# EDITORIAL

It is now a commonplace to write about, or to reflect upon, the significance of technology in our modern world. Books abound, conferences are held, and so-called futurists, discuss technology with ever-increasing frequency. But the question remains: has technology been understood for what it really is? And what are its effects on the world around us?

Martin Heidegger, the great German philosopher, once spoke of technology as "the metaphysic of the age." Understood properly, technology, he argued, is not just a phenomenon that exists beside others, but the very horizon that governs and elicits the whole of our thinking. As this horizon, technology is a destiny – an expression of Being *(das Sein)* – that propels the history of thought itself. As Being unfolds in Heidegger's narrative, there is a discernible rise in our calculative attitude to the reality around us that slowly excludes that sense of partaking in Being and nature that once so characterized the life of the ancients. Eventually this attitude becomes so extreme that it culminates in the philosophy of Nietzche's will to power, thus setting the stage for technology's assault on reality as a whole. In this respect, modern technology is distinguished by its unprecedented hegemony – it quest to objectify the whole of reality. And this hegemony, according to Heidegger, is costly in the extreme. It excludes, in principle, crucial regions of human experience that lie beyond its objectifying net, most notably, regions having to do with "the holy" *(das Heilige)* and "the religious."

The objectifying effects of technology's will to power are also evident in technology's suppression of Mother Earth – the râpe and pillage of the environment. Originally endowed with a divine status, the earth is transformed into a lifeless resource plundered and ravaged by the forces of technology. Today "Mother Earth" – except in some quarters – has lost her capacity to evoke our homage to her fertility and power. Gone, for many, is that sense of awe found to be found in a poem by Ludwig Barthel:

> If I were an insect,
> I would moan:
> Your sapphire-green sky, God

bursts into radiance that hurts.
You are hidden as if behind silken tapestry
but
matter is scorched by your immense presence.
My pupils
are goblets
open to the brink. Who
will circulate the cup and pour the wine?
I must
dance.
My ears resound
With bronze-like darkness.
Wings are spinning in me
Endlessly.
I listen to
the roar.
Only you are speaking.[1]

The papers in this volume are devoted to evaluating a particular aspect of the relationship between Religion, Technology, and Mother Earth. Not all the papers are explicitly devoted to an examination of Mother Earth but there are clear implications for this theme.

Our volume opens with an interview with Heinrich Ott, the distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Basel. A former student of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, Ott rose to prominence in the late nineteen-fifties with the publication of *Thinking and Being*. Arguably this work is the finest book ever written on the theological significance of Heidegger's later thought. Our interview with Ott focuses on Heidegger's analysis of technology and on Ott's account of "primary experience" as the "ontological place" where our sense for the religious and our experience of the holy can still be found in the technological age.

Sean Kelly examines and assesses the psychological origins of patriarchal consciousness that go, he argues, "hand in hand with the generalized exploitation of the earth." Kelly argues via Ken Wilbur and Michael Washburn that patriarchal consciousness may in fact be a constitutive ingredient in the differentiation of human consciousness as it makes its way towards greater wholeness. Or as Kelly puts it, "the

1. Ludwig Barthel's poem "Lying in the Grass of August" was translated from the Germen by Uta Doerr and Colin O'Connell.

Goddess's return might signal not only the bankruptcy of patriarchal consciousness, but the successful completion of the process of differentiation which the patriarchy has subserved."

William Sweet takes up the question of how technology changes religious belief and discusses their mutual relationship. Each, he argues, is influenced by the other since technology and faith share a common world. It is possible, he notes, for a religious believer to affirm that a child is a gift from God, but what this means in the kind of world where we practise techniques like *in vitro* fertilization, will undergo change. While religious belief and technology exert a mutual influence, neither, he argues, is reducible to the other.

Job Kozhamthadam asks the basic question: can religion give science a heart? Much like Einstein, Kozhamthadam argues that a "science without religion is lame, a religion without science is blind." What we need is a marriage of the two that avoids the effects of an amoral science - of a science that proceeds merely on its own.

Finally, Richard Myers and Patrick Malcolmson point to the importance of the political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau in challenging the views of Hobbes, Locke and others who represent life in a state of nature as "nasty, brutish and short." Rousseau, they argue, embodies a view in the modern tradition of political philosophy that valorizes and evokes a strain of thinking recently associated with the retrieval of the Mother Goddess. "Nature," for Rousseau, "is no longer the enemy, but a beneficent and wise mistress."

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