Heidegger’s Critique of Rationalism and Modernity

An Abstract

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Heidegger argues that the overly reductionist approach of the natural sciences, since 1850, renders it blind to the essential character of nature. Instead of revealing nature to us, modern scientific thinking conceals nature behind the veil of its own interests, interests driven by the quest for technological mastery over nature and circumscribed by its mathematical method. This chapter reconstructs Heidegger’s general critique of modern math-based science by focusing on how the scientific thinking informs thinking in general, how it dictates the way objects appear, the character of causation and free will, and the character of science now that it has come under the sway of technological thinking. While the chapter does not investigate Heidegger’s solutions to this problem, a brief discussion of Plato’s notion of wonder, as the basis of philosophical thinking, points us in the direction of a new, or perhaps old, way of thinking.