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What is Orientation in Reality? A Philosophical Exploration of Technology, Placement, Enchantment and Wonder

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WHAT IS ORIENTATION IN REALITY? A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION OF TECHNOLOGY, PLACEMENT, ENCHANTMENT AND WONDER

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This thesis gives an account of the ontological basis of the profound sense of disorientation in contemporary society and attempts to discover through a phenomenological account of orienting experience that which holds the possibility of authentic orientation in reality. Martin Heidegger's understanding of "being-in-the-world," the "there" of *Dasein,* and the epochal revealing of reality as resources in modern technological society is the philosophical backdrop for the thesis. This philosophical foundation is elaborated upon by showing that the challenging-revealing of the real as resources within the "framework" of technology results in the ontological "dis-traction" of reality. This dis-traction pulls apart the fabric of reality resulting in a discontinuous, homogenized, horizon of fungible entities available as resources and commodities for the satisfaction of human needs and desires. The character of dis-tracted reality is disclosed in displacement and disenchantment. Reality is displaced in the sense that as resources and commodities everything is neither near nor far—rather, all things are in a strange sense distanceless—at no place. Further, reality is disenchanted in the original sense that things as resources and commodities no longer "sing from within." They can no longer speak to us in their own right because they no longer have any independent standing apart from their dependent status as resources and commodities. Careful phenomenological attention to concrete experiences of place and enchantment in our everyday lives discloses the promise of re-engagement with and authentic orientation in reality. The thesis concludes with reflections on the essential task of philosophy: to reawaken us in wonder to an enchanted world that in its independence speaks to us and to which we appropriately respond.

Introduction

> The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.[1]

To ask 'what is orientation in reality?' is ambiguous. However, this ambiguity is not necessarily debilitating but rather potentially constructive and instructive. It asks us to question the possible relationship between orientation and reality and also to inquire regarding authentic orientation. What orients our thoughts, words and actions—what guides or fails to guide us in our everyday engagement with the world? But, also, what is true or authentic orientation? The apparent ambiguity focuses us on two fundamental issues: the possibility of orientation through our engagement with reality in our everyday lives and the character of authentic orientation.

The concern that unites the three philosophical explorations of this thesis is the relationship between technology and orientation and the possible transformation of this relationship in authentic orientation. Technology and orientation seem at least initially to be unrelated phenomena. We commonly think of technology as merely all the instrumentalities constructed or employed by humans that are utilized to satisfy our needs and desires. Technology seems nothing more than the collection of means that we control to satisfy our independently determined ends. As the generic term for this collection of means, it seems unlikely that technology could have anything to do with orientation. Rather, orientation would seem to necessarily reside in the realm of independently determined human ends—our needs, desires and values. It seems unquestionable that these subjectively given human ends direct the various means that we refer to as technology.

One might raise what appears initially to be a minor objection: if the ends we pursue are determined subjectively, then it would be more accurate to refer to the "direction" rather than the "orientation" these ends give to the employment of technological means that we utilize in our everyday world. Orientation in its original sense of human placement through the sun rising in the east at the beginning of the day suggests that we are oriented by things that are external and independent of us, not by our internal, subjectively given ends. But, whether we refer to these human subjective ends as directing or as orienting, they appear to be essentially different from and controlling of any means or technology that we use to achieve them.

There is, however, an alternative understanding of technology that sees it not as merely a collection of means but as the essential, determining characteristic of contemporary life. When we look at contemporary society what appears to uniquely characterize it is the pervasive influence of technology—an influence that is not merely a neutral and powerful enhancement of the ability to accomplish our ends—but, rather something substantive that mediates, patterns and constrains how we take up with the everyday world. When we reflect on the role of technology in our everyday lives, its pervasive yet matter-of-fact, self-concealing presence becomes apparent. The evidence of the social sciences confirms that this is the case. Americans spend on average over eight hours each day interacting with screen-based media including television, computers, cell-phones, gps units and other hand-held devices.[2] New devices such as the iPad and multimedia smart phones combined with ubiquitous high-speed wireless access, and ever more refined software applications that cater to our individualized "life-styles" and preferences promise that this pervasive presence in our lives will only increase. When we look beyond screen-based media to other ways we interact

on an everyday basis with technology, its pervasive influence becomes even more astonishing: we listen to music on our iPods while engaging in nearly all our daily activities; we drive an average of over an hour each day in cars;[3] we live and work in environmentally controlled buildings that are linked to an interlocked grid of energy production that extends around the world; we exercise on cardio-machines that track our vital signs and progress towards our goals; and when we become ill we are treated by a health care system of unparalleled technological sophistication. Even the food we eat is the result of a tightly integrated and sophisticated technological structure that produces, processes, distributes and markets it in the form of the forty thousand commodities available in our average local grocery store.[4] Even "friends" are now procured, made available and interacted with on the internet through social media software. There is virtually no aspect of our everyday lives that is not mediated by technology.

The evidence appears overwhelming that technology is the distinctive and definitive feature of our postmodern lives. However, one could admit this and still deny that it has had any effect on reality—on that which can be said to "be." Indeed, that the real is given and is not something that can be fundamentally affected by our involvement seems both intuitive and undeniable. No matter how caught up humans are with technology and whether this pervasive involvement is positive or pernicious, reality is what it is. However, there is a radical and I believe compelling understanding of technology that, in fact, questions this seemingly correct and common sense interpretation. It sees technology as both shaping our implicit understanding of reality in our everyday lives and as fundamentally inflecting and transforming reality itself. This understanding of technology sees it as not merely a collection

of means to the accomplishment of our ends or as the distinctive and pervasive character of contemporary society that shapes our behavior, but rather as both the way reality shows itself to us and the way in which we implicitly understand and engage reality.

This radical, counterintuitive understanding of technology is explored from alternative perspectives in the following chapters. Each chapter explores the central claims: that technology, as the way reality is revealed in our historical epoch, is fundamentally disorienting; and that technological reality is "distracted" in the root sense of the term — pulled apart and homogenized—initially and minimally as a collection of resources and ultimately and pervasively as an array of commodities. This dis-traction of technological reality is expressed in our everyday lives as the distraction of never really being anywhere at anytime—a subtle yet profound disengagement from the world. Technological distraction is manifested as a lack of authentic orientation in reality; a searching with aimless curiosity for the new, the exciting, the different—what is not here and now but which promises a more purely enjoyable here and now—and yet something that we know in advance is in a way always the same.

This substantive interpretation of technology, as the way reality is revealed in our historical epoch, was first articulated in a comprehensive way by Martin Heidegger, in his essay, "The Question Concerning Technology."[5] Subsequently, it has been thoughtfully taken up, enriched and transformed by other philosophers, most prominently in the work of Albert Borgmann in his, *Technology and The Character of Contemporary Life*.[6] The philosophical explorations in this thesis build upon this tradition. In particular, this thesis attempts to make

plausible the claim that reality is not just given, an inert background or the indifferent stage upon which life is played out—but, that reality has a history; that it shows itself and is understood in a fundamental way that inflects all our thoughts, words and actions; that there is an implicit, pre-theoretical, everyday understanding of being within historical epochs and of the way reality makes sense to us; and in particular, that the implicit, pervasive understanding of being in our modern technological epoch is what Heidegger termed the "framework"—a challenging, positioning, ordering of the real in which reality is revealed first and most of all as resources and commodities available for the satisfaction of our human needs and desires.

However, to make sense of Heidegger's understanding of technology as an epochal way of revealing, we have to return to his original account of fundamental ontology and the being of "Dasein" or human beings. In *Being and Time*,[7] Heidegger responded explicitly to Kant's project in *The Critique of Pure Reason* of providing both a proof of the external world and demonstrating how we acquire knowledge of the world.[8] However, for Heidegger, the scandal of philosophy was not the lack of a proof of the external world but rather the failure to appreciate that no proof was necessary because we are always and already in the world. We cannot treat the world as an object that we theoretically observe as a subject and then attempt to build a bridge to it through an explanation of how we acquire knowledge and then demonstrate its existence based upon this knowledge. That we always and already find ourselves in the world prior to any possible theoretical or epistemological claims about the world, has implications that go beyond whether a proof of the external world is needed or possible. Heidegger shows that, when reflectively attended to, our prior, concernful "being-in" the world discloses the unique character of human spatiality. We have always and already

engaged with that which we encounter within the everyday world and have brought it near through its significance within this world. This spatiality of our everyday being-in-the-world has implications for orientation in reality and is explored in the first chapter's discussion of space, spatiality, epochal *a prioris* and place.

For the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, this prior, implicit engagement with the world can be disclosed in terms of the three structures of the "there" of human beings ("Dasein"): "Situatedness," "Understanding" and "Speech," and how these are expressed in our average, everyday ways of taking up with the world. Our average, everyday mode of engagement with the world is "inauthentic" for Heidegger, because it is not taken up as uniquely one's own but is "dispersed" (zerstreut) in the "they-world" of others. It is fundamentally distracted by the "they–world" of others. However, it is in this "inauthentic" mode of our average, everyday engagement and its dispersion in the "they-world" that we find important intimations of Heidegger's later views on technology and the "framework" of technology as the being or the way reality is revealed in our historical epoch.

An interpretation of spatiality and the three characteristics of the "there" or "place" of human beings: "situatedness," "understanding" and "speech," and their relationship to Heidegger's later understanding of technology, underlies the discussion in all three chapters of the thesis. In Chapter One, Kant's treatment of space and spatiality in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is explored along with the nature of *a priori* knowledge. An attempt is made to make sense of *a prioris* that are necessary but changeable; that can be both constitutive of knowledge while yet undergoing fundamental change as a result of cultural and historical transformations. These

"epochal *a prioris* " are seen as analogous to Thomas Kuhn's scientific paradigms[9] and Heidegger's "ways of revealing" or "dispensations of Being" that radically change our understanding of reality.

Chapter Two explores the nature of epochal paradigm change in relation to the disclosure of the "there" through the fundamental "speech" or articulation of significance of reality and our responsive and heedful hearing. This exploration takes up with the particular experiences of the last traditional chief of the Crow Nation, Plenty Coups, and the Crow People as they moved from the revealing of their traditional Crow paradigm through their forced acceptance of the technological paradigm of dominant white culture, while keeping open the possibility of a new Crow paradigm.

In Chapter Three, I return to a discussion of the mood or attunement of modern technology contrasting it with the alternative attunement or disposition that is characteristic of philosophy—an attunement which holds the promise of authentic orientation in reality. The alternative philosophical attunement is that of wonder at the Being of beings—at the way beings are in their own right. This attunement in wonder opens up the possibility of the re-enchantment of the beings through an experience that allows beings to speak in their own right. The task of philosophy in the midst of our technological epoch is seen as the reawakening of humans in wonder to the way beings are in their independence such that they speak to us and we in turn respond appropriately. Thus, the enduring task of philosophy is to reawaken us to the possibility of a new way of revealing, a new paradigm that may allow us to discover our orientation in reality.

The ultimate concern that unifies the philosophical explorations of the thesis is the possibility of authentic orientation in reality. This orientation "in" reality as disclosed by the fundamental spatiality of human beings and the three structural characteristics of the "there" is also central to clarifying the essential character of technology—the way in which it discloses reality as first a collection of resources and then as an array of commodities. Or, alternatively from the standpoint of the subject, how we always and already understand reality as merely resources and commodities and take up with it in a way consistent with this pre-reflective understanding. This revealing-understanding of the being of technological reality, I claim, is ontologically dis-tracting—that is, it pulls apart the fabric of reality, and the frayed threads separate and contract into a disconnected, homogenized, horizon of fungible entities available for use, consumption or increasingly merely as diversions based upon our individual needs and desires. Moreover, in revealing the real as the "framework," technology displaces and disenchants reality. It displaces reality in that everything in its dis-tracted status as resource or commodity is neither near nor far—that it is in a strange sense "distanceless" or at no "place." And, that as resources or commodities, things are "disenchanted" in the original sense—no longer capable of "singing from within" or speaking to us—because they no longer exist in their own right. Our distracted technological reality characterized by displacement and disenchantment no longer holds the possibility of orientation in reality because we are no longer engaged in our everyday lives with anything that is not ontologically dependent upon us. As Heidegger points out this gives rise to the illusion that

> … everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise to one final delusion: It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself.[10]

Is the rule of technology then complete? Is it a fate to which we helplessly acquiesce and which necessarily determines our lives? If not, what holds the promise of re-engagement with reality and with it the possibility of orientation in our everyday lives? In each of the following chapters, I point to concrete experiences of place and enchantment in our everyday lives and in my experience of wild places that hold the promise of authentic orientation in reality—a reality that is not merely instrumental to the achievement of our subjectively determined ends but a reality that is disclosed in a receptive co-responding. The original and essential task of philosophy—to reawaken us in wonder that things are as they are—is the task and path that these explorations share in common, and it is this task in which they place their hope.

Chapter One:
Kant's *A Priori* of Spatiality, Technological Space and Wild Places

Space seems the most obvious and least problematic of all that we experience. In our everyday world we seldom consider it thematically because it conceals itself as the horizon within which everything exists—the seeming invisible, indifferent background. If explicitly asked what space is, most would respond with a puzzled expression that it is obviously that which is outside us and within which everything is located. That it is what both people and things move through when they change position. Although this everyday understanding of space is correct, it obscures the fundamental problematic of space. In what follows, we will be questioning our understanding of space through an examination of Kant's transcendental account in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and by examining the puzzling differences in the pattern of our everyday experiences of space. In trying to illuminate these puzzles, the fundamental problematical character of space will emerge and necessarily bring into question our understanding of place and thing.

The first obstacle to revealing the problematic of space is that we are for the most part unaware of our experience of space. If one asks regarding what we experience, the response is that we experience objects, people, events, and perhaps even time, but space is commonly understood as just the transparent matrix, the abstract context, for what we actually experience. However, there are experiences in which the fundamental character of space can be thematically disclosed, when its usual cloak of invisibility is removed and its essential connection to how we experience things and the world is revealed. This disclosure of space requires careful phenomenological description of essentially different patterns in our common pre-theoretical experiences of space. Two activities that reveal

very different experiences are distance running and commuting. The following descriptions attempt to capture the essential patterns characteristic of space in these activities.

Let's begin with a simple phenomenological account of a particular spring run that I took near my home on a trail that parallels Rattlesnake Creek as it flows out of the mountains to the north. Before leaving the house, I quickly check the sky and temperature and decide that only a light windbreaker is needed to stay warm and dry on this partly cloudy, sixty-degree day. Arriving at the trailhead on my bike, I stretch while exchanging greetings and comments with others who are running or hiking with their families, friends and pets. I am a little apprehensive about my planned eight-mile run because during the last month I have only been running three miles at a time, four days a week. As I slowly begin running up the trail, the sun unexpectedly disappears behind the clouds and a cool breeze flows down the canyon from the still snow-covered peaks. I pass closely by cliffs on my left that enclose and magnify the sound of the still invisible creek so that I am briefly immersed in its flowing sounds. The trail then turns downhill and the sounds are now joined with the view of the flowing creek to my right. In anticipation, I look ahead up the narrowing canyon towards Stuart Peak and the area I will be running for the next few miles. The chokecherries are just beginning to leaf, with their dark red tips shading to green looking ornamental in their variability. The buttercups and glacier lilies are blooming with their subtle scents, variable forms and shades of yellow, while above the larch are just showing a hint of pale green as they break bud. I feel through my feet the texture and incline of the trail as I run on and over rock, bare soil, pine and larch needles

(the softest). My breathing and stride begin to settle into a smoother and less obtrusive combination, freeing me to focus more fully on things that engage my attention. Beaver have been working industriously at the seemingly hopeless task of chewing through some very large black cottonwoods much too far from the creek to be of assistance in building dams. I pass a single, gnarled apple tree, testimony to some early pioneer farmer's optimism about living far up this beautiful, rocky, narrow and cold canyon. The tree seems to have acquired an appropriate wildness continuous with the pines, meadow and creek that surround it. I think of concerns I have left behind today and recollect past times I have been on the trail. As I run, each thing I encounter greets me with an appropriate discretion all its own and yet continuous with the surroundings—all that has come before and all that will follow. At a small creek that flows out of a narrow draw on my left I reach my halfway point, turn around and begin running back down the canyon. The prospect before me shows the canyon slowly widening as Rattlesnake Creek gathers waters from the surrounding mountains with their dwindling winter snowfields flowing with growing power into the distant Clark Fork River in Missoula. I can see much of the area I traversed on the way up; each part fits as it should in its place and in my memory. Retracing my route, things and places are familiar, and yet my altered orientation subtly changes their appearance while simultaneously disclosing previously unnoticed things. To my left a great blue heron unexpectedly and laboriously takes wing in the creek and slowly rises in the air seeming to gain just enough speed to fly a few feet above the creek and up the canyon behind me. As my feet and legs begin to tire, I become more focused on the trail immediately in front of me, making sure I don't trip over a rock or root. I intermittently begin to anticipate my arrival at the trailhead and my subsequent plans for

the day, while knowing that it is still far away. The pervasive organic smell of spring, heightened by the warmer afternoon temperatures, brings me back to where I am and that which is nearby. Catching a fleeting glimpse of clarkia in bloom, I recall the first time I hiked the trail with friends over thirty years ago and of being turned back by an early spring snowfield with a clarkia in bloom at its melting edge. I begin to encounter and greet more people walking and riding mountain bikes, their presence indicating my growing proximity to the trailhead. The forest thins and a meadow comes into view with the familiar sight of Spring Creek flowing across and into Rattlesnake Creek. I pass by the sounding cliffs again and arrive with a seeming suddenness at the end of my eight-mile, hour-long run, tired yet calmly ready for what the day may bring.

Alternatively, consider a very different but more common experience, one shared by most Americans on a daily basis: commuting by automobile. The average American spends nearly an hour each day driving between home and work, with twenty percent commuting more than ninety minutes. Over eighty percent drive alone.[1] This routine but necessary activity reveals an everyday experience of space very different from that of running. Again, the description is of a particular commute that I made in late winter from my home to the University of Montana in Missoula, approximately forty-five miles distant.

I leave my home in the Bitterroot Valley a minimum of seventy minutes before the start of class to ensure that with the variables of traffic and road conditions I will arrive on time. Before leaving, I note that it is a gray, windy, thirty degree day but I only wear a light coat because the car will be warm within a few minutes and it is but a brief walk to class from

the parking lot. Drinking coffee from my insulated travel cup, I back out of the driveway and turn on the radio to listen to the morning news of events in distant places, hoping that their novelty will distract me from the familiar drive. I pay little attention to what is outside the car as I pass through the familiar landscape. I have seen it all so many times before: two-lane Highway 93 with its commercial sprawl, interspersed small housing developments and rural ruin, all punctuated at regular intervals by billboards—a numbing banality and sameness. Occasionally, I glace up from the road to the sunrise on the peaks of the Bitterroot Mountains, but I quickly refocus on the busy highway with traffic traveling in the opposite direction at seventy miles per hour three feet away and cars both just ahead and behind me in my lane. The road seems occasionally icy, so I shift into four-wheel drive. I see a highway patrolman and check my speed to make sure that I am not inadvertently exceeding the speed limit by more than the customary five miles per hour. I look at my watch when I reach the small town of Florence, relieved that twenty miles has taken the appropriate thirty minutes and that I am still on schedule. The university is now only twenty-five miles and, if all goes well, thirty-five minutes away. I briefly call my daughter to check with her before she departs the house for school. As the news begins to repeat itself, I put on a book-on-tape that I hope will provide an interesting diversion for the remainder of the commute. The traffic slows as ever-increasing numbers of single occupant cars join the flow from the suburbs surrounding Missoula. I arrive at the first stoplight in town with growing concern that I will not make it to the University in time. I focus on trying to pass slower cars and consider taking an alternate route that may have less traffic. Fortunately, the majority of stoplights cooperate and I reach the University just in time. The remaining hurdle of finding parking on the congested campus

is quickly solved when I find a parking place with a couple of minutes to spare. At last my day begins.

What then are the hidden, perplexing differences between the experiences of space in running and commuting that require illumination and explanation? Superficially, they seem very similar. Although the locations where they took place were clearly different, the space within which they occurred appears fundamentally the same. In particular, the space of my run was but a series of changes of locations describable in terms of three-dimensional coordinates that could be plotted on a map of the Rattlesnake Recreation Area. Similarly, the space of my drive to Missoula was but a series of similar coordinates through a different set of locations also traceable as a route on a map. The distance between any two locations of either trip could be described in terms of an objective numerical measurement expressed in the same standard units. Moreover, any arbitrarily selected distance of the same length between two locations in either example is in apparently the same space.

These answers regarding the similar character of space in the two examples are certainly correct. How could anyone disagree? However, when we reflect thematically on space they fail to disclose the essential experiential differences. In running, one is physically engaged with a particular place and time; with every stride its continuity is directly experienced.[2] But, this continuity is not just the ongoing direct physical engagement, it is also the continuity of all that can be seen, heard or even smelled in the distance with the nearness of one's current place. The creek next to the trail is continuous with the

mountains in the distance from which the melting snows of the past winter flow and with the widening valley and the city at the confluence. Although my oriented, embodied engagement is first with what is present, close by, here and now; what is far away in space or time is brought near in a way that is continuous with it. This bringing near of what is distant through embodied engagement with particular things and places opens up space in a way that gives depth to the world. This opening up of space through bringing near seems similar to what Heidegger calls dis-severance (Ent-fernung) in *Being and Time.*

> De-severing amounts to making the farness vanish – that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close. Dasein is essentially de-severant: it lets any entity be encountered close by as the entity which it is. …In Dasein there lies an essential tendency towards closeness.[3]

The experience of space in running is minimally characterized by oriented, embodied engagement at a particular time and place with specific present things that occur as continuous with other places and things both near and far.

Alternatively, commuting is a practice that reveals a very different kind of space. In contrast to running, it is notable that commuting clearly separates means from ends. The automobile and its related systems of devices is purely the means to the end of transportation to the University. It is also an experience of space that is always mediated by these multiple devices. There is no direct, skilled bodily engagement with the world. In particular, the automobile as a transportation device with its constellation of ancillary devices that enhance its capabilities for transportation while distracting us through entertainment and communication with others, separates us from direct engagement with any particular time, place or context. The space we experience becomes discrete and indifferent, each location fundamentally alike any other and discontinuous from location

to location. Space is measured not by things being brought near in concern and these things themselves gathering a world that speaks to us. Rather it is measured by the abstract, indifferent metrics of distance and time.

Heidegger in his essay, "The Thing," points to this way in which space is increasingly attenuated to a uniform, shallow, distancelessness as modern technology becomes ever more pervasive in our lives.

> What is happening here when, as a result of the abolition of great distances, everything is equally far and near? What is this uniformity in which everything is neither far nor near – is, as it were, without distance? …It shows itself and hides itself in the way in which everything presences, namely, in the fact that despite all conquest of distances the nearness of things remains absent.[4]

The outer world and the things of it both seem reduced and homogenized in a way that is fundamentally disorienting. This strange flattening of space and things seems to confirm again the distinctive pattern of technological space as mediated by devices that we encountered in the experience of commuting.

If the above descriptions accurately point to fundamentally different patterns in our experience of space that cannot be reduced to merely idiosyncratic subjective states of mind, then there exists a problematic of space that requires philosophical reflection and explanation. Moreover, it is significant that the pattern of our experience of space while commuting conforms closely to our default, everyday understanding of space. Thus, both the problematic of space and the conformity of the understanding of space mediated by technological devices with our everyday correct understanding of space call for further explanation.

A philosophically appropriate place to begin this exploration of the problematic character of space is Kant's complex treatment of space in the *Critique of Pure Reason.* A fundamental task of the *Critique* was to provide a comprehensive foundation for Newtonian physics through the determination of the conditions of the possibility of experience in general. In particular, Kant saw the inadequacy of Newton's substantive concept of space and wanted to provide an interpretation of space consistent with both Newton's discoveries and Kant's understanding of the necessary transcendental structures of experience.

Particularly relevant to our task of explaining the problematic of space are Kant's concept of spatiality as a pure form of intuition and his understanding of quality as intensive magnitude or degree. These two conceptual threads will be considered in relation to the development of a notion of a cultural-historical, synthetic *a priori* of spatiality. I will then apply insights regarding the historical synthetic *a priori* in science developed in Friedman's "Kant, Kuhn and the Rationality of Science."[5] In particular, I will examine his account of how historical synthetic *a prioris*, as constitutive frameworks for scientific theory, change during paradigm shifts that accompany revolutionary advances in science. Finally, I will argue for the existence of a cultural-historical *a priori* of space that is characteristic of our modern technological age; where this cultural-historical *a priori* is the assumed, preconscious, default experience of technological space that forms the background context within which things can only present themselves as resources and commodities available for use in the satisfaction of human needs and desires. It is this

technological cultural-historical space that is the underlying framework conditioning the disclosure of the reality of things in our everyday life.

The understanding of space as a cultural-historical *a priori* that conditions experienced reality will then be applied together with Heidegger's understanding of dwelling, to particular experiences of space and place in wild areas where a non-technological world of nature is given in a way that cannot be ignored. These experiences of wild places provide a fundamental challenge, a "recalcitrant experience" in Quine's terminology, to the technological understanding of space.[6] Given this challenge, a revisioning of the cultural-historical *a priori* of space as an essential element of the constitutive framework of technological reality seems necessary. A new paradigm or constitutive framework that points towards a more fundamental and richer oriented spatiality of place is required.

In the Transcendental Aesthetic of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant argues that space and time are forms of intuition that fundamentally structure our outer and inner experience of the world. In particular, space is the form imposed by consciousness on all appearances of objects as outside of us. This form of intuition is not empirical in the sense of being derived from experience. Rather it is a synthetic *a priori* form of our sensibility through which alone we have access to outer appearances.

> Space is nothing other than merely the form of all appearances of outer sense, i.e., the subjective condition of sensibility, under which alone outer intuition is possible for us. … Since we cannot make the special conditions of sensibility into conditions of the possibility of things, but only of their appearances, we can well say that **space comprehends all things that may appear to us externally** [my emphasis]**,** but not all things in themselves, whether they be intuited or not, or by whatever subject they may be intuited. …what we call outer objects are nothing other than mere representations of our sensibility, whose form is space, but whose

> true correlate, i.e., the thing in itself, is not and cannot be cognized through them, but is also never asked after in experience.[7]

However, space as a pure form of intuition is not the precise metric space of mathematics that is applicable to objects. Space as a form of intuition given to the appearances of sensibility is prior to the Categories of the Understanding that are the synthetic *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience of objects. Thus, the space of intuition is logically prior to the Categories and is in this sense preobjective. The metric, mathematizable and measurable space of the objects of experience is a contribution of the Pure Concepts of Understanding under the logical function of quantity as expressed in its general principle of the Axioms of Intuition: "all intuitions are extensive magnitudes."[8] In contrast, the space of the Transcendental Aesthetic is topological, relational, ordinal space. It is the space we always and already inhabit in a pre-reflective, pre-mathematical, pre-objective way.

> Space is not discursive or as we say, a general concept of relations of things in general, but a pure intuition. For, in the first place, we can represent to ourselves only one space; and if we speak of diverse spaces, we mean thereby only parts of one and the same unique space. Secondly these parts cannot precede the one all-embracing space, as being, as it were, constituents out of which it can be composed; on the contrary, they can be thought only as in it. Space is essentially one; the manifold in it, and therefore the general concept of spaces, depends solely on limitations.[9]

Space is given, and given as a whole through, the form of intuition we impose on our preobjective experience of the outer world. Space as a synthetic *a priori* form of intuition of the outer world can be seen as Kant's attempt to explicate the implicit cultural space of everyday experience. It is Kant's absolutized and abstract formulation of what is in reality the cultural-historical, synthetic *a priori* of space presupposed by the additive, precise,

mathematical space of objective experience which is ultimately required by the natural sciences. Following Brittan, I will refer to it as "spatiality" to distinguish it from the mathematizable and measurable "space" of the Axioms of Intuition.[10] However, the concept of a cultural-historical *a priori* will require a fundamental reinterpretation of Kant's concept of *a priori*. Following Friedman's interpretation, I will briefly give the outlines of such a reinterpretation later in the chapter.

First, we need to follow another sign that Kant provides indicating the path that is relevant to the possibility of cultural-historical space and the way in which the outer world is most immediately experienced. The principle of the Anticipations of Perception is formulated as:

> In all appearances the real, which is an object of the sensation, has intensive magnitude, i.e., a degree.[11]

This general principle that applies the "Pure Concepts of the Understanding" derived from quality to our experience, claims that experience of the reality of objects varies continuously in intensity. All objects of experience vary in the intensity of their sensible intuition and this variation is to be understood as variation in their degree of reality. Stated more formally this would appear to imply that the principle of the Anticipations of Perception requires as a condition of the possibility of experience that objects are not cognized as uniformly given but are always experienced as having degrees of reality or presence. They stand out, apart and are distinguished from one another in part through their degree of reality. This experience of quality as degree of reality is suggestive of Heidegger's later use of presence and provides a tentative connection to our subsequent

discussion of the experience of wilderness. It is, at a minimum, a very immediate encounter with the objects of experience where the thing-in-itself seems to almost break the surface of experience. This experience of the "the real of appearances" allows for a depth and contextual richness which seems absent from the other Categories of Understanding.

Kant also points to a suggestive relationship between space and quality.

> …although equal spaces can be completely filled with different matters in such a way that in neither of them is there a point in which the presence of matter is not to be encountered, nevertheless everything real has for the same quality its degree which, without diminution of the extensive magnitude or amount, can become infinitely smaller until it is transformed into emptiness and disappears. Thus an expansion that fills a space, e.g. warmth, and likewise every other reality (in appearance) can, without in the least leaving the smallest part of this space empty, decrease in degree infinitely, and nonetheless fill the space with this smaller degree just as well as another appearance does with a larger one. … it is false to assume that the real in appearance is always equal in degree and differs only in aggregation and its extensive magnitude...[12]

It is not only differences in matter and its quantity or extensive magnitude that allow distinctions among objects in space. The same spaces with the same quantity can be distinguished by the intensity or degree of reality of the quality experienced. Kant acknowledges that it seems strange that there can be a synthetic *a priori* principle regarding the degree of reality under the category of quality when the quality itself can only be given in the sensation. However, he maintains that this principle can be known to be constitutive of all possible experience and prior to any experience.

> All sensations are thus, as such, given only *a posteriori*, but their property of having a degree can be cognized *a priori*. It is remarkable that we can cognize *a priori* of all magnitudes in general only a single quality, namely continuity, but that in all quality (the real of appearances) we can cognize *a priori* nothing more than their intensive quantity, namely that they have a degree, and everything else is left to experience.[13]

Thus, Kant says that the only quality of magnitude that can be known prior to experience is continuity and that the *a priori* principle of quality is that the real has degree. But continuity presupposes only the spatiality of the Aesthetic that "comprehends" all things while not requiring the mathematical, additive space of the Axioms of Intuition. And, the concept of degree of reality suggests the fundamental way things present themselves with and within the spatiality of preobjective everyday experience.

Gathering these various strands of thought, it seems that Kant's concept of spatiality can be interpreted as the universal, cultural, preobjective space we always and already inhabit which comprehends our experience of the outer preobjective world. This topological spatiality is one within which things present themselves in terms of their degree of reality. These phenomena are continuous with the world and, I want to suggest, orient the world through their preobjective presence.

How then can we reconcile Kant's fundamental claim that spatiality as a form of intuition and the principle of the Anticipations of Perception that applies certain Pure Concepts of Understanding to experience are both known *a priori* as necessarily true of all experience with the notion of a cultural-historical *a priori* that changes? One possible way is to reinterpret what is meant by *a priori* knowledge along the lines suggested by Friedman in his paper, "Kant, Kuhn and The Rationality of Science." Friedman notes that Reichenbach distinguished two senses of *a priori*:

> …necessary and unrevisable, fixed for all time, on the one hand, and constitutive of the concept of the object of knowledge.[14]

He argued that the first sense of the Kantian *a priori* must be abandoned, while the second sense that is as constitutive of the concept of the object must be retained.[15] Similarly, I propose that the concept of a cultural-historical *a priori* of space requires that we abandon the meaning of *a priori* as necessary and unrevisable, while retaining its meaning as constitutive of experience—but, constitutive of our pre-objective, everyday understanding of the world we inhabit and the things we experience. Thus, a cultural-historical *a priori* of space is constitutive of our experience of the outer world but constitutive in way that is also linked to cultural and historical developments that fundamentally change our everyday, prereflective experience of things. The seemingly unquestionable, uniform and preformed way in which things present or show themselves to us in experience is inextricably linked to that prereflective, preformed understanding of space within which they present themselves.

How then do cultural-historical synthetic *a prioris* change if they are fundamentally constitutive of our experience? What can challenge them in a transformative way, if of necessity they pre-form all our experience of the world? Although cultural-historical *a prioris* appear as unquestioned givens, independent of us (if they appear at all), we are necessarily implicated and participate, even if unwittingly, in this pre-formed understanding of the world. The world may uniformly appear as objects in a mathematizable, spatio-temporal grid or as resources always at our disposal in a uniform, surficial and distanceless space. However, they only appear in this way through a mutual appropriation of ourselves and reality in which we are co-responsible for the world revealing itself through the cultural-historical *a prioris* of things and spaces.[16] We are

always and already involved, even if unwittingly, in the application of this constitutive framework as the default, *a priori* interpretation of things and space to our experience of the world. But as obligatory participants in the revealing of how things and space are present, we can also attend to countervailing experiences that, though few and concealed, show us things and places that speak in their own right.

Therefore, what is required to put into question the technological cultural-historical *a priori* is attentiveness to experience itself. What is needed is careful attending to "recalcitrant experience" which quietly and usually unheeded challenges our unquestioned, accepted interpretation of experience. If we are attentive, being engaged in and oriented by wild places can be such a deep and challenging experience to the prevailing paradigm of the technological world. Carefully heeded, the experience of wild places can have the quality of a "conversion experience" akin to what Kuhn spoke of as a requirement for the transformation of scientific paradigms.

In what follows, I will attempt to disclose phenomenologically a particular experience of wild places that is consonant with my deepest experiences and which was and remains transformative of my understanding of space, place and things. The experiences of that particular day had the quality of eloquent presence, indeed as addressed to me, which perhaps only poetry could adequately bespeak. While noting this, I will only attempt to come to terms with a part of the philosophical import of what transpired and how this may

be related to the theme of cultural-historical *a prioris*, in particular, how they may be challenged if we pay heed to the intimations of experiences in depth of eloquent reality in wild places.

Over twenty years ago, during early summer, I hiked alone for twelve days in the Bob Marshall Wilderness of western Montana. Despite working for nearly a decade as a wilderness ranger and exploring many wild areas of Montana and the West on my own for the last forty years, it is this trip and one day of it that stays with me. In particular, there were four experiences during this day that provide the focus for my preliminary interpretation of the spatiality of oriented place that challenges and undermines the dominant cultural-historical *a priori* of technological space. These experiences return to me in recollection in a way that seems as if I had been given fundamental instruction in reality—if only I could understand the import of what I was told. It was this insistent instruction by experience through these particular things, events and places that reoriented and spoke to me then. If my thinking and writing are adequate to the experience, then I believe that they disclose how things and places may speak to us as suffused with meaning in a way radically different from that of our technological world.

Heidegger's understanding of dwelling suggests a similar sense of the oriented spatiality of place that is helpful in interpreting their significance. What speaks to us in this way is never insistent, nor can the experience be guaranteed through following certain instructions or practices. You don't get hit over the head by the meaning of it all if you just climb a mountain. Rather, it seems most often a matter of accretion of meaning in the

particular through continuous heedfulness. It only comes of its own and to one that has been opened to it by the daily lessons in attending and inhabiting the world that the wilderness insists upon as you follow a trail through tough country with a very real sixty pound pack.

First, a brief narrative of what happened before I attempt to uncover the meaning relevant to the theme of the paper. The day began on the South Fork of the Flathead River where the Helen Creek Trail begins its long ascent of Pagoda Mountain. I broke camp somewhat belatedly that morning after trying to dry some clothes that had gotten wet crossing a sketchy ford of the river the previous evening. It was a beautiful day and the morning passed enjoyably as I slowly hiked up the mountain. Near the summit the trail became fainter in the rock and meadows. Before I realized what had happened, I had wandered an unknown distance off the trail and the way back to it was not obvious. This didn't strike me as a real problem. How far wrong could I go on top of a mountain where I could see twenty miles in any direction? Confident of intersecting the trail again if I circled the top of the mountain downslope of the summit, I continued to hike. After about half an hour I came upon my own tracks at the location where I had first realized I had lost the trail. This was disconcerting in that it confirmed I was still lost, but of greater concern were the mountain lion tracks that were in my recent footprints. I knew it was highly unlikely that I would be attacked. Nevertheless, I searched out a large walking stick and then climbed back to the top of the mountain to orient myself with a map and compass. I then set off in the general direction of where the map indicated that the trail was located. The worst-case scenario was a long cross-country hike down to the White River. Within

an hour, I was relieved to come upon the trail and proceeded without further adventure to my intended camp at Brushy Park on the White River.

I set up camp within a hundred feet of the river and decided to try fishing for my dinner. The White River lived up to its reputation and I was soon rewarded with a couple of beautiful trout. I cooked and ate my dinner away from camp, acutely aware of being alone and how tempting the smells would be to any grizzlies that might be in the area. I then hung my pack in a tree at the far end of the meadow about fifty yards from my tent and small fire.

I retired to my sleeping bag just after sunset to read as the campfire slowly flickered out. Before it became completely dark, I heard crashing in the brush at the far edge of the meadow accompanied by the snorting and snuffling sounds of a bear. A large grizzly came into view directly below my pack. Although seemingly uninterested in me (despite my significant interest in him), it rose on it hind legs to reach my pack. Fortunately, it was just out of reach but yet so tantalizingly close that the bear continued to stand and swat at it. Not wanting to draw attention to myself and unable to come up with any better plan, I remained in my sleeping bag watching the scene. The lumbering bear danced beneath my pack for what seemed a long time though in reality was probably only fifteen minutes. Finally, unsuccessful and frustrated he grunted loudly and crashed off again into the willows away from camp.

Much relieved but very awake despite my exhaustion from the eventful day, I continued to listen and watch the meadow outside my tent for a long time. My fearful watchfulness continued to keep me awake until a herd of deer silently came into the meadow and bedded down for the night in a semi-circle around by tent. Their strange yet comforting presence confirmed to me that there were no bears or lions in the immediate vicinity and I was able to at last fall asleep.

I awoke just after the dawn of another perfectly blue day with the deer gone and all at peace. I retrieved my pack from the tree, made coffee and ate breakfast enjoying the sounds and beauty of morning by the river. However, exhausted from the previous night I laid down again in the grass, intending to just close my eyes for a few minutes. I awoke suddenly much later in the morning with the realization I had to get hiking if I was to make it over the Continental Divide via Larch Hill Pass to a campsite at the base of the Chinese Wall.

I began taking down the tent and gathering up my gear. But, when I started to put them in my pack that was leaned against the nearest tree, I noticed that the webbing at the base of both of my shoulder straps had been completely eaten through by meadow voles during my morning nap. Doubtless it was the salt in the straps from dried perspiration that attracted them. After unsatisfactory attempts to reattach the ends of the straps, I realized that I could reweave crude straps attaching my shoulder pads to the base of the pack with lightweight nylon cord I had with me. After successfully completing the reattachment, I departed my camp reflecting gratefully on the extraordinary experiences of the past day.

What philosophical significance relevant to the theme of space and the oriented spatiality of place can be gleaned from these particular experiences in the wild places? Further, are these somewhat unusual experiences occurring within a brief period of time representative of the experience of wild places in general and how they may represent a fundamental challenge to technological space? Responses to both questions will be given in part through a preliminary interpretation guided by Heidegger's understanding of humans as ones who fundamentally live by dwelling.

> …the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan,* dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.[17]

This dwelling is accomplished through a staying or being with particular things that gather in their own way the fourfold nature of the world: earth, sky, divinities and mortals. Things as gathering a world create locations, which as sites for the presence of the fourfold character of the world open up spaces as places. We are fundamentally oriented by the world gathering power of specific things.

> In saving the earth, in receiving the sky, in awaiting the divinities, in initiating mortals, dwelling occurs as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold…. How do mortals make their dwelling such a preserving? …Dwelling itself is always a staying with things. Dwelling as preserving, keeps the fourfold in that with which mortals stay: in things.[18]

Despite the abstractness and unusual use of language, Heidegger's understanding of dwelling, thing, the fourfold, and their relationship to space can help clarify the meaning of the four aspects of my experience in the wilderness: being lost and the presence of the mountain lion; the grizzly bear threatening; the deer sheltering; and the meadow voles revealing my vulnerability and dependence.

Thoreau suggests that being lost opens us to an understanding of how we really are in the world.

> Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.[19]

Being lost on Pagoda Mountain, then finding the lion tracks and finally becoming oriented in that place so that I could proceed, all relate to the spatiality of oriented place. Being lost is obviously a not knowing where you are in relationship to other places and things. You are bewildered and aware of the need to establish anew your relationships to places, things and the world. The experience may open one to the otherness of reality and through that to a respect for it in its own right. The consciousness of being lost, disoriented, seems an experientially necessary condition for recognizing the possibility of a new understanding of things, space and place. And, as such it is a profoundly recalcitrant experience that challenges the constitutive framework of technological space as a surficial, uniform distancelessness and things as resources at our disposal.

My initial re-orientation on Pagoda Mountain resulted from the felt presence of the mountain lion as essentially other and who at least through curiosity was focused on me. The top of the mountain quickly became a place through the mountain lion, as thing—as eloquent presence, gathering the fourfold. The earth was "saved" in the free presence of the mountain, meadow, and river far below. The sky was "received" as sky with the sun's descent in the west indicating the time remaining to find a camp before dark. The divinities were clearly present as powers greater than myself as I "awaited" their possible appearance. Finally, I was "initiated" through the lion into my own nature as mortal, as

possibly threatened. The mountain lion through its gathering power established a location as a site for the fourfold which opened up space for various places. These places were both near and far. Nearest to me was the mountain lion, despite not knowing his exact position. Also near were thoughts of my family and home. Farther was the trail that I had still to find if I was to make it even farther to my camp by the White River.

The bear, the deer, the voles as particular things gathered earth, sky, divinities and mortals, each in their own way. They spoke as uniquely themselves and with what seems in recollection to be an almost totemic significance. They established my camp in Brushy Park by the White River as a location and place where briefly I may have come to dwell by staying with these things. In establishing this location they provided the opening for spaces and places. Instead of objects, resources or commodities being located in space, the oriented spatiality of place was gathered by things.

How then do we bring together Kant's spatiality as the form of the outer world; experience of the qualitative degree of reality of things; cultural-historical *a priori's* of space; Heidegger's understanding of dwelling, thing and place; and finally the particular experiences of wild places as challenges to the pervasive technological *a priori* of space? In the path followed in this chapter, we have indicated some of the relationships among them and a grand synthesis seems beyond the necessarily limited scope of what can be accomplished here. Preliminary concepts that bring together the significance of these themes are three: the thing-in-itself; the relationship between space and thing; and things as eloquently present.

In Kant's thought, the thing-in-itself seemed closest to actual human experience in the pre-objective spatiality of the Aesthetic and in the experience of quality as degree of reality in the Categories. The object of experience for Kant was located in the outer world by spatio-temporal coordinates in a single, uniform space. However, the thing-in-itself as partially revealed in the spatiality of the Aesthetic and the intensity of experienced reality points towards the notion of presence as the eloquent reality of things in their own right. The priority of presence suggests that it is the thing-in-itself through its presence that yields depth and space and in this way inverts the relationship between space and thing (object). Heidegger understands the thing as presence through its power to gather the fourfold as world at a location that creates spaces and places. The experience of wild things and places challenges the constitutive framework of the cultural space of technology and confirms the world-gathering oriented spatiality of place given by the centrality of things. In the experience of wild things and places, we are addressed by things in a way that speaks to us of what they are and where we are. The eloquent reality of wilderness holds the promise of a receptivity that is an attentive listening and responding to the thing-in-itself. That we fail to heed this address of things because we are so intent in our attending to the technological world of resources and commodities is the danger of which Thoreau speaks.

> We are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor which alone in copious and standard.[20]

Chapter Two:
Hearing, Hearkening and Heeding—Eloquent Reality, Epochal Change and the Crow People

The purpose of this chapter is twofold, (1) to explore in greater detail and depth the preconditions for the kind of orientation that has been presented in the first chapter, and (2) to show that, though the circumstances of a white middle-class American and of a Native American tribe can be painfully different, the challenge they face is in important ways the same—the loss of orientation and the task of regaining it.

The visual as both primary access to the world and as metaphor has pervaded philosophical thought from the pre-Socratics through contemporary philosophy. This chapter focuses on hearing as an alternative and philosophically neglected form of perception that is central to the disclosure of the world and our understanding of it. As a point of departure and continuing guide for thinking, this chapter calls upon Heidegger's developing thought on speaking, hearing and language from *Being and Time* through the *Question Concerning Technology*. The relationship between speaking, hearing and the disclosure of the Being of the "there" in the early Heidegger are contrasted with his later understanding of Being as the disclosure or way of revealing of a particular epoch.

The disclosure of our technological epoch, whose essential nature as the framework results in the challenging, positioning, ordering, revealing of all things as resources, will be thought in terms of a hearing and speaking that is characteristic of it. In particular, technological revealing is fundamentally characterized by its deafness to the speaking of the world and its active silencing of the world. This twofold denial of the possibility of

the world as speaking and as disclosing itself to our hearing makes it ever more difficult for the possibility of an alternative way of revealing to emerge. However, the claim on us of the eloquent reality of that world that is nearest to us and in which we always and already are holds the promise of a 'turning' to a new dispensation of Being, a way of revealing that is more receptive and responsive to beings as they present themselves. Hearing, speaking and language are central to the possibility of such a 'turning' and the character it might take.

To show concretely the primacy of hearing as holding the possibility of both the explicit disclosure of the current epoch's way of revealing while indicating the possible turn to a more responsive revealing, we will take the case of the Crow people of Montana and the response of their leader Plenty-Coups as described by Jonathan Lear in *Radical Hope*. In the example of the Crow and Plenty-Coups we see the rapid, forcible transition from their traditional world through the cultural devastation of white settlement and the turning towards the possibility of a new epoch and way of revealing that would reconstitute a uniquely Crow world. Through the Crow experience we can see that at a time of epochal change there is the possibility of a hearing-responding that preserves the revealing of the traditional paradigm in a non-nostalgic way while partially incorporating the dominant paradigm of the white technological culture and at the same time holding open the possibility of the turn to a more appropriate future paradigm that is consistent with a specifically Crow way of revealing. Their historic experience shows in a compressed and suggestive way how through an attentive listening and appropriate responding to eloquent reality, a radically new and dominant paradigm may still allow the preservation of a

portion of a traditional paradigm and give indications of a precursive paradigm. If this interpretation of their experience is plausible, it would seem to have something to teach us regarding the possibility of a turn from our current technological way of revealing.

In his discussion of understanding in *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges the dominance of sight as both the philosophically privileged mode of perception and as the pervasive metaphor for reason.

> We must, to be sure, guard against a misunderstanding of the expression 'sight'. It corresponds to the "clearedness" (*Gelichtetheit*) which we took as characterizing the disclosedness of the "there". Seeing does not mean just perceiving with the bodily eyes, but neither does it mean pure non-sensory awareness of something present-at-hand in its presence-at-hand. In giving an existential signification to "sight", we have merely drawn upon the peculiar feature of seeing, that it lets entities which are accessible to it be encountered unconcealedly in themselves. Of course, every 'sense' does this within the domain of discovery which is genuinely its own. But from the beginning onwards the tradition of philosophy has been oriented primarily towards 'seeing' as a way of access to entities and to Being. To keep the connection with this tradition, we may formalize "sight" and "seeing" enough to obtain therewith a universal term for characterizing any access to entities or to Being, as access in general. [1]

His utilization of sight in explicating understanding is justified by reference to its traditional philosophical use and by its aptness as a metaphor for the "clearedness" that characterizes the disclosure of the "there" and the "unconcealment" of entities as they are in themselves. Both as "clearedness" and "unconcealment," sight is a metaphor that connects his analysis of understanding to the tradition. He acknowledges that every sense does this in its own way with those things that it "discovers". Thus, it seems clear that sight is not necessarily the only or most fundamental way in which the "there" is disclosed. As we will see, speech and hearing are equally fundamental in *Being and Time*

and because of their characteristic openness and receptivity they grow in importance as Heidegger's thinking develops in his later essays.

In his analysis of "Being-In As Such" in *Being and Time*, Heidegger acknowledges that speech is an equiprimordial existentiale of the disclosure of the "there" along with "situatedness" and "understanding." [2]

> Speech is existentially equiprimordial with situatedness and understanding. The intelligibility of something has always been articulated, even before there is any appropriative interpretation of it. Speech is the Articulation of intelligibility. Therefore it underlies both interpretation and assertion. That which can be Articulated in interpretation, and thus even more primordially in speech, is what we have called 'meaning.'[3]

Heidegger seems to be indicating that there is a way in which speech as the articulation of intelligibility is prior to and fundamental for interpretation and assertion—while also claiming that understanding is equiprimordial with speech. To grasp this, it is important to recognize that by speech he does not mean in the first instance the linguistic utterance of human beings but rather the way in which the world as intelligible is always and already articulated to us—the way in which it makes sense to us prior to any thematization of particular entities within the world. It is this articulation of intelligibility prior to human speaking that Heidegger refers to as speech and which as such is an existential disclosure of the "there".

However, an essential dimension of speech is hearing. Things and others speak to us and we hear them as the intelligible enworlded beings that they are. This primordial speech does not exist independently of human beings because intelligibility and its articulation

require the hearing of humans. Speech and hearing are coeval in origin and are the basis of both human speaking and perceptual hearing.

> Hearing is constitutive for speech. And just as linguistic utterance is based on discourse, so is acoustic perception on hearing.[4]

The hearing that understands and the speech that articulates the intelligibility of the world in which we always and already find ourselves are inextricably combined. Together they constitute the speech that is disclosive of the "there" of Dasein.

Thus, both sight in relation to understanding and hearing in relation to speech are key perceptual metaphors for the early Heidegger. They are co-disclosive of the "there" of Dasein's "being-in" the world. Further reflection and explication of Heidegger's later thought will be required to understand the way in which hearing may be understood as the primary way in which human beings are open to the world and claimed by a speech.

In the analysis of "Being-in As Such" in which he shows specifically how Dasein is "in" the world, Heidegger identifies the three existentialia of the "there" of Dasein: situatedness, understanding and speech. These existentialia are constitutive of the Being of "there" and as such are disclosive of Dasein.

> By its very nature, Dasein brings its "there" along with it. If it lacks its "there", it is not factically the entity which is essentially Dasein; indeed, it is not this entity at all. Dasein is its disclosedness.[5]

These three equiprimordial ways in which the Being of the "there" is disclosed are manifested ontically (concretely) as mood or attunement, sight and talk.

Mood captures the all-encompassing way in which Dasein is always and already attuned both to itself and the world. We are never without a mood even if it is the mood of objective detachment from the world. Mood is prior to all cognition and volition and inflects all of the ways in which we engage reality. How we understand, interpret or 'see' reality is always influenced by the mood we bring to it. Our speaking reflects our mood both in that which we speak about and through the way we speak: our intonation, pace, demeanor and way of listening.

As the ontic manifestation of understanding, sight can be subdivided in terms of the Being of the entities we understand: things, others and ourselves. The sight of circumspective concern (*Umsicht*) that characterizes our being-alongside the ready-to-hand in the world is that way in which we concretely understand the Being of entities other than humans. Solicitude (*Rücksicht*) is the sight of Being-with others in the world as beings like ourselves. And, finally, there is the sight by which we understand ourselves in terms of our existence, transparency (*Durchsichtigkeit*).

> Dasein is this sight equiprimordially in each of those basic ways of its Being which we have already noted: as the circumspection of concern, as the considerateness of solicitude, and as that sight which is directed upon Being as such, for the sake of which any Dasein is as it is.[6]

Finally, the ontic manifestation of the speech is language or human speaking. Language is the concrete manifestation as the totality of words that we speak. The connection of speaking with understanding as Heidegger points out becomes clear in the way that we hear. We always hear understandingly. We do not hear abstract sounds but rather hear a particular thing or person. We hear the voice of a friend or a stranger or the wind in the

trees or a jet passing overhead. And when we speak, we similarly speak understandingly and out of a certain mood to others that we are with in the world.

With this detailed explication of the way in which the Being of Dasein's "there" is disclosed and having indicated in a preliminary way Heidegger's use of both sight and hearing as perceptual metaphors for the basic forms of this disclosure, it is time to take up specifically with our primary themes of hearing and speaking. The centrality of hearing and speaking throughout Heidegger's thought can be traced in the following selected passages. If we turn first to his early analysis of "Being-In," he states: "Indeed, hearing constitutes the primary and authentic way in which Dasein is open for its ownmost potentiality-for-Being…"[7] In the "Letter On Humanism" we find the claim

> Thus language is at once the house of Being and the home of human beings. … Thinking in its saying merely brings the unspoken word of Being to language…Being comes, lighting itself, to language. It is perpetually underway to language. Such arriving in its turn brings ek-sisting thought to language in a saying. Thus language itself is raised into the lighting of Being.[8]

Finally, in "The Question Concerning Technology,"

> Man stands so decisively in attendance on the challenging-forth of Enframing that he does not apprehend Enframing as a claim, that he fails to see himself as the one spoken to, and hence also fails in every way to hear in what respect he ek-sists, from out of his essence, in the realm of an exhortation or address, and thus can never encounter only himself.[9]

These remarks have in common that they find a relationship between hearing, speaking, humans and Being. In particular, humans are understood as always addressed by Being, but they can fail to recognize this address, the unspoken word or claim of Being. Being as a way of revealing of the world in a particular epoch necessarily speaks to humans because we always respond in the way in which we pre-reflectively understand the

world—the way in which it makes sense to us: as resource, as created, as actuality, as idea, as presence. There is, thus, a fundamental hearing of humans that gives us our implicit understanding of the Being of beings.

However, our hearing is also a hearing that understands or hearkens to that which is articulated as intelligible. Our hearing is never first the perception of sounds that are then interpreted as a particular thing. Rather, it is a hearing that 'hearkens', in the sense that it already understands implicitly what it hears as something within the world we inhabit.

> It is on the basis of this potentiality for hearing, which is existentially primary, that anything like hearkening becomes possible. Hearkening is phenomenally still more primordial than what is defined 'in the first instance' as 'hearing' in psychology—the sensing of tones and the perception of sounds. Hearkening too has the kind of Being of the hearing which understands. What we first 'hear' is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking wagon, the motorcycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling.[10]

Finally, this hearing can be considered a heeding if humans explicitly hear themselves as the ones addressed and understand that they exist from out of their "essence in a realm of exhortation or address".[11] In this heeding of the speaking of Being, we understand ourselves as essentially claimed by this speaking to which we respond in our own speaking. As a heeding of the claim, hearing at its fundamental level is constitutive of our most basic receptivity to the world and the source of our responsive speaking that is appropriate to and disclosive of that world.

In the "Letter on Humanism", Heidegger, reinterprets the "there" of Dasein as disclosed by mood, sight and speaking in a way that makes sense of this fundamental sense of

hearing as heeding while bringing together the perceptual metaphors of vision and hearing. The "Da" of Dasein is to be understood as the "there" where Dasein ek-sists and stands out into the light of Being and from where it hears the speaking of Being. This interpretation of the "there" is consistent with an understanding of it as the site of the disclosure of Being—where we hear the address of Being that governs the way of revealing of all beings within a historical epoch. Thus, it is both the location of the revealing of beings and the site of our essential openness to language through a hearing to which we respond in our own speaking.

We are essentially the "there" as the site of the address of Being and always respond to this address in our way of revealing. That we are addressed can be concealed from us in the sense that we fail to pay heed to it as an address and merely attend to the world in the way it already makes sense to us—failing to see this as a responding on our part. This is the case in our contemporary technological world, which is silent because everything is revealed as resources ever more instantaneously and ubiquitously available for the satisfaction of our needs and desires. Nothing can address us in its own right because as a resource it has no context that it gathers or independent standing apart from human beings. This technological way of revealing necessarily fails to hear the speaking of that which is nearest to us. However, in heeding that which is closest to us, the address of Being, our own speaking may correspond to this heeding by disclosing both the Being of our modern era of technology as a particular way of revealing and also the possibility of a turning towards another way of revealing whose dawning character as world and thing can only begin to be discerned.

Heeding the claim of Being as first a recognition of our necessary involvement in revealing and thus, also, our involvement in the particular way of revealing of the current epoch, allows us to realize the possibility of alternative ways of revealing. This heeding thus permits us to recognize that there existed other historical epochs with their particular ways of revealing. However, this heeding often takes the form in our technological epoch as nostalgia for a pre-technological way of revealing. Yet, it can also explicitly hold open the possibility of a precursive way of revealing that incorporates both the current and an earlier way of revealing within a new revealing that corresponds to things as they show themselves or speak to us in their independence; gathering in their speaking and bringing near to us a world suffused with significance that speaks to us—a new disclosure of Being, an eloquent reality in which we may come to dwell.

To understand what this might mean concretely, it is instructive to attempt to understand the experience of the Crow People of Montana during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century under the leadership of Chief Plenty-Coups. Jonathan Lear in his provocative book, *Radical Hope*, describes the Crows' forced transition from their traditional world through the imposition of the white, western technological world and their early attempt under Plenty-Coups' leadership to hold open the possibility of a new world: a world that might bring together elements of their traditional way of revealing with the western technological world which they now inhabited but which would still be a uniquely Crow way of revealing.

To understand the philosophical significance of the Crow experience requires a brief recounting and interpretation of key experiences in the life of Plenty-Coups as he related them just prior to his death to the ethnographer Frank Linderman. We begin with a striking conversation in which Plenty-Coups speaks of the way the Crows experienced their world after the loss of the buffalo and their traditional life.

> Plenty-Coups refused to speak of his life after the passing of the buffalo, so that his story seems to have been broken off, leaving many years unaccounted for. "I have not told you half of what happened when I was young," he said. When urged to go on. "I can go back and tell you much more of war and horse-stealing. But when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground, and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened. There was little singing anywhere. Besides," he added sorrowfully, "you know that part of my life as well as I do. You saw what happened when the buffalo went away.[12]

What can it mean to say that after the buffalo were gone "nothing happened," and how can it be that Linderman would know this part of his life as well as Plenty-Coups does? One way of understanding this might be that with the loss of the buffalo, the Crow and Plenty-Coups lost their traditional way of revealing—the way in which their world spoke to them as significant or eloquent; that articulation of intelligibility that was the speaking of Being which gathered their specifically Crow world together. Nothing happened after the buffalo were exterminated in the sense that nothing gathered their world together and spoke to them in their traditional way. Events and the things of the world became in an essential manner unintelligible. Events certainly continued to occur, but they took place within a foreign world of the white man's. The Crows' "there", the traditional way of being within which the Crow were co-disclosed as themselves with their world, had collapsed. There were no longer significant, enworlded Crow events, but merely things

that happened in homogeneous time that a white man such as Linderman would know as well as Plenty-Coups.

Yet, as Lear observes this loss of the Crow world did not lead Plenty-Coups to despair despite the suffering and loss of intelligibility that their new reservation life entailed. He retained a sense of radical hope in the survival and recovery of a Crow way of life through a vision that he had as a boy. It was a vision interpreted by both himself and the Crow people as providing a path for them to follow through the cultural devastation of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries while keeping open the possibility of a turning to a new but yet unknown Crow world and way of revealing: a new Crow world in which again things might happen in a way informed by both tradition and the reality of the dominant white technological culture yet transformed in a way that could not be known in advance.

It was a vision and yet strangely a vision that instructed Plenty-Coups and the Crow in a way of hearing, a hearing that was both a hearkening and heeding. In the vision he is told by a man-person in the form of a Buffalo-bull that all the buffalo will soon be gone and replaced by strange spotted buffalo (cattle) that the white man will bring. Then, a tremendous wind from all directions comes to the forest where they are talking and all the trees are blown down, except one. The Buffalo-man then says:

> Listen Plenty-Coups, in that tree is the lodge of the Chickadee. He is least in strength but strongest of mind among his kind. He is willing to work for wisdom. The Chickadee-person is a good listener. Nothing escapes his ears, which he has sharpened by constant use. Whenever others are talking together of their successes and failures, there you will find the Chickadee-person listening to their words. But in all his listening he tends to his own business. He never intrudes, never speaks in strange company, and yet never misses a chance to learn from others. He gains success and avoids failure by learning how others succeeded or failed, and without

> great trouble to himself…The lodges of countless Bird-people were in the forest when the Four Winds charged it. Only one person is left unharmed, the lodge of the Chickadee-person.[13]

The path that the vision directs Plenty-Coups and the Crow people to follow is one of fundamental openness and receptivity through a radical commitment to a constant hearing. Both the tribe and Plenty-Coups interpreted the vision to be saying that only through such a hearing would they be able to survive and keep their lands—and with them the possibility of a future.

In the interpretation of Plenty-Coups' vision, the Crows' new hearing is in the first instance a hearing of the speaking of a totem animal, the Chickadee-person, speaking from within their traditional Crow world—a Crow paradigm or way of revealing. This speaking instructs them to engage in a continuous hearing from within the new white technological world that will inevitably displace their traditional Crow world. This hearing is to be a hearkening that hears as white people hear from within their world and in terms of their way of revealing of all things as resources. It hearkens in that it understandingly hears that the things the Crow understood as alive and spiritual are now all reduced to the uniformity of resources available for human use. Only if the Crows hearken to this transformed revealing of the white culture will they be able to preserve the possibility of a Crow future.

Yet, this task of hearing includes remembering the voice of their traditional culture in the speaking of the Chickadee-person. However, this is not a nostalgic remembering but a

remembering that their world was once eloquent and in its eloquence spoke to them, through the Chickadee-person, of the path to follow in the new white technological world and told them to be inconspicuously open and to hear the saying of others. Their inconspicuous hearing must be sharpened by continual use, listening everywhere to the wisdom, the successes and failures of others. They must learn what succeeds and what does not within the new world for this is their hope for retaining the possibility of a future as a people.

The hearing that the Chickadee-person instructs the Crow in is also a heeding because it hears in the twofold sense of a hearing what speaks as the speaking of only one particular way of revealing. And, it is a heeding because through understanding the white technological way of revealing as but one way of revealing, it understands itself as one necessarily addressed by Being to reveal the world. As one claimed in such a way, it is awake to the possibility of an alternative precursive revealing that holds the promise of a fundamentally new paradigm; a precursive paradigm that corresponds to both the radically transformed technological reality of the Crow and to their traditional paradigm. It is not wholly within the way of revealing of the dominant western culture; rather, it hears and is instructed in its hearing by the traditional cultural paradigm. Thus, it is not wholly intent on the attending to the revealing of everything as resources but rather is open and receptive to understanding this as but one way of revealing—that of the technological world.

There is an archaic sense of hope as a feeling of trust in something or someone. In whom or what one places trust may be unclear. In the case of the Crow with the destruction of their traditional understanding, the near total collapse of the intelligibility of the world, whom or what they could place their trust in was radically unclear. To move forward and follow the path of openness to possibility through a constant hearing of the speaking of the new world required an attunement that corresponded to this task. I agree with Lear (though for different reasons) that this attunement that corresponded to their new situation was one of radical hope, a kind of hope that was not a hope for a specific future possibility, nor a trust in someone or something that they could identify. Rather, it was radical hope in the sense of placing their trust in a path to understanding through a continual hearing—an openness to the possibility of a new way of understanding and revealing. What they hoped to achieve in this hearing they could not say, beyond that they would survive as a people and keep their land. The task of radical hearing required the attunement of radical hope—a task and attunement embodied by Plenty-coups throughout his long life.

The Heideggerian understanding of Being-in-the-World provides a context and way to make sense of Plenty-Coups' vision and the Crow experience. The vision and the paradigmatic speaking of the Chickadee-person from within this vision gave the Crow a new way of Being-in, a new "there" as a site of disclosure for their radically transformed way of Being-in-the-World. The disclosure of this new "there" necessarily included a mood or attunement to the world as a whole. This mood was one of radical hope that kept open to them a horizon of possibilities through both the sight of understanding and the

hearing of speech. Co-constitutive with attunement was an understanding, but a necessarily preliminary understanding that could only be an openness to the understanding of things, others and themselves. Finally, what essentially held together the fragile openness to possibility of radical hope and understanding was the Chickadee's instruction in hearing as both a hearkening to things and others understandingly and a heeding that heard the speaking as a way of revealing and most radically as a claim upon them as the ones spoken to in this revealing. It was this new "there" that disclosed the Crow to themselves within the new epoch of western technological culture and which gave to them the possibility of a future that might yet be again an eloquent reality that spoke to the Crow.

> But this ideal (the chickadee) gave the Crow a basis for hope that if they followed the wisdom of the chickadee (whatever that would come to mean) they would survive (whatever that would come to mean) and hold onto their lands (whatever that would come to mean). Thus Plenty-Coups bequeathed an ideal that would help the tribe tolerate a period of conceptual devastation. And the fact that this ideal has survived—that is, that a traditional ideal has a vibrant life on the other side of the abyss—lends legitimacy to the claim that the Crow have indeed survived. Or, perhaps that the Crow have revived.[14]

The history of the Crow under the leadership of Plenty-Coups shows their understanding of this new way of Being-in-the-World and the success that it allowed them within the dominant white culture. Plenty-Coups made the decision to ally with the inexorable advance of white military power against the Crows traditional enemies: the Lakota, Blackfeet and Cheyenne. This was a decision for which he was criticized by other tribes throughout his life, but it was a decision he saw as essential to saving the Crow's land—the very basis for the survival of the people. He engaged in repeated negotiations with the

federal government in the early twentieth century to retain the heart of the Crow land in the Pryor Mountains. He also stressed the importance of education for the Crow and helped establish schools on the reservations. And, in his final years he bequeathed his home and surrounding lands as a park for the use of both the Crow and white people—an idea he borrowed from an early visit to George Washington's home, Mount Vernon. Finally, he passed on in the dominant culture's technology of writing in the form of Frank Linderman's book, the ideal of the Chickadee and how he had embodied it in his life. And, with that he passed on the continuing possibility of the turn to a new Crow way of revealing in which again the eloquent reality of their land and people spoke to them.

> Look at our country! It was chosen by my people out of the heart of the most beautiful land in all the world, because we were wise. And it was my dream that taught us the way.[15]

What then might we in our current epoch of Being, consumed as we are in a technological revealing of everything as resources, learn from the Crow response to the loss of their traditional world and enforced habitation in our technological world? Only a few inconspicuous, fragile, preparatory yet perhaps important intimations regarding an alternative revealing can be discerned. First, our fundamental openness to revealing comes as a hearing that hearkens and heeds the speech that is the articulation of intelligibility of the world—the eloquence of reality. Thus, what is most needed is an attentive hearing by us to things and our world. Moreover, this radical hearing can only come with an attunement of radical hope, which keeps open the horizon of possibilities as a whole. And, the disclosive understanding of our "there" comes out of an epistemology of receptivity that holds our knowing back in a hearing that both acknowledges and

wonders that things are as they are and not otherwise. Finally, such a disclosive Being-in needs a particular place such as the Crow have that can provide a site for a gathering that brings an eloquent world near to us.

> Through this we are not yet saved. But we are thereupon summoned to hope in the growing light of the saving power. How can this happen? Here and now and in little things, that we may foster the saving power in its increase.[16]

Chapter Three: What Are Philosophers For?

> For this is an experience (pathos) which is characteristic of a philosopher, this wondering: this is where philosophy begins and nowhere else—Plato[1]

This concluding chapter turns to crucial and final questions that confront philosophy today: What are philosophical insights good for in a time that has been leveled by modernity and technology? How can philosophers hope to help society regain a sense of orientation.

The question: "What are philosopher for in a destitute time?" is only a reformulation of Hölderlin's question in his elegy "Bread and Wine": "…and what are poets for in a destitute time?"[2] Hölderlin's original question became, in turn, the title of a major essay by Heidegger. The question I am asking, however, is only tangentially related to Heidegger's essay and Hölderlin's poem. In asking this question of philosophers, the hope is to discover something essential about both philosophy and the character of the destitution of the age in which we live. Further, the question leads to a preliminary indication of what philosophy can say to us regarding the nature of what lies beyond the destitution of our times. The fundamental claim this chapter makes is that the essential role of philosophy today lies in the recovery of the original and still defining experience of philosophy: wonder that things are as they are. This wonder at things and the world opens up the possibility of the discernment of paradigms that govern our implicit understanding of the world while pointing us to the possibility of a different and more appropriate understanding of reality. The role of philosophy is to ever and again awaken humans to

seeing the world anew. In our destitute, disenchanted technological age, this awakening in wonder to things as they are hold the promise of fundamentally challenging the implicit and unquestioned instrumentalization of the reality that reveals everything as resources and commodities. Wonder seems in dialectical contrariety to the framework of technology and, as such, points us towards what Heidegger called the saving power.

In pursuing answers to the question the title poses, I will be looking for guidance from sources within philosophy and from my recent experience teaching environmental ethics. The philosophical sources are primarily: Heidegger's essays, "What is Philosophy?" and "The Question Concerning Technology"; Albert Borgmann's writings on the philosophy of technology; and Charles Taylor's, book, *Modern Social Imaginaries.* These sources and my thoughts regarding the role of philosophy will be weighed against the power to disclose my experiences during three weeks of intensive teaching and philosophical discussion on issues in environmental ethics with students while backpacking in the Little Belt and Big Snowy Mountains of Montana.

If we are to answer our question, we first need to clarify what is meant by the destitution of our times. Heidegger's answer is that the destitution of the modern epoch lies in a revealing that is the essential character of technology. This technological way of revealing, which he names the framework, challenges forth, positions and orders the real as resource such that it is always available as an instrument for the satisfaction of human needs and desires. This instrumentalization of everything that "is" in the modern era has

been called "the disenchantment of the world." The term was famously first used by Max Weber in his essay, "Science as a Vocation." For Weber disenchantment meant:

> …there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means. This process of disenchantment, which has continued to exist in occidental culture for millennia, and, in general, this 'progress,' to which science belongs as link and motive force.[3]

In *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Charles Taylor traces the genealogy of this disenchantment through the radical transformations of both individual self-understanding and the individual's relationships to community, family, society, religion and the moral order that occurred during the late middle ages through the Protestant reformation and the rise of the modern era. These transformations required the disciplining and rationalization of both the individual and society to make possible the new modern order. This complex of implicit understandings or social imaginaries regarding ourselves and the world made possible the set of practices characteristic of the modern, disenchanted world.

> One of the central features of western modernity … is the progress of disenchantment, the eclipse of the world of magic forces and sprits. This was one of the products of the reform movement in Latin Christendom … the attempt to discipline and reorder society … so as to render it more peaceful, more ordered, more industrious. The newly remade society was to embody the demands of the Gospel in a stable and as it was increasingly understood a rational order. This society had no place for the ambivalent complementarities of the older enchanted world: between worldly life and monastic renunciation, between proper order and its periodic suspension in carnival, between the acknowledged power of spirits and forces and their relegation by divine power. The new order was coherent, uncompromising, all of a piece. Disenchantment brought a new uniformity of purpose and principle.[4]

This disenchantment through the systematic, uniform, rational instrumentalization of the world left no room for any form of explanation other than that of efficient causation and subsumption under scientific law. As both Taylor and Weber note the new order is seamless with everything in principle being capable of explanation through technical means, calculation and science.

What then are the characteristics and consequences of this disenchantment of the world? The unquestioned assumption of scientific, causal understanding as the only mode of explanation and the accompanying instrumentalization of reality precludes the possibility of anything being understood as existing in its own right. There is nothing in the world whose existence, power and effects are not fully explicated in terms of instrumental reason and modern science. Things that may once have had a claim upon us or spoken to our concern in their own right have all decayed into resources or commodities that are only present as available for our use or consumption.

If everything is understood as and reduced to resources and commodities, then there is an implicit and pervasive severing of means from ends. Resources and commodities can never be ends but only means, and if the framework of technology only allows the real to be revealed as resources then the only possible ends that remain are human ones. But if ends are exclusively human they come to be seen as subjective, without independent standing. This subjectivity of human ends then disappears into the apparent arbitrariness of human desires. The means become coincident with the objective world, which is instrumental to the wholly subjective human ends of ultimately arbitrary desires.

This disenchanted world of subjectivized ends and objectivized but strangely intrumentalized means is tellingly disclose by Borgmann's understanding of the "device paradigm." The device paradigm discloses both the underlying and pervasive pattern of our technological world and our implicit understanding of this world. The paradigmatic device is composed of the machinery and the commodity it makes available for use. The machinery of the device is unstable over time in the sense that it tends to become ever more concealed: smaller, less obtrusive and more opaque to ordinary understanding. The commodity produced by the machinery is also unstable because it is the subject of constant refinement to improve its availability through becoming every more instantaneous, ubiquitous, reliable and safe. The machinery of the device is but the means to the end of producing the commodity.

Although, the commodity can be seen in isolation as the end of the particular device that produces it, it is embedded as a means within a hierarchy of means whose final end is only found in the satisfaction of human needs and desires. This final end finds its universal expression in technology's ultimate promise of liberation from the burdens of reality and prosperity through the ever-increasing consumption of commodities. The device paradigm thus clearly discloses an essential and pervasive feature of our technological disenchanted, modern world: the characteristic severing of means from ends. However, the commodities that are the putative ends of the device are in turn revealed as merely instrumental to other higher order ends, which terminate in the only final and self-warranting end: human needs and desires.

The universal instrumentalization of the world clarified through an understanding of the device paradigm points to the radical ontological dependence of the technological world. The only beings that are their own warrant, that are acknowledged in their own right, that can speak to us or exert a fundamental claim on our concern, are other human beings. And, even in this seemingly final claim on our concern, Heidegger points to the increasing tendency to view ourselves as resources. One need only look at the everyday language of human resources and their productive employment to find confirmation of this final attempt at instrumentalization. This dissolution of all things into resources and commodities means that there can be nothing in our disenchanted technological world that can be understood as a power that is greater or even independent of ourselves. When everything becomes a means or a commodity for consumption the world withdraws and we seemingly only encounter things whose ultimate referent is ourselves, making plausible the claim that the world is merely a human construct.

This withdrawal of the world is manifested by its silence in which we only hear the echo of our own voices. Only humans speak and even this speaking becomes instrumentalized as the mere expression of internal, subjective states. It is no longer a speaking that has been potentiated in a listening to a world that speaks in its own right and to which we respond. Heidegger sees this as the ultimate danger.

> This danger (the framework of technology) attests itself to us in two ways. As soon as what is unconcealed no longer concerns man even as object, but does so, rather, exclusively as resource (Bestand) and man in the midst of objectlessness is nothing but the orderer of resources, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. … man stands so decisively in attendance on the

> challenging-forth the framework that he does not apprehend framework as a claim, that he fails to see himself as the one spoken to, and hence also fails in every way to hear in what respect he ek-sists, from out of his essence, in the realm of an exhortation or address, and thus can never encounter only himself.[5]

The destitution of our time, the disenchantment of our modern technological world is that it no longer speaks to us. The enchanted world of things that spoke in their own right is silenced.

If the destitution of our times lies in the dissolution of all things into resources or commodities resulting in the loss of a world that speaks to us, then what is the role of philosophy and how may it harbor and promote the saving power? Both Plato in the *Theatetus* and Heidegger in "What is Philosophy?" claim that the essential *pathos* (variously translated as disposition, attunement or experience) of philosophy is wonder. This attunement of philosophy in wonder is not seen as just the starting point of philosophy, which then proceeds to explain the cause of our wonder, thereby allaying it. Rather, wonder is both the beginning and on-going determinative attunement of philosophy. Philosophical wonder is in incorrigible.

Before examining in detail the relationships between philosophy, wonder and the saving power, I want to examine the idea of attunement as it applies to the disenchanted technological world in which we live. That there is a characteristic attunement to our technological world is essential to an understanding of the way we implicitly take up with this world and how in turn it is revealed to us. This attunement can be seen as an ontological imaginary, and implicit pre-theoretical orientation to reality as a whole that inflects the way the world is revealed to us and that makes sense of our explicit

understanding and practices. Henry Bugbee speaks to this in a way that seems clear and confirmed by experience.

> And the story seems something like this: as we take things, so we have them; and if we take them in faith, we have them in earnest; if wishfully—then fantastically; if willfully, then stubbornly; if merely objectively, with the trimmings of subjectivity—then emptily…[6]

The question then is what is the attunement or disposition that is characteristic of the disenchanted world of technology, which gives us our implicit and seamless understanding of the world and that makes sense of the silence of the world. The technological attunement seems to mirror the disjunction of means and ends giving it a strangely bipolar nature. One pole is mild disconnected depression and the other hyperactive distraction. Borgmann, in his *Crossing The Post-Modern Divide,* names this passive-active bipolar attunement as sullenness and hyperactivity.[7] Heidegger also, makes a suggestive observation of the passive form of this attunement in relation to the lack of connection with things.

> Indeed, the loss of rapport with things that occurs in states of depression would be wholly impossible if even such a state were not still what it is as a human state: that is a staying **with** things. Only if this stay already characterizes human being can the things among which we are also fail to speak to us, **fail** to concern us any longer (emphasis is Heidegger's).[8]

The passive, depressive, sullen pole reflects the implicit understanding that everything we encounter in the world is revealed only as instrumental to our will—everything is reduced to a resource or commodity. Nothing fundamentally claims us or speaks to us independently of our desires. Nothing enchants us or 'sings within' as the original

meaning of the word suggest. The futility, emptiness and silence of such a world is both sourced and reflected in the attunement of depression and disconnection.

Alternatively, the other pole of this fundamental attunement—hyperactivity and distraction—reflects the implicit understanding that the technological world is one in which the self and its desires are unanchored and the only ultimate end is satisfaction of these desires by an endless array of alternative resources or commodities that are increasingly available. Instead of responding passively, the self pursues the ever-more attractive and abundant commodities that technology makes available, believing that they will provide the enduring happiness they promise. However, they in fact provide only fleeting pleasures precisely because of their instant, universal, easy and safe availability. Rather than responding to this with depression and disconnection, those in the active phase of technological attunement pursue with avidity the distractive, momentary pleasures of increasingly refined commodities.

I observed this characteristic bipolar attunement (and sometimes the oscillation within the same individual) and its transformation in my environmental ethics students. Our class first came to know each other while purchasing supplies before the start of our backpacking trip and during the subsequent drive to the trailhead. Between brief conversations and necessary organizational activities, most of the students were constantly using the two nearly ubiquitous modern devices that they would soon have to leave behind: cell phones and iPods. They were calling and texting during almost every available moment, oblivious for the most part to one another and the place they were.

During our final moments purchasing supplies for the trip, there seemed a frenzied attempt to obtain every possible commodity that could either be consumed before or carried on the trip. The availability of the vast array of commodities in the large supermarket and adjacent hardware store, combined with our imminent departure to a place where these commodities and devices would no longer be available, made clear the implicit attunement and reinforcement of this attunement by these devices and commodities. The students' engagement was clearly dominated by distracted technological hyperactivity.

However, behind this distracted hyperactivity there seemed a variable undercurrent of mild depression in the quieter moments on the drive to and immediately after our arrival at the trailhead. This took subtle forms and its intensity depended on the temperament of the individual. However, it seemed characterized by a disassociation from the particular place we were. It was as if our imminent departure and the resulting absence of many technological devices and commodities was dawning on them, along with the realization of the futility of their frenzied hyperactivity. Many were subdued and required repeated and explicit direction to orient them to the place and to what needed to be done before we left in the morning. As the frenzied hyperactivity of the technological world receded, they seemed to subside into the quiet disconnection from the silent and disenchanted world.

Plato, Aristotle, Heidegger and others have pointed to a fundamentally different attunement, wonder, as characteristic of philosophy. What then is the character of this attunement? In what way is it the source and definitive of philosophy? And does it offer

an alternative to the attunement of the technological world that might point to the 'saving power'?

Heidegger speaks explicitly of the phenomenology of wonder.

> In astonishment we restrain ourselves. We step back, as it were, from being, from the fact that it is as it is and not otherwise. And astonishment is not used up in this retreating from the Being of being, but, as this retreating and self-restraining, it is at the same time forcibly drawn to and, as it were, held fast by that from which it retreats. Thus, astonishment is dis-position in which and for which the Being of being unfolds.[9]

In astonishment or wonder that something is as it is, its particular way of being is brought before us thematically and as a question. In wonder, the usual framework of significance within which a thing is implicitly understood or revealed breaks down, and the thing lights up as the particular thing that it is. We become receptive and are opened to its uniqueness. As Heidegger emphasizes, this attunement of wonder is not our normal one. The attunement of wonder is a dis-position. We are not in our accustomed position; we are in a sense lost or bewildered and this allows that at which we wonder to claim us in its independence.

A critical aspect of wonder (as distinct from curiosity) is that we are not questioning regarding the cause of the thing or its scientific explanation. The wonder that it is as it is and not otherwise is incorrigible. It is not allayed by subsumption under scientific law or the giving of reasons and causes; although scientific understanding may deepen our wonder. Nor is it wonder at some new and unique way we can utilize what we wonder about. Wonder is not concerned with the thing in its instrumentality, as a resource or commodity.

If wonder is not about how something can be explained through scientific theory, causal explanation or utilized as a resource, what can be said more clearly about the source of wonder? To answer this, it is best to go to accounts that explicitly bear witness to wonder; experiences that reveal the phenomenology of wonder. Thoreau gives such an account in his description of the discovery of a new species of bream.

> But in my account of this bream I cannot go a hair's breadth beyond the mere statement that it exists—the *miracle of its existence*, my contemporary and *neighbor*, yet so *different from me*! I can only poise my thought there by its side and *try to think like a bream* for a moment. I can only think of precious jewels, of music, poetry, beauty, and the mystery of life. I only see the bream in its orbit, as I see a star, but I *care not to measure its distance or weight*. The bream, appreciated, floats in the pond as the *centre of the system*, another image of God. *Its life no man can explain* more than he can his own. I want you to perceive the mystery of the bream. I have a contemporary in Walden. It has fins where I have legs and arms. I have a friend among the fishes, at least a new acquaintance. *Its character will interest me, I trust, not its clothes and anatomy. I do not want it to eat.* Acquaintance with it is to make my life more rich and eventful. It is as if a poet or an anchorite had moved into the town, whom I can see from time to time and think of yet oftener. Perhaps there are a thousand of these striped bream which no one had thought of in that pond—not their mere impressions in stone, but in the *full tide of the bream life* (emphasis mine).[11]

Thoreau makes clear that it is not the lack of a causal explanation or scientific understanding that makes him wonder at the bream. Nor is it the possible uses to which the bream can be put. Rather, his wonder comes from the "miracle of its existence," as the "centre of the system, another image of God," and as a fellow being but one that is "so different from me." The bream is experienced in its independence and with respect as Thoreau's "contemporary and neighbor." And, it is experienced in wonder as a being whose presence expands and enriches Thoreau's life. In its flourishing "in the full tide of

bream life" it enhances the flourishing of Thoreau's own life. His wonder is grounded in both the "mere' existence or presence of the bream as the particular kind of being it is with its own unique way of flourishing and in an awareness that he is fundamentally connected as a fellow creature to this being in a way that is essential and that will "make his life more rich and eventful."

Thoreau's speaking of his wonder at the presence of the bream is clearly a speaking that responds to his being claimed by the bream in its own right. The bream in its independence is self-warranting; it requires no justification or explanation in terms of something else. It speaks to Thoreau as another being requiring respect and Thoreau's own responsive speaking in wonder is potentiated and trued by the speaking presence of the bream. In wonder the bream is literally enchanted, it sings from within itself; it speaks in its own right, awakening Thoreau to the eloquent reality in which they both dwell.

How does my experience and that of the students during the environmental ethics class in the mountains of Montana clarify and confirm this account of the disenchantment of our technological world transformed through philosophical wonder revealing at least interstices where reality speaks eloquently and the world discloses the possibility of reenchantment? An essential prerequisite was the leaving behind of the most common technological devices used by the students: cell phone, iPods and GPS units. This freed all of us from the constant distractions these devices cause in our everyday lives. In addition, we all carried backpacks sufficient for a ten-day trip over difficult terrain. This shared experience focused the students by bringing them into direct physical connection

with the places through which we hiked. Every night we chose our campsite together and shared a meal cooked by rotating student chefs. We all shared the vagaries of the weather: a snowstorm that covered our camp with six inches of wet snow and forced us to layover; an intense lightening storm succeeded by driving rain; and hot dry days where we had to be careful to pack enough water. We were constantly challenged to find our way with only a topographic may and compass through an area where none of us had previously been. These shared activities were often deeply engaging and tested both our existing skills and our abilities to learn new ones. The skilled focal engagement of our small community was structured throughout by the basic material necessities of food, shelter and traversing difficult country. This focal engagement seemed to slowly alter the students default attunement of distracted hyperactivity or mildly depressed withdrawal to a least an interested awareness of where we were and the tasks required.

As important as this physical encounter with material reality was for creating a receptive disposition, it was our readings and discussions of environmental philosophy that were the most surprising. The first evening, we discussed an overview of traditional ethical theories and how each would interpret responsibility for and the actions that should be taken in the actual case of an oil tanker running aground on the coast of England. After I gave additional explanation and clarification of the differences among utilitarian, deontological, virtue and intrinsic value theories, the students began a discussion of the various aspects of the environmental crisis: global climate change, species extinction, excessive first world consumption accompanied by third world poverty and degradation of the environment, could be made sense of in light of alternative ethical theories. They were

particularly taken by Aristotle's notion of virtue and the good life. The discussion was marked by their full engagement and a dawning sense of how one could begin to make sense of perplexing and seemingly overwhelming environmental issues within the context of ethical theory.

Throughout their lives they had encountered a nearly endless series of environmental problems that, while profoundly troubling to them, seemed hopelessly unsolvable because of the lack of any theoretical or practical context that might give them a way of making sense of the issues in general and offer a possible guide for their actions. I was impressed that they not only saw philosophy and ethical theory as immediately relevant to the particular environmental issues but also that they had intimations that there were different ways of seeing the world that might provide a kind of comprehensive and crucially important insight. At the end of the discussion they said with some excitement that it had given them a framework for interpretation of environmental issues which they had lacked before and that they wanted to understand in more depth. Moreover, they expressed a new found sense of hope for the future rooted in the possibility of a clear and consistent way of responding where before they had felt overwhelmed by the complexity and enormity of the problems.

Over the next several days we went on to discuss the history of our current environmental crisis; its relationship to modern technology; and how the notion of virtues as skilled dispositions integrated in the good life could provide a comprehensive context for a response to the environmental crisis. We also read and discussed the alternative

paradigms explicated by Borgmann in *Technology and The Character of Contemporary Life.* The technological device paradigm and the paradigm of focal things and practices initially seemed to most to be abstract, impossibly complex and without application to their lives. However, as we talked both in formal discussions and informally along the trail of specific examples and experiences within their own lives that gave life and relevance to these paradigms, each student came to recognize the way in which these paradigms revealed their world in a more coherent way. What had before been unrelated, sometimes problematic and at other times deeply meaningful experiences were now given a structure within which they could be understood, interpreted and evaluated. There slowly dawned a realization of a different way of seeing the world.

Our philosophical discussion were intertwined with and given depth by two particular focal experiences that seemed imbued with wonder and that quietly made a profound impression on the students. The first occurred after spending two challenging days and nights weathering an intense storm that blanketed our camp with up to six inches of snow preventing us from hiking further. The third morning dawned crystal clear with the whole area coming alive with bird song and the happy chirruping of squirrels. What struck everyone was the beauty of the bright morning light on the snow covered trees and shrubs and rocks lining the creek below our camp. The light awakened our world and us in wonder to the beauty of all that surrounded us. The mood of wonder caused all of us to pause and be astonished by the experience of what was, as it was. Everyone lingered, almost transfixed by what was before us as we tried to go about the tasks of preparing

breakfast and breaking camp. We finally departed camp with light and responsive hearts just before noon.

We hiked several miles down Deep Creek as the snow melted and the day warmed. Finally, making camp during late afternoon at the mouth of the appropriately named, Temple Gulch—guarded on each side by limestone spires reaching hundreds of feet above our heads. We bushwhacked a mile up the gulch to try to locate a spring for water because Deep Creek had unexpectedly disappeared into the underlying limestone and was now only a dry creek bed. We were all heartened to find what on the topographic map had been only the faintest suggestion of a spring but which turned out to be an impressive water source, flowing directly out of the limestone into a basin surrounded by golden Rocky Mountain maples. We quickly filled all our containers and returned to camp in the dry creek bed.

As we arrived in camp, the sun was just beginning to set behind a cloudy horizon. Then as we began dinner it broke through a stratum in the clouds and bathed our camp in a golden light that lengthened the shadows we cast and those of all the surrounding trees and rocks. We suddenly seemed giants inhabiting a world grown to match our size. The light which we could not have expected a moment before, changed all things, stilled our concerns and transfixed us as we looked and listened to the presence of what was. As we spoke with each other of this experience during the subsequent days, it seemed that it inflected all our reflections and our understanding of how things and the world were in some fundamental way. However, we were at a loss to say what exactly this was.

What philosophical significance can be found in my experiences teaching this environmental ethics class in the mountains and how does it connect to the themes of this chapter? In reflecting on this it seems that there was a dynamic interplay of theoretic philosophical understanding; dawning recognition of paradigms that structure our understanding of ourselves and the world; shared focal activities and experiences of place combined with experiences in depth attuned in wonder that revealed the world in its presence as independent of us and as speaking to our concern in ways that put the lie to our instrumental and exclusively scientific understanding of reality.

In destitute times, philosophy, it appears, has a critical and potentially transformative role. It can give us a theoretical understanding that brings together in a coherent way seemingly disparate yet critical issues. However, to be something that grounds the actions and lives of individuals this theoretical understanding must be placed within the context of the good life and what human flourishing might mean. But, philosophy must go beyond this broadly theoretical understanding to give us an alternative paradigmatic explanation of our world that throws that world into relief while bringing into question our pre-reflective, everyday understanding. Philosophy must also explicitly acknowledge that, however carefully it must proceed in reflection, it has it origin and continuing source in the experience of wonder. The role of philosophers is to reveal the world anew to us in wonder—to reveal this world as an enchanted world that in its independence speaks to us—and that in our hearing and co-responding to this speaking lies the possibility of our truly flourishing.

In speaking of the philosophical significance of the sublime, Henry Bugbee articulated an understanding of what he called the "philosophical orientation" that seems to eloquently express this idea.

> I would now speak of the element or orientation in question as a wittingness of ourselves and things—together—in the mode of finality. …in the phenomenon of the sublime we are decisively caught up in destinate existence with one another and with things—as belonging together, existing in a mutuality that is final and ultimate. It is in and out of that mutuality appreciated as final and ultimate that we can affirm things and other persons in their independence, and also at the same time—reflexively—ourselves. This affirmation is respect.[11]

Conclusion

In a conclusion it is customary to summarize the results of your work, point to the implications of your conclusions and indicate what still needs to be done. In the case of the philosophical explorations in this thesis the clarity needed for a definitive summarizing seems difficult to obtain. This difficulty seems inseparable from the subject matter itself. It seems worthwhile to examine the nature of this difficulty before attempting the traditional concluding tasks.

These explorations have attempted to examine that which is closest to us; so close that its nearness makes it difficult to obtain the distance for a "speaking about." Often it seems that it is only through careful recollection of our most engaging experiences and attentive listening to the disclosive speaking of other people's experiences that we gain access to the essential matter to be thought. But what is the nature of this closeness that makes a clear speaking about what is close so difficult? The concealing closeness of the matters we are trying to reflect on results from their being concerned with how we are always and already engaged in the world, prior to any thematization of objects, world or of ourselves as subjects. Discerning the essential patterns of this prior engagement with the world requires both careful attention to occurent experience and serious philosophical reflection that is continuous with this experience. However, the difficulty of this process does not absolve us of the responsibility to speak with the degree of clarity and philosophical rigor permitted by the subject.

Thus, any conclusions that result from these explorations are only provisional and suggestive, not systematic and forcible. The test of their appropriateness and truth is their power to disclose the determining and conducive character of modern technology and to point suggestively towards an alternative way of revealing that holds the promise of the co-flourishing of both humans and more than human others. Overall the thesis has tried to discern the patterns or structures of our pre-theoretical engagement with our modern technological world while also pointing to other experiences that disclose alternative patterns of an engagement with the world that is deeper, more receptive and respectful of the essential character beings.

In particular, the explorations have been unified by the contrast between what I have called the fundamental dis-traction of reality that characterizes the way we implicitly understand our modern technological reality in terms of the availability of resources and commodities and the possibility of orientation by reality through acknowledgment of things in their own right through the disposition of wonder and a receptive heeding of eloquent reality.

Reality implicitly understood within the technological framework as merely a collection of resources and the commodities that can be made ever more instantaneously and ubiquitously available from these resources, is a reality that has its standing only on the basis of our subjective willing and valuing of it. It is our needs and desires and their satisfaction by commodities that grants a derivative status to reality. Reality so understood is completely instrumentalized, lacking any status except that conferred upon

it by humans. It is a reality that is disenchanted and silent because it retains no independent significance that can speak to us. At most it can be made available to satisfy our subjective needs and desires. In addition, it is a reality that can provide no orientation for our thoughts, words and deeds because it can only be a means to the realization our idiosyncratic, subjective ends. The only possibility for direction in our use of instrumentalized reality is provided by our subjective will.

We are like Ahab in *Moby Dick* who, after having smashed the quadrant, lashed the anchors, and re-magnetized the ship's compass, is unmoored from any orientation from without and directed only by his own willful purposes.

> The path to my fixed purpose is laid with iron rails, whereon my soul is grooved to run. Over unsounded gorges, through the rifled hearts of mountains, under torrents' beds, unerringly I rush: Naught's an obstacle, naught's an angle to the iron way![1]

Neither Starbuck's pleas nor his evocation of Ahab's wife and child can stay him from his course.

> "Oh, my Captain! … let us fly these deadly waters! Let us home! Wife and child, too, are Starbuck's –wife and child of his brotherly, sisterly, play-fellow youth; even as they, sir, are the wife and child of thy loving, longing paternal old age! Away! let us away—this instant let me alter the course!"[2]

Ahab refuses, and this final refusal to give up the direction set by his single remaining purpose, to destroy Moby Dick, shows that Starbuck, the crew, the ship, indeed everything that is left of Ahab's world is reduced to an instrument of his will.

His final refusal to be oriented by anything other than his own purposes even brings into question Ahab's identity—as if our ability to become and remain ourselves requires an

appropriate responding to something outside of us that is its own warrant; that speaks to our concern.

> "Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who that lifts this arm? … By heaven, man, we are turned round and round in this world like yonder windlass, and Fate is the handspike. And all the time, lo! that smiling sky, and this unsounded sea!" [3]

As we know, Ahab, the Pequod and all the crew excepting one are destroyed by Ahab's singular willing. Only Ishmael survives and is tellingly rescued by the Rachel, the ship whose captain turned from his purpose of whaling to look for his son lost at sea.

> It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan.[4]

Only through orientation by and through a reality that speaks to us and to which we respond appropriately may both we and the world be saved.

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