Abbau … Unbuilding

Mark Jackson

Auckland University of Technology

In this paper we read across two texts by Martin Heidegger, firstly, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", delivered as a lecture in 1951, and secondly, a lecture from 1941, "Valuation" delivered in the context of a Heidegger lecture series on the philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" is a well known Heidegger essay, much discussed in architectural theory for its reference to notions of building and dwelling, although Heidegger's discussion of building is more fundamental in its questioning than what we generally think of as building. This is important to grasp, for just as we may discuss culture with respect to its values and technologies in connection with its many modes of 'housing' or construction, so we need to recognise in Heidegger's more fundamental questioning of building and dwelling how he is, as well, questioning something fundamental to cultural valuation and our processes of cultural construction, and their modes or technologies of building. From this close reading of "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", the paper activates the earlier text by Heidegger on his reading of Nietzsche's notion of 'nihilism' as the fundamental disclosure of Being: will-to-power as revaluation of the highest values. In developing an understanding of Heidegger's important 'meditation' on Nietzsche for his own questioning of contemporary culture, we may get a sense of the extent to which "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" may offer a radical approach to an overcoming of nihilism, where nihilism is recognised as the ground or principle for our ongoing projections of culture, value and technology.

Introduction

The philosopher Martin Heidegger, particularly in his writing on Friedrich Nietzsche, drew close association between our understandings of culture, value and technology (Heidegger, 1987). What he referred to as the epoch of technicity, our epoch of capitalism and technological science, he also thought in more Nietzschean terms, where Being is revealed as will-to-power as the revaluation of the highest value. The expressions 'culture,' 'value,' and 'technology' become synonymous for nihilism, for abandonment of a supreme value and the institution of the relativity of all values, expressed in human making as cultural production. While our epoch has characterised technology as a means to human ends, as means to culture building, Heidegger has emphasised the extent to which our time, our culture, is one that is grounded in and by the instrumentalism of technological determinacy (Heidegger, 1977a). The grounding or dominant framing of the question of cultural production, or the values we give to cultural production, are themselves co-extensive with the instrumentalist horizon in which we are located. In this sense, all building, all construction or production is embedded in the same dominant framework by which human being seeks to construct its world from the material substances of organic life or inorganic matter such that human being resources its productive processes from these substances, including the organic life of other human beings.

Technological enframing, as our horizon for progress, production, culture building and valuation, approaches that which is, the beings that are, as resource. This is to say, human productive capacity treats all beings as instruments in the management of resources for construction. All values are held to be relative and in this all valuation is open to instrumentalist and technological determinism. In this paper I want to read closely a text by Heidegger written shortly after the end of the Second World War, when much of Europe was in devastation, and there was an acute shortage of dwellings. The text, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" is concerned with a much broader theme than the narrower notion of building and dwelling, as pressing as this narrower issue was at the time of writing (Heidegger, 1993). Or, rather, the technological and instrumental concern with housing shortage, with destruction and implicitly with a question of technology, value and culture that war foregrounds, is addressed by way of a question of what

is building in our relation to being. We need to approach this question in is broadest interpretation: what is any cultural production, any human production in relation to dwelling, which means in relation to the value we give to such production in the securing of our sense of self and world. And how do we think of such building and dwelling outside of an ends-means relation: how do we think of a cultural production other than as a means to secure the ends of valuation, recognition, esteem or identity, as the measure of that cultural entity? I want to contrast Heidegger's thinking in this essay with his analysis of aspects of the work of Nietzsche on the notions of will to power and valuation. This appears as a chapter in volume four, "Nihilism," of his four-volume work, titled *Nietzsche*. The chapter title is "Valuation" (Heidegger, 1987: 58-68).

This approach to a reading of Heidegger's "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" emphasises Heidegger as the philosopher of "unbuilding" or "destruction."[1] Heidegger reserved these words for the approach he singularly took in his reading of our Western tradition of metaphysics. What did he mean? Western metaphysics, commencing with Plato, and, for Heidegger, culminating with Nietzsche, is coincident with our Western history of production, or Western history itself as a history of human progress, of the subsequent rise of superior cultures, greater values and more sophisticated technologies, of the slow emergence of human cultural refinement, betterment, justice, freeing from the necessities of nature, in short, human freedom. Yet, Heidegger sees the culmination of metaphysics in nihilism, in an epoch of technicity where human being itself is enframed by technological determinacy. Heidegger's 'unbuilding' or 'destruction' refers to his particular approach to this history of Western metaphysics such that he determines what is consistently concealed in that history's various determinations of Being. Rather than approaching this history as the successively more accurate revealing of the nature of Being, he approaches this history as the ever more confounding obscuring of the question of Being. If Nietzsche names Being as 'will-to-power,' Heidegger suggests that accurately names the most devastating relation of human beings to their world, as a relation in which every being strives to increase its power, or force, over other entities. This becomes the underlying framework for cultural production and for the incessant revaluation of whatever values we may hold.

In his 'unbuilding' of this productionist history of metaphysics, Heidegger attempts to uncover what has consistently been obscured or concealed in our understanding of what Being is. The essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" is significant and far-reaching for the manner whereby it attempts to ask what is our relation to Being, or what are human beings engaged with when they seek to secure their world by building. And Heidegger approaches this question rigorously yet in a manner that continually questions our instrumentalist horizons of ends-means distinctions or the assumption that culture building is a means to the valuation of cultural productions. My question is, perhaps in a reductive simplicity, to consider what is 'building' for the philosopher of 'unbuilding'.

Building, Dwelling, Thinking

Heidegger typically commences this essay with a logic that he will immediately set about to refute. Hence we assume the relation between building and dwelling is an instrumental one. We build in order to dwell. Our end is dwelling. The means to this end is building. In this sense, building is a constructing in order to house our dwelling. Dwelling hence emerges from the productionist capacity of building itself, from its technicity or technological determination. We quickly understand all of the implications here. To be better dwellers, we necessarily need to be better builders, which is to say better planners, better at calculating what it is we want, better at using the resources at our disposal for building, keeping in mind that the planning, building, consuming of resources are all means for an ultimate good, better dwelling. From the discourses of eco-sustainability to those of armaments manufacture, this logic is the same, as it is founded on an ethics of dwelling deliverable through production, which is to say, achievable through building.

Heidegger wastes no time at all in destructuring this logic, the logic of Western metaphysics, or what, after Heidegger, has been named 'productionist metaphysics'.[2] He suggests that this ends-means distinction blocks our view of the essential relation: "To build is in itself already to dwell" (Heidegger, 1993: 348) At this point Heidegger moves very quickly, or rather he takes some short-hand on the essence of language, perhaps anticipating that we have the time to read the full transcript elsewhere. The privileged instantiation we mortals have of an ends-means productionist metaphysics is our thinking of and in language. While we think we use language as expression, as a means to a communicative end, our 'essential being' is driven into 'alienation.' That is, while we use language as the building materials for a communitarian dwelling, we remain caught in the enframing of technology. For Heidegger, language is the house of being, and language is the 'master of man', which is to say master of any notion of dwelling. Hence, to get a sense of our relation to language, a relation of dwelling and thinking, we may think the relation of dwelling and building, where neither thinking nor building would be considered as a calculating, planning construing of the world or as a means for some finality, *telos* or end.

Bauen, build, means to dwell, to stay in a place. We may understand the word 'neighbour' as the near-dweller, the one dwelling nearby. We may also hear in the resonance of *abbau*, unbuilding, a notion of 'homelessness,' undwelling. And, as we shall see, homelessness for Heidegger is our primordial being. Hence, we are builders because we are dwellers. Heidegger then emphasises how far the essence of 'dwelling,' *bauen*, *reaches*. I have italicised 'reaches'. The Heidegger text italicises 'how far': "Where the word *bauen* still speaks in its original sense it also says *how far* the essence of dwelling reaches" (Heidegger, 1993: 349). The reach goes as far as the German, "I am," *ich bin*. Being is dwelling. The way we are is dwelling. The reach is also to the notions of protecting, cherishing, taking care. At this point, Heidegger makes something like a repetition of a distinction we find in *Being and Time*, in "The Worldliness of the World" (Heidegger, 1996: 59-102).[3] There, in discussing *Dasein*'s taking care, he suggests things are either present-at-hand or ready-to-hand. The ready-to-handness of things is in *Dasein*'s accomplishment of a project, for example, with tools. He was fond of using the example of the handiness of the hammer in its equipmentality, serviceability and reliability. Ready-to-handness concerns a concernful making. Present-at-handness is *Dasein*'s relation to the objective 'nature' of things, to presence. In "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" Heidegger, in discussing building as dwelling, distinguishes between a building that cultivates growing things and a building that erects buildings. With this we would necessarily need to read closely those passages in *Being and Time* on the handiness of things and the key notion of 'relevance' as that which relates things in their handiness. And we would recognise that 'relevance' consists in the ontological "for-the-sake-of-which" that orientates *Dasein*'s freeing of things in their being in the taking care of the project that is *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world. While we would equally have to recognise that such being-in-the-world is, in *Dasein*'s ecstatic temporality, its projection into its potentiality for being, which is to say, its non-being.

If the essence of building is dwelling, what then is the essence of dwelling? Again Heidegger turns to language. In *bauen* and *wuon* he finds a coincident "to stay in place" with an emphatic register of to be at peace, in German *friede*, 'the free,' safeguarded, preserved from harm, leaving something in its own essence. We may relate this directly to a series of passages in *Being and Time*, for example:

> On the other hand, letting something be relevant, understood in an ontological sense, concerns the freeing of *every* thing at hand as a thing at hand, whether it is relevant in the ontic sense or whether it is a being precisely *not* relevant ontically – which is initially and for the most part what is taken care of, which we do not let 'be' as the discovered being it is, but work over it, improve it, destroy it (Heidegger, 1996: 79).

In "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" Heidegger emphasises that the fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing, this freeing. Ultimately, if dwelling is a staying, it circumscribes in general a staying of mortals on the earth. And here Heidegger's leaning to Hölderlin emerges, in the notion of the gathering of the fourfold.[4] The "fourfold" refers to earth, sky divinities and mortals: "But 'on the earth' already means 'under the sky.' Both of these also mean 'remaining before the divinities' and include a 'belonging to men's being with one another'." (Heidegger, 1993: 351-353). We already understand from *Being and Time* that mortal's stay is a stay in things, and that *Dasein*'s dwelling is a surrounding world of handy things freed in the taking care of their (things) being for the sake of *Dasein*'s futurity. Dwelling is a staying with things. If Heidegger introduces the fourfold, earth, sky divinities, mortals, at this point in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" is he suggesting something different, that the essence of dwelling lies elsewhere? Rather, he is suggesting that the essence of thingness is the gathering of this fourfold into a "unity" or perhaps more precisely, the essence of the fourfold is the thing. Or, to be even more precise: in dwelling's preserving of the fourfold, this staying keeps the fourfold's essence in things. It brings the essence of the fourfold into things, when things are let-be. This dwelling as keeping, as a staying-preserving, is a building. Staying with things is dwelling "propriating" as the preservation of the fourfold.

Heidegger's example is the bridge, something we clearly build, and instrumentally considered as a means to an end (Heidegger, 1993: 354 ff). We build bridges to cross-over, traverse the impassable, annul difference and so on. The example in this case is not simply one example among many possibilities. The bridge is the example of exemplarity itself. The example bridges. And in every encounter Heidegger will have with difference, his thinking of its bridging is exemplified in his thinking of the bridge as example in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." His example is in short the exemplarity of the question in general of what joins, what nears, what de-distances, what gathers, what construes near-dwelling, what presences or what belongs together, what is the belonging of a belonging together. It poses the core of the question of relation in his short essay "Identity and Difference" (Heidegger, 1969: 23-41), or the core of the question of relevance that bridges *Dasein* and thingness in *Being and Time*. And we will see something of a repetition in difference of a thinking from *Being and Time* concerning the spatiality of *Dasein*. And this question of the bridge goes as well to the heart of the matter with respect to any question of culture expressed in terms of identity. What is cultural identity but a question, expressed in one form or another of the togetherness of a belonging, as in the gathering of differences, of identities in their singularity or differences and in the reparation of their separations. Culture as that which construes identities in their cohesive nearing presents us with this question of the bridge and the grounding question of how it is thought. And as production, as the material constructions of human engagements, culture, like the bridge in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" is building as thing.

In stressing that the bridge is not an ends-means but rather is a thing, we necessarily are led to question how the fourfold of the bridge unfolds. Heidegger engages in a series of spatialising registers: locale, space, making-room, boundary. The implication of these, how they fold in, lies in the emphasis given in any question of the being of beings to the relationality of a nearing, and in the context of "Building, Dwelling, Thinking", of the stay of mortals with things. Mortals build in that their dwelling is a freeing of things. A thing gathers the fourfold in its own way and in this is a locale. In this sense, locale/thing is a relation in two senses or a doubling of a sense of space-making: a relation of gathering and a relation of the nearing of mortals and things. Locale is the name for the coincident gathering that is thingness and the safeguarding that is dwelling. They implicate one another in the "bringing" mentioned above. We do not yet know, however, what *gives* in this bringing. Yet what *follows* is in fact a series of givings. We cannot think of locales as particularities in space, as locations pinpointed in space in general. Rather, locales make space for a site. Space is given in locales. Yet, this is not space in general either. Space is provided for in places and paths. The site is for the fourfold gathering/thing and determines places and paths. Space is a making-room and in this sense building as the freeing of a place for something to unfold, for settlement. A boundary is that from which something essentially unfolds rather than being an end-point or closing. In this sense, and in summary, things as locales, allowing a site, are buildings.

Heidegger suggests that locales are double space-making. Locale is a shelter for the fourfold and a shelter as dwelling. In this building is a locale that allows spaces and a joining of spaces. In this building is a bridging or relationality of what it allows to be. The conundrum here coincides with the one pointed out by Joan Stambaugh in Heidegger's "Identity and Difference": "What is new about this understanding of identity, as a relation, is that the relation first determines the manner of the being of what is to be related and the how of this relation. It is perhaps difficult for us to think of a relation as being more original than what is related, but this is what Heidegger requires of us" (Heidegger, 1969: 12). The essence of building is letting-dwell in the raising of locales by the joining of their spaces. Dwelling is the basic character of being in that building and thinking belong to dwelling. And the essence of dwelling? Heidegger suggests: "Mortals ever search anew for the essence of dwelling, that they must ever learn to dwell" (Heidegger, 1993: 363). If I mentioned above that we have not as yet approached the question of what dwell (Heidegger, 1993: 363). If I mentioned above that in dwelling we somehow preserve this bringing, Heidegger brings the bringing of the fourfold into things, yet in dwelling we somehow preserve this bringing. That is to say, we are not dwellers as a *telos* or would suggest it is a call or summons of mortals into their dwelling. A call to dwelling is because we are not yet. finality to our being, but as the futurity of our potentiality for being. A call to dwelling is because we are not yet. This is 'homelessness' in Heidegger's thinking. Dwelling is not achieved once and for all but is the project of being and hence cannot be separated from the question of ecstatic temporality, of time and being and of the *abbau* as homelessness that is for Heidegger "the summons that calls mortals into their dwelling."

In what has been written so far there has been an emphasis on a summary rehearsal of Heidegger's thinking in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." Thus there has been little actual questioning of Heidegger's thinking, which is to

say little thinking. We suggested that 'locale' is a complex notion as it refers to the thing in as much as the thing is a gathering which includes a gathering of mortals, hence a nearing or de-distancing, or presencing in Heidegger's sense, a nearing of mortals with things and as this gathering/nearing is the freeing of things in their being and the freeing of mortals for their potentiality to be. But are we any clearer, despite the clarity of Heidegger's thinking, as to what 'locale' is? Is locale a being? Certainly a thing is a being, but if building is the staying-preserving in dwelling accomplished in the nearing of mortals to things, in the freeing of things in their being, and locale is the siting of this accomplishment, which is also presencing, we arrive at the kernel of the conundrum of being and temporality. We are equally not clear on how to think the relation of homelessness to locale. If locale is the settlement in shelter in the double-space making for the fourfold and mortals, how does homelessness have a relation to temporality as in an *a priori*, that would accomplish a 'summons' to dwell, that is, alert us to the temporality of a potentiality to be. Is homelessness a being? I have wanted to hear the word 'homelessness' in translating the German '*abbau*'. Yet it is generally translated as 'dismantling' and is related to the other term 'destruction' in Heidegger's engagement with the history of ontology. Is it entirely inappropriate to read the 'homelessness' of "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" in relation to Heidegger's reference to *abbau* in contexts that are engaged directly in the questioning or dismantling of metaphysics?

Valuation and Being

We suggested at the beginning of this text that for Heidegger, in his understanding of our current epoch in its relations to technology, the disclosure of Being may be thought of, after Nietzsche, as "will to power." We suggested that there is an essential link between culture, technology and value that may be understood in a closer analysis of the notion of nihilism. If we understand Heidegger's concerns in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" as concerns with human production for the sake of securing and enhancing human dwelling, are we able to develop a stronger sense of the matter at stake in a questioning of the essence of building by seeking out Heidegger's understanding of the relation between nihilism and value? When one first considers it, nihilism seems to imply an absence of value or absence of valuation, or the nullity of valuation. Can we even suppose a relation at all between them? Yet, in his close reading of Nietzsche, Heidegger draws out the extent to which Nietzsche emphasises that nihilism names the revaluation of all values; it is "the history of valuations" (Heidegger, 1987: 58). But, has this anything to do with "Building, Dwelling, Thinking"? Remember the emphasis we have given to building as a nearing, securing, preserving sheltering, as a preserving and enhancing in the double sense of preserving the fourfold in things and securing mortals. Yet we are homeless in our constant search for dwelling, which for Heidegger is the search for what has remained concealed in the history of the epochs of Being. What has remained concealed is the belonging together of human beings and Being, what Heidegger calls the granting of the belonging, even "the innermost indestructible belongingness". This is the "saving power" he mentions in his essay "The Question Concerning Technology" (Heidegger, 1977a: 32).[5]

Hence for Heidegger the history of metaphysics as a history of ontology is a history of the successive obscuring or forgetting of the "belonging" of human being and Being. Rather, this history of metaphysics presents a history of the determination of Being, by human being, in terms of the calculability of things in the world. Thus its history is a history of the successive and incremental progress in human understanding of things as to what they are, their being. If this history is inaugurated with Plato's forgetting of Parmenides, it culminates in Nietzsche's "overturning" of Platonism in his will-to-power as the revaluation of the highest values. Nietzsche names Being as will-to-power, just as Heidegger will develop his own reading of Nietzsche and in "The Question Concerning Technology" name Being as "Enframing", as that disclosed in the essence of technology. Both Nietzsche's and Heidegger's disclosure of Being emphasise the extent to which the "belonging" that grants or gives Being has withdrawn, as this "belonging" is revealed as a challenging.

Enframing, as the essence of technology, is understood in terms of Being, the is-ness of what is, as calculability, planning, ordering, a challenging of whatever is to its calculation and calculability. This *is* the belonging together of human being and Being. Being challenges human being to calculability; human being challenges Being to its calculation. If in his lecture "The Question Concerning Technology" Heidegger speaks through Hölderlin of a "greatest danger", it is precisely this: that the belonging together, the mutuality is a challenging. Its danger is that

Being is construed as will, and hence that human being construes Being as calculability and hence conceals the belonging. If Heidegger alerts us to the "event" of appropriation, this "event" is human being thinking the greatest danger, thinking Being as Enframing, thinking the stake in belonging, or what is concealed in thinking as calculability. This event of appropriation is the opening in thinking to a thinking of Being anew. Heidegger does not say "anew" for very precise reasons. He says rather in a more originary thinking precisely because it is the Parmenedian thinking that was first forgotten with the inauguration of metaphysics or the forgetting of the belonging that grants or gives Being. We cannot say what human being or Being are, except in and from this belonging, while the belonging itself withdraws. "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" alerts us to this withdrawal of belonging in the production of human cultures, while Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche on valuation alerts us to the crisis of value thinking itself, in our notion of cultural value, or in the inseparability of the notions of culture and value.

But what is value? Heidegger maintains that for Nietzsche "thinking in values belongs to that reality that is defined as the will to power" (Heidegger, 1987: 58). But in what way does valuation correspond with will-to-power? Nietzsche suggests: "The view-point of 'value' is the viewpoint of the conditions of preservation and enhancement with regard to complex constructs of relative life-duration within becoming" (quoted Heidegger, 1987: 62). We want to emphasise all of the salient aspects of this short quotation. "Preservation and enhancement" refer to will-to-power. Will-to-power is the securing, preserving and enhancing of power, the overpowering of successive stages of power. "Becoming" is this successive "overpowering." For Nietzsche, "becoming" is the "overused" name for what he calls will to power. From the quotation we get a sense, then, that value and power are linked: value is the "viewpoint of the conditions" of will to power, or the viewpoint of the value of the Being of beings. "Viewpoint" suggests that our seeing is 'pointed,' from a particular perspective, from what Nietzsche names a "perspectival character." But this is a viewpoint of the 'conditions' of will to power. Value is a conditioning, a perspective, or pointed seeing of conditions of preservation and enhancement of power. By 'condition' is meant a measure, gauge or reckoning. But this measure as conditions of preservation and enhancement of power is a measure of the 'points' of viewpoints themselves. For this reason Heidegger emphasises that values are never posited in and of themselves and then applied to particular circumstances that come to hand:

> Will to power is thus *in itself* an envisioning of more power. The 'envisioning of' is the path of *perspect* and *purview*: the per-spective belongs to will to power ... We could also say that all of these values are as *values* particular viewpoints of particular perviews of a particular will to power. But insofar as each real thing is real by virtue of the fundamental character of will to power, a single and individual 'perspective' belongs to every individual thing. *Beings as such are perspectival* (Heidegger, 1987: 64).

As that conditioning, "preserving and enhancing" values are the conditions of possibility of power itself, in power's exercise of domination, or in its increases and decreases in the "relative life-duration within becoming." Values are the measure of degrees of power in "constructs of domination." We might here contrast how Heidegger engages in a discussion of "preservation and enhancement" as "constructs of domination" and how in "Building Dwelling Thinking" he was able to talk of building as a securing –preserving. And we might ask whether all that we are able to name as cultural edification, culture building, would more appropriately be considered in terms of cultural valuation as "constructs of domination", or whether we could address such edification outside of that valuation of preservation and enhancement, and instead address it as a revealing of the withdrawal of belonging in the belonging together of human being and Being. But already this posing of two alternatives, two modes of reading our cultural world, is framed by valuative thinking, by an interpretative either-or that would want to posit the greater value in *this* reading rather than *that*, that would preserve both readings in their difference only such that a superior, life-enhancing over-powering would ensue, such that a small but decisive moment of domination could be secured. At the heart of this momentum is the conditioning-conditioned relation of viewpoint-valuation and the power of will. As a succinct counter-position to the construction of building in its nearing of mortals and Being, we find this other Heideggerian position on construction, that alerts us in more somber and sober terms to the crisis in this epoch's disclosure of Being:

> Values are conditions of 'constructs of domination' within becoming; that is, within reality as a whole, whose fundamental character is will to power. The constructs of dominance are configurations of will to

power. Nietzsche often calls not only the conditions of these constructs of domination, but even the constructs themselves, *values*, and rightly so. Science, art, the state, religion, and culture all pass as values insofar as they are conditions by virtue of which the classification of becoming – as what alone is real – is carried out. For their part, these values further posit definite conditions for securing their own continuance and development. But becoming itself – that is, reality as a whole – 'has no value at all' (Heidegger, 1987: 66).

Becoming has no value: there is nothing that might serve to condition it. Becoming is Being as will-to-power. In this sense, values are not ideals that are able to be brought into the service of judgements about things in the world. Values are perspectival or particular measures brought to bear on the surpassing of one's own power. If becoming is the unconditioned, values are essentially conditioned conditions for the preservation and enhancement of power. As Nietzsche said:

> *Value* is the highest quantum of power a man is able to incorporate – a man: not mankind! Mankind is much more a means than an end. It is a question of the type: mankind is merely the experimental material, a monstrous excess of failures, a field of ruins (quoted in Heidegger, 1987: 67).

We may thus get a sense that in "Building Dwelling Thinking" Heidegger is suggesting a questioning that is in fact quite difficult. By what measure can we approach the question of human constructing outside of valuative thinking? It is worth noting that many commentators on "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" make reference to a particular nostalgia Heidegger seems to have for past traditions of building: he references archaic German expressions, no longer quite relevant to common usage; he references an old bridge in Heidelberg; he references the traditional Black Forest farmhouse and is disparaging when mentioning modern industrial building. These commentators are no doubt correct in their reading when we take as our interpretative frame the question of building and dwelling as a question of an appropriate ethos, ethics or way of life for our times. Such a reading implies, in its framing, valuative questions with respect to cultural differences, where 'culture' already names constructs indicative of identity and value.

Is it at all possible to engage in a questioning of entities other than by way of valuation of identity constructs? Nietzsche's revealing of the essence of metaphysics as will to power would suggest it is not, and further, Heidegger's revealing of the essence of technology would suggest the utmost difficulty in developing a perspective from which to recognise the danger itself, that is, the danger of approaching whatever is as cultural constructs about which valuative reckoning is made. And so, those commentators on Heidegger's "Building Dwelling Thinking" are certainly correct in their summations of a certain quaint naiveté on the part of this German philosopher who consistently preferred the provinces to the German capital, Berlin, who preferred his little rustic country-side hut, rather than his more comfortable town-house in Freiberg. But, would these commentators have even begun to read a text whose essential questioning was that of the question of "constructs;" a text that attempted to leap outside of the normative frameworks of valuation and cultural determinations, and that attempted to suggest that 'culture' itself as a construct should be subjected to *abbau*, unbuilding, if not destruction. Perhaps such a question of understanding or misunderstanding coincides with what Heidegger expressed as the hazards in understanding *Dasein* as "consciousness" as opposed to "openness-to-Being."[6]

Notes

1 For a discussion on Heidegger's notions of 'destruction' and 'dismantling' in relation to Husserl's use of *abbau* and Derrida's 'deconstruction,' see Gasché (1986) especially section 7 "*Abbau, Destruktion,* Deconstruction": 109-120. See also Critchley (1999, especially 27 ff).

2 See Zimmerman (1990). This book is a close engagement with the thinking of Western metaphysics as productionist metaphysics.

3 A complication arises in discussing "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" in relation to *Being and Time*. In BDT Heidegger does not make reference to *Dasein*, a term absolutely central to B&T. Rather he refers to 'mortals.' Yet in this essay I am wanting at times to draw some close relation between *Dasein's* relationality to things and mortal's dwelling. It is important to keep in mind that in BDT Heidegger has shifted an emphasis on his questioning of Being, from its disclosure in *Dasein's* being in the world to a questioning of Being from a viewpoint other than the being of beings.

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies
Vol. 22 (1+2) 2003, page 52

ACCESS
Critical Perspectives on Communication, Cultural & Policy Studies
Vol. 22 (1+2) 2003, page 53

4 For a discussion of the framing of the "four" in Heidegger's thinking, see Derrida (1981: 354-355).
5 Thus, on p. 32 we read: "As the one so needed and used, man is given to belong to the coming-to-pass of truth [i.e. *Ereignis*, or what will later be translated as "appropriation"]. The granting that sends in one way or another into revealing is as such the saving power [i.e. the saving power from the 'greatest danger']. For the saving power lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence. This dignity lies in keeping watch over the unconcealment – and with it, from the first, the conceal-ment – of all coming to presence on this earth. It is precisely in Enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence – it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light, provided that we, for our part, begin to pay heed to the coming to presence of technology". Heidegger has just mentioned *Ereignis* in the context of a "saving power" in suggesting the indestructibility of the granting of belonging. And just prior to this (30-31) he has intimated that what endures primarily out of the earliest beginnings is what grants. Note 26 on p. 32 reads: "Here and subsequently in this essay, 'coming-to-pass' translates the noun *Ereignis*. Elsewhere, in 'The Turning', this word, in accordance with the deeper meaning that Heidegger there finds for it, will be translated with 'disclosing that brings into its own.'" And, of course, in "Time and Being" the term is translated as 'event of appropriation.' Where Heidegger introduces the notion of *Ereignis* towards the close of QCT as the "saving power," it is in "The Turning" (Heidegger, 1977b: 36-49) that he most fully explores this notion for a thinking of Enframing as the concealing of a belonging of human beings and Being. In this context he uses the expression "in-flashing" as in a lightning flash that reveals the clearing or openness of Being that is human being, and this revealing of a clearing is the revealing of the "greatest danger."
6 See footnote 2 to the translator's introduction to Heidegger's *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (1977: xxxv). "In a letter to Professor J. Glenn Gray (October 10, 1972) concerning this work, Heidegger states: 'Everything that I have attempted is misunderstood without the turning from 'consciousness' *into* the '*openness-for-Being*' that was being prepared in *Being and Time*.' Heidegger has emphatically expressed his preference for 'openness' and his disapprobation of 'there' as a translation of *da* in *Dasein*."

References

Critchley, S. (1999). *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Derrida, J. (1981). The Crossroads of the 'Est'. In *Disseminations* (Barbara Johnson, Trans.) (pp. 354-355). Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
Gasché, R. (1986). *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the philosophy of reflection*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Heidegger, M. (1969). The Principle of Identity. In *Identity and Difference* (Joan Stambaugh, Trans.) (pp. 23-41). Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
Heidegger, M (1972). Time and Being. In *On Time and Being* (Joan Stambaugh, Trans.) (pp. 1-24). New York: Harper & Row.
Heidegger, M. (1977a). The Question Concerning Technology. In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (William Lovitt, Trans.) (pp. 3-35). New York: Harper Torchbooks.
Heidegger, M. (1977b). The Turning. In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (William Lovitt, Trans.) (pp. 36-49). New York: Harper Torchbooks.
Heidegger, M. (1987). *Nietzsche Vol. III. The will to power as knowledge and as metaphysics* (Frank A. Capuzzi, Trans.). San Francisco: Harper Collins.
Heidegger, M. (1993). Building, Dwelling, Thinking. In David Farrell Krell, (Ed.), *Basic Writings* (pp. 347-363). London: Routledge.
Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and Time* (Joan Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany: State University of New York Press.
Zimmerman, M. (1990). *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, politics, art*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.