this nature that is thinghood."[76] For, as Gill points out, "autonomous entities rely on themselves for the realisation of their capabilities and for their persistence," and it is only because "their active potentiality – their soul – is their immanent form"[77] that they are capable of achieving autonomy at all.

Whilst it might be insisted that productive thinking is now the way of 'being-human', or at least an essential part of it, it should be remembered that productive thinking is not contemplative, and therefore involves no 'being-at-work' in the conscious, effortful and necessary way for human 'thinghood'. In essence, productive thinking is incidental to 'being' human, which is no doubt why so many 'human tasks' can be carried out by computers. For, whilst Aristotle suggests that, "living is defined for human beings by the potencies of sense perception and for thinking,"[78] this thinking is not the productive thinking responsible for 'techne'. Rather, "the aspect of the soul that is called intellect [is] that by which the soul thinks things through and conceives that something is the case, [and] is not actively any of the things that <u>are</u> until it thinks."[79] Thus, thinking is tied to reality, to perceiving it and contemplating it, and man is transformed by these activities into a 'knower'. 'Techne', by contrast, is concerned with the application of accumulated knowledge and is primarily geared towards production, or the application of acquired skills. Aristotle's distinction between those actions that produce things that leave the actor and the superior actions that do not has already been made. However, in the 'Nicomachean

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[74] Mary Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity*, 213
[75] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1050b 15
[76] Ibid, 1041b 28
[77] Mary Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity*, 213
[78] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a 20
[79] Aristotle, *De Anima* 429a 25

Ethics' he considers further this important distinction between activity engaged in for its own sake and action for the sake of production. "The active condition governing action is different from the active condition governing making and neither of them is included in the other.. ..Art is not concerned with things that are, or that come into being by necessity, or with things that are by nature, since those things have their sources in themselves. The end of making is different from itself but the end of action could not be, **since acting well is itself the end**."[80] Whilst the active condition governing making things seems easy to grasp, it is more difficult to discern what Aristotle is pointing to with regard to the active condition concerning non-productive action, the 'acting well' that 'is itself the end.' This is because Aristotle's notion of inner activity is unfamiliar to us, and, therefore, the distinction he draws between ends produced internally and ends produced externally is a difficult one to make. However, whilst man can create things, he can't create being. To form bronze into a statue is not an expression of the 'thinghood' of bronze, but of its potency to be so shaped according to motion, because there is no 'thinghood' in the bronze qua statue. In the Christian philosophy of the Middle Ages the creative intellect was seen to have an essential relationship with what it produced, but a non-essential relationship with nature, as man and nature were seen to be essentially static and separate entities. [81] Indeed man's creative relationship with the reality he produced was deemed to be more fundamental and intense than his relationship with nature, which, when viewed from the point of view of knowledge, it is.[82] However, from an ontological perspective the opposite is the case, because, "the more an object is true, the less it is comprehensible for the human mind."[83] In seeing the products made as "more essential" what is undermined is the sustaining power of reality, because unlike ensouled creatures who are sustained by nature, so far as manufactured things are concerned, "the source of motion is in the one who makes and not in the thing made, and this is either an art or some other capacity."[84] For such creations only continue to subsist if externally maintained, because they have no inner cause.

In response to the question "what is the cause in the sense of form" as far as a human being is concerned, Aristotle answers, "what it keeps on being in order to be" which, according to Aristotle, is the same as "the cause for the sake of which it is, i.e., its end,"[85] because, as pointed out earlier, the Greek notion of 'cause' doesn't just point to an initiatory event, but subsists in the entity continuing to 'be'. The potency in a thing's nature is its potency to 'be' and to become more fully what it 'is', which, as far as 'being-human' is concerned, is a potency only fully actualisable through the inner activity of the soul: "The work of a human being is a certain sort of life. This life consists of a being-at-work of the soul."[86] And such a life has its end within itself: "Life in the internally active sense is an end."[87]

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[80] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140a – 1140b
[81] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 16.1 ed.Timothy McDermott (London: Methuen, 1991), 45
[82] Aquinas, 'Questiones disputatae de veritate', 3..3. Trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952) See Josef Pieper *Living The Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 41
[83] Pieper, *Living The Truth*, 57
[84] Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1064a 10
[85] Ibid., 1044b 2
[86] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a 15
[87] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1244b 24, trans. Blair, Ibid, 68

And by having its end within itself, "the end comes to be among the goods associated with the soul and not among external goods."[88]A thing's potency to be other than conformed to its form, which clearly is the same potency, seems to develop as a result of a lack or deprivation. That lack or incapacity seems to develop as a result of the thing itself becoming, in some way, inadequate for its own form, or, as a result of it being deprived of that form. However, the notion of being inadequate to one's form doesn't arise if 'being' is seen to be synonymous with existence, or, if a contemplative connection with the cosmos is elevated to the supererogatory activities of mystics, rather than recognised to be the sustaining activity of 'being-human'. The problem with idealised, disincarnate forms, as Aristotle saw, is that they don't touch us or impact upon our lives, as they make no ontological demands of us.[89] Whereas, if forms are 'real' and we can instantiate them, then the notion of falling beneath an exemplar has direct ontological significance, since it pertains not to what we are failing to believe in or acknowledge, but to what we are failing to 'be'. In the 'Nicomachean Ethics' Aristotle recognises a level of awareness, or conscious engagement, with reality that we no longer seem to have. He talks about an awareness of our existence, not as the concluded fact that we exist, i.e., not as a concept, but as the experienced reality that we are, essentially, of our 'thatness': "If one who sees is aware that he sees and one who hears is aware that he hears, and one who walks is aware that he walks, and similarly in the other cases there is something in us that is aware that we are at-work, so that whenever we perceive we are aware that we perceive and whenever we think we are aware that we think, and if being aware that we are perceiving or thinking is being aware that we **are** (since our **being** is perceiving or thinking), and **being aware that we are alive is something pleasant in itself.**"[90]

The Soul

"The soul is the thinghood of the body. What such and such a body keeps on being in order to be at all."[91] In 'De Anima' Aristotle makes it clear that the body is for the sake of the soul and that the body is in potency what the soul is as an 'entelecheia'. The soul makes possible not just life, but 'a certain way of life', because by virtue of the soul, mere living is transformed into a life that puts into activity the highest activities of which an organism is capable. In the case of an animal that defining activity would appear to be perception, which is the capacity that not only identifies it, but elevates it above merely being alive. As a result of an animal's capacity for perception the whole of the perceptible world comes to be present within it, at-work in its soul as part of its life, rather than simply constituting the environment that surrounds it. Aristotle stresses the importance of perception, making the point that whilst plants may be defined by the fact that they take in nourishment, "since no other potency of soul belongs to them," as far as animals are concerned the situation is different: "Life belongs to living things, then, through this source [food] but to an animal, first of all, through sense perception for even those that do not move or change their places,

[88] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098b 20
[89] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 991a 10
[90] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a 30
[91] Aristotle, *De Anima* 412b 10

if they have perception, we call animals and **do not merely say they are alive.**"[92] Aristotle goes on to consider the meaning of living and perceiving for the soul. "And seeing that the means by which we live and perceive is meant in two ways as is the means by which we know (by which is meant in **one sense knowledge but in another the soul**) since by means of each of these we say we know something."[93] Here Aristotle contrasts, living, perceiving and knowing as activities of the soul with the potencies of those activities, i.e., having a life, having the capacity to perceive and having knowledge, which is a contrast between the 'entelecheia' of 'thinghood' and the latent potency of simply having the potential to 'be', i.e., the potential to engage in those activities but not actually doing so. As Aristotle said earlier, "having a soul is life in potency," since it is not its possession that is significant, but its use. Accordingly, the soul is the primary sense in which we live: "It is not the body that is the being-at-work-staying itself of the soul, but the soul is the being-at-work-staying-itself of some body."[94]And if we are not living in accordance with the activity of the soul, we are not living a truly human life. Aristotle recognises different potencies in different living creatures, because notwithstanding that all beings participate in divinity they don't all do it in the same way, as some living creatures possess potencies that are "more honourable" than others. Aristotle sees something of a hierarchy of potencies in the manner of a geometric progression, and just as a triangle is present in a quadrilateral, lesser potencies are present within higher potencies. This is because the soul is not just the cause of life in living things, it is also the "for the sake of which" they are: "since all natural bodies are instruments of the soul."[95] And "that for the sake of which" something is points beyond the extant self to the principle, or 'arche', that brought it into being.[96] In the 'Nicomachean Ethics' Aristotle seems to be looking upwards in that hierarchy towards our higher potential, suggesting that, "one should not follow those who advise us to think mortal thoughts because we are mortal and human thoughts because we are human, but as far as possible one ought to be immortal and to do all things with a view toward living in accord with the most powerful thing in oneself."[97] Because even though this part is "small in bulk", it is more important and powerful than anything else and, more importantly, it is essentially what we are: "And each person would even seem to be this part."[98]

If the form of 'being human' is an active one, what specifically does a human being have to be actively 'being' in order to 'be' human?[99] In the 'Nicomachean Ethics', Aristotle asks, "is a human being by nature idle?"[100] For whilst our animal nature is determined by perceiving reality, as opposed to simply having the potential to perceive it, Aristotle points

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[92] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 413b
[93] Ibid., 414a 5
[94] Ibid., 414a 10
[95] Ibid., 415b 15
[96] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 23 '*arche*' means 'beginning, starting point, principle, ultimate underlying substance, ultimate indemonstrable principle'.
[97] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177b 35
[98] Ibid., 1177b 20
[99] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1041b 20 In principle – a human being is an independent thing put together by nature and in accordance with nature. This nature is 'thinghood' which is not an element but a source.
[100] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b

towards something divine and immortal dwelling within us. And what ultimately emerges is that our perceptive capability is far deeper than our current understanding suggests. For whilst Aristotle does see human life extending to the realms of divinity, the activity of 'thinghood' that makes such experience possible is firmly rooted in perception, because the activity of "its form and what it is for a certain body to be will not belong to it without perception."[101] Perception is not just a particular function an organism has, rather, it is what governs its way of 'being' in the world. In the 'Protrepticus', Aristotle draws a distinction between having a soul and actively using it, making the point that to live a truly human life, it is necessary to have an actively engaged soul, which seems to suggest the necessity for an intimate perceptive/contemplative relationship with reality. And Aristotle repeats the same message in 'De Anima', "for both sleep and waking are in what belongs to the soul, and waking is analogous to the act of contemplating but sleep to holding the capacity for contemplating while not putting it to work,"[102] again emphasising that it is the waking part of the soul, active in contemplating, that is the governing sense of soul.[103] Perception appears to play a crucial role in this actively engaged relationship, as we can't be engaged with reality without it. It is our perceptive faculty, which is more than the individual senses alone, that connects us to, and keeps us aligned with, the dynamic movement of reality. And, because such holistic 'knowing' does not derive from conceptual thought, it can't be reproduced in any form of technology or productive thinking. It is the 'knowing' that is foundational to what we are, the constituting axiom that cannot be demonstrated, because it is not present in any system we produce, but is the underlying basis that enables such systems to be devised. As far as Aristotle is concerned, perception is the defining potency of the soul, the soul being the organ of perception, and its ability to 'be acted upon', the governing sense of understanding it.[104] The intellect, by contrast, doesn't have an organ, and therefore isn't a part of the body:[105] "Whereas the perceptive potency is not present without a body, the potency to think is separate from the body."[106] Its potency is likened to that of a blank tablet awaiting an inscription, inert and motionless. It isn't active until it thinks and its activity is then limited to what it thinks. And, because the abstractions and imagery that can be inscribed upon the tablet have no matter, neither do they have 'energeia' or 'entelecheia', i.e., they have no 'thinghood', and consequently no activity to impart, and therefore cannot 'act upon' the soul.[107] The perceptive potency, by contrast, does require matter, and it is this need for material conveying the processes of reality that seems to underpin human 'thinghood', because no activity and no 'being-acted-upon' is possible without it. It is 'being-acted-upon' that completes us as individuals, not just morally, but ontologically, just as the lack of 'being-acted-upon' diminishes us. Because, as Mary Louise Gill points out, it is only through expressing what we are that we maintain our identity, and to do that we need to be actively involved with the material world - we need to actively perceive it.

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[101] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1035b 15
[102] Aristotle, *De Anima* 412a 30
[103] Ibid., 419b 20
[104] Ibid., 412b 20
[105] Ibid., 429b 5
[106] Ibid., 429a 20
[107] Ibid., 429b 15

Despite being a potency our capacity for perception is not passive, but stems from an effortful openness. And in that sense, it is a potency that we have to activate. In this regard, Aristotle draws a distinction between the passive dispositions - 'pathetikos', which consist of the inner activities of perception and contemplation on the one hand, and the activities of discursive thinking and imagination on the other. Because, whilst the former passive dispositions require an active engagement with reality, and should not in any way be considered inert, the latter do not have a direct dependency on the real, as images suffice. Aristotle seems to regard both imagination and discursive thinking as derivatives of the former inner activities which engage with reality, pointing out that the 'phantasm' of imagination takes its name from the light required for sight, even though none is required for imagining.[108] And, as far as discursive thinking is concerned, its very possibility depends on the underlying contemplative intellect, which sees things as a whole, because, "without the deathless and everlasting contemplative intellect nothing thinks."[109] However, the foundational nature of the active contemplative intellect seems to have become occluded by the proliferation of the phantasms of the mind, and the productions of the creative intellect, which have persuaded us that all intellectual activity is, essentially, instrumental, i.e., of our own making and therefore replicable.[110]

The power of perception, whereby the perceiving thing becomes like the perceptible thing, would seem to indicate that in perceiving we are altered. However, as previously pointed out, that is not quite the case, because the 'alteration' that follows from 'being acted upon' in perceiving is not necessarily a change away from what something 'is', it can be, and in this case is, a change towards being more properly what we 'are'. As Aristotle explains, there are two kinds of alteration, "a change to a condition of lacking something, the other a change to an active condition and into a thing's nature."[111] Aristotle describes 'being-acted-upon' as both a destruction and a preservation: "In one sense it is a partial destruction of a thing by its contrary, but in another it is instead the preservation, by something that is at work-staying-itself, of something that is in potency and is like it in the way that a potency is like its corresponding state of being-at-work-staying-itself,"[112] because animate nature, by 'being-at-work' in the active forms it is, conveys that essential activity to the perceiving soul, which is, thereby, likewise animated. Aristotle immediately goes on to describe contemplating as just such a change into 'being-at-work', and to a "class of alteration", which is more what we are according to nature: "Contemplating is either not a process of being altered (since it is a passing over into being itself, namely into being-at-work-staying-oneself), or is a different class of alteration."[113] It, thus, appears that it is through our perception and contemplation of dynamic nature, i.e., of the perceptible wholes, or 'thinghoods', that are busy 'being-at-work-staying-themselves,' that we are

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[108] Aristotle, *De Anima* 429a

[109] Ibid, 430a 25 In *Metaphysics* 1072b 25 Aristotle states that man can share in the divine intellect, by experiencing it.

[110] In Chapter 5 of Book III of *De Anima* Aristotle draws a distinction between the receptive intellect and the creative one, which, as Joe Sachs points out, has been the subject of a massive amount of commentary and fierce disagreement concerning whether the activity of the creative intellect refers to God or to man.

[111] Aristotle, *De Anima* 417b 15

[112] Ibid, 425 b 25

[113] Ibid., 417b 4

animated and thereby maintained in our own animate 'thinghood'. In answer to the question whether we are 'acted upon' by what is like or unlike, Aristotle answers 'both' in two different senses, "for what is unlike is acted upon, but in the **state that results from being acted upon it is like**."[114] Because the form of the perceived thing is 'being-at-work', and therefore it has a dynamic affect on the perceiving being, and this is how its reality is 'known': "For what is potentially knowing becomes knowing by the becoming-present of something else. For whenever a particular thing has happened, the thinking part of the soul knows the universals in a certain way through the particular."[115] However, in the 'Metaphysics', Aristotle acknowledges that although things are known by the contemplative intellect, or sense perception, according to the fullness of their particular composite nature, which a universal definition cannot convey, it is possible for this primary 'knowing' orientation towards reality to fall away: "We know them directly by the contemplative intellect or by sense perception, and once these fall away from an active exercise, it is not clear whether they have being or not, but they are always described and known by means of a universal articulation."[116]This would seem to mean that reality continues to be 'known' by interpretation rather than from direct experience, because the universal articulation is a reconstruction in speech of the form which is, or once was, directly present to the perceiving, contemplating soul.[117] However, when forms are understood more as conceptual realities than perceptible ones, "when the active exercise of contemplation or sense perception falls away," the universal articulation is left to stand free of any underlying experiential reality, essentially because the language of concepts does not need reality.

Looking more closely at perception and why it is the sine qua non of animals, what emerges is an integrated experienced world in which all of nature is at work sustaining itself as what it 'is', with beings impacting on each other in the process: "Everything is acted upon and moved by something capable of acting and already being-at-work."[118] Although perception is fundamental to the 'thinghood' of an animal, and what determines it as an animal, that perceptive power is a kind of potency rather than an independent 'being-at-work', which would seem to indicate an ontological dependency on reality. Aristotle says, "it is clear that the perceptive power does not have being as a being at work but only as a potency."[119] Perception as a potency and yet an activity of 'thinghood' seems to point to some sort of contradiction, but this not so because, as previously pointed out, Aristotle came to see that some forms of 'being at work' were incomplete, and therefore could be potencies thus, "the perceptive thing is, in potency, such as the perceived thing already is in full activity.... So it is acted upon when it is not like the perceived thing, but when it is in the state that results from being acted upon, it has become likened to it, and is such as that is."[120]And since 'being-human' is both an activity of 'energeia' and a process

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[114] Aristotle, *De Anima* 417a 5
[115] Aristotle, *Physics* 247b 2-15
[116] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1036a 10
[117] Ibid., 138, Sachs
[118] Aristotle, *De Anima* 417a 5
[119] Ibid., 417a 8
[120] Ibid., 418a

of becoming that is 'entelecheia', perception is required for both, it is the same activity. And not only does perception sustain us in our 'being-at-work' as perceiving animals, it also underpins our intellectual ability, which too is part of our 'thinghood':[121] "No act of sense perception is isolated from our highest intellectual activity, by which we both discriminate what we receive and also relate it to the thinghood of things,"[122] because, "**one who perceived nothing would not be able to learn or be acquainted with anything either**."[123] However, Aristotle also points out that "if we don't have a potency to perceive we cannot be acted upon by perceptible things,"[124] and that, "nothing has perception without the soul."[125] Bearing in mind that our ability to perceive is dependent upon the perceptible reality that surrounds us, as well as our own conscious efforts of openness, there would appear to be a risk that by compromising the animate quality of our surrounding reality, our capacity for perceiving and for thinking will be deleteriously affected. And that a diminished 'thinghood' will necessarily ensue, because there will be no exemplary dynamic forms of reality to take in and shape us. As Pieper points out, "the greatest menace to our capacity for contemplation is the incessant fabrication of tawdry stimuli which kill the receptivity of the soul." [126] In the 'being acted upon' of perception, the active form of the perceptible thing is imposed upon the perceiving entity, without its material. However that event would not be possible without the material presence of the perceptible thing, since all processes need matter. Nature is material, it is not distinct form in matter, but 'informed matter' as one abiding entity; 'snubness' being the concept Aristotle chooses for expressing this ontological unity, since neither form nor matter can exist without the other.[127] This helps to explain why for Aristotle the study of nature or reality is contemplative rather than practical or productive, i.e., because it concerns the inner source of motion within independent things.[128]Abstracting from reality misrepresents it, because 'knowing' reality comes with sensing and experiencing it, which is an activity of the soul. But further, as far as the inner activity of 'being' human is concerned, not to see and contemplate what is real means not to be 'acted upon' by reality and that means not to engage in a conscious relationship with the world. This is because only in ensouled things, and the contemplative knowing of them, are there exemplars of 'entelecheia', which an active soul can perceive and, thereby, be 'acted-upon'. For, the organising activity that holds a particular thing together is also at work on the perceiving soul. The fact that nature offers us the possibility of perceiving holistically has important implications for our own 'thinghood'. Not just because perceiving and contemplating reality is the underlying foundation of our way of being in the world, but also because it avails us of the experience necessary for maintaining ourselves as such, and, if sustained, points towards the highest realms of human existence.

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[121] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a 20
[122] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 120, Sachs
[123] Ibid., 432a 8
[124] Ibid., 424b 8
[125] Ibid., 411b 30
[126] Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 102
[127] Mary Louise Gill, *Aristotle on Substance - The Paradox of Unity*,35
[128] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1026a

Contemplation

Aristotle regards contemplation as the governing sense of our 'being-at-work', and observes that it belongs to the soul in two different respects, "both sleep and waking are in what belong to the soul, and waking is analogous to the act of contemplating but sleep to holding the capacity for contemplating while not putting it to work."[129] Thus, "the one who is already contemplating is a knower in the governing sense, **since he is at-work staying himself knowing.**"[130] This would suggest, even if Aristotle had not specifically pointed it out, that contemplation is an effortful and conscious activity requiring wakefulness, and not to be confused with the possession of knowledge through learning or study. Contemplation is the most perfect virtue as it has no end beyond itself, "a thing's perfection corresponds to the extent to which it is chosen for its own sake,"[131] and offers the most perfect happiness, "the virtue of understanding is not as perfect as perfect happiness itself, which is not understanding, but the contemplation which is the exercise of understanding." Thus. the joyful understanding exercised through contemplation is not derived from learning, but arises through our direct acquaintance with reality, for, as Aristotle points out, contemplation belongs to knowers, not to those seeking knowledge.[132] Contemplative thinking sees things as wholes without thinking things through, and is the foundational thinking that makes such derivative thinking possible.[133]

In the 'Nicomachean Ethics' Aristotle presents a view of 'being-at-work' which shows how the inner activity of 'energeia'/'entelecheia' spills over into discernible actions of the stable soul – 'hexis'. [134] As previously pointed out, the word 'hexis' is innately dynamic and carries through the inner activity of 'being' into visible actions, and therefore translating it as 'habit' obscures this dynamic internal aspect, and misrepresents its source as something external. Aristotle makes it clear in the opening of the 'Ethics' that good works cannot be done unknowingly: "for just and temperate acts to be done justly and temperately, the agent has to act knowingly."[135] Thus justice and temperance are actively present in the agent, and it is this internalisation of virtue, this inner source, that makes it possible for these virtues to exist in acts. Aristotle goes on to suggest that contemplating is the best activity, and the one true virtue on which human happiness depends, not as an addition, but as the completion of human nature, by being altered in the way that a roof both alters and completes a house. What Aristotle seems to be suggesting is that contemplation constitutes the focal activity of our being: "Contemplation is the best activity because it is the operation of the best in us and concerns the highest objects of knowledge, also contemplation is the most continuous activity since we can contemplate truth more continuously than we can engage in any action."[136] And whilst in the 'Nicomachean Ethics', from which this quote is taken, Aristotle does not explicitly say that

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[129] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 412a 20
[130] Ibid, 417a 25
[131] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097a 30 – b 6
[132] Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle On The Perfect Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 104
[133] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051b 24
[134] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle*, 157
[135] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1105a 31 -4
[136] Ibid., 1177a 18 -21 and 1177a 15

contemplation and perception engage with reality in the same way, there does appear to be an overlap between the two, because the virtuous contemplative of the Ethics 'knows' the good by perceiving it, not by deliberating about it.[137] What he sees is 'the beautiful' - 'to katalon,' not just in things, but in actions.[138] Also in 'De Anima' Aristotle describes how the soul knows "the good and the not-good" by perceiving them, not by working them out. Further, Aristotle repeatedly points out that to be moved by reality, the soul must perceive it, and it is this 'being-acted-upon' relationship with reality that underlies both contemplation and perception, and is carried through to the Christian understanding of the virtue of prudence. [139]

In his examination of Aristotle's theory of the perfect life, Anthony Kenny reports that the main reason why interpreters are motivated to reject the primacy Aristotle attributes to the virtue of contemplation is because, "they do not find the position credible as a piece of philosophy, and as admirers of Aristotle they are unwilling to saddle his mature ethical works with such a strange doctrine. In particular they find the contemplative who is the hero of 'Nicomachean Ethics' Bk 10 a strange and repellent being."[140] Clearly Aristotle's ethical hero is not socially directed and for that reason has been considered "distant" and even "calculative" by modern interpreters. However, it appears to be Aristotle's assertion that contemplation is the most continuous of activities: "We can contemplate truth more continuously than we can engage in any action,"[141] that puts into question the credibility of his philosophy. Kenny describes the position which conveys the idea that Aristotle was focused on contemplation as the one primary virtue the 'Intellectualist position'. And contrasts this with what he calls the 'Multi-virtuous position', which regards contemplation as being just one of a number of prominent virtues. So far as this work is concerned, however, the pre-eminence of contemplation does not arise from it being the most important out of a selection of important virtues, but because contemplation constitutes our guiding orientation towards reality, from which all virtuous activity naturally follows. What emerges from an examination of Kenny's analysis, and that of the other commentators he refers to, is that contemplation is perceived to be an external activity that one does, rather than an internal active state that one is 'being'. With the result that all of life is then seen to be lived on the same level, with different external activities all vying for the same physical time and space. Thus, Kenny's suggestion that following Aristotle's line of thinking, the contemplative whose neighbour's house caught fire would prefer to go on contemplating rather than help him put it out, seems to be implying that the physical activity of carrying buckets of water is on the same level as that of contemplating, and would necessarily displace it. There are surely two levels, or kinds, of activity here. The

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[137] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1109b 23; 1126b 3-4

[138] Ibid, 1115b 12 -13 1122b 6-7

[139] Aristotle explicitly distinguishes discursive thinking from contemplation on which it rests in *De Anima.* Bk III ch 5, and in *Metaphysics* Bk X 1052A 29-33. He makes the point that the divine intellect is continuously at work in all living things as the source and cause of their being. Sachs, *De Anima*, 34, "the discursive intellect that thinks things through belongs to the embodied soul, and decays and dies along with it (408b 25-29). But the discursive intellect is bound up with a contemplative intellect that must be in us but not of us."

[140] Kenny, *Aristotle On The Perfect Life*, 89.

[141] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a 15

fundamental inner activity, pertaining to 'thinghood', i.e., the activity of the soul 'being-at-work' perceiving and contemplating reality, and an external, superficial motion pertaining to something incidental- carrying buckets of water. The secondary, superficial motion is distinguishable from the former as it has its goal outside itself, putting out the fire, and is therefore not complete at each moment, as the former contemplative activity is. There isn't necessarily any conflict between them because they operate on different levels of being, since one is related to 'thinghood' and the other isn't. Whilst playing the flute does not actualise any potency with regard to my 'thinghood', since it is incidental to it, neither does it necessarily prevent or delay such actualisation, essentially because my 'thinghood' depends on inner activities that orientate me towards reality and not on external activities that don't. Consequently, whilst playing the flute may prevent me from carrying buckets of water and vice versa; neither of these activities necessarily prevent me from perceiving and contemplating reality.

The real danger, so far as contemplating is concerned, would seem to be our forgetting that there is an essential inner dimension to our 'thinghood', which we need to actively maintain. For, Aristotle specifically states that any failings regarding contemplation stem from our compound nature, i.e., from our potential to be distracted, which comes from within not from without. Thus, the suggestion that things like illness or loss of money are obstacles to contemplation fails to recognise that the equilibrium of the contemplative soul is raised above the impact of such things, because as Aristotle states, happiness is not about the ups and downs of life, but about something far more substantial. "If we were to follow along with the fortunes we would often call the same person happy and miserable in turns, making the happy person out to be a kind of chameleon or a structure built on rotten foundations."[142] Rather, it is possession of the enduring virtue of contemplation that belongs to the happy person, and those who are blessed spend their lives most continuously in contemplation. And, Aristotle adds, "this is the reason that forgetfulness does not encroach upon them."[143]

A further 'problem' concerning contemplation is raised by D. Devereux, who suggests that a contemplative lacking moral virtue has nothing to prevent him from ruthlessly pursuing his goal of contemplation by betraying a friend to gain a large sum of money, thereby assuring himself of years of leisure for philosophising.[144] But, as has been said, being an inner activity, contemplating doesn't have goals, it is one. And, with regard to the notion of a contemplative lacking moral virtue, as was pointed out earlier, according to Aristotle the virtues arise from within us as a result of our being in a right relationship with reality. And, therefore, if such virtues don't arise, then we are probably not in a right relationship and, consequently, can't be a contemplative. Since that right relation is a contemplative one, "the attitude of silent contemplation", as Aquinas described it, it is difficult to see how a contemplative attitude and a virtuous one could be separated. Martha Nussbaum points to a way out of the supposed problem concerning the continuous nature of Aristotelian

[142] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1100b 8
[143] Ibid, 1100 b 20
[144] D. Devereaux, 'Aristotle on the Active and Contemplative Lives,' Philosophy Research Archives 3(1977), 834-44': quoted in Kenny, *Aristotle On The Perfect Life*: 89

contemplation, by suggesting, "perhaps the best that one can say is that Aristotle like anyone who has been seriously devoted to the scholarly or contemplative life understood that thoroughly and properly followed its elements are such as to eclipse all other pursuits."[145] A problem with this suggestion, though, is that there is nothing scholarly or professional about Aristotle's understanding of contemplation; he specifically excludes learning from being an activity of the soul.[146] And, although in the 'Protrepticus' Aristotle acknowledges a distinction between the life of the philosopher and 'normal life', his philosophy is concerned with understanding reality and the love of wisdom which is open to everyone who has not been stunted or maimed. Aristotle's contemplative stance isn't about anything and therefore doesn't need any particular subject matter to sustain it, because, "the thinking that is just thinking by itself is a thinking of what is best just as itself...by partaking in what it thinks, the intellect thinks itself, for it becomes what it thinks by touching and contemplating it, so that the intellect and what it thinks are the same thing."[147]Aristotle is not reserving this 'thinking' solely for God, for he goes on to make the point that "the divine being is always in the good condition that we are sometimes in," because the "Being at work of the intellect is life." [148]Aristotle makes the same point in the 'Protrepticus' when he says that "not all men who experience pleasures while living enjoy life, but those who delight in the pleasure that comes from being alive,"[149] because the delight of living and the delights of life pertain to different levels of existence, with only the former being experienced by one who is actively 'being-at-work-staying-himself'. Accordingly, the activity of 'living life' is distinct from the activities within it, and, consequently, 'being alive' is like contemplating - "the delight derived from the activities of the soul."[150] Aristotle describes pleasure as a 'being-at-work' of an active condition in accord with nature and as such "pleasure is the active enjoyment of being what we are."[151] And immediately goes on to say, "it turns out reasonably that no pleasure is the product of art, since there is no art of producing any other way of being-at-work either."[152]

What also emerges in Aristotle's exposition of the fruits of contemplation, is its ontological significance as an 'entelecheia'- as the way of maintaining oneself as an integral whole: "The activity of our thoughts and of our intellect which is most true is stimulated by the most real of all realities – particularly if it preserves forever and without wavering the perfection that it receives."[153] Aristotle tells us that we have the power to contemplate prior to contemplation, just as we have the power of sight in order to see. However, in Book X

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[145] Martha Nussbaum, 'Aristotle', T.J. Luce ed. Ancient Writers (New York: 1982):403, quoted in Kenny, *Aristotle on the Perfect Life*: 89

[146] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1048b. Aristotle specifically excludes learning from the activities of thinghood, which include seeing, understanding and contemplating . These are complete at every moment, unlike learning. See Ronald Polansky in *Aristotle's Ontology*.

[147] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b 20

[148] Ibid, 1072b 28

[149] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, 85

[150] Ibid., 86

[151] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Sachs,139

[152] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1153a 25

[153] Aristotle, *Protrepticus* 87

of the 'Nicomachean Ethics' he gives an indication of the extraordinary depth of this power, which seems to point to an essential divine element in 'being human': "While the being-at-work of the intellect seems to be contemplative and aim at no end beyond itself, and to have its own pleasure (which increases its activity) ... Such a life would be greater than what accords with a human being, for it is not insofar as one is a human being that he will live in this way, but **insofar as something divine is present in him,** and to the extent that this surpasses the compound being ... and each person would even seem to **be** this part, if it is the governing and better part it would be strange, then, if anyone were to choose not his own life but that of something else."[154]Aristotle acknowledges that "God is superior to the human understanding,"[155] and that "God is always in a state of actuality, but the human understanding needs a principle to set it in motion."[156] However, once set in motion, what contemplation seems to points to is nothing less than 'knowing' God, since what it ushers in is a state of 'being' that is in accord with what is highest in man. In the last chapter of the 'Eudemian Ethics', Aristotle says, "one should conduct one's life with reference to one's superior, and more specifically with reference to the **active state of one's superior**.. a human being is by nature a compound of superior and inferior and everyone accordingly should conduct their lives with reference to the superior part of themselves. However, there are two kinds of superior: there is the way in which medical science is superior, and the way in which health is superior, the latter is the raison d'être of the former. It is thus that matters stand in the case of an intellectual faculty. For God is not a superior who issues commands, but is the raison d'être of the commands that wisdom issues."[157] What Aristotle seems to be indicating here is that the superior constituent of human life is the soul, and that to live in accordance with that superior element it is necessary that the soul be actively engaged in one's life, just having a soul is not enough. By living in such an internally active way we come to 'know' God, not in the way of having knowledge about him, but in the way of experiencing him. Accordingly, the purpose of the intellect is not to accumulate knowledge about God, because that would be akin to gathering medical knowledge, but to bring about the healthy state of 'being' in which we are actively 'knowing' God.

4.2.3 Change

It appears that there are activities of the soul, such as perceiving and contemplating, which both express and preserve our human 'thinghood'. They are not superadded to completed natures, but are actually constitutive of our 'thinghood' as individual human beings.[158] Nevertheless, according to Aristotle, all things with material can change, because by virtue of their materiality they hold within themselves the potential to be other than they presently are. Thus, change comes from what is potential, i.e., from what has the capacity to be other than conformed to form, and a being ceases to be so conformed when it is not engaged in the activities that constitute its 'thinghood'. For, as Aristotle said, 'thinghood' is what a

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[154] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b 20 – 1178a 4
[155] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1248a 29
[156] Ibid., 1248a 17 -21 trans., Kenny, *Aristotle On The Perfect Life* , 95
[157] Ibid., 1249 b 6 – 20 trans., Kenny: 99
[158] Ronald Polansky, ***Energeia in Aristotle's Metaphysics*** IX, 211

thing keeps on being in order to be at all, as identity stems from activity. Potency relates to fundamental internal change, to 'becoming other' and to 'coming into being', "everything changes from something that has being in potency to something that has being-at-work....also everything comes into being from what is, though from what is potentially but is not at work." [159] And whatever has potential to 'be-at-work', but is not so acting is, by default, engaged in relative 'non-being', because not to be at work in one's form of 'thinghood' is not to fully 'be' qua that 'thinghood'. If there is an essential element to 'thinghood', like the surface of a block, and that element falls away, the resultant thing is fundamentally altered; it is not a changed block, rather it is no longer a block. And the same consequences would seem to apply if that essential element is an activity, like a swimmer who is no longer swimming. For, as Aristotle says, "**being and not being** are meant in one sense by reference to the various ways of attributing being and in another by **reference to the potency or being-at-work of these or their opposites**."[160] Aristotle regarded it as a fundamental error of the ancients to fail to recognise that the change that results in becoming comes from the potentiality already inhering in 'being', because beings already hold within themselves the potential for change. And, therefore, to divide 'what is' into being on the one hand and nothing on the other leads to an impasse from which nothing can emerge, because inertia and constant motion are thereby viewed as fixed polarities, whereas in reality those elements are intermingled to varying degrees in all that exists. Accordingly, to recognise, as Aristotle did, that things can both 'be' and 'not be' at the same time, in reality though not in language,[161] is to open up the possibility for change: "we call something white or not white not through its wholly being so, but because most or the most important of its parts are so, and not to be in a certain condition is not the same thing as not to be in this condition wholly. And it is the same with being and not-being and the rest of the changes to a contradictory, since the thing will necessarily be in the one or the other of the opposites, but all the time is neither wholly.. **so one thing is always changing into another and it is never at rest. Such is the way of things that are moved within themselves**."[162] Natural beings are moved within themselves, because "they have in themselves a source of motion,"[163] and have their end within, since nature is teleological. However, having the source of motion within oneself is not an insular relation, since the impulse for that inner movement depends upon a perceptive openness to dynamic reality. Aristotle referred to this relation as a 'being-acted-upon' which is why he asserted that knowledge of the natural world should be contemplative and not productive, so that we are open to an affecting nature.

Since there is a teleological significance in 'being' according to form, it is the change towards 'being' other than according to form that is incidental: "The cause of what is incidental is the capability of material to be otherwise than it is for the most part."[164]

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[159] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1069b 10
[160] Ibid., 1051b 5
[161] To disclose the fact that something is tells us nothing about the state of its 'isness' or 'being', which is why Aristotle specifically distinguished 'thinghood' from both names and concepts.
[162] Aristotle, *Physics*, 240a 20
[163] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1064a 10
[164] Ibid., 1027a 15

Nevertheless, the capability of material to 'be otherwise than it is for the most part' can extend beyond the minor and incidental and become the major, determining part. In which case the resultant entity emerges more as a creation of what it isn't, according to nature, than of what it is, for deprivation, too, is a cause of form. As pointed out earlier regarding 'sickness', what begins as a deprivation can develop into a universal if sufficiently instantiated, and if we are all sick, then sickness becomes the new form - the 'new health' in effect. If matter can be according to form or according to the deprivation of form, in a cosmos that is constantly moving, the forms of 'thinghood', which by nature are organised into wholes, change, as deprivations affecting one form emerge into new forms of organisation, and matter that is no longer determined in accordance with the 'thinghood' of the composite being it constitutes, becomes more determined by the motion to be something else. Accordingly, any matter that loses the form of its 'thinghood', in the sense that it stops yearning to embody it, becomes unstable as its end is no longer within itself. As Blair puts it, "the lack of its end within it is what makes it lose its old internal end and internalise a new one – thus one form goes out of existence and another comes into being."[165] We are always a part of reality, by virtue of our materiality if nothing else. However, when we are not actively 'being present',[166] i.e., not perceiving and contemplating, which constitute the governing activity of our "being-at-work-staying-ourselves," the matter which we embody is, arguably, not within the active form of human 'thinghood'.[167] This then raises the question whether such a failing constitutes a deprivation, or lack, as far as our constituting, individuating form of human 'thinghood' is concerned. It is a significant question, because, whilst deprivation is derivative of form, and evidences something of an incapacity or lack as far as the primary form of 'thinghood' is concerned, "so deprivation is a certain kind of contradiction or incapacity, either marked off by itself or taken together with the material receptive of what is lacking,"[168] it also has the capacity to produce form.

Obviously change only has ontological significance if there is a way of 'being' that is 'being-true' that change can obstruct or distort, which, as Heidegger points out, is a metaphysical question of the purest kind. And one which Aristotle addresses in chapter 10 in Book IX of the 'Metaphysics', which Heidegger suggests is a placement that underscores the ontological significance of 'being-true', because this book is concerned with the 'being' and 'non-being' of entities, and the way that truth distinguishes them: "And since **being and not being** are meant in one sense by reference to the various ways of attributing being, and in another by reference to the potency or being-at-work of these or their opposites, **but the most governing sense is the true or the false**.....if something is, it is present in a certain way, and if it is not present in that way, it is not.."[169] Heidegger dwells on this statement, because he regards its location at the end of Book IX, which is the book concerned with the potency and 'being-at-work' of entities, i.e., with reality, not with thought, as an indication that 'being-true' pertains primordially to beings in

[165] Blair, *Energeia and Entelecheia: "Act" in Aristotle*, 100
[166] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048a 35
[167] Ibid., 1048 a30
[168] Ibid., 1055b 20
[169] Ibid., 1051b – 1052a

themselves and gives an indication of how beings must 'be' in order to be true. [170] For Heidegger the fact that Aristotle closes Book IX with chapter 10, interpreting 'being-true' as 'proper being', indicates that Greek metaphysics' fundamental conception of being here comes to its first and ultimate expression.[171] According to Heidegger, it follows that 'Being-true' means being in accordance with 'energeia', which in this work is understood in an active sense, i.e., as the 'being-at-work' of a being. And, although Heidegger interprets 'energeia', not in that active sense, but as a completed 'actuality', he still recognises that proper beings, according to 'energeia', are those which exclude every possible change, every possibility of becoming-other.[172] However, natural beings actively maintain themselves, not by statically resisting change, but by embracing and transcending it through constant movement. And, therefore, the 'constant presence' and 'enduring constancy' meant by 'ousia' is not the constancy of a fixed and durable entity, the static and completed existant, or 'actuality', which Heidegger sees as synonymous with 'parousia', but the constancy of a maintained activity, an enduring and long-suffering forbearance -whereby distorting influences are withstood. Accordingly, it is this dynamic reality that constitutes the activity of beings. And it is the effort of 'being-at-work-staying-themselves' that maintains them in their 'thinghood', as "the being that is true – the most proper being."

Aristotle recognised that despite nature being the primary 'for the sake of which' something is, man could impose his own 'for the sake of which' on things thereby challenging the 'telos' of nature: "we make use of everything there is as though it is for our sake, for we are also in some way an end, and 'that for the sake of which' is double in meaning."[173] And he saw that, "as well as nature there are things that come into being that are called products. And all products result from art, or from an aptitude, or from thinking."[174] Not only does this produced 'observer-relative' reality differ from nature in that it is 'unsouled', and therefore inactive, but, also, through its institutional nature it maintains its governance over our lives, by reinforcing and developing the thought-forms that brought it into being.[175] Nature differs from art, or 'techne,' in two fundamental respects as far as human 'thinghood' is concerned. Firstly, it is constantly in motion, being the inner impulse of 'thinghood'. And, secondly, the perfect and completed exemplars of 'entelecheia', in "beings-at-work-staying-themselves", only exist in nature, because teleology, as an inner impulse of reality, can only 'be' in the natural world. These distinctions are important, because it seems that in harnessing nature and replacing natural ends with productive ones we have supplanted an internal, teleological source of motion with an external, ateleological one: "in things that come from art we make the material for

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[170] Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 57

[171] Ibid., 58

[172] Ibid., 73 Heidegger refers to Book IX as the Book concerned with 'Actuality'.

[173] Aristotle, *Physics* 194a 30

[174] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1032a 30

[175] Wilhelm von Humboldt, *On Language - The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and its influence on the Mental Development of Mankind*, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 49 *"In itself [language] is no product (Ergon), but an activity (Energeia)"*. See chapter 6

the sake of the work, but in natural things it is in being from the beginning."[176] In a world increasingly dominated by manufacture and productivity, in which we appear to be more determined by the social ontology we have created than the intrinsic reality of the natural world, it appears that art, rather than assisting nature, is diverting it from its teleological path and supplanting a superior purpose with an inferior one. According to Aristotle, "all that comes into being according to nature comes into being for a purpose and furthermore comes into being for a superior purpose to that which comes into being through art. For nature does not imitate art, but art, rather, imitates nature. For art exists to assist nature." [177]

Our potencies are inherent strivings, not just random possibilities. They derive from what we are, or could be, and since they relate primarily to our individual 'thinghood' they cannot be socially or technologically replicated, "since there is no art of producing any other way of being-at-work either."[178] If we are not engaged in the work of our 'thinghood', perceiving and relating ourselves to reality, there would seem to be no possibility of withstanding the flux of change. Because, if 'to be human' means 'to be', and if our 'being' depends on our ability to perceive and 'be acted upon', by an animate perceptible reality, as our surroundings shift from a natural world to a technological one, our potential 'to be' in the way Aristotle understood it, will be compromised. And, instead, our reality becomes governed more by motions and historical productions moulding us and the patterns of our lives to an external construction. A question that therefore arises, given the increasing homogeneity and decreasing spontaneity of modern culture, is whether we now exist in a form of organised humanity, or 'social being', as "a large body and its members", as Nietzsche saw it, that is not in accordance with the active, individuating 'thinghood' of human 'being' presented by Aristotle. Since it is only by actively being what one is according to nature that one can be individuated as a distinct and separate this.[179]

[176] Aristotle, *Physics*, 194b 10
[177] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, 12
[178] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1153a 25
[179] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1041b 11

CHAPTER 5 AN EXPLORATION OF HEIDEGGEREAN BEING

5.1 The Limitations of Metaphysics

Heidegger contended that Being had withdrawn because it had been forgotten, due to the predominance of 'presence' in western metaphysics i.e., as a result of our preoccupation with the actuality, or existence, of things: "beings are considered what is actual," rather than questioning the 'why' and 'how' of Being itself. A further significant metaphysical deficiency, so far as Heidegger is concerned, involves the movement of history. As Heidegger believed, following Dilthey, that western metaphysics had also failed to recognise the ontological significance of history, which meant that factical life – life focused on performance and intrinsically historical - had no place within the western ontological tradition. Heidegger regarded this as a lacuna in metaphysics which the 'new thinking' of 'authentic historicality' would have to come to terms with and render accessible. And his intention in 'Being and Time' was to establish a new, more primordial historically focused ontology. The central concern of that alternative ontology was not the 'present-at-hand', ontical entity nature, the ground of ancient ontology, which Heidegger viewed as static and limited, but Dasein, whose factical life experience brought Being into question and made history an ontological reality. "Therefore *fundamental ontology*, from which along all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the *existential analytic of Dasein.*"[1]

In this chapter it is proposed to consider whether western metaphysics, as expressed in the thinking of Aristotle, is ontologically inadequate as Heidegger suggests, and whether as a result of that deficiency it is no longer capable of saying anything meaningful about human nature. Since, as both Aristotle and Heidegger recognised, 'being' and human nature are inextricably linked: "every .. thoughtful doctrine of man's essential nature is in itself alone a doctrine of the Being of beings."[2] However, contrary to Heidegger's assertion that the crux of the spiritual history of the West was reached in the questioning of Being, it is felt that in an ontological comparison between Heidegger's 'questioning' presentation of Being and Aristotle's more experiential exposition of actively 'being', it is the latter which points to a deeper understanding of human nature and its ineradicable relatedness to reality, and, consequently, appears more relevant to a consideration of the ontological challenges of modernity. For incorporated into Aristotle's understanding of man's metaphysical nature is the realisation of his ontological vulnerability and the recognition of the constant presence of the forces of change. As has been seen, it is not that the ancient Greeks were unaware of history, or that ancient ontology had no place for it. They simply did not deem history to be ontologically important, because Being did not reside there. Aristotle describes history as "incidental to being", and, consequently, close to 'non-being; like sophistry it effects a seeming rather than real 'being'. Accordingly, constituents of life produced by history, i.e., derived from activities incidental to 'being', that have come to form the substance of human existence, emerge as aspects of a deprivation of 'being', and, as such, are

[1] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 34 [14]
[2] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?* 79

potentially determining. Since, as has been seen, deprivation, too, is a source of form. The essential ontological point, however, concerns individuation, because the activities of individuation, whereby human 'thinghood' is expressed and maintained, are not externally focused performances; their primary concern is with 'being-acted-upon' rather than being productive in any way. And, consequently, future possibilities for 'authentic historicality', handed down by however revered a heritage remain possibilities and nothing essential to the potential of human nature. For Heidegger, however, the essence of being authentic is determined entirely by the realisation of future possibilities, because Dasein is not grounded in any intrinsic potential. "The essence of Dasein lies in its existence. Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not 'properties' present-at-hand.... they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that."[3]

Otto Pőggeler summarises the shortcoming of metaphysics revealed by Heidegger as follows, "it conceives of thinking as 'seeing' and of Being as a constant being-in-view, a constant presence; thus it cannot ascertain the realization of factical-historical life itself which cannot be brought to a standstill."[4] There, thus, appear to be three specific failings identified, all of which are inter-related, i.e., that metaphysics is concerned with 'seeing' rather than thinking; that what it 'sees' are existent, actual entities; and that there is, therefore, no place for the movement of history because that metaphysical landscape is, essentially, static and fixed. They are inter-related because it is asserted that it is metaphysics' preoccupation with 'seeing' static beings that has blinded it to the ontological significance of the movement of history. The implication being that ancient ontology, being essentially inert, is incapable of discerning movement, notwithstanding Aristotle's dynamic neologisms indicating otherwise. History derives its ontological significance from the fact of its discernible movement, and from the misperception that it is, and always has been, the sole animating force concerning human 'thinghood'. However, history only comes into view as operative because reality has been de-animated, demoted to the ontical, the 'present-at-hand' of mere 'environment', the "soil of history".[5] And in order to validate and maintain history's claim to be of primordial ontological significance it is necessary for reality to be denied its inherent dynamism and in order to achieve that it is necessary to project onto the subject matter of ancient ontology our contemporary vision of beings as fixed and static entities. At the same time re-interpreting Aristotle's dynamic ontological terminology, as conveyed in terms such as 'ousia' and 'energeia', in an inert fashion in order to accommodate that de-animated interpretation of reality. For, the metaphysical standstill is not the creation of ancient ontology, derived from its insistence that Being means seeing beings in 'fixed presence', but the creation of language which cannot express the dynamism inherent in reality, because "the way in which a thing possesses its existence [is] grammatically closed to us."[6] As Nietzsche realised, "conceptions are the graveyard of perceptions," because the stasis reality is brought to by language in such terms as 'existence' and 'actuality' are conclusions of thought and do not pertain to reality itself.

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[3] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 67 [42]
[4] Otto Pőggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, trans., Daniel Magurshak and Sigmund Barber (New York: Humanity Books, 1991), 29
[5] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 433 [382]
[6] Burrell, *Aquinas, God and Action*, 35

Accordingly, it would appear that our preoccupation with actuality over 'being', i.e., with the fact that something exists rather than with the activity that it is 'being', is a symptom of our changing relationship with reality, as a result of which we see things more as static, separate entities than as dynamic aspects of an underlying holistic movement. It is not that 'being' has withdrawn, but that it has been thought out of existence, or rather, out of the reality of 'being' and into the stasis of existence.

It is proposed to consider Heidegger's critique of western metaphysics under three headings, in accordance with the 'failings' identified above.

1. History
2. Seeing
3. Constant Presence

1. History

In his own rejection of metaphysics in favour of historical thinking, Wilhelm Dilthey, whose influence on Heidegger is evident in 'Being and Time', conceded that he was merely adhering to "the movement which, since the second half of the 18th century, has continued to negate metaphysics."[7] Dilthey was attempting to establish a study of human sciences, distinct from natural sciences and founded on epistemological grounds, and felt that metaphysics needed to be abandoned as it had not done justice to historical life, which formed the substance of human science. In his view it was the dynamism of life itself, by which he meant the complexity of social and cultural interconnections, which thwarted the metaphysical drive to explain reality through stable principles. For Dilthey life was, essentially, a historical experience in which intrinsic reality had little if any significance and he regarded metaphysics as no more than a conceptual system created by thought trying to explain it. It is, therefore, not surprising that he found thought incapable of giving an account of a reality beyond itself: "the metaphysical attempt to capture all reality in a valid system of concepts must fail because all thought is a function of the volitional-emotional-representational whole of life and cannot, then, go beyond this ground to explain it."[8] In contrast to the realism that shaped ancient ontology, Aristotle being of the view that reality needed to be apprehended in order for the mind to know itself, Dilthey believed that life was transparent and that through its emanations man had the capacity to know himself and the society and history that he created.

In 'Being and Time' Heidegger incorporated Dilthey's historical thinking through his correspondence with Count Paul Yorck of Wartenburg, Dilthey's philosopher friend. And, whilst Yorck did not make a scientific observation, but spoke, "from the knowledge of the character of Being of human *Dasein* itself," he provided a very clear statement concerning the ontological significance of history: "The fact that the total psychophysical datum lives rather than *is* is the germinal point of historicity, and a self-reflection which is directed not towards an abstract but rather toward the fullness of myself will find the historically

[7] Jacob Owensby, 'Dilthey – Husserl correspondence, 203' quoted in *Dilthey And The Narrative Of History* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994): 157
[8] Ibid., 162

determined. Just as I am nature, I am history."[9] In reflecting on Yorck's statement Heidegger surmised that what it brought into view was the domination of traditional ontology which, "originating from the ancient way of formulating the question of Being, fixes the ontological problematic within fundamental strictures."[10] And he concluded that, "only the present-at-hand of nature, and not the life of history is adequately grasped by ancient ontology." To Heidegger's way of thinking, life is intrinsically historical and, thus, it is history rather than nature that has primary and primordial ontological significance. As far as Heidegger and Dilthey are concerned, it is not that history is only now ontological and determining, but that it always has been, and that that fact has been hidden and, consequently, western metaphysics has never done justice to historical life. However, Heidegger does not take a progressive view of history; in many ways he believes that the best days of western civilisation are behind it. Rather, what he advocates for the authentic historicising of Dasein – a being who is authentic when properly available for its future possibilities – is a revering of the possibilities handed down by history, to which the 'they' of inauthentic world-history is blind. "Authentic existence is indifferent to the past and progress." "Authentic Being towards-death is the hidden basis of Dasein's historicality."[11] However, what is of primary importance so far as Heidegger's rejection of ancient ontology is concerned is the supposition that what is of primary ontological significance for Dasein – the being for whom Being is in question – is the realisation of future possibilities in action. Because, by focusing on external activities to be achieved, the meaning of life is directed outwards beyond itself.

According to Poggeler, it is "by reflecting upon primordial Christian religiosity as the model of factical life experience" that Heidegger obtains "the guiding concepts which present the structure of factical life."[12] And this is because Heidegger sees that man's life should be determined historically by means of the permanently inaccessible. Any meaning secured in life will lead to its ruination, because life will then no longer be performed with the correct attitude.[13] And the problem posed by metaphysics and the metaphysical conceptualisations that influenced early Christianity, as seen in Augustine's endorsement of neo-Platonism, is that they present an accessible and knowable understanding of Being, as God is enjoyed as the *summum bonum*. And the reason such an orientation must be destroyed is because, "a quietism accompanies the valuing and esteeming which extricates itself from factical life and seeks God as the rest."[14] This is why the language of Luther rejecting all notions that God can be seen through creation was so useful to Heidegger in his attempt to establish 'performance' as the essential element of factical life. For Augustine, however, what was essential about reality, from a religious perspective, was not simply what it revealed for contemplation, but that it provided the foundation of universal principles, through the rational insights of Greek philosophy.[15]

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[9] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 452 [401]
[10] Ibid., 454 [403]
[11] Ibid., 437 [386]
[12] Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, 25
[13] Ibid., 23
[14] Ibid., 27
[15] Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 3

2. Seeing

According to Heidegger, "since its earliest beginnings metaphysical thinking is oriented to seeing," and the problem with that is that it "thinks Being as a constant being-present-at-hand." [16] As a result, man not only fails to raise Being to a question, because he contents himself with what can be seen instead, but he also fails to establish a right relation with the world. For Heidegger it is thinking not seeing that is of primary metaphysical significance, because it launches and maintains the individual on the way to establishing the historical world of Dasein. It appears that for Heidegger perception is not consummated in the reality seen, but in what is subsequently disclosed in discourse: "Perception is consummated when one **addresses** oneself to something as something and **discusses** it as such. This amounts to interpretation in the broadest sense and on the basis of such interpretation, perception becomes an act of **making determinate.**"[17] Whereas for Aristotle perception is the defining activity of the soul and requires effort, since it allows reality to act upon and alter the perceiver, for Heidegger perception holds no such potential. As previously seen, Heidegger does not regard perception to be a significant metaphysical activity, essentially, because reality is not recognised as having anything to impart. From which it follows that the primary meaning of 'dunamis', so far as Dasein is concerned, is seen to be 'acting on another', rather than 'being-acted-upon' by reality itself.

In a later section of 'Being and Time', Heidegger considers the significance of perception that is not consummated in interpretation, under the heading 'curiosity'. Heidegger asks, "what is to be said about this tendency just to perceive?" [18] and suggests that it "concerns itself with seeing, not in order to understand what is seen (that is to come into a being towards it) but <u>just</u> in order to see." For Heidegger such simple seeing is, by its very nature, to be distracted by things and to seek abandonment in novelty. However, the deficient seeing that seeks distraction does not stem from an inadequacy in the act of perception per se, but from our inadequate capacity to truly see. In considering the ancient claim that the activity of contemplation is the source of our greatest happiness, Pieper makes the point that man is athirst for reality according to his nature and that this thirst is quenched by 'seeing', "our whole reward is seeing."[19] In contemplative knowing man "achieves a new status of Being," not as a result of what he discloses in discourse through interpretation and understanding, i.e., not as a result of anything that <u>he</u> does, but as a result of what is achieved in him simply through seeing. Since, in such ontological 'knowing', "the reality of the world becomes transformed into oneself."[20]

[16] Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, 29
[17] Heidegger, *Being and Time* 89 [62]
[18] Ibid., 214 [172]
[19] Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation.*, 64
[20] Ibid., 66

3. Constant Presence

According to Heidegger, the problem with ancient ontology is that it thinks Being as constant presence, as evidenced by its concern with the perception of beings. However, by conflating the terms 'ousia' and 'parousia' in his interpretation of what that metaphysics understands by 'being-human', he blocks an understanding of Aristotelian 'energeia'- the essential and indiscernible activity of 'thinghood' whereby beings are 'at-work-being-themselves' and, thereby, reduces an internally active entity to stasis. 'Energeia' denotes the work that cannot be seen and produces nothing; it is the continuous activity of the active soul.[21] For Heidegger, however, "the fundamental characteristic of work and working lies in this: that something comes to a stand to lie in unconcealment."[22] The work of the Aristotelian soul, however, is not to 'bring to a stand', or to 'lie in unconcealment', but 'to be' and 'to continue to be'. It appears to be this fundamental distinction regarding the discernible nature of work, and what it completes in production, that lies at the heart of the misinterpretation of the metaphysical term 'energeia'. As Heidegger recognises, "the way Being determines itself as actuality from activity and from work is obscure."[23] However, as Brentano said earlier, it is in our motion that our nature is realized, and, consequently, Aristotelian 'being' emerges not as a static, completed state, but as a dynamic and continuing process, in and by virtue of which we realise ourselves by actualising our potential. In the 'Topics' Aristotle hints at an inherent physicalism in his thinking,[24] and certainly the terms he coined for the specific task of conveying his dynamic metaphysics, 'energeia' and 'entelecheia', are derived from his 'Physics'.[25] And, as George A. Blair and Joe Sachs point out in their respective translations of his work, Aristotle deployed carefully crafted neologisms precisely to avoid the dogmatic application which later overcame them. They also point out that without understanding the inherent movement of these terms, his thought cannot be understood. In a similar fashion, the modern day physicist, David Bohm, in his work 'Wholeness and the Implicate Order', deploys the same device, the 'rheomode' – "the flowing form of speech," and for the same reason - in an attempt to avoid "the division of the totality of experience into separate named entities."[26]

Whilst Heidegger recognised the profound significance of the mistranslation of 'energeia' as 'actualitas': "Its significance underlies all history," as a result of which, "all western history is Roman and never Greek", he doesn't penetrate to the dynamic significance of 'energeia', because his metaphysical vision remains focused on fixed presence. In 'Metaphysics as History of being' Heidegger says of 'actuality', "beings are considered what is actual. The actual is the completed act or product of an activity."[27] However, the difficulty with

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[21] F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 62. "The ergon of man is the energeia of the soul according to logos."

[22] Martin Heidegger, 'Science and Reflection', trans. William Lovitt, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 161

[23] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 2

[24] Wolfgang Wieland, 'Die aristotelische Physik, (1962): 13-14, quoted in Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle*: 59

[25] See Joe Sachs, *Aristotle's Physics* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2004)

[26] David Bohm , *Wholeness and Implicate order* (London: Ark, Routledge, 1983), xii

[27] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 10

considering 'completion' in terms of a "completed act or a product of an activity", is that such expressions pertain to the mind's cognition of reality and not from the active, 'presencing' of reality itself, which is always changing. And as a result, the 'reality' captured in the completed act or product blocks any apprehension of the dynamic reality beneath. Consequently, 'completeness', which for Aristotle relates to an act as its fullness and perfection in **activity**, as expressed in the neologisms 'energeia' and 'entelecheia', is reduced to the mundane description of a past event, i.e., 'the completed act'. The distinction between the form of completeness which occurs within an ongoing act or process as its fullness and perfection **qua activity**, and the form of completeness which is understood as an actuality produced by a concluded activity, is of crucial metaphysical importance for understanding Aristotle's dynamic metaphysical vision. Because, whilst in productive activities that pursue goals beyond themselves, and are thereby deemed 'historical', completeness can be seen in terms of completed activities and the products of those activities, in activities which are not productive or externally directed, possessing an inner 'telos' related to the action itself, completeness pertains exclusively to the activity qua activity. The point is that 'historical self-making', whether authentic or not, being comprised of a multitude of possibilities actualised in completed acts, is unable to conceive of 'completeness' in this more holistic, active, 'trans-historical' sense. Both meanings of activity, the unhistorical and the historical, derive from the Greek word 'ergon',[28] which we understand today simply as work – the productive or functional form of activity. From 'ergon' Aristotle derived his neologism 'energeia', by the addition of the prefix 'en' meaning 'in' or 'within', meaning the 'inner activity' of a being which produces nothing. [29] Heidegger does recognise that creations of 'energeia' are capable of movement, but this movement appears to be entirely mechanistic and externally directed, and has no significance so far as the inner activity of 'being-at-work' is concerned: "This product is itself in turn active and capable of activity. The activity of what is actual can be limited to the capacity of producing a resistance which it can oppose to another actual thing in different ways. To the extent that beings act as what is actual, Being shows itself as actuality".[30]

5.2 Onto-theology

Having failed in his attempt to find a 'fundamental ontology', Heidegger came to the view that metaphysical thinking was historically determined and that the metaphysics of a particular epoch was the product of the thinking of that age, or rather, a reaction to the determinative thinking of the previous era. He believed that beings were, essentially, 'actualised', or grounded, and then variously described as history progressed through different epochs of thought. The phrase Heidegger coined in recognition of the distinction between the 'whatness' of beings expressed in their essence and the 'thatness' of beings expressed in their existence was Onto-theology:[31] Onto – for the ontology or ground which

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[28] F.E.Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 61

[29] Energeia 'being-at-work' – "an ultimate idea that all being is 'being-at-work and that without that activity a being would cease to be. This activity is an ongoing state complete at every moment."

[30] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 2

[31] Kant used the term 'Ontotheology' in response to Anselm's 'proof' of the existence of God, – to express the attempt to derive reality from a concept

Heidegger regarded as the basis of the essence of all entities, i.e. their 'whatness', and theology as representing the justificatory theory for their existence, i.e., their 'thatness'. "The essential constitution of metaphysics is based on the unity of beings as such in the universal" – i.e., ontology "and that which is highest" – i.e., theology.[32] These two static outposts of metaphysical thought Heidegger regarded as setting the parameters of historical thinking; "Since the early days of western thought being has been interpreted as the ground or foundation in which every entity as an entity is grounded."[33]And, as far as Heidegger is concerned, it is this fundamental misinterpretation of Being, in terms of the ground and unity of beings, that has led to the onto-theological constitution of metaphysics, as a result of which metaphysics has unified our successive historical epochs, by anchoring our historical intelligibility within onto-theological parameters.[34]

Having determined that metaphysical thinking grounds entities, by considering beings rather than Being itself, Heidegger asks, "how did it happen that Being was pre-stamped as ground ?"[35] And concludes that the metaphysics of Aristotle is responsible for this two fold development: "Metaphysics represents the beingness of entities in a twofold manner. In the first place, the totalities of entities as such with an eye to their most universal traits, but at the same time also the totality of entities as such in the sense of the highest and therefore divine entity. In the metaphysics of Aristotle, the unconcealedness of entities as such has specifically developed in this two fold manner. (c.f. Met 3.5.10)" [36] The text Heidegger here refers to is the book in which Aristotle sets out the impasses, or problems, involved in attempting to think through a metaphysics of 'being'. Because, for Aristotle, an impasse is the place where thinking begins, not where it ends: "those who inquire without first coming to an impasse are like people who are ignorant of which way they need to walk."[37] Aristotle concludes that book by pointing out that the sources of knowledge he is concerned with are not the sources predicated in a universal way, but the sources prior to them, i.e., sources in reality and not what can be predicated of reality through universals; he is not concerned with 'universal traits', but with universal 'being': "nothing that belongs to anything universally is thinghood."[38] And earlier in Book 3 Aristotle specifically states that universality is not 'being', "It is not possible for either oneness or being to be a single genus of things."[39] Aristotle makes the point that "the universal is a reconstruction in speech of the form, while the form itself is present directly to the perceiving or contemplating soul," because, "perceptible things we know directly by the contemplative intellect or by sense perception."[40] Thus the primary universal Aristotle is seeking would seem to concern holistic perception rather than conceptual thought.

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[32] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 61
[33] Ibid., 32
[34] Iain D.Thomson, *Heidegger on Onthotheology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2
[35] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* 57
[36] 'Martin Heidegger – 'Pathmarks,' (1998), 287 ed. William McNeill: quoted in Thomson. *Heidegger on Ontotheology*: 32
[37] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. 995a 34-37
[38] Ibid., 1039a
[39] Ibid., 998b 22-27
[40] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1036a10 and 1036a8

In examining Heidegger's onto-theological interpretation of Aristotle's thinking it is proposed to examine the texts he reproduces in his works to consider, firstly, whether or not these texts are representative of Aristotle's metaphysical thinking, and, secondly, to question whether an alternative interpretation is available. Having considered the texts and Heidegger's analysis of them, it is then intended to examine Heidegger's attempt to trace the genealogy of onto-theological thinking. What it is hoped will emerge is not only that Aristotle's metaphysics does not present the static 'grounding of entities' Heidegger suggests, but is itself derived from an onto-theological awareness, by virtue of which Aristotle sought a new departure beyond the constraints of language and the combining and separating of thought. As Sachs points out "Aristotle does not argue from the thinkable to the existent, but uncovers another way of Being that transcends and governs both the thinkable and the existent."[41] What it is sought to show is not that Aristotle's thinking is not a grounding ontology, because it is, but that its ground is not the stasis of actuality reducible to 'whatness', as Heidegger suggests. Rather, for Aristotle, man is grounded in the potency of 'being' and 'becoming', which leans more towards 'thatness' than 'whatness', since it is in our activities that our identities come to light. As Edel previously pointed out, the potency in which we are grounded "is a ground because it is a ground for some activity."[42] For, "things do not possess motion as something additional to themselves; they are or become things-in-motion."[43] Aristotle's primary interest was not in the universal ground of beings, as a common trait shared by the many, but in dynamic reality itself. And therefore if ontology is to be understood as the search for a shared commonality, so far as Aristotle is concerned that search is for a shared way of 'being' rather than any sort of 'whatness' or essence. It is not a universal ground for entities that Aristotle is seeking, but a universal source, i.e., their 'thatness' not their 'whatness'. Aristotle is not concerned with the argument concerning universals and particulars and is not trying to derive the one from the other, but attempting to uncover another way of being that transcends them both, i.e., 'being' "as it is in its own right."[44] The way Aristotle takes is not through language, but through experience. He is trying to "open up the possibility of a new way of being that would belong to form, active and causal enough to be responsible for the way things are, yet stable and independent of those things."[45]

The main works containing Heidegger's onto-theological analysis are the essay, 'Metaphysics as History of Being' written in 1941 and published in 'The End Of Philosophy' and 'The Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics', written as a seminar in 1957 and published in 'Identity and Difference'. In the later seminar Heidegger sets out the position as follows, "when metaphysics thinks of beings with respect to the ground that is common to all beings as such, then it is logic as onto-logic. When metaphysics thinks of beings as such as a whole, that is, with respect to the highest being which accounts for everything, then it is logic as theo-logic. Because the thinking of metaphysics remains

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[41] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs, xx
[42] Edel, *Aristotle's Theory Of The Infinite*, 36
[43] Ibid., 35
[44] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs, xvii
[45] Ibid., xxiv

involved in the difference which as such is unthought, metaphysics is both ontology and theology in a unified way, by virtue of the unifying unity of perdurance."[46]

Heidegger opens 'Metaphysics as History of Being', with the statement, ''Being means that beings are, and are not non existent." To which he adds, "Being names 'that' as the decisiveness of the insurrection against nothingness,"[47] which raises the question how 'nothingness' is to be understood, whether as 'non-existence' or as 'non-being'. For, in a dynamic Aristotelian cosmos, which recognises a spectrum of potential and actual beings, to say that something exists does not satisfy the question concerning their 'being'. If the 'Being' Heidegger refers to here is understood in the Christian sense, which sees us as creatures made out of nothing, then it is our created state, the fact of our existence, that satisfies the decisiveness of that insurrection. If, however, 'being' is understood in the active Aristotelian sense, the insurrection against nothingness requires something more than factual existence; it requires actively 'being'. In which case, 'the insurrection' would seem to relate to something more than a single creative event, rather insurrection would emerge as a continuing feat. Heidegger takes the former, Christian view, in keeping with his historical view of Dasein and its existential possibilities, and goes on to say, "so decisively has Being allotted beings to itself (in Being) that this does not need to be thought expressly."[48] However, it is precisely the form of this allotment and its degree of decisiveness that occupy Aristotle's deepest thinking, from which he concludes that the activity of 'being', by virtue of which beings maintain themselves in their 'thinghood', is both effortful and continuous. This is an important point as it goes to the heart of the metaphysical significance of beings; for the fact that there are beings, i.e., that they exist, does not answer the question of their 'being'. Accordingly, what Aristotle's thinking enables us to consider are the ontological repercussions for a being who does not consciously maintain itself and, consequently, by default or deprivation, allows its latent potential, which it has not actualised by realising its 'thinghood', to become actualised in and through another form of being. Since for Aristotle, deprivation too operates like form. However, the significance of this inner dynamic aspect of Aristotle's metaphysics does not emerge in Heidegger's analysis, because he does not engage with the question of 'thatness' posed by the effortful inner activity of 'energeia'. Heidegger's view of Being is essentially one of 'presence' and, accordingly, 'energeia' comes to be interpreted in terms of 'enduring presence' and 'presencing', i.e., as a discernible aspect, rather than as an inner activity, of beings. And, since for Heidegger, Being is disclosed in and by discourse, there appears to be no remaining ontological question of 'thatness' that falls to be considered, beyond the obvious fact of existence. For Heidegger doesn't recognise the dynamic nature of 'being' in man, or indeed anywhere in nature: "nowhere in beings is there an example of the active nature of Being."[49]

In Book IX of the 'Metaphysics' Aristotle considers how we know the truth of things as they are in themselves and suggests that "the true or false is this: touching and affirming

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[46] Heidegger, *The Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics*, 70
[47] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 1
[48] Ibid., 1
[49] Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, 66

something uncompounded is the true (for affirming is not the same thing as asserting a predication) while not touching is being ignorant,"[50] which would seem to suggest that Aristotle is seeking a deeper more perceptive form of 'knowing' than the discursive. The ontological significance of this is obviously that if the primary understanding of 'being true' is restricted to the purely linguistic - to what is given as a disclosure in discourse - then the metaphysical nature of 'being', as an activity we engage in, cannot be penetrated. Whilst truth and falsehood do reside in propositions, a man can surely 'be' false, as Yima was, without enunciating a lie. For, as previously seen, the antithesis of the primordial truth of 'aletheia' is not falsehood, but ignorance; an ignorance that stems from a failure to affirm the truth of reality, thereby revealing that there is a dimension of primordial truth and 'being' which calls to be articulated, but which cannot be reduced to language. [51]

Heidegger's approach to Being, like Plato's, appears to be from ideas or beliefs to reality; he suggests in 'Being and Time', that, "theology is seeking a more original interpretation of the being of the human being toward God prescribed from the meaning of faith and remaining within it."[52] Whereas Aristotle begins from what is closest to us and from his realisation that reality is composed of motion and change, which is why the neologism, 'energeia' is deduced from the 'Physics', "as the necessary condition of any change or becoming,"[53] which must mean that human beings, as part of nature, too, have such transformative potential. However, because Heidegger concludes, "beings are. Their Being contains the truth that they are. The fact that beings are gives to beings the privilege of unquestioned. From here the question arises as to what beings are,"[54] he doesn't see the physically derived origin of 'energeia', from Aristotle's observations of nature, and its inherent transformative potential. Accordingly, when Heidegger questions the origin of the term 'energeia', "how should he [Aristotle] reach the concept of the individual real being's presence, if he doesn't previously think the Being of beings in the sense of the primordially decided essence of Being in terms of presencing in unconcealment?"[55] he concludes that, "the same essence of Being presencing, which Plato thinks for the **koinon,** [the many] in the **idea** is conceived by Aristotle for the tode ti [the particular] as energeia".[56] However, Aristotle's interest in the particular existent, the 'tode ti', over the thinkable universality of the many, the 'koinon', is not part of his metaphysical thinking, but his logic. The 'tode ti', which is the 'this' or 'that' revealed in unconcealment: "that which comes forth to meet perception as a ready-made or independent whole,"[57] in itself conveys nothing of its 'being'. Rather, for Aristotle, it was a being's active indiscernible 'thinghood' which determined its 'being' prior to any conceptual distinction between 'whatness' and 'thatness' being made.

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[50] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051b 20
[51] Ibid., 1051b 25
[52] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 30 [10]
[53] Aristotle, *Physics*, Bk 1 ch 7
[54] Heidegger, 'Recollection in Metaphysics', *The End Of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 81
[55] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 9
[56] Ibid., 9
[57] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs lix

In his attempt to elucidate the metaphysical distinction between 'whatness' and 'thatness', which he regards as "the distinction that begins the history of metaphysics,"[58] Heidegger appropriates the language of scholasticism, i.e., 'essentia' and 'existentia, essentially because such a distinction does not exist in Greek. "The origin of the distinction of 'essentia' and 'existentia', remains concealed, expressed in the Greek manner: forgotten."[59] However, Heidegger suggests that the distinction is easily traced to the thinking of Aristotle, "who brought the distinction to a concept".[60]Heidegger explains, "*Essentia* answers the question *ti estin* what is (a being)? *Existentia* says of a being *hoti esti*: that it is."[61] Heidegger suggests that "presence in the primary sense is Being which is expressed in the *hoti estin*: that something is, *existentia*: as opposed to presence is the secondary sense *ti estin*: what something is *essentia*."[62] However, this two fold ousiological construction of 'thatness' and 'whatness' is not Aristotle's. The word Aristotle uses for what something is, metaphysically speaking, is a single term which transcends the 'thatness'/'whatness' dichotomy of language. It is not 'ti esti', which is the generalised answer to the question about what something is, but 'ti en einai' which means 'what it is for something to be.' [63] Because for Aristotle, 'what' we are cannot be distinguished from the activity by virtue of which we are 'being' what we are; for, as previously pointed out, our identity is our activity. And this is why 'being' and existence cannot be conflated, because, as Burrell explains, language can tell us that something exists, but not how it is existing, and therefore the 'thatness' of reality contained in 'being' is lost in simply an acknowledged fact of existence, which is why Sachs specifically rules out the word 'essence' as a translation of 'energeia'.

Essentially, for Heidegger, "metaphysics is Platonism,"[64] and it is Plato's thinking that remains decisive for the changing forms of philosophy, as far as Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle's metaphysics of 'energeia' is concerned. Heidegger suggests that "what Plato thought as the true, and for him sole, beingness of beings (*ousia*), presence in the manner of *idea (eidos)* now moves to the secondary rank within Being." i.e., as 'energeia'. As a result, 'eidos' and 'energeia' are said to convey, respectively, the 'presence' and 'presencing' of Being. Thereby, providing a phenomenological distinction between what is immediately given in outward appearance, 'presencing', i.e., Aristotelian 'energeia', and what persists within it, 'presence', Platonic 'eidos': "**Being is presence as the showing itself of outward appearance. Being is the lasting of the actual being in such outward appearance** This double presence in-sists upon presence, and thus becomes present as constancy: enduring, lasting."[65] [Heidegger's emphasis] However, a problem with the two aspects of presence Heidegger seeks to convey in 'double presence', i.e., the 'presencing', or 'showing' of outward appearance – 'energeia' and the enduring lasting of 'presence'-

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[58] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 1
[59] Ibid., 6
[60] Ibid., 4
[61] Ibid., 4
[62] Ibid., 7
[63] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs lix, 'what it is for something to be' is '*ti en einai*'
[64] Heidegger, *Time and Being*, 57
[65] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 9

'eidos', is that both meanings, i.e., of activity and endurance, are conveyed in the Aristotelian neologisms of 'energeia' and 'entelecheia', ('entelecheia' being what 'energeia' naturally leads into if sustained), which, presumably, was Aristotle's reason for coining them. Heidegger seems to be presenting 'energeia' and 'eidos' as differentiated hierarchical aspects of reality, i.e., respectively the unhidden and hidden aspects of nature, even though neither 'energeia' nor 'eidos' convey the discernible element of every day appearance. Translating 'energeai' as actuality would satisfy the need for a discernible and static aspect of nature, but would not convey what Aristotle intends, as the resultant being would thereby be cut off from its own dynamic nature and made dependent on an external animating source – 'eidos'. According to Aristotle, endurance is not achieved by the fact of actuality, but by the continuing of activity of 'being'. For Aristotle 'presencing', is an activity of 'being', not discernible in outward appearance, and therefore it can't manifest in explicate everydayness, as the 'showing of outward appearance'. Rather, 'being-at-work is something's being present in activity,"[66] those activities being seeing, contemplating and understanding, as far as human 'being' is concerned. Accordingly, the inner activity of 'energeia' is not something superadded to 'eidos'- Plato's notion of form, which Aristotle explicitly rejects in the 'Metaphysics' on the ground that such forms are not in beings, but an entirely different way of understanding the reality of form.

The philosopher John Austin describes the Aristotelian vision of 'being' as "like breathing only quieter", which, from a phenomenological perspective, is quite accurate, because activities like perceiving and contemplating, which are here understood to be essential aspects and activities of human 'thinghood', are clearly not disclosed in any outward appearance, since the whole activity is taking place within. Aristotle is not attempting to convey endurance in what is materially present, in what has 'come to a stand', but in enduring activity, in the 'continuing to be', as expressed in the neologism 'entelecheia' – 'being-at-work-staying-itself' and its pun on 'endelecheia' meaning continuous. The fact that 'telos' is contained within the activity, 'en-**tel**-echeia' is intended to show that the end is in the activity qua activity and not in any produced end. It is by virtue of engaging in the inner activity of 'being' – 'energeia', and its sustained development as 'entelecheia' that a being maintains its 'thinghood'. However, as previously seen, Heidegger dismisses any notion of a being actively experiencing Being, and remains committed to the notion of Being as presence, potentially disclosable to Dasein. Heidegger supports this 'double presence' – "the distinction of a twofold ousia (presence)"[67] of 'presence' and 'presencing' by reference to the logical distinction Aristotle drew in the 'Categories' concerning universals and particulars.[68] "The distinction of a twofold ousia (presence) has become necessary. The beginning of the fifth chapter of Aristotle's treatise on the 'categories' expresses this distinction." However, the distinction drawn in this logical work between 'prote ousia' and 'deuteria ousia' is concerned with what can be predicated and not with metaphysical distinctions. Therefore, whilst, "within substance Aristotle distinguishes, 1, primary substance e.g. a particular man or horse from 2, the secondary substances of

[66] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1048a 30
[67] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 6
[68] Aristotle 'Categories, 2a 11', trans. W.D. Ross: quoted in *Metaphysics as History of Being*: 6

species or genera in which primary are included," the relation being depicted here is "the relation of universal to particular,"[69] which, as previously pointed out, Aristotle regarded as an impasse to be penetrated by metaphysics if the primary nature of 'being qua being' is to be comprehended. Because, as Aristotle said, "nothing that belongs to anything universally is 'thinghood', and none of the things attributed as common properties signifies a this, but only an of-this-sort."[70] And whilst individual things are important to Aristotle, since independent self-sustaining things are the exclusive creation of nature, it is not as a particular in relation to a universal that they are important, since that simply refers to the names that they bear and says nothing about their 'being'.

Heidegger sees the 'ousia' of the individual, which for Aristotle is its 'thinghood', phenomenologically, in the form of presence, in what it presents: "lies present, the persisting of the individual."[71]And suggests that it is Aristotle's metaphysical conception that sees the, "individual actual being as that which truly presences,"[72] because, for Heidegger, 'ousia' is synonymous with 'parousia' and means presence. Accordingly, Heidegger asks, "how should Aristotle be able at all to bring the ideas down to actual beings if he has not in advance conceived the individual actual being as that which truly presences?"[73] However, as previously pointed out, Aristotle's metaphysics is derived not from the application of concepts or idealised forms, but from his observations concerning reality. Accordingly, his approach to form "is always from nature, or change, or the way the world is."[74] What the individuated being of nature is 'being' concerns Aristotle, which is an inner activity that transcends the 'whatness'/'thatness' dichotomy. The activity of 'being,' which is the focus of Aristotle's dynamic ontology, pertains to 'beings of nature', which actually are purposes in themselves and are not simply beings with purposes, because, "Aristotle's 'teleology' is nothing but his claim that all natural beings are self-maintaining wholes."[75] Accordingly, when Heidegger thinks 'entelecheia' in terms of the coming to rest of a house, he is not thinking of 'entelecheia' in the primary manner which Aristotle intends for beings. "Entelecheia' is the consummate activity of 'thinghood' – its 'being-at-work-staying-itself."[76] It cannot properly be possessed by a product, particularly one without motion, because produced things do not have 'being' in that primary sense. And although Aristotle also applied 'entelecheia' to motion, recognising motion as "a complex whole and an enduring entity" in itself, the 'being-at-work-staying-itself' of motion qua motion is necessarily incomplete since it remains motion. Although Heidegger recognises the teleological element of 'entelecheia' as "having itself-in-the-end", he sees that end in the resting of what is produced,[77] as the "containing of presencing." Accordingly, a house that is built is, "having its present in its outward appearance and

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[69] W.D. Ross, *Aristotle – a Complete Exposition of his Works and Thought* (New York: Meridian Books Inc. 1959), 28
[70] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1039a
[71] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 7
[72] Ibid., 9
[73] Ibid., 9
[74] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs, 22
[75] Ibid., liii
[76] Ibid., li
[77] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 5

through its outward appearance."[78] For Heidegger sees the effort of 'energeia' directed outwards in terms of productive work – 'ergon', rather than inwards, in non-productive activities of the soul: "The house there **is** an **ergon.** 'Work' means what is completely at rest in the rest of outward appearance – standing, lying in it – what is completely at rest in presencing in unconcealment." Heidegger describes this work as, "a work in the sense of that which is placed in the unconcealment of its outward appearance and endures thus standing or lying. To endure means here: to be at rest as work."[79]It seems that in Heidegger's thinking the enduring of 'entelecheia', which for Aristotle is an effortful and continuous activity, is viewed externally in a static sense as what is unconcealed by work or effort, as what "presences in unconcealment."[80] And thus, what Aristotle intends to be complete in continuous activity, i.e., in activity qua activity, comes to be completed in the stasis of a completed act.

In the 'Sophist' the Eleatic stranger suggests that the resolution to the conundrum of our knowledge of reality, i.e., essentially how we can know anything when everything is in the state of flux, lies in finding a way of approaching Being though thinking rest and motion together.[81] Heidegger seems to be seeking an accommodation of both those aspects in a reality which can be disclosed in 'unconcealment', through the hidden 'presence' of 'eidos' on the one hand and the discernible 'presencing' of 'energeia' on the other, and, thus, seems to be adopting a Platonic approach to the problem and contemplating two modes of reality: "Both modes of **ousia, idea** and **energeia,** form in the interplay of their distinction the fundamental truth of all truth of beings," as "Being announces itself in these two modes."[82] It appears to have been Aristotle's insight, however, to seek the reconciliation of rest and motion by penetrating beings themselves, recognising within them a spectrum of 'being', containing degrees of potential, with 'rest' emerging as a conclusion of constant and stable activity. Aristotle saw that reality had to be penetrated rather than transcended, because he realised, as did Nietzsche, that the supposed 'vitalising force' of a distinct suprasensory world was more imagined than real, and that a metaphysics not rooted in reality was vulnerable to the ebb and flow of imagination.[83]

Heidegger's metaphysical vision remains focused on presence rather than on 'being', as his tracing of the genealogy of onto-theological thinking would seem to bear out. The fundamental question Heidegger asks is a phenomenological one, "how does presencing have the difference between the 'pure nearness of lasting'" and the "showing itself of outward appearance' within itself?"[84] To which the answer Heidegger gives is, "obviously the twofoldness of the [metaphysical] question about being must result from the way the being of entities manifests itself."[85] The image Iain D. Thomson uses to convey this dual presencing of - 'dynamic showing' in emergence, and more 'passive lasting' in endurance,

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[78] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 6
[79] Ibid., 5
[80] Ibid., 5
[81] Plato, *Sophist* 249 c-d . Sachs suggests that this observation influenced Aristotle.
[82] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 10
[83] Heidegger, 'The Word of Nietzsche: God Is Dead' in, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 61
[84] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 8
[85] Heidegger, 'Kant's Thesis on Being', 340: quoted in Thomson, *Heidegger On Ontotheology*: 36

is that of time lapse photography, filming the blooming, followed by the sustained bloom, of a flower, but laments that Heidegger does not actually explain the distinction he later comes to formalise between Anwesen – 'presencing' and Anwesenheit – 'presence.'[86]

Having concluded that onto-theological thinking is phenomenologically rooted, Heidegger assumes that its origin is to be found in the distinction in man's primordial awareness of presence, as Being is perceived to be essentially self-manifesting. The difficulty with such a view is not simply that man is reduced to a mere observer, a purveyor of perspectives, rather than being a participant in reality itself, but, as Thomson points out, the onto-theological project then emerges as something never ending.[87]As the clearing in which Being gives itself is revealed to be multi-faceted, offering numerous other perspectives to consider, other roads to follow, which is what Heidegger subsequently does in his studies of such pre-Socratic thinkers as Parmenides and Heraclitus. And whilst these thinkers offer a great deal of insight regarding the primordial determinative power of 'physis' and 'aletheia', as Aristotle was aware, our difficulty appears to relate to our own preconceived idea about the nature of reality as something ontologically detached from us. The blind spot in our metaphysical vision, that Aristotle saw, through his refusal to accept the de facto presumptions of inert existence, concerns the enigmatic question of 'thatness' that Heidegger returned to again and again in 'The End of Philosophy'. It is our presumed understanding of 'thatness', our assumption that it is answered by the bare fact of existence that convinces us that we are ontologically complete, actualised entities, and that prevents us from discerning its determinative power. For Heidegger the unquestioned nature of 'thatness' relates to Being, but not to beings, "thatness remains unquestioned everywhere in its nature, not, however, with regard to actual beings (whether they are or not)."[88] For Heidegger 'thatness' relates to transcendence, but not to reality, to God, but not to man, because, with regard to beings, "whether they are or not", is regarded as self-evident; a question answered in full by the bare fact of their existence, with no other question of 'thatness' seen to pertain. The essential metaphysical questions thus become removed to a transcendental realm, rather than the lived realm of human experience. For Aquinas, however, our cognitive difficulties concerning the understanding of being "stem from our inadequate perceptive powers," [89] because, "we cannot conceive the meaning of 'to be' otherwise than by pointing out that which 'to be' is in the case of the only beings given in experience."[90]

The trend of Heidegger's thinking was away from metaphysics; he concluded in one of his final works, 'Time and Being', written in 1962, that Being is simply not accessible metaphysically and had to be experienced. In the term Heidegger applied for this direct, active, relation - 'Appropriation', he appears closer to the 'sensory' thinking of Aristotle, for whom, like Aquinas, the higher aspects of reality could not be known without sense,

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[86] Thomson, *Heidegger and Ontotheology*, 37
[87] Ibid, 39
[88] Heidegger, *Metaphysics as History of Being*, 11
[89] Thomas Aquinas, 'In duodecim libros metaphysicorum expositio' 2.1 no 286', quoted in Josef Pieper, *Living The Truth*: 59.
[90] Etienne Gilson, *The Elements of Christian Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1960),256

because 'noesis' – the intuitive connection between man and the divine principles of reality, is initiated in his experience of the real world.[91] Heidegger ultimately concluded that the origin of the difference between Being and beings cannot be thought within the scope of metaphysics. And it is, therefore, not surprising that he concludes his onto-theological seminar by expressing a preference for the divine God of god-less thinking over the causative God of philosophy: "God-less thinking which must abandon the God of Philosophy is thus perhaps closer to the Divine God." [92] For this is "the one who inspires awe and can be worshipped." Whereas, Aristotle's God of philosophy is perceived to be not uncanny enough to inspire awe and necessitate the "stepping back from Being." According to Ted Sadler, "Aristotle does not seem concerned to preserve the mystery of Being,"[93] because he has not provided room for existentially significant motifs such as anxiety etc. Thus, the relation between awe and anxiety emerges as adequate verification of the authenticity of an approach to Being. However, what underlies the fact that Aristotle and Heidegger approach the question of Being from different metaphysical directions is that they have different conceptions of human 'thinghood'. For Aristotle it is the fact that "the soul is the form-giving principle of the body,"[94] that makes man receptive to all the forms of the cosmos as a matter of nature.[95] For Heidegger, however, the human being who relates to Being is the 'homo humanus' - man stripped of his animal nature, the being who thinks and is open to Being disclosed in language and thought. He observes reality and thinks about it, but does not appear to be a participant in it. In 'Being and Time' Heidegger stresses that man's preoccupation with beings has occluded his understanding of Being, but, as previously pointed out, the opposite claim could also be made. In that through our idealised theological preconceptions of Being we have replaced a causative ontological connection with God with a psychological one, as the real metaphysical realm has been subsumed in psychology. The significance of the reciprocal relationship between Being and 'being' goes to the heart of Aristotle's 'Metaphysics', which is concerned with "the highest being, the cause of being and being itself in its own right all fused into a single subject of inquiry."[96] Aristotle called this work 'Theology' because he regarded man as a participant in divine activity. Aristotle saw the source of man's being in the divine, which his being a creature of nature did not in any way negate, because the God of theology is also the God of ontology, and without the latter, the former becomes vulnerable to the imagination. When Being became a transcendental notion in the Middle Ages, the ontological connection was severed, as the subject of theology no longer needed to be perceptible in nature. Because, as Heidegger points out, God-less thinking about the Divine

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[91] Aquinas, *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*,.6. 3. "Although divine revelation raises us up to a level where we perceive realities otherwise hidden from us, we are nonetheless never lifted so high as to perceive these realities any other way than through the world of the senses." See F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 121, Josef Pieper, *Living The Truth*, 95

[92] Heidegger, *On Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics*, 72

[93] Sadler, *Heidegger And Aristotle*, 180

[94] Pieper, *Living The Truth*, 94. The notion that the soul is the form-giving principle of the body, -*Anima forma corporis, was* almost canonised in the High Middle Ages. It showed that man was *capax universi* – able to know the universe, "man's spirit is ordered towards the body and the senses and thus the material world".

[95] Ibid., 95

[96] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Sachs, xix

God does not need reality; and, as has been seen, Luther shunned it in favour of 'inner exploration'. However, when the ontological connection has been severed there is no basis for a metaphysical relation, because reality cannot be derived from belief. The fact that every where the ontological question is raised, theological questions are already there, points to a primordial connection prior to any psychologism, and it is towards an understanding of this ontological relation that Aristotle directs his philosophical concern.

5.3 Dasein

In endeavouring to retrieve the question of Being from the oblivion into which it had fallen, Heidegger proposed an existential analysis of Dasein – the being for whom Being is already in question.. The fact that Being is being questioned clearly shapes the approach to an understanding of what is meant by 'Being', in that Being is, thereby, established as an answer to a question. Thus, our relationship with Being is prefigured as one of disclosure and understanding. For Dasein, as inquirer, is presented as a being with a legitimate questioning apprehension of Being. And, in the mode of questioner, Dasein is presumed to have the capacity for receiving something back in the way of understanding, of recognising or discovering something essential about Being as a result of that inquiry. Heidegger says that the form of that questioning isn't a circular one, as might be supposed, but goes forwards and backwards from Being to Dasein's way of being-in-the-world and back again. And what is shown of Dasein's 'being-in-the-world' in that questioning is the world of a being estranged from Being. Dasein doesn't attain an understanding of Being, but reveals its ignorance of 'being', which, for Aristotle, is an ontological failure; it is a failing to know that comes from failing to 'be'. And it stems from a failing to be in touch with reality, because, as Aristotle explains in the 'Eudemian Ethics', ontological understanding is not like the attainment of medical knowledge, but the experience of a state of health.

Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein's existence is defined by nullity. As 'care', which designates Dasein's orientation to the world, is grounded in the not: to be Dasein "is to be the ground of a being which is determined by a not".[97] For Heidegger this negative form of existence is not a falling away, or deficiency, of actually 'being', but a falling away that doesn't know Being, i.e., the failing is one of understanding, rather than one of 'being. And whilst Dasein is seen to be falling when he is being inauthentically historical, moving towards authentic historicality doesn't lead to an understanding of Being, but to what Heidegger deems to be a more resolute, and, therefore, more appropriate orientation to the world. Heidegger's concern is focused on authentic historical possibilities of existence rather than any 'trans-historical' potential for 'being', as the 'issue' concerning Dasein is not its potential 'to be', but the possibility of its attaining an understanding of Being. In 'Being and Time' Dasein's 'being-in-the-world' is analysed in order to gain an understanding of Being, not to identify any ontological failing in 'being'. But the danger with interpreting 'being human' in the questioning orientation of Dasein is that man is then seen to be an ontologically complete entity, albeit an existentially dependent one: "The

[97] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 330 [285]

kind of Being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-Being, lies existentially in understanding." "Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein's own potentiality for Being."[98] However, the analysis of Dasein's 'being-in-the-world' does reveal evidence of man's 'not-being', not simply because he is grounded in nullity, as Heidegger admits, but because his orientation to the world reveals a being detached from 'being'. And whilst it is true that Heidegger's orientation to Being was not to find 'being', but to question the possibility of a disclosure to Dasein through the logos, he was in search of a fundamental ontology verifying that questioning stance, which he did not find. It is, therefore, proposed to examine more closely Heidegger's search for a fundamental ontology in 1. Authentic historicality and 2. Understanding and Disclosure

1. Authentic and Inauthentic Historicality

Heidegger acknowledges an element of 'self-concealment,' in Dasein's questioning venture as "what is most proximate comes to be furthest away," and presents a picture of this as something to pierce through, to reach what is essential beneath. Human nature remains for Heidegger something to be retrieved and revealed, something to be reached by means of a bridge from the ontic to the ontological, and ultimately something 'not yet' seen. For, according to Heidegger, man has not yet come into his nature, and, therefore, revealing it remains a task for authentic thinking. Through such spatial metaphors as 'the clearing,' 'the step back' and 'withdrawal' Heidegger presents a metaphysics of disengagement, in which man appears to be forgetful of Being and isolated and homeless in the cosmos. Heidegger's existential analysis of Dasein's temporality is replete with negative terms such as death, the nothing, anxiety and nullity. Others, such as conscience, calling, guilt, and falleness appear to be drawn from Christian teachings, although Heidegger resists any theological interpretation of them, insisting that their meaning is existential. Such terminology is generally used as a form of 'attunement', calling Dasein back from its absorption in inauthentic world history, i.e., from the 'everyday' world of the 'they'. However, in being called back, essentially, by the higher part of himself, since conscience is an attestation to and by Dasein of its ownmost 'potentiality-for-being'[99] Dasein is not called upon to 'be' in any way, other than to be ready for death and anxiety. Although the inauthentic nature of his being-in-the-world is, thereby, pointed out to Dasein, he is not imbued with any power for 'being' in any particular way, but only for choosing a possibility from history not chosen by the 'they'. For although, "anxiety brings Dasein face to face with its being free for the authenticity of its Being,"[100] that authenticity is realised by Dasein choosing its future possibilities from authentic history. "The resoluteness in which Dasein comes back to itself discloses current factical possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness, as thrown, *takes over*."[101] Thus, Dasein's authenticity seems to be derived from a rejection of inauthentic history - the world history favoured by the 'they', but nothing primordially valid. By being resolved to choose authentically, recognising the part played by fate and

[98] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 183 [144]
[99] Ibid., 341 [295]
[100] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 232 [188]
[101] Ibid., 435 [384]

repetition in authentic history, Dasein, in effect, takes over the throwness of its existence, which means that it distinguishes itself from other current forms of existence, but doesn't reveal anything intrinsically teleological. Dasein's 'potentiality-for-being' seems to be limited to being selectively historical and not to actually 'being' other than historically.

Heidegger was interested in Nietzsche's thinking on eternal recurrence, and refers to him in 'Being and Time'. However, whereas the repetition of Heidegger's authentic historicality is brought to Dasein in the company of "death, guilt, conscience, freedom and finitude", for only, thus, can an entity be historical in the very depths of its existence,[102] for Nietzsche the underlying meaning of eternal recurrence is an affirmation of the total forces of life.[103] He saw in the law of eternal recurrence "a joyful and trusting fatalism,"[104] a "voluptuous delight of the eternally self creating Dionysian world."[105] For Nietzsche eternal recurrence is coupled with a fundamental affirmation of life; he regarded it as "the highest formula of affirmation that can possibly be attained," and explains that it came to him "6,000 feet beyond man and time" as he was walking in the woods.[106] Nietzsche saw that the burden of history could not be lifted simply by doing history differently. Rather, life had to be affirmed from within itself, because the foundation of life, that made it healthy, great and truly human, lay in the unhistorical.[107] And Heidegger, too, at one point does seem to question the significance of choosing one's historical experiences. Having established the mode of Dasein's authentic historicality: "Dasein's primordial historizing, [which] lies in authentic resoluteness [and] in which Dasein *hands* itself *down* to itself free for death in a possibility which it has inherited and yet has chosen,"[108]Heidegger goes on to question the value of such resoluteness: "How can recourse to resoluteness bring us any enlightenment? Is not each resolution just *one* more single 'Experience' in the sequence of the whole connectedness of our Experiences?" To which he adds: "Why is it that the question of how the 'connectedness of life' is constituted finds no adequate and satisfying answer?"[109]

Heidegger's route for tracing out the ontology of Dasein's historicality relied very much on Dasein's temporal nature. For, having established that the Being of Dasein is defined as Care, and that Care is grounded in temporality, Heidegger concluded, "thus the interpretation of Dasein's historicality will prove to be, at bottom, just a more concrete working out of temporality." [110] However, Heidegger later concluded that it was not possible to distinguish the ontic from the historical without first establishing a fundamental ontology, which also prompted him to raise the question whether inauthentic historicality made achieving such a determination impossible, "if historicality belongs to the Being of

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[102] Heidegger, *Being and Time* 436 [385]
[103] Nietzsche, *Will to Power* –1063 "The law of conservation of energy demands the law of eternal occurrence"
[104] Nietzsche, 'Twilight of the Idols', *A Nietzsche Reader*, 236
[105] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 550
[106] Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo', *A Nietzsche Reader*, 239
[107] Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 12
[108] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 435 [384]
[109] Ibid., 439 [387]
[110] Ibid., 433 [382]

Dasein, then even inauthentic existing must be historical. What if it is Dasein's inauthentic historicality that has directed our questioning, has blocked off access to authentic historicality?"[111] However, the boundaries of the question could, perhaps, be further expanded to ask whether it is the fact of historicality itself that has blocked off access to authentic 'being'? For, as Heidegger asks, "does Dasein first *become* historical by getting intertwined with events and circumstances? Or, is the Being of Dasein constituted first of all by historizing, so that anything like circumstances, events and vicissitudes is ontologically possible *only because Dasein is historical in its Being?*"[112] Heidegger doesn't directly answer that question, but observes that the world is made historical because Dasein is historical. Heidegger regards Dasein as the primary historical entity responsible for the historicizing of the world; even nature becomes historical as a result of Dasein's prior historicality. Thus, "the world has an historical kind of Being because it makes up an ontological attribute of Dasein."[113] Historicality is, thus, established and passed on through Dasein's mode of encountering beings, which would seem to prompt the question whether Dasein's 'historicizing' way of encountering entities is a necessary one. For, as Sartre pointed out earlier, "man should not be defined by historicity but by the permanent possibility of living historically."[114]

The familiarity of the psychological language of Dasein's presentation poses something of an obstacle in attempting to point to an essential, but less familiar, relationship with Being. Such existential language is problematic because it establishes disengagement as a natural way of being in the world as a result of its inculcation through normalising discourse. In his examination of Heideggerean and Aristotelian presentations of Being, Ted Sadler suggests that Aristotle's metaphysical thinking appears 'dry', 'terse' and 'shallow' in comparison with Heidegger's existential analysis. Aristotle's thinking is found to be too unemotional to be able to offer anything instructive to the modern subject, because it lacks the existential motifs of anxiety, guilt and alienation which modernity presupposes to be synonymous with perception and depth. However, this perceived emotional deficit is itself a historical creation, arising because we have come to locate meaning, not in reality but exclusively in language, which has developed an increasingly therapeutic role in society.[115] Anxiety is a fundamental presupposition of existential philosophy, with the 'authenticity' of the individual being inextricably linked to, if not defined by, its presence. Notwithstanding the fact that the disengaged, introspective orientation to the world from which anxiety, as a fundamental existential attunement, derives its authority itself emerged from historical and literary developments within society. This is an important point, because in setting up the existential and emotional self-conscious man as more human, we are presupposing an answer to the question concerning what it means to 'be' human, even though the substance of that interpreted, existential 'humanness' would not equate to 'being-human' in the active Aristotelian sense. Rather, alienation and anxiety would appear to the ancient world as symptoms of an ontological deficiency: productions of

[111] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 439 [387]
[112] Ibid., 431 [380]
[113] Ibid., 432 [381]
[114] Jean Paul Sartre, *Search For A Method*, 167
[115] Frank Furedi, *Therapy Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 6

thought and language which arise, "because existence has lost its direction,"[116] as a result of the perceptive void left by an unencountered reality. For, according to the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus, anxiety is a form of ignorance, the vice opposite to the virtue of insight – 'phronesis'.[117]

The every day world would appear to have become flat and empty and filled with the intoxicating distractions of the 'they' because we have relocated all notion of meaning to a transcendental realm outside it. For the Greeks there was no kairological event to await, requiring any kind of anticipatory resolution, because in a world permeated by divinity man was already summoned to contemplate a divinely-inspired reality. Only in a god-less world would man have to seek the certainty of Being through its experienced absence, by virtue of an internalised, psychological inadequacy. In explaining the necessity for the 'fundamental attunements' of despair, joy and boredom, in the 'every day world', Ted Saddler suggests that, "since the bare phenomenon of Being is not something with which one can be 'occupied' in the usual sense, every dayness turns back to actually existing 'beings.' As a result, the attunements of the unfathomable 'facticity of existence' are necessary to pull us back from the 'every day attunements of fallenness."[118] However, it appears that the realm of the everyday has become 'fallen' because we don't know how to 'be' in it, having lost our capacity to receive reality. It is our historicizing mode of encountering entities that produced the 'fallen' 'everyday' world, and that is the mode in and through which we continue to encounter those entities.

Although both Heideggerean 'care' and Aristotelian 'knowing' derive from a deficiency in man's relationship with the world, "a deficiency in our having to do with the world concernedly,"[119] it is in Aristotle's thinking that that deficiency is understood metaphysically, as a deficiency of animate reality. And, consequently, it is a deficiency remediable through man's active perceptive engagement with the world, whereby he is 'acted upon' by perceptible forms. Accordingly, what might appear to the modern mind as 'psychological' estrangement, to the ancient world would be recognisable as ontological disengagement. Because, to such a world, man was "athirst by nature," and could only quench that thirst by 'drinking' of reality; the point being that it is the activity of 'drinking' that is crucial, the availability of drink alone can not slake a thirst. Thus, what was underscored was the fact that man was required to actually 'be' active in his orientation towards the world. It was not historical possibilities that constituted an authentic life, as life was required to be authenticated from within, from the potential inhering in 'being-human', rather than through the non-essential possibilities existing in history. As Josef Pieper pointed out earlier, our relationship with reality is one that naturally seeks satiation, "the fulfilment of existence takes place in the manner in which we become aware of reality,"[120] because the source of that satiation is outside the self and not determined by the self. And, consequently, whereas, "action that reaches outward perfects the work rather

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[116] Eric Voegelin *Anamnesis*, trans. Gerhart Niemeyer (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989),100

[117] Ibid., 100

[118] Ted Sadler, *Heidegger And Aristotle, The Question of Being* (London: Athlone, 1996), 162

[119] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 88 [61]

[120] Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 64

than the person who acts, the activity in which we receive the drink which is happiness is by its nature an activity where efforts work inwards."[121]

2. Understanding and Disclosure

Heidegger presents Dasein as the being dependent upon Being. For Heidegger this dependency relates to the understanding of Being: "An understanding of Being belongs to Dasein's ontological structure. As something that is....the kind of Being which belongs to this disclosedness is constituted by state of mind and understanding."[122] This dependency seems to be reciprocal: "Being 'is' only in the understanding of those entities to whose Being something like an understanding of Being belongs."[123] Heidegger derives evidence for his interpretation of 'Being as understanding' from the fact that since time immemorial Being and Truth have been brought together, to the extent that the words 'being' and 'truth' were considered interchangeable. However, whilst for Aristotle, 'aletheia', pertains to beings themselves, in the 'how' of their being, i.e., to 'proper being', because "what each thing has of being, that too it has of truth,"[124]for Heidegger 'uncoveredness' relates to how Dasein understands the uncovered entities and only to their own comportment in a secondary sense: "These entities become that which has been uncovered. They are 'true' in a second sense. What is primarily 'true' – that is uncovering – that is Dasein."[125] And because, for Heidegger, truth is essentially and primarily 'uncoveredness', it belongs to man - the being who can uncover, and, therefore, will only be as long as there is Dasein:[126] "The 'universal validity' of truth is rooted solely in the fact that Dasein can uncover entities and free them."[127]However, because the primary meaning of truth is seen to be Dasein's act of 'uncovering', by virtue of which entities are disclosed and freed, the question of Dasein's own 'being', its individual mode of 'being true', or 'proper being' remains unasked. Heidegger identifies Dasein's mode of comportment as 'circumspect concern', which focuses on knowing and uncovering entities, but there is no question concerning any activity of 'being' itself for Dasein. For, Dasein is seen to be held in Being by the disclosedness of language, by what language and thought make known or allow to be seen: "disclosedness is constituted by state of mind, understanding and discourse." And, as a result of such disclosure, rather than through any mode of 'being' on its part, "Dasein achieves a new status of Being towards the world."[128]

Dasein is also capable of disclosing, "itself to itself in and as its own most potentiality for Being."[129] That 'disclosure of itself to itself' of Dasein's 'potentiality for Being' holds the possibility of being 'authentic' or 'inauthentic', depending upon whether its mode of existence is 'in truth' or in the 'untruth' of 'falling'. However, these terms, whilst applied

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[121] Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 57
[122] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 182 [143]
[123] Ibid., 183 [144]
[124] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 993b 30
[125] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 262 [220]
[126] Ibid., 268 [226]
[127] Ibid., 270 [227]
[128] Ibid., 88 [62]
[129] Ibid., 263 [221]

by Heidegger as significant indicators of 'authenticity', are not seen to signify any ontological disparity or loss - there is no question of inauthenticity relating to 'non-being' - which would seem to be right, because on an ontological level they would not seem to be very different.[130] However, whilst Dasein's authentic historicality derives its authenticity from the fact that it is chosen by Dasein, as opposed to being designated by the 'they', Dasein's capacity for realising such a choice is itself questionable.[131] Heidegger recognised that Dasein is born into a historical world, but maintained for Dasein a freedom to choose its possibilities for life. However, that 'freedom' may not be as extensive as Heidegger imagined; certainly in his later thinking Heidegger reveals an awareness of the determining power of technology. And if Dasein's historical possibilities are not of its own choosing, then attaining authentic historicality may not be a realisable goal, which would seem to suggest that Dasein's ontological relationship with history is more problematic, and that, perhaps, Dasein is, in fact, more determined by historical forces than Heidegger realised.

Whilst 'disclosedness' frames Heidegger's approach to Dasein's understanding of Being, and he is generally dismissive of 'mere perception' so far as Dasein is concerned, Heidegger does refer briefly to the Greek understanding of primordial truth in the context of 'disclosedness': "we must not overlook the fact that while this way of understanding Being, (the way which is closest to us) is one which the Greeks were the first to develop as a branch of knowledge and master, the primordial understanding of truth was simultaneously alive among them."[132] Heidegger distinguishes such primordial perception from the discourse that takes entities out of their hiddeness by talking about them truthfully.[133] He refers to 'aesthesis' - the sheer sensory perception of something 'true' that is more primordial than the disclosing of the logos, and adds "noesis is the perception of the simplest determinate ways of being which entities as such may possess, and it perceives them just by looking at them. This noesis is what is 'true' in the purest and most primordial sense. It merely discovers, and it does so in such a way that it can never cover up. It can never be false; it can at worst remain a non-perceiving – not sufficing for straight forward and appropriate access."[134] For Heidegger, such simple perception is inadequate as it doesn't manifest or disclose anything and therefore fails to make reality accessible. However, whilst inaccessible knowledge might be inadequate so far as disclosure is concerned, that 'inadequacy' does not prevent such simple perception from satisfying an ontological need that doesn't require disclosure. For Aristotle the failure of perception is ignorance – ignorance of the true nature of things, their 'being-true', which is a failing with ontological consequences, because, as Aristotle saw, we instantiate truth as well as disclosing it in discourse. As has been seen, in Aristotle's metaphysics there is an indication of an ontological significance attached to man's active engagement with reality, whereby he is called upon to acknowledge and affirm the truth of the reality he receives through the articulation of his 'being'. The Aristotelian perspective of 'being' recognises

[130] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 220 [176]
[131] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 1936 According to Mannheim, it is not the individual man who thinks, because thinking is primarily an instrument of collective, rather than individual, action.
[132] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 268 [226]
[133] Ibid., 57 [34]
[134] Ibid., 57 [34]

man's participation in an unfolding reality, not by virtue of what he produces, but by virtue of what he 'is', that participation ultimately pointing towards the realisation of the divine nature of the cosmos. This ontological, experiential 'knowing' of reality, attained through contemplative 'seeing' is a direct, affirming, intimate, relation,[135] which has nothing to do with epistemology, and is perhaps only understood in a tangential Aristotelian cosmos, in which everything is in touch with everything else. However, without a dynamic ontology we are unable to appreciate that the knowing relation by which man enjoys the world through his contemplation of it, is, in turn, ontologically determining, for that 'knowing' perception permeates and maintains him in that relation. Heidegger rejected 'knowing' as a primary ontological relation because he saw its 'single exemplar' as purely epistemological, and instead regarded "care as a primordial structural totality [that] lies before every factical attitude and structure of Dasein."[136] In his presentation of 'care' as primarily ontological, Heidegger taps into the ontological deficiency which likewise underpins Aristotle's metaphysics of motion. However, for Aristotle it is our deficiency of reality that moves us, our desire "to attain a more intense and 'realer' realness,"[137]and not our desire to acquire any form of knowledge.

What ultimately emerges in Heidegger's historical understanding of Being is the presentation of a theologically derived conception of Being, endeavouring to shape a sustainable ontology. From an onto-theological perspective, it appears that Heidegger already has the justificatory theory for existence and is in search of an ontological ground to support it. For what Heidegger appears to depict in 'Being and Time' is a theologically derived relation to Being, although he always refused to explicitly deify Being itself.[138] As Heidegger states in 'On The Essence of Ground', written in 1929, "through the ontological interpretation of **Dasein** as being-in-the-world, no decision whether affirmative or negative, is made concerning a possible being toward God. It is however, the case that through an illumination of transcendence we first achieve an **adequate concept of Dasein**, with respect to which it can now be asked how the relationship of **Dasein** to God is ontologically ordered."[139] The task that then followed was to ontologically ground that being, experienced psychologically, as a theological absence, for, "the knowledge brought us through faith is the knowledge of what is absent."[140] It could not be done, Heidegger could not extrapolate an ontology from theology, reality from transcendence, and the work was not completed. As has been seen, in his thinking at this time Heidegger was influenced by the works of Luther, who countenanced man's ontological diminution, as he sought certainty through the negation of the self: "To love God is to hate one's self, and to know nothing outside of God." In the diminution of Being he was effecting, Luther was in turn influenced by the ontological demands of developing nominalism, and his loathing for the

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[135] Buber, *"The original meaning of the Hebrew verb 'to know' is 'to be in immediate contact with."* see Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*
[136] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 238 [193]
[137] Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 54
[138] Sadler, *Heidegger and Aristotle*, 14
[139] John Maquarrie, *Heidegger and Christianity*, 61 (New York: Continuum, 1999), 61; Krell, *Basic Writings – Martin Heidegger*, 253
[140] Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation*, 78

"profane and bold worldliness" of Aristotle's philosophy, whose explicit recognition of the soul's pre logical comprehension of reality was denied in Luther's rejection of nature. But what is more significant so far as Luther's influence on Heidegger's thinking is concerned, is his reorientation of faith to the authority of scripture – the theology of the word,[141] and to the notion of a calling, to which man responded by doing God's works, thereby demonstrating the veracity of the call within by external and productive activity.[142] What comes to be expressed in Luther's theology of the word is more than the abandonment of man's ontological relatedness to nature, which was already in conflict with Christian teachings, but the proclamation of the word as the essence of truth. As a result, man's relationship with truth was distilled into language and rendered demonstrable, i.e., externalised and consummated in the equivalence of representation, which was precisely what Aristotle had rejected in his metaphysics. And, as faith is about an absence we think rather than a reality we contemplate, an ontology derived from faith alone need not engage with reality, it can be entirely drawn from the imagination. As an extension of contemplation, faith appears a natural response to an unknowable totality. However, when unsupported by reality it becomes simultaneously a matter of authority and doubt. And, according to Aquinas, the sin that underlies that doubt is not so much a rejection of God, or a failing of faith, but a denial of the order of reality.[143] Aquinas explains that in the false judgment of despair is revealed the "most dangerous sin," because, by rejecting reality, despair closes the door to man's knowledge of God, for to intuit God we need reality. [144] Aquinas recognised that despair is a state that is reached through the process of 'acedia', or 'spiritual sloth'- meaning a lack of activity, or work, on the part of the spirit.[145] However, the meaning of this word became completely inverted in the Reformation, when the focus of religious activity shifted towards the external world. It is, therefore, not surprising that the sloth of 'acedia' came to depict laziness and a lack of productive work. Accordingly, in recognising anxiety as an appropriate comportment for 'being human', what is countenanced is the despairing rejection of reality. At the same time, and perhaps more significantly, despair is also "opposed to man's true becoming,"[146] because, by rejecting reality, he is rejecting his own exalted nature, and thereby refusing to be enjoined to a "higher, divine state of being."[147]

5. 4 Overcoming Metaphysics

Heidegger's attempt at a fundamental ontology foundered on an ontic/ontological distinction that could not be bridged. And he ultimately concluded that the ontological difference was not accessible metaphysically. He believed that metaphysics was historically compromised because of the occlusion caused by endless interpretations of beings. In its place he felt that a new form of 'thinking' was required, "to come to terms

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[141] Erik Eriksson, *Young Man Luther* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1962), 207
[142] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 2001), 45
[143] St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologaie* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964-1975), 11 11 20, 1; 11 11 14,4,1
[144] Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, trans. Sister Mary Frances (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 51-52
[145] '*acedia*' is taken from the Greek '*akedia*', denoting a lack of caring, or apathy.
[146] Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, 47
[147] Josef Pieper, *On Hope*, 56

with what metaphysics leaves unthought... because this unthought essence pervades and determines the west."[148] Because Heidegger saw Being in terms of an original revelation that had been occluded by interpretations of beings and had now withdrawn, he believed that by interpreting Being in terms of history man could be liberated from the metaphysics that "has now entered its ending," as a result of man becoming "fixed in his producing". Heidegger thought that instead man could be established in the history of Being, "in the history in which Being remains the unthought and unperceived horizon of all possibilities."[149] Heidegger's notion of overcoming metaphysics did not mean its abandonment, but, rather, its incorporation in history. Because, for Heidegger, the prevailing historico-technical order of the world was the last stage of metaphysics: "This order is the last arrangement of what has ended in the illusion of a reality whose effects work in an irresistible way, because they claim to be able to get along without an unconcealment of the essence of Being."[150] And, for Heidegger, such 'unconcealment' relates to what is disclosed in language and thought, not to what is revealed in reality.

However, Aristotle's metaphysics does not warrant Heidegger's historical disqualification, because the 'universalism' of his metaphysical vision wasn't drawn from concepts and ideals produced by history, but directly from his observations concerning reality itself. And further, since the spectrum of Aristotelian 'being' encompasses both 'being' and 'non-being', his thinking actually enables us to follow Heidegger's entreaty to engage with the 'unthought' that is determining the west. The essence of that determining force Heidegger perceived to be both technological and historical, which he considered to be aspects of the same essence, wielding a power too great for man to withstand.[151] However, what Heidegger considered to be the determining 'unthought', i.e., not disclosed in thought, is, perhaps, locatable within Aristotle's metaphysical vision of 'being' and 'non-being', since the distinction between those ontological activities pertains human 'thinghood', i.e., to what we are 'being', and, therefore, extends beyond the realm contained by thought. However, with his resistance to the notion of animate matter, and his designation of human 'thinghood' as 'parousia' rather than 'ousia', Heidegger's perception of 'non-being' was firmly fixed on the "abyss of the unhistorical." And, therefore, 'non-being' was not seen to have the capacity for emerging from being itself. For Aristotle, by contrast, 'non-being' pertains to the activities of beings themselves. It arises in incidental activities not constitutive of 'being-at-work', such as the historical and the technological. Consequently, 'non-being' can arise within 'thinghood' itself as a result of a deprivation or lack of that sustaining activity. What this means is that whereas Heidegger looked outside form for 'non-being', "in the chaos of the unformed", for Aristotle there is nothing outside the spectrum of 'being', since potency and act extend throughout reality. And therefore 'non-being' can arise from within, as the result of a being failing to maintain itself. Whilst Heidegger did not recognise deprivation as a significant ontological force, he did see

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[148] Michael Allen Gillespie, *Hegel, Heidegger and the ground of History*, 135
[149] Ibid, 135
[150] Heidegger, 'Overcoming Metaphysics', in *The End of Philosophy*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 86
[151] Gillespie, Nietzsche, vol. 2.26-27' quoted in, *Hegel, Heidegger and the ground of History*: 155

technology as "the organization of a lack,"[152] into which metaphysical man was drawn as "the working being", "the laboring animal." And it is this 'ergonomic' perception of 'productive' man which appears to constitute both his historical situatedness and his orientation towards 'non-being'. However, whilst Heidegger recognised the alienating force of modern productivity, his views concerning its development were focused on technology rather than on social and cultural developments. For Heidegger, Dasein exists "fatefully" and "essentially" in Being with others, and it is only through co-historizing that "the power of destiny becomes free."[153] It seems that because Heidegger believed Dasein's spiritual milieu to be culture rather than nature, he was unconcerned with man becoming more animated by the historicizing of culture than by the movements of the natural world, and did not recognise that the effects of the 'determining unthought' are social as well as technological.

Heidegger's conclusion that metaphysics is historically determined has turned the focus of the analysis of formative thinking away from first philosophy and its noetic ideals, to a new search for regulation in the process of history. And whilst this work does not deny such regulation, that regulation is itself regarded as metaphysically determined, as it appears to originate in the same movement that permeates Dasein with 'non-being'. In the 'Metaphysics' Aristotle draws an ontological distinction between the sort of knowledge capable of demonstration and that which has to be pointed at another way. Metaphysical truths, including that observed in the determinism of history, emerge as a knowledge of the latter kind, the 'truth' of which is passed on ontologically and remains discernible in and through us, in our orientation to reality. For Aristotle metaphysical truths are realized and sustained in instantiation, by their embodiment in us, as we live them. Accordingly, rather than historicism reducing all metaphysical truths to the context of a particular epoch's thought, i.e., to whatever has materialized as knowledge at that particular time, in Aristotle's metaphysical vision the determining power of history emerges as a perceptible materializing aspect within an over-arching dynamic ontology, by virtue of which, the form of 'being' human has shifted, from one seeking to receive and instantiate reality, to one content with replicating it. This ontological shift would seem to have been necessitated because the inner activity of 'being,' by virtue of which reality is perceived and 'being' human expressed, has been replaced by external activities pursuing multifarious incidental goals rather than realizing an essential inner one.

The Aristotelian understanding of 'being' acknowledges degrees of 'being', since, as previously seen, that spectrum of 'being' encompasses potential and actual beings. However, whilst, from an Aristotelian perspective, beings are always in Being to some degree, Being, in the sense that Heidegger means it, i.e., as an awareness of Being given through its disclosure in language and thought, need not necessarily be modern man's experience. For Heidegger, that lack of disclosure, which means that, "the still hidden truth of Being is withheld from metaphysical humanity,"[154] is attributable to Being's

[152] Heidegger, 'Overcoming Metaphysics', in *The End of Philosophy*, 107
[153] Heidegger *Being and Time*, 435 [384]
[154] Heidegger, *Overcoming Metaphysics*, 87

withdrawal. However, 'being' was recognised by natural theology before it became a concern of a theology of the word and appears to be inseparable from that primordial connection with reality. Because, whilst the activity of 'being' remains indiscernible to propositional language, for to say of something that it 'is' answers only the question of its existence, 'being' may continue to reveal itself in reality in our orientation towards it. It is, therefore, suggested that the focus of concern regarding Being be centred not on the ponderous question of 'Being's withdrawal', but on the possibility that beings may have withdrawn, through our failure to maintain ourselves in an appropriate orientation towards reality by actively 'being'.

CHAPTER 6. THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS POSTMODERN BEING – 'NON-BEING'

6.0 Postmodern Society and Sophistry

In earlier chapters 'being' was considered from a Heideggerean perspective - as a question seeking a disclosure of Being in language - and from an Aristotelian point of view, as an active way of individually 'being' within the world. The concern of the present chapter is with the apprehension of 'non-being', considered as a socio-historical development, incidental to 'being' that has become discernible in the post-modern world. Whilst in the existential tensions of late modernity the problematic nature of existence clearly became apparent, it is in the less agonistic milieu of post-modernity that the true nature of 'non-being' reveals itself. Because the essence of that negating movement is not oppositional; it does not seek to discomfort the individual, but to absorb and utilise its ontological resources. And it achieves that most effectively by relieving the individual of its existential anxiety, whilst at the same time reassuring it that all of its actions are its own. As has been said, 'non-being' is to be understood as a mode of being primarily concerned with activities that are 'incidental' to 'proper being', as defined by Aristotle. It is a mode of being made up of historical and productive activities that result in external achievements, but produce nothing internally, its focus being on the performance and acquisition of socially established functions and goals. Such a mode of being is not concerned with, and nor does it recognise, any notion of individual potential realisable outside the socially established paradigm. And, on account of that failure of recognition, such a way of being is regarded as deficient so far as the realisation of human potential is concerned, being a distortion of, or falling away from, the primordial movement Aristotle recognised as 'being-true'. In Aristotle's metaphysics that primordial movement is recognised as pointing towards an ontological understanding of truth, and it locates it within us, in what we embody in our mode of 'being'. As a result of that ontological relation, we are obligated to reveal the truth, literally bound to truth by our natural reason that recognizes it and by our power of speech which affirms or denies it.[1] In all our actions we are responding to that primordial relation, which means that regardless of our interpretations of ourselves and of reality, that obligation continues to express itself through our mode of being in the world.[2]

What this chapter seeks to show is the lapse in our understanding of that governing primordial relation, and the ontological consequences that have followed from that failing. For it seems that our productive, 'co-historicizing' way of being in the world is primarily as coalesced aspects of a larger social entity, rather than as anything individuated in its own right. It is, therefore, intended to consider various aspects of human 'thinghood', such as our capacity for reason and language, which are implicated in the historical movement

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[1] Frithjof Schuon, *To Have A Center* (Indiana: World Wisdom Books, 1990), 24

[2] John Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins*, 439; W.W. Skeat, *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 398.This underlying metaphysical relationship with reality is, perhaps, best expressed as a religious orientation towards the world order, 'religio' originally conveying the notion of an obligation to reality – literally a 'being bound' by its ligaments.

of 'non-being', in an attempt to uncover the basis for our changed understanding of the ontological meaning of 'being human'. For, as our understanding of what constitutes human reason has shifted from a capacity intrinsic to what we are, shared in to some degree by all ensouled beings, to an instrumental power that we alone wield, our orientation towards reality has inevitably changed. So, too, as language has become increasingly conceptual and analytical, our mode of perceiving the world has altered, leading to the development of a predominantly 'observer-relative' social ontology. The primary purpose for considering these historical developments is to attempt to bring to light the fact that they are interrelated aspects of our increasingly externalised way of being in the world. However, a difficulty with conveying any notion of deprivation or failing within those historical developments is the perception that what has been achieved throughout successive epochs is a movement towards the greater emancipation of the individual.

Kenneth Gergen, in his study of postmodern existence – 'The Saturated Self', suggests that postmodern man achieves freedom by being relieved of the burden of any degree of coherence, because we are thereby freed to become whatever we choose.[3] "For the postmodern, life is rendered more fully expressive and enriched by suspending the demands for personal coherence, self-recognition... and simply being within the ongoing process of relating."[4] From an Aristotelian perspective, however, there can be no proper 'being' without coherence, since the individuating movement of 'being' is necessarily a cohering one. According to the ancient Greeks it is only by experiencing and questioning the intrinsic tension of human existence, i.e., the very burden of coherence postmodernism seeks to relinquish, that man comes to encounter the divine ground of his 'being', and to realize that he is something more than mortal. And it is only by maintaining an openness towards reality that man is able to experience the 'noetic' pull of the order within it.[5] What this indicates is not only that coherence cannot be overthrown, but that man needs to experience the existential tension it brings. He is required to cooperate in his own development if life is to be gained, because he is not a completed entity.[6] Rather, "it is only in transcending himself that man reaches his proper level."[7] Contrary to Gergen, a "world of enormous potential" does not open up for the liberated postmodern self, who "vanishes fully into a state of relatedness," because such a being only exists within the social fabric in which his actions are enmeshed. What are being conflated here are the notions of potential and possibility. And whilst man may access numerous social possibilities by relinquishing his need for coherence, he does not thereby develop any of his potential. For, as was pointed out earlier, what is potential in man relates to what he 'is', as a result of the inherent power that he has according to his nature, and in which he is grounded. Possibilities, however extensive, superadded to a conception of self which ignores the potentiality in which 'being human' is grounded, will always point towards a diminution in

[3] Kenneth Gergen, *The Saturated Self* (New York: Basic Books, 2000),17
[4] Ibid., 133
[5] Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 91
[6] Ibid., 105
[7] Frithjof Schuon, *To Have a Center*, 39

'being', because, whereas realised possibilities manifest in merely accidental changes, the potential inhering in man points towards his becoming something more ontologically.

The illusion that the postmodern individual has emancipated itself through the dissolution of historical forms is itself a construction of Social Being and evidence of the successful inculcation of a socially derived consciousness. According to Karl Mannheim, what was realised in the 1940s, by philosophers and sociologists alike, was that the human mind was not progressing rationally or morally.[8] And, consequently, a form of social planning was necessary to ensure that "harmonious growth" was maintained and "chaotic forces" sublimated. The essential problem, as Mannheim saw it, was to shape man, through reshaping his thought processes in order to ensure his coherence with the social movement. Specifically, abstract thinking needed to be encouraged in order to replace the concrete, personal train of thought man naturally engaged in, because it was felt necessary that man should start to think 'naturally' from a social context. Through such inculcation the necessary social consciousness would begin to develop and that would ensure that a new form of self observation would arise, in which man would see himself primarily as a social element rather than as anything individual. And through such socially derived knowledge, the individual would begin to regulate his behaviour in accordance with his new found social consciousness. This does not mean, however, that the individual would come to see himself as being socially determined. On the contrary, "the individual can retain the illusion of his intellectual independence since he no longer has the chance to see how his own actions and experiences grow out of collective ones."[9] In fact, not only is man unable to penetrate that illusion, but, according to Mannheim, he will actually come to feel more liberated than ever, through a greater sense of empowerment: "In a certain sense, his thought has become more spontaneous and absolute than it ever was before, since he now perceives the possibility of determining himself. On the other hand he can never reach this stage by himself but only through sharing a social tendency in that direction." According to Mannheim, it is through his acquired social determination that "the individual for the first time raises himself above the historical process – which now, more than ever, becomes subject to his own power." However, the power that the individual, thereby, comes to wield is not his own power; it is not an expression of his intrinsic potency, but an expression of social power: the power to become more socially.

At the very beginning of philosophy sophistry was recognised as a powerful force, capable of persuading people to act in a way contrary to their nature. It was a 'seeming' rather than a 'being' that sophistry effected through its withholding of reality; and both Plato and Aristotle recognised its relationship with 'non-being'. The sophists were able to distract people from realising their true nature only because they understood it; and realised how, through flattery, people could be persuaded to see themselves differently, in a way that suited the sophists. The emergence of such a determining movement was acknowledged by Parmenides, who saw in the sophistic tendencies of the mind the founding of an alternative way of being in the world, achieved by language creating a derivative reality. And, in

[8] Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society*, 51
[9] Ibid., 209

warning against taking the path of 'non-being', Parmenides emphasised its indiscernible nature, because once on it, language, having given it being, is unable to reveal it. Sophistry withholds reality, not for any purpose other than that of wielding power. And it achieves that by convincing us of an alternative reality in which human potential has no meaning. In order to convince us of that other reality sophistry needs to persuade us to identify with something incidental to our essential nature. Although the essence of sophistry lies in manipulation, it relies very much on our willingness to be manipulated, which indicates that sophistry as well as suppressing our potential also expresses something essentially true about our nature. Psychiatrist, Rene Muller suggests that because individual 'thinghood' has become problematic in postmodern society we have willingly relinquished its heavy burden in exchange for cultural rewards, "that our culture is only too ready to give us in exchange for that self."[10] Some form of exchange would appear to be necessary, because whilst the self in search of meaning is misplaced in a social movement that finds no significance in the realities sought by individual 'thinghood', that struggling self still has an ontological burden that needs to be discharged if social cohesion is to be maintained. [11] Josef Pieper, writing in 1948, suggested that it is as a result of our being bound ever closer to the world of work that enables us to make that exchange. As, through such a commitment to work, we become convinced that there is no ontological need for us to be anything other than productive. Pieper described such a commitment as, "the final binding of man to the process of production, which is itself understood and proclaimed to be the intrinsically meaningful realisation of human existence." However, such a binding would not be effective unless it was perceived to be advantageous to the individual. And such an advantage Pieper identified in the individual's release from the burden of being anything at all, which is a 'freedom' achieved through the total utilisation of the individual's ontological resources. As such a productive person is "inclined to see and embrace an ideal of a fulfilled life in the total 'use' made of his services."[12]

Pieper made these observations at a time when society was less planned than it is today, and when productivity appeared to be the defining aim not only of society but also of its individual members. With the development of technology, however, individual productivity now appears to be less significant. According to sociologist, Peter Berger, writing some 30 years after Pieper, whilst bureaucracy and productivity are both key phenomena of modernity, it is bureaucracy that "locates the individual in society more explicitly than work".[13] And what is particularly significant about bureaucracy and the way in which it "locates the individual in society" is that "bureaucracy, unlike technology is <u>not</u> intrinsic to a particular goal." This is an important point because what it indicates is that

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[10] Rene J. Muller, 'The Marginal Self', quoted in Kenneth Gergen, *The Saturated Self* (New York: Basic Books, 2000): 150

[11] For Heidegger, the ontological reality of obligation manifests itself in man's realisation of existential guilt. Through such an 'attunement', accompanied by the realisation of death and the call of conscience, Heidegger sees Dasein called to an appropriate resoluteness in his way of being in the world. That way of being is focused on achieving authentic historizing, but not on actively 'being' in any individuated, unhistorical way.

[12] Josef Pieper, *Leisure – The Basis of Culture*, 43-44

[13] Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 60

the 'meaning' of bureaucracy and the bureaucratic life it creates inheres in what it is and in the mode of being it necessitates in modern society, and not in some transcendent purpose beyond. For, the abstracted mode of thinking that bureaucracy embodies serves to establish and sustain our modern form of existence in which the anonymised individual is compelled to be in a constant state of registration and compliance. However, more significant than the time consuming and emotionally demanding form of everyday observance which, as Nietzsche realised, succeed in using up the individual's intellectual and ontological resources, is the inculcation of an ateleological mind-set. For the primary aim of bureaucracy and the bureaucratic mode of thought it advances is the creation within the individual of a form of social consciousness that is content with focusing the entirety of its energies on negotiating the terrain set out by an impersonal social agenda; the point being not to arrive anywhere, but simply to be on a journey.

So far as Mannheim is concerned, the function of the moulded modern individual is precisely to supply the substance necessary for social action – the material for its form.[14] However, 'Social Being' can only secure such a resource by ensuring that the individual is maintained within an ateleological frame of mind, thereby providing a constant space for socially determined action. In order to achieve that, however, it is necessary that individuals no longer be determined by individuating movements, which are contrary to the movement of Social Being. And in order to effect that change of orientation, the individualistic frame of mind must be forsaken. Bureaucracy constitutes the institutionalisation of that ateleological frame of mind and fixes the individual in the movement of 'non-being' which is the determining activity of 'Social Being', because not to engage in that activity is not to 'be' according to the vision of social 'thinghood'. Mannheim recognised a distinction within human rationality, between what he called 'substantive reason', which is the power to reason concerning ends, and 'functional reason', which is the capacity to reason only according to the means to reach those ends. According to Mannheim, that distinction has become increasingly evident in modern society, in which a social agenda and not 'substantive reason' make the essential determinations concerning ends. The individual is, thus, left with sufficient opportunity to make determinations concerning means, by selecting options within a given paradigm, but not to question or change the nature of the paradigm itself.

The coercive element in modern society was observed by Durkheim, who recognised that the power mechanisms inherent in 'Social Being' are evidenced by the force exerted on contrary mobilities within society. For, social facts alone rarely influence individual behaviour without the additional force of inhibiting factors. And, as Durkheim recognised, it is precisely the coercive aspect of such facts that reveals their social origin: "A social fact is to be recognized by the power of external coercion which it exercises or is capable of exercising over individuals."[15] However, that coercive element now appears to have been internalised within our developed social consciousness. For, as Mannheim foresaw, it

[14] Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society*, 344
[15] Emile Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method* 1895 - quoted in Andrew Roberts - http://www.mdx.ac.uk/WWW/STUDY/ssh6.htm

is not possible to be aware of oneself as a social being without being self-regulating – as self-regulation is the activity intrinsic to Social Being. As a result, the shape of our lives now appears to be more determined by the task of conforming to external patterns of behaviour and social norms than by acting on any internal impulse. And further, because that behavioural imperative is total and continuous, it seems that we can only manage to keep ourselves within the undisclosed bounds of its dominion by adopting a similarly totalistic and regulatory frame of mind and maintaining ourselves in a constant state of 'being-instructed.'

A number of post-modern philosophers perceive in contemporary society a movement away from historical aspirations.[16] Whether that is because historical goals are believed to have been attained, or are no longer considered attainable, the important point is the perception that the focus of life in postmodern society has been drawn back to the practice of actually living it. Such a change of orientation is relevant to the movement of 'non-being' because it reveals more clearly that movement's essential nature, which is not that it is historical, but that it is incidental so far as the activity of 'being-human' is concerned. Aristotle deemed historical activities close to 'non-being' because they are incidental to human 'thinghood', which means that it is their incidental nature that is relevant. Accordingly, a society may be focused on incidental activities through its historical aspirations, as it looks for purposes outside society, or it may be entirely constituted by such activities through its creation of a complex network of functional activities. In either case, however, it is the movement of 'non-being' that is determining, as its concern is with directing and fully utilising ontological resources in furtherance of activities that are incidental. A difficulty encountered in attempting to bring to light such a negating movement is the presumption that because being social is natural to human beings, our social structure must be an entirely natural development of that inclination. And, consequently, any problems arising within that structure are seen to be most effectively resolved through the achievement of greater social cohesion, i.e., by eliminating the non-cohering elements.

A problem with the word 'social' is that in applying it to all forms of human association, the unhistorical, the historical and, perhaps, what could now be described as the 'post-historical', there is the underlying assumption that the same entity is being described throughout, just at different stages of its evolution. The presumption being that unhistorical societies naturally become historical as they develop and become productive. As a result, we tend to regard modern society as simply a more technological and democratic version of the past communality of the polis. It is, however, founded on very different principles and, according to Hannah Arendt, is in fact, "a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the modern age."[17] For, whilst the polis recognized a distinction between the public and private realms, any such distinction is meaningless in the pseudo

[16] Stuart Sim, *Derrida and the End of History* (Cambridge: Icon Books Ltd., 1999)
[17] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), 27

paternalism of modern society.[18] According to both Plato and Aristotle, man's political nature stemmed from his relationship with reality and his ability to communicate what he discerned from that experience, any notion of association or sociality being, if not irrelevant to that purpose, certainly of secondary of importance. [19] However, the distinctive notions of the political and the social became conflated in the Roman era when communality was presumed to serve an external purpose rather than an internal one; thereby placing the furtherance of incidental goals and activities at the heart of social life. As Hannah Arendt explains, it was Seneca's mistranslation of 'zoon politikon' as 'animal socialis', and Aquinas' assertion that "man is by nature political that is social,"[20] which began the misperception of Greek association in the polis. And, according to Arendt, "more than any elaborate theory, this unconscious substitution of the social life for the political betrays the extent to which the original Greek understanding of politics has been lost." For the word 'social', which is Roman in origin, having no equivalent in Greek language or thought, was first used in reference to a specific common endeavour, a shared 'doing', and then became generally applied to the human condition which was then seen to be similarly directed towards external productive activities. And, thus, what was occluded by that mistranslation was a prior shared orientation to the world that was not primarily concerned with external achievements.

The present chapter considers the unfolding of the developing movement of 'non-being' under the following headings:

1. **Postmodern Being**
2. **Reason**
3. **Language**
4. **Social Thinghood**

6.1 Postmodern Being

One of the most notable characteristics of postmodern society is its fluidity, as relations and processes now characterise realities previously regarded in structural terms. Whilst many perceive this movement positively, regarding the shedding of old forms as liberation from oppressive ways of thought, from an Aristotelian perspective the emerging destiny of postmodern man is not towards liberation, but dissolution. As the individuated form of 'being human' becomes subsumed in a counter-movement demanding compliance and performance. For man is not free to relinquish the challenge of self-coherence, and its concomitant dependency on truth and meaning, without ceasing to 'be' at all. And, whilst Gergen suggests that life can be enriched by suspending such demands, that man can "simply be within the ongoing process of relating," this is to confuse 'being' with existing, which are ontologically different, as this work has sought to show. Rather, what is suggested by the flux of modern and postmodern society is the movement of untruth, or,

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[18] Gunnar Myrdal, 'The Political Element in the Development of Economic Theory', 1953, quoted in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*: 310. Myrdal suggests that society devoured the family and became a fully fledged substitute for it.

[19] Aristotle, *Politics*, trans., T.A. Sinclair (London: Penguin Classics, 1992), 1253a7

[20] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 24

'pseúdos', the counter movement that is opposed to the dynamism of reality. This movement isn't just false, but actively deceitful, because it mirrors the movement of reality but at the same time veils it with its own false replications, thereby, supplanting the 'telos' of truth's movement with its own ateleological diversions. The significance of such an obscuring movement derives from the fact that it creates and sustains a false way of being in the world.[21] And, consequently, what emerge are not just two different sorts of activity, but opposing orientations to reality, one oriented to truth and the other to power. The teleological movement oriented to truth finds consummation in a sustained active relatedness with the reality from which it arose. As Brentano points out in his study concerning the realisation of potential in Aristotelian 'being', "just as motion constitutes a state of becoming, and realizes this state, for which reason it is actuality **[energeia]**, so it also consummates it **as such** and is therefore called a consummate reality **[entelecheia]**."[22] Whereas, the ateleological movement, being pure motion, attains no such realisation, for as Aristotle points out, the 'entelecheia', or 'being-at-work-staying-itself', of motion qua motion is necessarily incomplete since it remains motion.

In the dialogue 'Theaetetus' Plato points towards just such an ateleological destiny for those who ignore the underlying patterns of reality, which are "established in the very being of things." Plato draws a distinction between the 'true cleverness' that recognizes this, contrasting it with the 'cleverness' that people prefer to hang on to, which is really "folly and utter senselessness," even though they pay a price for such ignorance. Because they not only become trapped in a world created by the images they have constructed, but actually change themselves in the process and end up, "living a life in the image of what they have become like." [23] It is this shifting movement from 'aletheia' to 'pseúdos', from the 'proper being' of the individuating human being to the 'non-being' of social 'thinghood' that this overview of postmodern being aims to trace out. For, whereas the inner activities of the Aristotelian soul are complete at each moment and produce nothing, the motions that constitute and sustain the progressive trajectory of social 'thinghood' are externally focused and productive.

What seems to support the postmodern perception of man as a multi-faceted relational self is society's expropriation of areas of life previously deemed private. As aspects of individuated existence, which formerly constituted the exclusive substance of individual life, and for that reason were not deemed commensurate with anything social, have been re-identified as public expressions of 'social thinghood'. For, it appears to be an underlying presumption of post-modernity that the individual has little of an inner world. And that what he does have is a mere shadow of a more significant public realm, in which he manifests his true, albeit historical, self, because the postmodern notion of self is entirely constituted and comprehended in external acts and functions. As Dilthey realised, 'life' no longer refers to something primarily individual, but to an aspect within a socio-historical system of influences. The fact that almost every aspect of modern life is lived in the

[21] Plato, *Cratylus* 427b. Socrates describes 'pseúdos' as the opposite to the divine motion of being that is truth, '*aletheia*'.
[22] Brentano, *On The Several Senses of Being in Aristotle*, 28. See page 17
[23] Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. Joe Sachs (Maryland: Focus Publishing, 2004), 177a

context of a multitude of unacknowledged functions shows the deeply immersed, largely invisible, contextualization of modern existence. And so closely is the social environment attuned to our needs that it is difficult to imagine an articulation of human goals and aspirations that is not socially predetermined or fulfilled, which, following Mannheim's insistence on the need for social remoulding would appear to be entirely appropriate. However, the notion that humanity might not be furthered within this social body is rarely expressed, it being a modern assumption that the social life we enjoy today is a natural progression of history, and that from the earliest forms of human life we have been inextricably moving ever closer towards what has culminated today in the complexity and sophistication of modern culture. Allied to that assumption is the idea that social progress, which is understood in terms of technological advance and increased productivity, is our own individual progression, and that when society evolves we evolve with it. However, the humanity promoted by modern society is a particular kind or view of humanity, essentially it is Dilthey's view of a humanity abstracted from nature, which is a purely socio-historical reality, devoid of inner animation: "'life' is the life of mankind with its social organizations and cultural achievements.... animals and plants as such, are, in this sense, not part of life at all."[24] This socio-historical view of life is itself derived from a particular view of human nature, which lends itself to being manipulated to serve ends other than its own. As Plato recognized in 'Gorgias', through the rhetoric of 'apaideusia' man may be used to serve society's needs and not his own. For the essence of 'apaideusia' is ignorance of the universal good that enables individual beings to flourish.

In 'The Sovereignty of Good', Iris Murdoch stresses the importance of philosophy returning to its beginnings and pondering the meaning of reality, instead of getting lost in linguistic theories concerned with the meaning of meaning. And in the context of a meaning found beyond that predetermined by language, she speaks up for our hazy inner worlds which resist social interpretation. As she points out, if we look at a person solely from the outside, as defined by their willed actions, there is a danger of not acknowledging the continuum of activity that is going on within them, of "inner acts forming part of the continuous fabric of being."[25] Because, "the task of attention goes on all the time," constantly constituting what we are, even when we are not manifesting that reality in external words and action, for, even at "apparently empty and everyday moments we are 'looking'."[26] Whilst inner activity often manifests in external action, what is significant about that action occurs invisibly and without commentary; it is not reducible to theory, and, therefore, not socially accessible. However, it appears that in the shift of attention from the inner to the outer realm, as we have come to view ourselves primarily in instrumental terms, it is the public language of concepts and analysis that has taken over as the more authoritative form of explanation, of even our most personal experiences. As a result, we are no longer seen to act in accordance with what we are, as individuated beings, but in accordance with how our actions are understood socially, as it is the latter meaning which is considered the more essential.

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[24] H.P. Richman, ed., *Wilhelm Dilthey Pattern and Meaning in History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 64
[25] Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge, 1991), 22
[26] Ibid., 43

A further, though related, result of the shift towards the primacy of 'social interpretation', and the collective vision it authenticates, is the diminished significance of individual 'experience'. For perceptions and intuitive knowing that do not cohere with the authorised interpretation are dismissed as essentially irrational and flawed. When social interpretations are regarded as primary, being perceived to be closer to 'true knowledge', individual 'knowing' comes to be eclipsed, or even nullified. And, in losing faith in our innate ability to know, we also relinquish our ontological relationship with that aspect of reality previously 'known', as responsibility for understanding and interpreting our relations with the world is taken away from us and passed to experts. For Aristotle, 'not knowing' was really the same as 'not living' and, consequently, having access to someone else's knowledge was no alternative to the ontological relationship that 'knowing' demanded. For, whereas the sleeping soul can accumulate knowledge, only an awakened soul can actually 'know'. However, the individuated 'knowing' possessed by the perceiving soul would seem to be undermined by the consensual form of knowledge promoted by society, since this is the only form of knowing social 'thinghood' can access. And, more importantly, in giving up individual knowing the individual locates himself more firmly within the impersonal movement of social consciousness. Certainly so far as Mannheim is concerned, this shift in orientation whereby the individual surrenders an aspect of his "cultural individuality" and instead allows himself to be led by the interpretation of others, i.e., by those society authorises to dispense interpretations, is essential if social consciousness is to be acquired. And, according to Mannheim, it needs to be acquired if social cohesion is to be maintained. What Aristotle's understanding of 'proper being' significantly points to in this regard, is the individual's ontological dependency on experienced reality, since there is a recognised reciprocity between man and the cosmos that sustains him in his active 'thinghood'. For what is lost in the compromised encounter with reality, when man does not hold himself open to perceive it, is not only a diminished understanding of the world, but also a diminished way of 'being' in it. However, such a reciprocal relationship can only be maintained if reality is believed to have something essential to convey, not just to knowledge, but to 'being', which means that our 'thinghood' needs to be seen as constituting something beyond the 'parousia' of performance. It needs to be seen as an activity of 'ousia', capable of 'being-acted-upon' by a perceived reality. As Iris Murdoch suggests, "what we really are seems much more like an obscure system of energy out of which choices and visible acts emerge at intervals in ways which are unclear and often dependent on the condition of the system in between the moments of choice."[27]

The notion of ontological 'becoming' and the primary inner movement it implies, are clearly antithetical to the trajectory of social progress, which sees the consummate nature of human life lived entirely in the public realm, in accordance with the determining social movement, and the complex of functional activities it offers. However, to the ancient philosophers man was perceived to be an 'unfinished being' who had to cooperate to gain a life, which meant that he had to be conscious of the tension of human existence and open

[27] Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, 54

to the transformative potential of nature. The fact that the ground of man's 'being' was recognized by the ancients to extend beyond the actuality of the world, and that his 'being' could therefore not be consummated in external activity, clearly puts him in conflict with a social movement whose vision does not extend so far. Particularly as that lesser social movement seeks to harness all of man's energies in pursuit of the communal goal of 'social progress'. According to sociologist, Louis Zurcher, adhering to the movement of even our diminished level of individual being, is becoming increasingly problematic, because the goal of the modern subject is no longer to retain a coherent sense of self, but to be sufficiently malleable to respond to the accelerated rate of cultural change. Thus the question of personal identity is no longer a matter for the individual to realise, but more of a transient experience determined by society, and its need for the individual to mould itself into an ever-changing aspect of social process: "This means that there **is** no identity, there is only identification or self-identification **as a process**..."[28] Because identity is understood as something achieved and maintained by the "stabilizing artifacts" produced by society.

As has been said, it is through sophistry that language conveys 'non-being' and deceives us as to its true nature. However, whereas for the ancient Greeks sophistry was discernible as a movement away from philosophy, which being the prior orientation to the world set sophistry in relief, for modern man that prior ontological relationship is no longer discernible. And, therefore, philosophy is no longer able to provide a backdrop against which sophistry can be detected. Consequently, persuading man that his essential nature is most authentically expressed by cohering with the movement of Social Being is unobstructed by any suggestion of an alternative mode of 'being'. Sociological interpretations of our underlying relationship with reality, whether via language, religion or morality, etc, tend to view the activities underlying those relationships primarily in instrumental terms, as do the genealogical investigations into their development, which means that nothing intrinsic comes to be revealed. Accordingly, there no longer appears to be anything of primordial ontological significance capable of revealing the true nature of sophistry's distorting nature. For all that is essential about human nature is deemed to be fully accessible to sociological interpretation. Notwithstanding the fact that so far as man's presumed 'natural sociability' is concerned, attempts to trace its natural origins have proved unsuccessful.[29] By imputing to the individual inchoate traits that are presumed to have come to fruition in modern society, such as a certain view of ethical behaviour and an assumed need for sociality, the false impression is given that modern society develops and fulfils our deepest nature. In essence, sophistry appears to have been institutionalised, it has become the language of the social, and the 'fictitious reality' that it has established is that contemporary society is the source, means and goal of all human potential. Frithjof Schuon suggests that the humanistic ideals this society promotes are little more than a utilitarianism, which "aim at perfecting man according to an ideal that does not transcend

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[28] Derrida, *Life After Theory*, ed. Michael Payne and John Schad (London: Continuum, 2003), 25

[29] Alexandra Maryanski and Jonathan H.Turner, *The Social Cage- Human Nature and the Evolution of Society* (California: Stanford University Press,1992), 163 Despite the fact that sociality has been linked to a number of diverse needs relating to:- ontological security, positive emotional energy, maintaining an identity, self-anchorage in roles, communicative action, sustaining a sense of facticity, , what the plethora of such theories reveal is "an implicit presumption that humans are inherently (read: biologically) social."

the human plane."[30] However, according to Mannheim, even that humanistic ideal is insufficiently moulded to fulfil the needs of modern society, which means that education needs to aim at producing something more specific, more tailored to the next stage of social development.[31]

As previously seen, not only do sociological investigations into human behaviour tend to interpret all activities in instrumental terms, but so, too, do the genealogical excavations which seek to undermine the historical accounts of those developments. According to Foucault, "if the genealogist refuses to do metaphysics what he or she finds underlying historical events is not a timeless and essential secret, but that they (events) have no essence or that their essence has been fabricated."[32] However, as Voegelin points out, genealogy without metaphysics remains in an impasse, because without considering the metaphysical nature of 'being-human', the genealogist is able to get no further than the social and the historical. To stay true to the nihilistic challenge is not to remain in the surrogate animation of a socially determined genealogy, which is only sustained as a counter force to the dominant rationalistic paradigm from which it is derived. For, according to Voegelin, nihilism is a servant of the noetic: providing a guideline for the seeker of reality through the action of rebellion. Thus, rebellion serves to get beyond the fact that "there is no point of contact between the symbols of dogmatic ideology and noetic thought." And, consequently, "whoever wishes not to get stuck in the secondary ideologies must push on, beyond the traditions to the pre-dogmatic reality of knowledge."[33]

The concern of this work has been with man's avoidance of the activity of 'being' and the consequent movement from 'being' to 'non-being', as man's orientation to the world has shifted from inner activity to external productivity. And it has been sought to show both these movements in the forms of existence that they have established and continue to establish. However, the difficulty with attempting to bring to light such movements is that 'being' is not discernible in itself, it can only be seen in its effects, as can its lack. So far as the effects of the movement of 'non-being' are concerned, the 'meme', perhaps, provides the most dramatic evidence of our dispossessed nature and misplaced potential. And for that reason should not be regarded as an alien intrusion into contemporary society, but as an indication of its true nature, revealing us more as carriers of modern culture than its participants, because 'memes' are not radically new entities, just the most recent phenomenological form of our growing estrangement from nature and from ourselves. The humanistic antipathy towards Dawkins' 'meme' theory, which implies that modern culture is little more than impersonal replication, stems from the obvious conclusion such a theory points to, i.e., that society is not on the progressive trajectory it imagined. Thus, the supposed superiority of modern culture has been called into question, not by scientific theories attempting to delimit man's potential, but because human life and culture as presently experienced have been revealed to be largely anonymous by-products of social

[30] Frithjof Schuon, *To Have A Centre*, 10
[31] Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society*, 205
[32] Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' 1971 in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books,1997):78
[33] Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 88

mechanisation. In 'The Posthuman Condition', Robert Pepperell suggests that there can be no sociological distancing from technological expansion and expression, because the very essence of the social is itself a creation of 'techne.' This is an important point, and one missed when technology is regarded solely as a scientific aspiration, because 'the technological' and 'the social' identify the same reality. The determining force shaping postmodern society is not scientific, but social, and to see technology purely as an expression of science is to ignore its fundamentally social origin and application. By furthering social development technology has inevitably come to constitute more and more of our reality, our very essence in fact, according to Heidegger. However, technology does not just provide the means for the realisation of imagined possibilities; it also creates the mindset that desires them. And, in that sense, technology's significance is more than simply instrumental. Because the mind that is content with the promises of technology, in a sense, desires nothing real, preferring the permanent postponement of realisations that technology makes possible. Accordingly, technology is not the expression of something alien in society, it is society.[34] Technology has a determining social element, which is entirely overlooked if it is seen simply in scientific terms. For the work of 'science' is not the exploration of reality, but the management of social problems. And, in furtherance of that social agenda, the intellectual tools that guide the scientists' work are pedagogically determined, being pre-set in a problem-solving social context.[35] Whereas Aristotle's metaphysics is closely related to his physics and envisages a dynamic cosmos, relational and teleological, of which man is a part, social science is founded on a particular image of man which denies him any such potential, deriving as it does from his conceptual limitations and consequent intellectual dependency on association.[36] It is this image of social superiority that applies a corrective to any unhistorical aspirations individuals may have resulting in conformism and complacency becoming the identifying marks of the model citizen. As Dilthey foresaw, in the social context individual life is meaningless: "Individuals themselves cannot 'mean' anything their actions are nonsensical until coordinated with the actions of others."[37] Gergen, too, sees us essentially as coalesced, and describes the postmodern self, or 'pastiche personality', as a process: malleable, superficial, and constantly changing, in conformity with the demands of a rapidly changing culture. As a result, "there is no self outside of that which can be constructed within a social context."[38] Accordingly, it appears that the process constituting the modern self is a social one, emanating from society and not from the individual, because it is concerned primarily with productive external activities that form the constitution of the social and not with inner activities that individuate and maintain the individual. To the ancient and medieval world, however, man was steered towards the fulfilment of his nature by reason, which was regarded as "a spiritual power living in each man."[39] Reason was regarded as part of man's nature, as the "organ for perceiving the true nature of reality and determining

[34] Robert Pepperell, *The Postmodern Condition* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2003), 203
[35] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 46
[36] Teillhard De Chardin, *Activation of Energy*, 387. "Henceforth man is less capable than ever of thinking alone."
[37] H.P. Rickman, *Wilhelm Dilthey Pattern and Meaning In History*, 105
[38] Gergen, *The Saturated Self*, 154
[39] Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason*, 7

the guiding principles of our lives."[40] Reason, however, now serves social purposes, having "become completely harnessed to the social process of production"[41] which suggests that a breakdown has occurred in our orientation to the world and that a radical change has occurred in our understanding of what constitutes human reason.

6.2 Reason

Being was perceived by Aristotle in its primary sense as 'ousia' – active 'thinghood' - which is an individuating aspect of nature, distinguished in the case of human 'being' by the endowment of comprehension. The capacity for reason was regarded ontologically, as an essential aspect of man's intrinsic nature, and not simply as a superadded tool for him to deploy.[42] As the 'rational animal' – the 'zoon echon logon' - rationality and animality would appear to constitute the essential and indivisible composition of man. If anything, 'animality' would appear to be the underlying vital force. However, the modern perception of man has focused exclusively on his possession of rationality, and not just since Descartes, who selectively avoided all sensual appurtenances in his estimation of what constitutes a human being. Whereas Aristotelian man 'knew' God through his 'being', by virtue of which man aligned himself with the divine principles of reality perceived directly by his soul, it was through his insular reason that the Christian was recognized as a servant of God, willing his actions, in contradistinction to the rest of 'unreasoned' nature, which was moved according to an 'inbuilt tendency' of which it was unaware.[43] As a result of Christianity's idealized vision of Being, reason's dominance over sensual awareness was ensured, as man was required to utilise reason in his efforts to overcome his 'fallen nature', which was a requisite step in seeking a closer relationship with God. According to Voegelin's account of the classical understanding of reason, it was this "restrictive concentration on the conflict between reason and passion"[44] that caused a "subtle distortion" in man's understanding of his rational nature, a distortion that is continued today in the dualistic conception of reason versus the senses. Because, by setting a rational mind against a sensing body, reason has been severed from its inner potency, and shaped to serve external productive activities rather than developing the potential for internal action. The underlying reason for that distortion is the destruction of our metaphysical relationship with reality and the subsequent, and inevitable, 'triumph' of the mind over the soul as our primary orientation to the world.[45] As a result, we no longer regard reason as an intrinsic aspect of our relationship with reality, but more as a distinct means for analysing and interpreting it. This shift is particularly significant as far as our understanding of human nature is concerned, because the human capacity for reason, being inherent to our nature, operates as the lynch-pin of our 'being', orienting us towards truth through the constant

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[40] Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason*, 13
[41] Ibid., 7
[42] Aristotle, *Protrepticus*, trans. Anton-Hermann Chroust (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), para 56, 'To the soul there belongs, on the one hand, reason which rules according to nature.'
[43] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 16.1.2., ed. Timothy McDermott (London: Methuen 1991), 172
[44] Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis*,
[45] John Wellmuth, *The Nature and Origins of Scientism*, 19 Whilst in the modern era this development is regarded as an advancement of the mind, the trend of thought that underlies it is actually a loss of confidence in the power of the mind.

flux of the changing world. In considering that shift in our understanding, it is proposed to consider first the mind's advancement over the soul in orienting us to reality; and secondly, the prior destruction of our metaphysical relationship with the world that made such a development possible.

1.The Advancement of the Mind

Aristotle suggests that "the work of a human being is a being-at-work of the soul in accordance with reason." However, he also recognises that there are different ways in which reason can belong to the soul, and concludes that it is the reason that belongs to the soul "in a state of being-at-work," i.e., in wakefulness, which "seems to be the more governing meaning."[46] Thus, our ability to reason is tied to our consciousness of reality, to our perceptive capabilities. The abandonment of the ontological doctrine of truth, which recognised truth as an aspect of reality and as the primary way of 'being' in the world, has already been considered. However, what is indicated by the relinquishment of that doctrine is more than just an event in our shifting consciousness of reality. As it would also seem to suggest a continuing process of ontological diminution, during the course of which our ties to reality have progressively loosened, as the mind has felt empowered to make its own independent determinations as to the nature of the real. A diminution that is perhaps now reaching its conclusion in the world observed by Daniel Dennett, in which thought and its productions appear to have outstripped human nature: "A human mind is itself an artefact created when memes restructure a human brain in order to make it a better habitat for memes."[47]

Whilst to postmodern consciousness appraisals of an unfettered mind may appear as freedom, to the ancient and medieval understanding a mind not conformed to reality is not acting in accordance with its own nature, but is, under the pretence of liberation, "enslaved to itself." Accordingly, what postmodernism undermines in seeking a pragmatic solution to the problem of vying perspectives, is not truth, viewed in accordance with the ontological doctrine, but the surrogate 'truth' of consensus, a later social construction. For, what the plethora of competing postmodern perspectives call into question is not the nature of truth itself, but merely the authority of previously dominant paradigms. As Gergen points out, it is a realization of postmodernism that, "the sense of objectivity is a social achievement"[48] and one that heralded the ascendancy of the mind over reality. However, that ascendancy relates not to the individual mind, for it is not the individual who is ascending, but to the mind acting in consensus, because, "to count as something factual or true demands that others reach the same conclusion."[49]At its inception as a distinct category of knowledge, objectivity was acknowledged to name merely a relation derived from the mind's cognizance of reality, and not reality itself. The Dutch theologian Johannes Caterus responded to Descartes' introduction of 'objective reality' in the 'Meditations' by asking him, "what is 'objective being in the intellect?" Because, according to Caterus'

[46] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a 4-7
[47] Daniel Dennett, 'Consciousness Explained',1991, 207:quoted in Susan Blackmore *The Meme Machine*: 22
[48] Kenneth Gergen, *The Saturated Self*, 84
[49] Ibid., 84

understanding it was, "simply the determination of an act of the intellect by means of an object ...merely an extraneous label which adds nothing to the thing itself." Consequently, "having objective being in the intellect is simply a thought of the mind which stops and terminates in the mind. And this can occur without the thing in question existing at all."[50] Descartes agreed, admitting that objective reality pertained only to an idea in the intellect, which is in the intellect, "in the way in which objects are normally there." Thus the idea of something in the intellect came to have its own reality, albeit a lesser one, initially at least, from the object of reality of which it was the idea. As Descartes explains, "the idea of the sun is the sun itself existing in the intellect – not of course formally existing, as it does in the heavens, but objectively existing, i.e., in the way in which objects normally are in the intellect....this mode of being is of course much less perfect than that possessed by things outside the intellect." [51] The modern understanding of reason which has shaped our world is drawn from Descartes' inversion of the intellect over reality, which was completed in the idealism of Kant and his rejection of metaphysics. With the growing cognisance of the power of the mind, reality was deemed to have nothing itself to convey. And, accordingly, 'knowing' became the exclusive reward of intellectual labours, as what thought experienced was no longer "the movement of the thing itself,"[52] but the mind's own determining ratiocination. Increasingly the language of knowledge spoke more of the mind's methods of application than anything resounding from reality and, unsurprisingly, 'calculation' became the model it aspired to.[53]

Whilst postmodernism rightly questions the dominance of the applied reason of modernity and the questionable truths it was taken to disclose, it fails to appreciate the pre-modern universal understanding of truth and of man's natural capacity to receive it. Whilst Maritain asserts that "realism is lived by the intellect before being recognized by it,"[54] recognizing the priority of reality in that process depends on the acknowledgement of an ontological relationship with reality, prior to anything the intellect may abstract from it. It was this understanding of reason, as a determining aspect of reality which all men had a natural capacity to receive, regardless of their culture or background, which enabled and sustained the universalism of medieval philosophy for more than three centuries. As Etienne Gilson explains in his study of 'Medieval Universalism', the fact that those studying at the University of Paris came from different countries and spoke different languages did not alter the unitary nature of their search for truth, or necessitate a 'multilogue' of vying perspectives, because truth, as an aspect of reality, was recognised to

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[50] Descartes *Meditations On First Philosophy*, trans., John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 85

[51] Ibid., 86

[52] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Sheed and Ward, 1993), 460 Gadamer explains that dialectic, understood authentically, is not a method of thinking, but an engagement with reality. Recognised by the Greeks as the movement of the *logos* and not simply as movements performed by thought.

[53] Margreta De Grazia, 'Secularization Of Language In The 17th Century' ed., Nancy Struever, *Language and the History of Thought* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1995), 18. De Grazia reports the historian of the Royal Society of London, Thomas Sprat, enjoining his fellow members to focus in their writing on bringing, "*all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can.*"

[54] Jacques Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 83

speak directly to men's souls: "What is rationally true is universally true, for the only thing that lies behind truth is reality itself which is the same for all."[55] Thus reason was seen as an aspect of reality, part of the natural order that man had the natural capacity to receive, and as a result of which he recognized truth: "**Ratio** implies not only the capacity for formally correct thinking,,, It implies first and foremost the capacity of man to grasp the reality he encounters."[56] For, what Albertus Magnus, (Aquinas' teacher), insisted upon, and indeed was the first to assert, was that because the world had been created by God, created things had their own being, and could not be grasped as works of God, "unless they are viewed as what they are in themselves."[57] Accordingly, the fact that the universe was recognised as being created by God did not absolve theologians from the task of endeavouring to understand it; rather it imbued it with a reality to be known. However, reason can only be maintained in that dynamic universal aspect by a vitalising realism which enables reason to be used in accordance with its own nature, which is "to judge things according to what they are."[58] Once reality is judged mute, with nothing to reveal, no truth can be received from it. And, consequently, the organ of perception that previously 'knew' it atrophies, as man's attention and energy are drawn towards honing his powers of analysis, rather than contemplating the depths of reality.

As realism fades, because the soul is no longer 'in touch' with reality, the assumption arises that the mind is capable of making its own determinations as to the nature of what is real. And, ultimately, the notion that any aspect of reality exists as a thing in itself, with an essential nature, becomes alien. However, the consequences of fading realism concern not only our understanding of reality, but also our understanding of the mind. Because whereas "the human mind is right when it conforms to reality," without realism it becomes dislodged from its anchoring source, which in the Middle Ages was recognized to be both spiritual and natural. However, a mind empowered by its own workings no longer felt the need for that anchoring source, since it had created its own. As Gilson acknowledges, although the theologians of the Middle Ages were "all united in belief in the universal character of religious faith and an equally strong belief in the universal character of rational truth," to most of them "the necessary foundation of solid theological studies was logic." Accordingly, they came to be more grounded by an order produced by the mind than the order perceived in reality, and increasingly it was belief alone that sustained the relationship with universal truth. Ultimately a tension developed between the two, giving rise to a schism between philosophy and theology, and eventually leading, by the time of the late Middle Ages to, what Gilson describes as, "the total wreck of scholastic philosophy and scholastic theology".[59] However, without metaphysics as their common ground, it is difficult to see how the two could remain linked. For once the mind had demonstrated to itself its own power to produce order, it no longer felt inclined to seek it in reality and inevitably felt sufficiently empowered to adopt its own system of belief, since

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[55] Etienne Gilson, *Medieval Universalism* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1937),17
[56] Josef Pieper, *Scholasticism*, trans., Richard and Clara Winston (London: Faber & Faber, 1960),117
[57] Thomas Aquinas, 'Summa Contra Gentiles' 2, 4, (1): quoted in Pieper, *Scholasticism*: 117
[58] Gilson, *Medieval Universalism*, 18
[59] Etienne Gilson, *Reason And Revelation In The Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner &Sons, 1938), 16

the verification for that choice no longer needed to be in reality, as the choice itself was seen to be vindicated by the authority of the rational power that chose it. In promoting the language of revealed scripture over natural reason's capacity to perceive the revelations of reality, an internal authority was replaced by an external one, making way for the triumph of idealism over realism as our determining orientation towards noetic truths. Whilst Gilson explains the justification for that movement away from metaphysics on the grounds that "very few men are metaphysicians, whereas all men need to be saved,"[60] it was the understanding of natural theology that each man needed to experience the tension of his own existence, his desire to know being the necessary precursor to a proper alignment with reality, because man is metaphysical by nature not by knowledge. Voegelin interprets the unrest of man's questioning as a divine encounter, in which man experiences the noetic pull towards order, which in turn suggests, "a consubstantiality of the human nous with the 'aition' it apperceives."[61] However, man will only experience this divine encounter if he questions his existence, which means that as a human being he cannot be free of the burden of his being: "The man who asks questions, and the divine ground about which the questions are asked, will merge in the experience of questioning as a divine-human encounter,"[62] because, "man is moved in his search of the ground by the divine ground of which he is in search." The burden of coherence is the tension of our individual existence and can only be resolved through our own quest for meaning, which is an ontological pursuit, not an epistemological one. However, when the movement of thought in the mind came to replace the movement of reality in the soul, as "reason began to plume itself on its autarchy,"[63] man came to see himself more in the context of what he could demonstrate than in what he could know, and consequently came to live more in the 'reality' created by conceptual thought than in the 'now' of directly perceived reality. And, whereas the noetic understanding of ancient philosophy was maintained by the perception of an animate reality, the idealism of universal belief that prevailed as the unifying force in the early Middle Ages, was not enough to sustain man's direct connection with reality, and nor did it seek to maintain it. Christian belief interpreted reality through the vision of scripture, which was more 'real' than the soul's diminishing perception of the natural world. And, even as those particular religious beliefs waned and came to be replaced by more convincing, i.e., demonstrable, scientific interpretations of reality, the approach to reality remained firmly fixed in idealism, because the atrophied powers of the soul and the intuitive 'knowing' it yielded were rendered inarticulate in a world increasingly dominated by discursive reasoning and conceptual language.

2. The Destruction of the Metaphysical Relationship with Reality

In the Middle Ages theological interest in Aristotle was primarily as the provider of a logical structure for the axioms of faith given in revelation, the challenge being to present faith as not beyond reason to pagans who had not received the benefit of direct revelation.

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[60] Etienne Gilson, *Reason And Revelation In The Middle Ages*, 82

[61] Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 95 '*Aition*' means cause. F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 16. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 983a – 993a

[62] Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, 95

[63] Pieper, *Scholasticism*, 124

And what Aristotle usefully provided was a 'scientific' framework for the justification of theological knowledge, albeit a framework vastly different to his own dynamic vision. However, in coordinating Aristotle's metaphysics with Christian theology space had to be found for the necessity of revealed doctrine: "Metaphysical investigation aims at the knowledge of God, but for the scholastic theologian this knowledge is accessible only to the believer."[64] However, if God could only be known to the believer, his metaphysical accessibility via reality had to be denied or ignored. And thus a believed reality, supported by faith came to supplant an intrinsic reality accessible through perception. The problem was that whilst Aquinas acknowledged that metaphysical investigation can show **that** God is, but not **what** he is, the nature of that putative metaphysical insight held implications regarding the fullness of man's 'being' and his natural capaciousness for God, which ultimately clashed with the Church's view regarding man's inherent emptiness.[65] Man's potential was to receive the act of existence and once that had been actualised, he had no further ontological potential, his operative potency being restricted to secondary acts, or 'doings'.

In the 'Summa Contra Gentiles', Aquinas prepared a text to present the reasonableness of faith to pagans. In order to achieve this, the ambit of natural reason, which Aristotle regarded as a divine gift, had to be reduced to allow for the supremacy of scripture and the continuing authority of its interpretation. "The truth about God to which human reason reaches is fittingly proposed to man for belief."[66] As a result, a 'two-fold truth' concerning divine being was recognised to exist, "one to which the inquiry of reason can reach, the other which surpasses the whole ability of the human reason." However, it was deemed fitting that "both of these truths be proposed to man divinely for belief. Because if this truth were left solely as a matter of inquiry for human reason, three awkward consequences would follow:" - 1. Few men would possess knowledge of God, being too lazy or too busy or not having the correct physical disposition. 2. Those who did discover the truth would take a great deal of time attaining it, and, 3. "Many remaining ignorant of the power of demonstration would doubt those things that have been most truly demonstrated." Thus Aristotle's ontological 'knowing' bifurcated into the certitude of faith and the demonstrability of reason. And in that bifurcation the world came to be divided between what can be demonstrated and what cannot. With knowledge, and all that knowing can mean, being attributed to demonstrable reality, and what cannot be demonstrated, establishing the ambit for faith. As a result, the knowable metaphysical truths that cannot be demonstrated, but can be known by being pointed at another way, were lost to that divided world. And further, man's natural capaciousness for God, which is his perceptive ontological disposition, came to be viewed as the strivings of a mind seeking demonstrations to support belief. Thus the human capacity for the contemplative 'knowing' of reality would appear to have been considered incompatible with the authority of scripture.

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[64] Charles B.Schmidtt and Quentin Skinner, et al., *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 588

[65] Ibid., 588

[66] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, chapter iv

In chapter five of the 'Summa' Aristotle is rallied in support of the Christian quest for God. He is briefly quoted disagreeing with Simonides' suggestion that mortals restrict their knowledge to mortal things. For, according to Aristotle, "man should draw himself towards what is immortal and divine as much as he can."[67] However, the immortality Aristotle mentions in the 'Nicomachean Ethics', from which the quotation is taken, is not something outside oneself, or beyond life. For as he goes on to say in that work, "as far as possible one ought to be immortal and to do all things with a view to living in accord with the most powerful thing in oneself."[68] For Aristotle the divine is potentially present in us, as the best part of us, and as such is accessible to those who live contemplating reality, which we all have the potential to do. Since, for Aristotle, knowing and living are in a way synonymous, accepting the reality 'known' by somebody else instead of striving to know it oneself, would be an abdication of one's life and not a means to fulfilling it. Because then one would not make the effort of holding oneself open to reality or be 'acted-upon' by the divinely inspired forms of the cosmos. Under scholasticism, however, the perceptive element of contemplation appears reduced. As it came to be viewed in increasingly instrumental terms: as the initiative of the will, a scholarly activity of the mind, which the senses can only hinder.[69]At the same time, man's orientation towards the divine came to be seen less as the individual's natural accord with reality, and more in terms of his performance of functions appropriate to his status within the church. As maintaining the integrity of that greater body through efficient regulation became the determining focus of the religious life. Accordingly, intrinsic reality and the individual's perceptive capacity to receive it became of less significance for knowledge of the divine. As nature, although acknowledged to be in God's mind, was deemed to have no reality accessible to man beyond the demonstrable. Clearly nominalism and a mechanical perception of the universe could only be a matter of time if nature no longer had anything to say. And, as Edward Grant points out in his work concerning the development of reason in the Middle Ages, whilst the origin of modernity is often traced back to Ockham or Descartes, once language and demonstration have been raised above the perceptive 'knowing' of reality, the supremacy of reason, which is the modern orientation to the world, is already taking place. Accordingly, "modern philosophy did not have to undertake the struggle to establish the rights of reason against the Middle Ages it was, on the contrary, the Middle Ages that established them for it."[70]

By saving man from the effortful task of 'inquiring after God', he was persuaded that his soul need not be actively engaged in such a search. And what was thereby institutionalised in 'the religious life' was an ontological disproportion between man's soul and the forms of reality needed to act upon it, because "insofar as he exists spiritually man desires

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[67] Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, chapter v

[68] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177b 35

[69] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Vol 46 180.1, 180.2 . 182.1[451 – 456], "In essence the contemplative life is a life of mental activity, but what stimulates us to live in this way is our will which activates all our powers including mind. Contemplation is hindered by strong passions which distract our attention from mind to sense. One can't at the same time be occupied with external activity and free for contemplation of God."

[70] Etienne Gilson 'La philosophie as Moyen Age' (Paris, 1922): 311: quoted in Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 355

satiation by reality."[71] Not only did man no longer recognise that he had any 'being' to realise, but he became caught in a situation in which his 'being' could not be consummated. Because he came to believe that his spiritual aspirations were capable of being satiated by ideas alone, as the higher aspects of reality previously 'known' through 'noesis' came to be regarded as a matter more fitting for belief. However, reasons for belief alone cannot provide ontological satisfaction and the believer remains intellectually and ontologically dissatisfied.[72] As Pieper points out, without reality the concept of belief ultimately becomes meaningless, if not alien to human dignity, because, unless man's natural powers to know of God's existence are utilised, man's soul remains inactive, and not only can he not attain happiness, but neither can he realise his true nature.[73]

6.3 Language

For Aristotle, man discloses himself in speech. And both Heidegger and von Humboldt recognize language as something fundamental to human nature. Heidegger describes it as, "the foundation of human being,"[74] and suggests that "man may find the proper abode for his existence in language."[75] For von Humboldt, "language is the inner organ of being", and, as such, directly implicated in man's spiritual development. All of which suggests a shared recognition of a fundamental ontological relationship between man and speech. However, the nature of that relationship and how it unfolds in history are viewed somewhat differently. And it is, therefore, proposed to briefly consider Heidegger's understanding of that relation, as described in a series of lectures given in 1957 - 'The Nature of Language', and in 1959 – 'The Way to Language' (these lectures formed part of a series of lectures given under the general title 'Language'),[76] followed by a closer examination of von Humboldt's thinking regarding that relation.

1. Heidegger

For a number of reasons von Humboldt's understanding of our ontological relationship with language is closer to the views expressed in this work, and, also, closer to the Aristotelian understanding of language. Two main areas in which Heidegger's views on language differ from von Humboldt's concern, i) human destiny and ii) the work of the soul.

i.) Human Destiny -

Heidegger states that, "there is no such thing as a natural language that would be the language of a human nature occurring of itself, without a destiny."[77] Wilhelm von Humboldt would, no doubt, agree. It is, however, on the nature of how that destiny unfolds

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[71] Pieper *Happiness and Contemplation*, 64
[72] Josef Pieper, *Belief and Faith*, 47
[73] Ibid., 23
[74] Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz, (San Francisco: Harper, 1971), 112
[75] Ibid., 57
[76] Both series of lectures were first published in German in 1959 under the title, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, and later translated and published under the title, *On The Way To Language* in 1971.
[77] Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*, 133

that they differ. Because, whereas for von Humboldt man appears to be a participant in that destining, as 'what has been determined' by destiny unfolds in history, revealing the nature of man's participation, or lack of it. For Heidegger, man is not required to participate: "We are not responsible for our experience with language or its lack."[78] For Heidegger the true nature of language is not revealed in the everyday reality that surrounds us, "in everyday speaking language does not bring itself to language but holds back,"[79] which is why Heidegger suggests that poetry and thinking are the necessary companions in an inquiry into the being of language. It is Heidegger's view that we may become transformed by our experiences with language, "from one day to the next or in the course of time."[80] As he sees man's destiny with language relating to a possible future event. However, this transformed relationship with language is something "which we cannot compel or invent."[81] Rather, it will result from an insight, "a lightening flash", "no one knows where or how", concerning our essential relationship with language. That revelatory insight concerns the fact that we are appropriated by language, i.e., held in a relationship with it: "Appropriation is *the* law because it gathers mortals into the appropriateness of their nature and there holds them."[82]And Heidegger sees in the event of that realised relation a possibility for a transformation, "what if Appropriation, by its entry, were to remove everything that is in present being from its subjection to a commandeering order and bring it back into its own."[83] Thus, Heidegger seems to see in our destiny with language a possibility for the undoing of the determining hold of technology and the technological thinking that has developed throughout history. And just as, according to Heidegger, we are not responsible for technolody's determining hold, neither is our active participation necessary to effect its release. Whilst Heidegger acknowledges the presence of scientism and methodological thinking in modernity, he does not see the mode of thinking that underlies those developments being imprinted on all thinking. For, as previously seen concerning his thoughts on 'releasement', Heidegger seems to regard certain aspects or regions of thinking to be separated, or at least separable, from technological developments and technological thinking: "In thinking there is neither method nor theme, but rather the region, so called because it gives its realm and free reign to what thinking is given to think."[84]Von Humboldt, however, takes a more comprehensive view concerning the burdensome influence of historical thought. For him language and thinking are, essentially, the same, and he recognises in the cultural forms shaping modern society emanations from a diminished perception of reality, which has not only resulted in an analytical influence on all language, but also on all thought.

If, as Heidegger suggests, man's destiny in language points to a possible future event over which man has no influence, that would seem to indicate that man's way of being in the world is not of ontological significance concerning the development of technological

[78] Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*, 59
[79] Ibid., 74
[80] Ibid., 57
[81] Ibid., 135
[82] Ibid., 129
[83] Ibid., 133
[84] Ibid., 74

language. And, indeed, Heidegger explicitly states that man is not responsible for any diminution in his experience of language, since, for Heidegger, the ontological relationship with language points to a possible future event, but not to anything unfolding now, not to an entwined relationship between man and language. For Heidegger Being reveals itself to language throughout the course of history: "Being says and language follows."[85] And that revelation is a direct one, i.e., directly to thought and language, "we speak only as we respond to language."[86] It does not concern reality, because Heidegger doesn't recognise an ontological connection between man's way of 'being' in the world and language. As previously stated, Heidegger doesn't hold man responsible for his experience with language and doesn't see any relationship between what he says and what he perceives. Since, as previously seen, for Heidegger perceiving is, essentially, hearing, i.e., what is garnered from being-in-the-world with others: "whether or not seeing in connection with contemplation reveals the world in the genuine sense, it is still *hearing* because it is the *perceiving of speaking*, because it is the possibility of being-with-one-another."[87] It seems that for Heidegger it is disclosures to the mind in thought and language that are primary, and not the soul's direct perception of reality. For von Humboldt, however, man, through his 'being', i.e., through the activity of his soul, is directly implicated in Being's revelation in history. Von Humboldt recognises that as man's relationship with reality alters so, too, does the nature of language. However, whilst Heidegger acknowledges the presence of technical language and recognises it as a rupture from man's natural language, he doesn't seem to see the full significance of that alteration. For his primary concern so far as language is concerned is not with how adequately man expresses reality, but with his speaking with others and creating a world.

In 'On The Way To Language' Heidegger considers von Humboldt's work and distinguishes it from his own on the basis that von Humboldt is looking to man's spiritual development and the part language has played in that. Whereas what Heidegger is seeking concerns the being of language alone: "Humboldt's way to language is turned in the direction of man, and leads through language on to something else: the endeavour to get to the bottom of and to present the spiritual development of the human race."[88] For von Humboldt, however, the two are inextricably linked; he sees that what is unfolding in man's spiritual development is his destiny, in which language is directly implicated. Von Humboldt recognises the essential part language has played in man's spiritual development as the formative element of man's underlying relationship with reality. For language gives shape to what man is, the world he creates being a reflection, conveyed through language, of his 'being'. Von Humboldt also recognised that because man's relationship with language underlies his spiritual development, that movement can go backwards as well as forwards. And the question as to which direction that development takes is entirely determined by man's abiding relationship with reality. The realisation that language has the power to act as a 'counter spirit' in that development, literally to work against man in

[85] Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*., 75
[86] Ibid., 107
[87] Ibid., 72
[88] Ibid., 119

his expression of reality, was Wordsworth's, who was a contemporary of von Humboldt. Wordsworth saw that our power of formation, i.e., our ability to make forms, is intimately linked with our relationship with language. To the extent that our discursive, cultural creations emerge primarily as manifestations of our anterior ontological relationship with reality, and only secondarily as direct products of thought, because the intellectual milieu from which such creative thoughts are derived is directly dependent on that prior relationship. And what von Humboldt understood that to mean is that the degeneracy he observed in language stems, essentially, from our inability to maintain our relationship with reality, because by losing the infusion of reality's animating force, the soul becomes increasingly inanimate; in Aristotelian terms, it goes to sleep.

ii.) The work of the soul

In both series of lectures Heidegger makes reference to what Aristotle considers to be the essence of language: "Now what (takes place) in the making of vocal sounds is a show of what there is in the soul" [89] And he distinguishes what Aristotle is here referring to, i.e., the sounding of what is shown to the soul, from that aspect of language that is of primary interest to him, which is meaning, "it is just as much a property of language, to sound and ring and vibrate, to hover and to tremble, as it is for the spoken words of language to carry a meaning." Heidegger is concerned with questioning the being of language and of assistance in this are poetry and thinking, because Heidegger sees the being of language in what is said and meant, and not in what 'is' in reality, as, "Being's grant is language". Heidegger sees von Humboldt's work as a continuation of the Greek understanding of language: "Though it had its beginnings in Greek antiquity.....this view of language reaches its peak in Wilhelm von Humboldt's reflections on language."[90] The connection is maintained because von Humboldt sees the primary expression of language as emanating from the soul and its relationship with reality. For Heidegger, however, as previously seen what is disclosed in language to thinking is more significant than what is revealed to the soul, as "the word alone gives being to the thing."[91] Accordingly, whilst Aristotle and von Humboldt speak of the showing of reality to the soul, for Heidegger, "showing relates to what touches us by being spoken and spoken about in everything that gives itself to us in speaking or waits for us unspoken."

Heidegger criticized von Humboldt's definition of the essence of language as 'energeia', suggesting that Humboldt's reference to it as a "labor of spirit" does not capture its given nature, and instead presents it as an activity of the subject. However, as previously seen, Heidegger understands 'energeia' in terms of 'actuality', i.e., as an external 'doing' rather than as the inner activity constituting what something is actively 'being'. It is evident from Humboldt's work as a whole that he does not intend 'energeia' in any productive, functional way, and, in fact, expressly distinguishes the activity of language - 'energeia' from the work produced by history - 'ergon'. It appears that for von Humboldt the fact that man's destiny is in language does not mean that it is external to him, as an event that may

[89] Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*,97
[90] Ibid., 116
[91] Ibid., 62

happen to him, but that it determines what he is and what he becomes. He recognises in language the articulation of a call to which man is required to respond, and that man's struggle is to answer authentically. Humboldt seems to detect a transformative power in language, and whilst like Heidegger, he recognises its mysterious given nature, "as a gift fallen to man according to his inner destiny," he also sees that it has a determining influence on man's relationship with reality, and by virtue of that fact can affect him ontologically.

2.Wilhelm von Humboldt

The work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, entitled, 'On Language – The Diversity of Human Language – Structure and its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind', published posthumously in 1836, closely examines the relationship between thought and language: "thought and language are one and inseparable from each other. The inseparable bonding of **thought, vocal apparatus** and **hearing** to language is unalterably rooted in the original constitution of human nature, which cannot be further explained."[92] Humboldt's aim, as he himself explained, was both "simple" and "esoteric": "a study that treats the faculty of speech in its inward aspect, as a human faculty," and, connected with this, "a philosophical survey of humanity's capacity for formation and with history." Von Humboldt's project, which spanned over 30 years, became something of an obsession that at times both overwhelmed and depressed him. He frequently announced that something, "deep", "mysterious", "inscrutable", "incomprehensible" and "unfathomable" was at work, which he found it very difficult to clarify. In his exploration, von Humboldt devoted himself to examining the possibilities that lie in the union between thought and language, specifically how language makes thought possible and how it shapes and changes its own nature.[93] However, the conclusions he reached were not entirely original, as he, like Wordsworth, was influenced by the thinking of French linguists Condillac and Diderot, whose thought he assimilated during his time in Paris.

Von Humboldt recognized that language has its own creative, autonomous aspect, "lying in its own nature"[94] and, consequently, came to the view that "however internal language may altogether be, it has yet at the same time an independent outer existence that exerts dominion against man himself."[95] For von Humboldt, language didn't so much mirror or represent reality, but actually forms a second world, expressing a new reality that enables knowledge to develop. Because thought is made possible, not as a result of the direct experience of reality, but from the language extrapolated from that experience. As pointed out earlier, regarding Bohm's 'rheomode'- the "flowing form of speech" and Aristotle's active neologisms, it isn't so much "the undifferentiated synthesis that the mind draws from experience" that is significant for the development and extension of thought, but the words and concepts into which that experience is broken up and retained. Because, as the

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[92] Wilhelm Von Humboldt, *On Language – The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind*, trans., Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 27

[93] Humboldt, *On Language*, xviii

[94] Ibid., 27

[95] Ibid., 28

expression of reality becomes increasingly shaped by the movements of the mind conveyed in language, rather than by its own animating force, it is the substance of the mind, its words and concepts, which comes to constitute the new 'reality'. As Humboldt stresses, to maintain and extend the flexibility of thought and the creative potential of the mind, it is essential that the words used to convey the reality experienced express its richness and dynamic nature, and thus convey the 'truth' of the experience in its purest possible form. Because after reality has been expressed, that resultant expression holds the possibility of another derivative emanation of reality through the process of 'feedback'. For, "thought once embodied in language becomes an object for the soul, and to that extent exerts thereon an effect that is alien to it." [96] Thus, thought is not a neutral tool, and once reality has been touched by it, it is changed, because what language records of thought's intervention then becomes a part of that reality, its history in effect.

Von Humboldt recognized that language is not created by a single act of reason, since reason itself requires language, we can't think without it. He saw that there are two parts to the creative process of thinking, an initial 'poetic' part, "sparked by feeling and instinct" in which reality is felt and 'known' that initiates "the instantaneous multi-faceted articulation of a state of mind." What then follows is a more prosaic stage, involving the use of every day language, which is an "evolving process." It is the use of 'every day' language to communicate the reality encountered that ensures that the 'newness' of the recorded experience is kept within the bounds of existing knowledge and expression; which then raises the question of how anything new can be known, if our primary allegiance is to language rather than to reality. During the second prosaic stage, von Humboldt points out that it is essential that there be conscious guidance of language, if it is to maintain, "the purposefulness that life and reality demand," because it is at this latter stage that words create their own impact and appear as objects to the mind. In the relationship between mind and language, the mind is the active party, but if it does not maintain its activity, it will not be able to retain its freedom against the 'counter spirit' of linguistic degeneracy and "language will work back on thinking in a manner that may become harmful."[97] For that degeneracy not to occur it is necessary that the lexical forms which come to express reality are able "to mesh with reality to the highest possible degree." Because the force that develops in opposition to 'energeia'- the activity of living language in man - is the 'ergon' of past accumulated thought.[98] As Humboldt explains, "at any given moment in history, the nations' speakers will inherit a mass of forms that contain the work already done, the ergon, and since these forms record the analysis already performed they also express the nation's world-view."[99]August Comte, the initiator of sociology, also had the near contemporaneous realization that the accumulated 'ergon' of the historical past wielded its own determining power, and was in fact the primary force shaping and directing mankind. Accordingly, it is not possible to choose one's perspective outside the parameters given by one's culture, since the determining parameters have already been laid down. What von

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[96] Humboldt, *On Language*, 62

[97] Ibid., Hans Aarslef xviii

[98] Ibid., 49 "*In itself [language] is no product (Ergon), but an activity (Energeia)*".

[99] Ibid., Hans Aarslef, xxx

Humboldt sought to show was not so much the origins of language, which he recognized were shrouded in mystery, but the changing movement and sense of language as it interacts more and more with the mind and its abstractions. For, as language begins to respond more to the analytic demands of philosophy and science than the soul's need to express reality, it becomes increasingly prosaic, "as prose, language becomes a method of thinking." And its essential movement, which is "the work of the spirit which can only exist in activity,"[100] begins to slow down, as the form that language takes shifts from the expression of a reality felt towards its analysis. This occurs because the constituent reality informing these respective movements alters from a resonating intrinsic reality perceived by the soul, to the 'ergon' of a static, linguistic, or 'institutional' reality, created by reason and maintained in historical concepts and theories.

Like Heidegger, von Humboldt recognized the autonomy of language. However, he saw language not simply as something given, but as a determining, effective influence on man's shifting relationship with reality: "the organ of inner being [language] is deeply entangled in the spiritual evolution of mankind – accompanying it at every stage of its advance or retreat."[101] For Heidegger what man 'showed by saying' was not decisively a human activity, but stemmed from what "let itself be shown." Von Humboldt, however, articulates a more agonistic relationship, focusing not so much on the given-ness of language, but on the given-ness of reality and its call to be expressed. It was von Humboldt's view that language did not just represent the objects of reality to the soul, but set them in the context of a new linguistic milieu: "language doesn't represent the objects but the concepts the mind has produced of them."[102] Thereby providing a totalizing form for them, akin to nature, but established by the mind in its search for a form of "regularity congenial to our mental pattern."[103] Von Humboldt regarded man's relationship with language as both conspiratorial and adversarial, as language conspires with man's energy to produce a synthesis between thought-form and sound as a result of which a third force emerges.[104] And from such acts of synthesis new combinations are produced, which then react on the mind from which they emerged: "Thus from the world reflected in man there arises, between them, the language which limits him with it, and fructifies it through him." It is on the strength of this one act of synthesis between mind and reality, which is threatened as the mind becomes burdened by history, that the vitality of a language depends. Because, as a result of its increasing materiality, through the accumulation of a body of analysis and interpretation, language, "when left to itself puts difficulties in the way of the inner form that works upon it." It is through the constraint of historically derived concepts that the expressive flow of language is slowed down in its "movement towards prose." And, consequently, whatever degree of reciprocity exists between the

[100] Humboldt, *On Language*, 49
[101] Ibid., 21
[102] Ibid., 84
[103] Ibid., 61
[104] Ibid., 184

resonance of reality and its expression in speech, as man acts like an echo,[105] a reverberation of the reality that has been passed over to him, is diminished when the innate activity of language is no longer recognized.[106]Thus, every conceptual reduction contributes to the increasing materiality and entropy of language, for it does not contain or express the truth of the reality it seeks to convey. And, further, the untruth it, thereby, creates through that lack of equivalence adds a distorting influence to the reality man seeks to know, as he begins to misperceive. Nietzsche recognized the inherent imbalance of conceptual language, "every concept originates through our equating what is unequal."[107] Because concepts do not convey the truth of perceived reality, rather they concretize thought and accumulate to form a 'counter spirit' working against the 'energeia' of expressive language. That 'counter spirit' works because, "every subsequent creation does not maintain the simple direction of the original force, but is subject to a composite influence, made up of this and the force supplied by the product created earlier." Put simply, the ratio of 'energeia' to matter alters as the energetic impulse which seeks to express what is perceived is burdened by the 'ergon' of preconceived, interpreted reality. Language flattens and inevitably inertia ensues because "the genius of language is what animates it." [108]

What von Humboldt realized is that language is not simply a medium for expressing thoughts, but the very means by which thoughts are constituted: a 'producing' in effect.[109] He saw that it is the "energy which man unknowingly provides from the active forces within him" which is the "driving force of language."[110] And that what then emanates in sound holds both intellectual and sensual power, "inseparably limited and in constant mutual interaction," mirrored in the distinction between poetry and prose. However, whereas poetry gives sensuous expression to a reality experienced without any consideration given to what makes it real,[111] prose seeks an explanation for the existence of what is given in experience: "intellectually coupling fact with fact and concept with concept it strives towards an objective nexus as an idea." The danger with this prosaic analytical approach is that without the infusion of the "authentic spirit" language becomes "merely a conveyor of facts," and begins to decay. And, as a result, not only does it not express perceived reality, but neither is it the path of intellectual development, "having no formal connections [with reality] only material ones," through accumulated theories of interpretation. This is a crucial point, because 'knowing', understood as a relationship with reality and not simply as the production of factual connections about reality, ultimately depends on 'being', which is the activity that forms our underlying relationship with the

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[105] J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), 95. The poet Gerard Manley Hopkins sees a rhyming relationship between self and world, '*a canon of feeling*' in which mind and object sing the same tune.

[106]Etienne Bonnot De Condillac, *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, trans., Hans Aarsleff (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2001), Xxxxviii

[107] Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', The Nietzsche Channel, trans. Walter Kaufmann and Daniel Breazeale, http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/tls.htm?200718,

[108] Humboldt, *On Language*, 93

[109] Ibid., 48

[110] Ibid., 214

[111] Ibid., 169

world, and, therefore, when released from the form of that connection, language ceases to have anything meaningful to say. In the process of intellectualization the movement of dynamic reality that is passed over to the mind through the activity of the verb becomes anchored for thought in nouns, (the static form of speech both Aristotle and Bohm took steps to avoid). Intellectualization develops because "the more mature the mind feels itself to be, the more boldly it works on constructions of its own," and language comes to be reshaped, as what is considered to be superfluous to the goal of understanding is simply discarded.[112] Ultimately a new order is constructed out of such concepts, "a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations and clearly marked boundaries which appears more solid, more universal, better known and more human that the immediately perceived world."[113] Because, as Nietzsche observed earlier, in the tension between knowledge and life, our historical way of knowing the world is by fitting reality into our concepts, rather than stretching ourselves out to know it as it is.

According to von Humboldt, language derives not from a social need to communicate; animals manage to communicate without language, but as a result of "the animating impulse that is peculiar to man."[114] Man receives that animating impulse by virtue of his reception of animate reality, of which he is an aspect. And, therefore, his diminished perception of reality necessarily echoes in his diminished expression of it, as evidenced in the decline of poetry and poetic expression, as language moves towards texts and technical jargon: what Heidegger called the "language of the unspoken." The peculiarity of language is that like man it has an ambivalent relationship with reality, constituted of both dependency and an apparent autonomy. And, therefore, although language is produced as a result of the synthesis of thought and sound, governed by the mysterious energetic impulse which ultimately determines the resultant word form, pre-existing words and patterns of thought draw the newly emerging sounds and words towards them. This is because conceptual language has already determined our patterns of thought, and shaped the energetic impulse that is our own thinking. This is the entropic draw of habitual behaviour, perhaps more easily recognised in our individual lives than in the communal, as the unconscious drive towards energy conservation emerges as the invisible determinant of most of our choices. For whilst it is possible to live each day anew, entertaining different thoughts and actions, we don't. Because the effort of achieving such a radical shift in our behaviour demands an exertion of mental energy we are not prepared to make, and because we increasingly identify ourselves more with our past thoughts and histories than with anything of a trans-historical nature. The compulsion of this entropic development, which occasionally calls us individually to question the locus of our personhood, von Humboldt perceived to be the result of the domination of thought and the habitual behaviour it engenders. It becomes determining, because as the inspiration of the energetic impulse declines, language becomes equally lifeless and uninspiring, dampening the inner activity of the soul, as it allows itself to be imprisoned by verbal limits. As Wordsworth warned,

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[112] Humboldt, *On Language*, 205
[113] Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra Moral Sense*, 5
http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/tls.htm?200718
[114] Humboldt, *On Language*, 63

"language, if it do not uphold and feed, and leave in quiet like the power of gravitation of the air we breathe, is a counter spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, to dissolve." Condillac, too, recognized that we are engaged with the world by sensation and that "without it understanding is virtually at a standstill'. And, further, that it is our sensual awareness that is the "distinct, unique connection between perception and language,"[115] that distinguishes us as human beings. However, it is precisely this aspect of humanity that Descartes rejected. For Descartes' cognitive being was defined by its ability to engage in discourse, but specifically disassociated from the animality of sound and gesture. Descartes warned against confusing speech with natural movements and gestures, because he regarded the natural 'activity' of language as a threat to the integrity of discursivity.[116]

However, it is the conceptual and analytical mode of thought engaged in by modern discourse that appears as the primary threat to the integrity of language. As discursive reasoning has increasingly detached us from a perceptible reality, and out of that abstracted mode of being we have created an idealized world known only to the mind. Accordingly, cultural constructs emerge not simply as particular belief systems held by particular individuals, but as inter-subjective norms, which comprise the essential fabric of society and are sustained as such by collective intentionality.[117] For, as Prado points out, discourse is an environment in which individuals are as deeply ensconced as they are in their physical environment, because in essence, discourse is reality[118] and increasingly one in which individuation has no place. The determining power and autonomy of social discourse, thus, appears to represent the qualitative shift in the nature of language foreseen by von Humboldt, as 'to be' now means 'to be a subject', which means to be engaged in social discourse: the milieu of power and Social Being. And that means to be more constituted by the materiality of 'ergon' - the burdensome history of the social, than the individuating activity of 'energeia'. Throughout his extensive archaeology, Foucault's primary aim was to bring to light the determining, transformative nature of social discourse. Like von Humboldt, Foucault noticed that discourse had an external dominant force, and that man's link to discourse was not exclusively, or even primarily, internal, i.e., it was not a "synthetic activity of consciousness", but the result of the dominance of pre-existing discursive practices. Accordingly, although Foucault did not deny that discourse could be changed, he doubted that the power to effect such a change was exclusively that of a sovereign subject. The modern subject, thus, reveals his diminished metaphysical response to reality through his own diminished powers of articulation. Because, whilst his fading reserves of energy are able to recognise, "the illusory ground of conceptual structures," which have been "employed to prop up the conventional functions of western thought,"[119] he does not have sufficient resources to challenge the authority of what the

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[115] Condillac, *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, xxviii

[116] Descartes: 'The Philosophical Works of Descartes', vol II 104,1967: quoted in: *Descartes: A Study of His Philosophy*, Anthony Kenny (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1997): 200.

[117] C.G. Prado, *Searle and Foucault On Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 92

[118] Ibid., 86

[119] Julian Wolfreys, *Deconstruction.Derrida* (New York: St Martin's Press, Inc., 1998), 39. What Derrida refers to as *'putting out of joint the authority of the 'is'*.

'ergon' has put in place.[120] For, the existence of the modern subject is itself a product of discourse and is, therefore, necessarily too dispersed to 'be', let alone to effect change. As we move towards the "language of the unspoken," to which man "is moulded and adjusted," he "surrenders his natural language"[121] and no longer articulates his natural relationship with reality. He ceases to be predominantly a creature of nature, and emerges more as a creation of social discourse.

Von Humboldt recognized that language accompanies man's spiritual evolution, and foresaw "an epoch at which it is all we see, where it not only accompanies spiritual evolution, **but entirely takes the latter's place**." [122] [my emphasis] Whilst recognizing that language "arises from a depth of human nature," Humboldt also recognized the emergence of something more sinister on the horizon: a time when language would seem to be something detached from the essence of man: "there opens a glimpse, however dim and weak, into a period when individuals are lost, for us, in the mass of the population, and when language itself is the work of the intellectually creative power."[123] This work suggests that the spectre of Humboldt's vision has arrived and that the modern subject's way of 'being' in the world, as evidenced by the increasing degeneracy of language, is now characterized more by 'non-being' than by the activity of 'being'. Rather than man forgetting an understanding of Being in the face of its withdrawal from the world, as Heidegger suggests, he has, more profoundly, forgotten how to 'be' within it. In identifying more with the historical power of language and thought than with his own 'knowing' and expressing of reality, man has dispersed himself into the flow of social discourse and forgotten his own dynamic nature.

6.5 The Emergence of Social Being

By the beginning of the 19th century a number of thinkers had become aware of the emergence of a new and distinct form of entity which expressed something beyond a shared communality of action: the social. Comte referred to it, appropriately, as the 'Grand Etre', which he regarded as a new Being evidenced by new laws. Nietzsche regarded it as a 'monster of energy', and Durkheim, as a dance that organizes man into its movements, through synchronising their particular consciousnesses into one collective consciousness. [124] A century earlier such notions as 'social', 'sociable' and 'sociality' had become more prevalent in discourse, and began to be recognised as naming something distinctive.[125] As what was emerging was a "very radical cultural shift toward emphasis on natural sociality."[126] This shift in social consciousness was fundamental in shaping our ideas about

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[120] Julian Wolfreys, *Deconstruction.Derrida*, 56
[121] Martin Heidegger, *On The Way To Language*, ed. David krell, Basic Writings (London: Routledge, 1993) 420
[122] Humboldt, *On Language*, 24
[123] Ibid., 24
[124] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 319
[125] Etienne Bonnot De Condillac, *Essay on the origin of Human Knowledge*, trans., Hans Aarsleff, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xii
[126] Condillac, *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge*, trans., Hans Aarsleff, Ibid, xii

what constitutes human knowledge. Because, as a result of greatly increased social interaction, social norms and practices came to be inculcated into philosophical and scientific discourse, thereby leading to the emergence of consensus as a major determinant of what purported to be knowledge. However, at the same time the parameters of our epistemological vision were narrowed, because it is precisely the social milieu of thought and language that prevents divergent thought processes from emerging.[127] As Karl Mannheim later pointed out, "much so-called thinking is really better understood as 'habitual response'."[128]

Comte saw in the material emerging from ordinary discourse a distinctly social element, and recognized it as the substance for a new beginning, for the thinking collective Being. What Comte sought to establish was nothing less than the concretisation of the abstract, as the idea of the social as a distinct entity, which was an achievement of thought, came to be the determining force behind man's actual relations and activities. Comte recognized the necessity of the 'Grand Etre' as a result of his observations concerning conceptual thought, and what he concluded to be its apotheosis in positivism, i.e., that mode of thought that aims at the complete systematization of all aspects of human knowledge, that 'evolves' from abstraction and speculation towards "the concrete science of material social facts." [129] As a result of that concretisation, the primary ontological question no longer concerned the constitution and activities of the individual qua individual, but as a participant in the constituting activities of the greater 'social being'. Comte saw that as society proceeds, the phenomena of its development are determined more and more, not by the singular tendencies of human nature, but by the accumulated influence of past generations over the present.[130] And it was the evident weight of history in language and thought that persuaded Comte to look for another way of explaining human behaviour. He dismissed Mill's notion that the general laws of human nature could explain human behaviour, because he saw that the product of the past - the 'ergon' of history, now outweighed the 'energeia' of nature, and, therefore, sought the explanatory source in something extraneous to human 'thinghood'. Comte not only recognized the significance of an accumulated past on human thought, he also realised its connection with the progress of society, emerging as it did as "the product of a single impulse." And realised that even if that impulse could be detected in individuals, it could not be properly understood in them, because it did not emanate from them individually: "Its true nature could not be understood except by examining them in the ensemble." What Comte seems to have detected was that the individuating impulse of individual man had been largely relinquished and that formerly individuated material was now seeking another form of ontological organization and expression.

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[127] Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 6

[128] Louis Wirth, Ibid, xvii

[129] Isaiah Berlin, 'Historical Inevitability' (1953) Four Essays: On Liberty 41-43, quoted in Gertrud Lenzer, *Comte and Positivism.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975): Xx. Isaiah Berlin points out that the enormous influence of positivism in shaping modern philosophical thought is forgotten because "the categories of our thinking are so deeply affected by Comte's systematic thinking that they appear entirely natural, autonomous."

[130] John Stuart Mill, *August Comte and Positivism*, (Toronto: Ambassador Books Limited, 1965), 84.First published 1865.

Mill's disagreement with Comte over positivism and his fears concerning the growing encroachment of tyranny go to the very heart of the question of what we understand by 'being human', because whilst Comte and Durkheim regarded the increasing complexity of society as a reflection of the ascending human mind, Mill did not see it in such evolutionary terms. He had a different understanding of human nature and of what constituted human well-being, and recognised that the moving force that was 'Social Being' was not embodied in individuals, but extraneous to them. Mill referred to Comte's system for organizing knowledge as a 'noxious power' and, writing about it in his autobiography, some fifteen years after the publication of 'Liberty', concluded that whether or not such a power would be exercised depended upon, "whether mankind have by that time become aware that it cannot be exercised without stunting and dwarfing human nature." If it were to be exercised, then Mill surmised that that would be the time when the teachings of 'Liberty' would have their greatest value. And he feared that those teachings would retain their value for a long time.[131] For Mill, like Aristotle, any notion of human freedom was inextricably linked to the pursuit and attainment of truth, and the realisation that truth had to be lived.[132] Mill realised that under the categorized thinking of positivism truth would become a matter of consensus, just some agreed certainty, which is why he was so concerned about the vitality of language being protected by freedom of speech: "not just for the tolerance to be shown by society, but more importantly to maintain the energy vitally necessary for the perception and appraisal of truth."[133]

In positivism Comte saw the ascendancy of the human mind freed from the distraction of speculation and, thereby, enabled to further "the progress of our humanity towards an ascendancy over our animality."[134]And his genius was to harness the directionless movement he detected in 'liberated' thought to the notion of social progress. As a result the ambit of social order was not only extended, but rendered permanently extendable, by interpreting all experienced reality in a way consistent with the potential of a determining social order. Thus all action came to be perceived in terms of the over-arching social movement, as either assisting progress and moving forward, or threatening it with moving backwards. And individual 'telos' came to be viewed in terms entirely consistent with the expanding spectrum of social activity. According to Comte, the main agent in the progress of mankind is intellectual, not because it is the most powerful part of our nature but because it is the guiding part, and is able to dominate by virtue of the development and deployment of ideas which, thereby, effectively manage our stronger more energetic impulses, because "the path it points to is the path of least resistance."[135]

Comte saw, as later thinkers would realise, that existing patterns of thought and language shape our embryonic thinking by drawing our mental energy along the well trammelled lines of established social norms. Accordingly, behind the 'Great Being' Comte saw a new form of thinking that satisfied itself with the factual observations of a purely theoretical

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[131] John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 181
[132] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 59
[133] Ibid., 120
[134] Gertrud Lenzer, *August Comte and Positivism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 100
[135] Ibid., 101

interpreted reality, and was no longer concerned with the speculation of the past which had endeavoured to reach greater ontological depths. Comte recognized that whereas earlier theological and metaphysical thinking had been concerned with abstracting from a perceived reality, the positivist thinking that the human mind was developing no longer needed absolutes or the search for causes to guide it. That speculative element was no longer necessary, because the notion of 'meaning' had been reduced to satisfy a social need, which had no capacity for transcendence. Simply to observe connections between established facts was sufficient, because what was now understood to suffice for understanding "is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts." And since "facts cannot be observed without the guidance of some theory," the form of the explanation was already provided at the outset. Comte regarded positivism as the concluding phase in human intellectual development, because it had access to the logical laws of the human mind, which he saw would replace the former subject matter of thought - reality. However, he erroneously believed that as science progressed, the number of observed general facts would diminish.[136] In fact the opposite has occurred, because once facts are derivative of theory and not of reality, it is social need that determines their production. And the driving force behind that, as Nietzsche observed, is not truth, but power. Whereas the individual's search for meaning is teleological, and consummated in the inner activity of 'entelecheia' in which the individual joyfully contemplates reality, the driving force of modern society is an ateleological movement, which remains, necessarily, ontologically incomplete.[137] For 'Social Being' has been founded on historical mobilities extraneous to human 'thinghood' – 'non-being', and is only sustained as the force determining human action by maintaining the illusion that it is furthering human 'thinghood'.

What Comte observed in the developing process of factual analysis is the logocentric domination of language over reality, as interpretations come to be perceived as more real, because more familiar and 'knowable', than the reality from which they are derived. Such a development occurs because as our perception of animate reality declines, the 'ergon' of historical thought begins to exert its influence on the knowing process. And, ultimately, it becomes impossible for an individual to provide a viable account of reality, i.e., one acceptable to the consensus, which does not acknowledge that conceptual legacy. According to Durkheim, it is the increasingly conceptual nature of thinking that is responsible for the emergence of society - a "superior form of existence." Durkheim saw that such a development was necessitated on energy grounds alone, because concepts are fixed ways of thinking, "crystallized at any moment of time" and "that do not move on their own." Rather, they require an active force to move them, and that is society: "Above the individual there is society and that society is a system of active forces."[138] Society's supposed superiority thus derives from its ability to mobilize concepts, because the increasing weight of conceptual thought necessitates the mobilizing power of the

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[136] Gertrud Lenzer, *August Comte and Positivism*, 72

[137] For 'entelecheia' applied to 'motion qua motion' is necessarily incomplete. See p.17

[138] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 328

collective. Concepts require this new social medium as man is no longer adequate to the task that 'thinking' has become. For, by default, he has produced a mode of articulation that is no longer his own. However, if concepts are the graveyard of perceptions, as Nietzsche recognised, a new and distinct source of animation appears to have been found in the functionalism of social ontology. For whilst we may struggle to appreciate the intrinsic notion of 'good', knowing the functional 'good-for' has become second nature.[139]

Although Comte is generally regarded as the grandfather of sociology, the modern subject was born with Durkheim, who recognized the unique nature of modern society, regarding it as an organism, not dissimilar to an ant colony, predating the economic division of labour it was able to facilitate. Durkheim also realised that for sociology to exist as the science of history and society, existing human relations had to be re-expressed in a form that directed them primarily at a social order rather than at anything personal. And, therefore, he sought a genealogical explanation for the most fundamental aspects of human existence, "I consider extremely fruitful this idea that social life should be explained, not by the notions of those who participate in it, but by more profound causes which are unperceived by consciousness ....Only in this way, it seems, can history become a science, and sociology itself exist."[140] From his research on the elementary forms of religious life, Durkheim concluded that religion is primarily a social phenomenon and that its origins lie in man's awareness of his facticity within a greater whole – a whole which Durkheim adjudged to be social rather than ontological: "Basically, totem is both the symbol of god and society, are these not one and the same?" [141] Durkheim concluded that they were, on the reasoning that, "the concepts of totality, society and deity are really just different aspects of one and the same notion."[142] Durkheim saw in the God of the totem the apotheosis of the group, which he regarded as the objectification of a shared psychological state and not a primordial ontological relationship with an experienced reality. Thus, religion was seen to be no more than the "expression of the collective ideal," which man was deemed incapable of conceiving on his own. And, consequently, the dynamism of religious thought was viewed as part of the process by which society shapes itself through the "influx of psychic forces which are then superimposed onto the forms at our disposal for the ordinary tasks of existence." Accordingly, for Durkheim, the dynamism that constitutes the changing social ideals which religion expresses is not ontological, but psychological, i.e., not from reality, but from the mind. This 'psychologising' of man's ontological relatedness removes the metaphysical tension of his existence to the social/psychological sphere, and ultimately makes it a subject of expertise, beyond the reach of the individual. Nevertheless, in denying man's ontological relatedness to an order underlying reality, it is not surprising that Durkheim reaches the idealised conclusions he does. For, he squarely faces up to the mute and inanimate reality of his time. Having declared faith to be the exaltation of all mental activity: "the transport of the individual

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[139] John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 4

[140] Emile Durkheim - Durkheim's review of A. Labriola: 'Essais sur la Conception Materialiste de L'histoire in Revue Philosophique Dec 1897', quoted in Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London, Routledge 1990): 24

[141] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 154

[142] Ibid., 337

beyond himself," Durkheim asks how the individual could add to the energies he has without leaving the self: "How could he surpass himself with his own forces alone?"[143] And, detecting no transformative power within his nature, reaches the obvious conclusion that only the collective can transport him. For Durkheim, thought is not given, but a historical product, "capable of exalting man to a superior form of existence, by raising him above his own point of view to an impersonal perspective." However, in the exaltation of the impersonal, man loses his individuation, as the movement that he 'is' becomes synchronised to the rhythm of the social whole, which, as has been seen, is built on a contrary mobility. As a result, man ceases to be animated by his own dynamism, and instead must be stimulated by the innovative forces of social activity, whose primary meaning is distraction.

Our appraisal of man as a social creation interpreted sociologically, rather than as a natural being understandable metaphysically, distracts us from his primordial noetic nature. This is because sociological penetration ends with collective ideals, for by interpreting holistic experiences in conceptual terms, it can't achieve noetic access to the totality of reality. With the development of the study of sociology, social relations, which are actually "expressions of ideas about reality,"[144] and as such, inherently philosophical, came to form the substance of sociological concepts. Such a development represents not simply a change from one subject of study to another, but an adjustment to the way in which we apprehend reality itself, because what was formerly an abstract interpretation of reality has been concretised to form the foundation of a new way of being in the world. However, the difficulty with de novo social concepts is that they do not derive from the essential nature of human action, understood ontologically, but from a socio-historical interpretation of that essential relation. And, thus, reality itself falls outside that consideration. However, if man is denied the capacity for the experience of transcendence without the collective body, then his ontological possibilities are similarly denied, because he is then seen to have no transformative potential that cannot be expressed sociologically, i.e., historically. Whereas, as has been seen, man's potential relates to the trans-historical. This is not to deny the actuality of social phenomena, but to suggest that what is being articulated in sociological concepts is not, or not only, the expression of the innate activities of a novel social Being, but also a distorted appraisal of man's noetic experience and possibilities.

[143] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 320
[144] Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1990), 24

CONCLUSION

The philosophical thinking of both Heidegger and Aristotelian is dominated by the question of being. However, how they perceive and express being's significance differs greatly. The aim of the present study has been to examine those differing ontological perspectives and consider their implications regarding human 'thinghood'. Because, whereas for Heidegger, Being's significance is to be seen in the fact that it has withdrawn from the world, Aristotle's understanding of being suggests that it is in our individual way of 'being' in the world that a significant withdrawal has occurred. This indicates that from an Aristotelian perspective our orientation to the world has direct implications for 'being'. Heidegger suggested the possibility of Being's withdrawal in the light of technological advancements which seemed to him to be organising the world in a way contrary to human interests, i.e., in accordance with a lack. However, that lack was not to be regarded as a human creation, as it was not man's intention that such a determining force should emerge in the world. From an Aristotelian perspective, however, that absence of intentionality is immaterial, because a determining lack can be brought into existence not only through what man *intends*, as Heidegger seems to be suggesting, but also through what he is, and through what he becomes. Aristotle realised that our *cognitive powers are actually* dependent upon our 'being'. And he also saw that deprivation is a creative force as well as form, which means that negating movements, i.e., movements away from form, can bring about demonstrable ontological changes simply by virtue of what they are. Certainly for Sartre, negating is a pre-cognitive orientation underlying human reality. Man's instrumental relations with the world do not produce that negating; they simply express the pre-existing reality that brought that orientation into existence. However, such a negating movement can only come into existence if there is an ontological predisposition to 'be' in a certain way that has fallen away, i.e., if there has been some prior ontological failing. And, indeed, this is what is indicated in Aristotle's ontology, i.e., that human beings are ontologically predisposed to 'be', not just to exist, but to actively 'be' oriented towards reality. And, therefore, a movement away from that predisposition, towards 'non-being', will bring about ontological consequences.

Whilst, for Heidegger, Being is a significant matter for human beings generally, i.e., as a question for a historical people to endeavour to think about authentically, it holds no significance for their mode of 'being' as individuated human beings. Firstly, because, following Dilthey's historical train of thought, individuation is not seen to be socially or culturally significant and, secondly, because Heidegger regards man as a complete and ontologically invulnerable entity, with no ontological requirement to 'be' in any particular way. Accordingly, individuation is seen to have no instrumental significance because it produces nothing, and neither is it seen to serve any intrinsic purpose sustaining human 'thinghood'. For Heidegger, man's energetic resources pertain to actions he performs and to the world that he, thereby, creates, i.e., as external actions of a 'parousia', but not to what he can actually 'be' in terms of 'thinghood' - 'ousia'. For Heidegger, Being remains a significant though largely absent force, but not one that holds any direct ontological significance for man's individual way of 'being' in the world. So far as the question of

man's 'thatness', i.e., the way that being is allotted to him, is concerned, Heidegger regards this to be fully answered by the fact of man's existence. And, consequently, from a Heideggerean perspective there is no danger of man falling away from 'proper being' as there is for Aristotle, since for Heidegger there is nothing that man is called upon to 'be' ontologically. Thus, within the Heideggerean perspective there is no possibility of a negating movement inhering in the activity of 'being' itself, because for Heidegger no activity of 'being' is operative in nature. And, accordingly, from such a perspective there appears to be no discernible connection between what unfolds in history and man's mode of being, or 'non-being'. Heidegger's ontological vision has no space for such an inherent negating movement because Heidegger's perception of human 'thinghood' is founded on a socio-historical way of being in the world.

For Heidegger man is intrinsically historical. And, whilst authenticity rather than progress was the measure Heidegger applied to man's historical development, he believed that the West had arrived at a kind of spiritual ascendancy in framing Being as a question. And, indeed, that the Greeks were ontologically lacking to the extent of their failure to pose that question. However, the questioner approaches Being as one who doesn't 'know' it, i.e., as one who lacks being which, from an Aristotelian point of view, would indicate an ontological diminution, and actually a falling away in living life. Because, so far as Aristotle is concerned, 'living' and 'knowing' reflect the same ontological relationship with the world. Heidegger singled man out as the only creature for whom Being is relevant, because, being the only creature with language, man is the only being capable of seeing Being as a question and the only being capable of receiving disclosures of Being in thought and language. However, this assumes that Being can only be disclosed in language and not in reality itself. It also makes the discursive mind rather than the perceptive soul the arbiter of being. The fact that only man is capable of raising Being as a question could indicate that he alone of all creatures is capable of becoming ignorant of being. And, the fact that he has now raised it as a question could indicate that he no longer knows Being. For whilst Sartre describes man's mode of being as uniquely 'Being-for-itself', in contradistinction to the rest of the natural world's 'Being-in-itself', 'Being-for-itself' is a mode of being that pertains to the historic creation of human reality, in which man chooses to define himself in his own instrumental terms. Thus, man alone can stand out in 'non-being' questioning Being as the only being who has forgotten how to 'be'. In order to apprehend that man alone has the capacity to negate his 'being', the significance of man's intrinsic nature needs to be recognised. However, if any notion of a fundamental ontology is seen to rest on a historical way of being in the world, no intrinsic traits or failings will come to light, as man's potential will be presumed to be entirely fulfilled in what is accomplished in history. And, further, to focus only on history in attempting to trace out a fundamental ontology is to ignore the far more extensive period of prehistory that informs man's orientation towards reality.

A significant factor that has hindered our realisation of our intrinsically active nature is the conflation of the notions of 'being' and existence, brought about by the conceptualisation of the reality of 'being'. Whilst inadequate Latin translations did not assist a scholastic

understanding of Aristotle's dynamic thought, it was the Christian idea that man's potential was fully realised in the act of his creation that rendered the Aristotelian notion of inherent internal activity redundant, because there was no longer anything for the inner activity of 'being' to refer to that was not already answered by the bare fact of existence. Accordingly, the fact that man was perceived to be ontologically complete and entirely sustained by an extraneous act of existence blocked any notion of ontological vulnerability, or ontological purpose, since there was nothing for man to become and, perhaps more significantly, nothing that he could cease to 'be'. Thus, man was made fully available for a host of social obligations and relations as there was nothing for him to 'be' beyond that social structure and its development. And the way was, thereby, opened for incidental activities and purposes to become foundational in society. Nevertheless, however entrenched and 'natural' such social purposes may become they remain incidental to individual human 'thinghood'. And, consequently, although such an altered orientation may provide the foundation for a socio-historical way of being in the world, it cannot form the basis for a fundamental ontology of human 'thinghood', which is an individualistic enterprise, albeit one engaged in with others, and not a collective one.

Both Heidegger and Aristotle recognise an essential relationship between Being and language. However, whereas for Heidegger Being is meaningful for man alone since only he has language, for Aristotle 'being' is meaningful for all ensouled creatures as they all participate in it in accordance with their ontological endowment. Because, for Aristotle, it is in reality that being is to be discerned, and the organ that discerns reality is the soul. How the discursive mind chooses to interpret that reality is secondary to, and directly dependent upon, the soul's prior perception of it. For as von Humboldt explains concerning the soul's reception of reality and the subsequent transmission of that perception into language, it is the "energy which man unknowingly provides from the active forces within him" that provides the "driving force" of what follows in language. Thus, it is the activity of the soul that determines what is subsequently spoken in language. And as the soul loses its intrinsic activity, it is the past thoughts and word forms retained by the mind that come to be the primary force determining what is expressed in language. As what language makes manifest is man's anterior relationship with reality and what determines that is his 'being'. The fact that, according to Aristotle, being is only directly discernible in reality means that if language supersedes reality as our direct interface with the world, i.e., if our interpretations and conceptualisations of the real world come to stand in place of the soul's perception of reality itself, that would seem to suggest that an absence of being will no longer be discernible, because reality will no longer be the measure of what is spoken. And this would appear to be the realisation behind Parmenides' warning against taking the path of 'non-being', as this path is a wholly linguistic one and, therefore, cannot reveal 'non-being'. Parmenides' warning is not that such an orientation to the world cannot be constructed or followed, but that being ontologically empty it cannot be 'known', because it has no reality outside language. He describes the path as "wholly unlearnable," because once on it, it is not possible to know 'what-is-not' or point it out. As the Goddess of Truth explains to Parmenides, such a path is constructed by the deceitful language of mortals, who wander around "two-headed" not knowing where they are going, "for they established

two forms in their minds for naming – of which it is not right to name one – wherein they have gone astray,"[145] because they named and ordered a 'reality' constructed and 'known' by the mind, but not intrinsically real.[146] The shift from reality to language reflects the movement from the perceptive soul to the determining mind and would seem to arise, as von Humboldt suggests, as a result of the power of accumulated thought suppressing the soul's potential to perceive reality. As a result, the determining movement shaping language is no longer sensed from reality, but arises from the mind's own determinations as to the nature of the real. What emerges instead is a surrogate reality constructed by language and 'known' only to the mind. And the language that gives form to that reality is increasingly drawn from the socio-cultural milieu which provides the individual's vicarious knowledge of reality. Heidegger noted that man is held in a relationship with language – 'appropriation' being the term he used to designate this essential, underlying relation. For Heidegger, however, it is not the active soul's perception of reality that sustains that relationship. Since, for Heidegger, perception is seen to be, essentially, a discursive relationship achieved by the mind listening to others, rather than a sensuous one maintained by an active soul. For Heidegger neither perception nor contemplation are seen to be significant activities for human beings, as historical man is supposed to produce his own purposeful world rather than find meaning in the natural one. However, what prompted Karl Mannheim to undertake his sociological research in the 1920s was the realisation that the social had become the determinative force in man's intellectual orientation to the world. Mannheim saw that although man believed himself capable of distinguishing himself from that greater social body, in reality he no longer had the ontological resources necessary to do so, as he no longer had the capacity to reason in anything but functional, i.e., social, terms.

Aristotle states at the beginning of the 'Metaphysics' that man finds the level of knowledge appropriate for his being, and that in order to know the truth he needs to make a conscious effort to engage with reality. However, since man's metaphysical relationship with Being is juxtaposed between the effortful, conscious activity of 'thinghood' and the effortless potency to become something else, he is, in effect, offered the possibility of 'being' or 'not being', as these different aspects are understood along the Aristotelian spectrum of Being. Because, it is only by actively 'being' that man can sustain his 'thinghood': "whenever it is at work, then it is in that form".[147] And, therefore, what is not at work is not in that form and, thus, comes to constitute the material for a potency to be otherwise. It appears that by not expressing **that** he 'is' man has come to articulate a less individuated form of 'thinghood', primarily focused on socially prescribed external achievements. Social Being has its own form of activity, which is, essentially, ateleological. It is the instrumentality of the discursive mind and not the intrinsic reasoning of the contemplating soul that steers the movement of that Being in its appropriate orientation towards reality. Accordingly, man participates in the movements of Social Being not in an individuated sense, but through his

[145] Parmenides of Elea, *Fragments*, trans., David Gallop (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 55
[146] Ibid., 55
[147] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1050a15

acquired social consciousness which locates him within that larger body as a particularized aspect of Social 'being'.

The externally focused orientation that man has acquired in his changed form, as an aspect of that larger ontological body, has been described in this work as 'non-being'. And an attempt has been made to trace that movement from its articulation in antiquity to the underlying historicism shaping modern society. Aristotle described the accidental activities we engage in - our 'doings' and 'producings' - as close to 'non-being', because they are not concerned with realising inherent aspects of our nature. The most significant aspect of the movement towards 'non-being' would seem to be our changing relationship with reality and the consequent alteration in our understanding of what constitutes human 'knowing'. For what is lost in the shift away from realism, and the relationship with reality that it demands, is the realisation that man's potential and meaning and his understanding of the highest aspects of reality are located in his encounter with reality, which is an experience that changes him. It, thus, appears that in forgetting the fecundity of reality and the effortful activity of 'knowing' it, man's perception of his own potential has come to be understood conceptually, and, as such, to be seen to be entirely realisable in external achievements, rather than in anything he could 'be'. Thus, accumulating knowledge, which Aristotle regarded as the action of the inactive soul, has come to overtake the primordial activity of 'knowing' reality, as epistemology has replaced ontology as our primary orientation to the world. In that external shift, as a result of which human potential has become tied to the notion of social development and progress, it was believed that consciousness was evolving and that the human mind, by ascending nature and developing conceptual systems, was reaching its apotheosis. It now appears, however, that reason does not wield the determining power formerly imagined, and that even our assumptions regarding the essential nature of human consciousness are probably wrong. For it seems that history has a determining power not previously recognised and that much of what unfolds in thought and discourse has been largely predetermined by past conceptual systems. It has been pointed out that the ancient Greeks recognised that a good society is founded on principles that enable individuals to flourish, which means to develop as individuals. Because it was recognised that individuals possessed their own ontological potential and that whilst that ontological resource could be diverted and utilised to serve other purposes, its teleological significance resided in man alone. However, the difficulty with applying that appraisal to modern society is that it is founded on different ontological principles, which recognise no teleological significance in individuation. On the contrary, the cohering imperative of modern society promotes a form of social consciousness that seeks to eliminate any tendency towards individuation. And it is for this reason that Aristotle's metaphysical understanding of human 'thinghood' is so valuable, because it reminds us that to 'be' human has an intrinsic significance that cannot be satisfied by the achievement of social goals. It consists of a potency to be something more ontologically, and whilst that ontological excess may be deemed socially problematic and in need of correction, that would seem to evidence modern society's inability to further or sustain individuated human 'thinghood'.

The Withdrawal of beings and the Discursive Creation of the Modern Subject – An Examination of the Movement from 'being' to 'non-being' Through a Consideration of Heideggerean and Aristotelian Notions of Being

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