



The Empty Cart: A Heideggerian Diagnosis of Digital Nihilism

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Abstract

This article challenges the prevailing sociological and psychological analyses of online shopping in Indonesia, arguing they overlook its ontological root: a "forgetting of Being" (*Seinsvergessenheit*) actively produced by the technological interface itself. Using Martin Heidegger's later philosophy and the "Empty Cart" as a heuristic device, this analysis demonstrates how technology's essence—*Gestell* (Enframing)—reduces the world to disposable standing-reserve (*Bestand*), fostering a nihilistic crisis of meaning. Tracing this condition's metaphysical genealogy from Plato to Nietzsche, the article culminates by exploring art, understood as *poiesis* and *Ereignis*, as a potential "saving power" that offers a radical response to the digital nihilism embodied by the Empty Cart.

Keywords: Heidegger; Digital Nihilism; Online Shopping; *Gestell*; *Seinsvergessenheit*; Art.

INTRODUCTION

The act of online shopping in Indonesia, often celebrated as a triumph of convenience and choice, presents us with a profound contradiction. Beneath its glittering surface lies a deep crisis of meaning that typical sociological or psychological analyses fail to address. They mistake the symptoms—compulsive buying and fleeting satisfaction—

for the disease itself. This article challenges this superficial understanding. We argue that the root of this crisis is not psychological, but ontological: a condition Martin Heidegger termed *Seinsvergessenheit*, a fundamental "forgetting of Being" that is actively produced

and accelerated by the very architecture of digital technology.¹

Nowhere is this diagnosis more evident than in the central symbol of this digital age: the "Empty Cart". This concept should not be taken literally. Rather, the "Empty Cart" is a potent metaphor for the spiritual and existential void that defines contemporary life, a void amplified by a consumer culture of limitless possibilities.² Even when overflowing with items, the cart remains perpetually "empty" in a more crucial sense. Why? Because this relentless pursuit of acquisition is a compulsive attempt to fill a lack of meaning that no amount of objects—understood merely as quantifiable things or *Vorhandenheit* (presence-at-hand)—can ever hope to satisfy.³ This emptiness, we contend, is a direct consequence of modern technology's essence, which Heidegger reveals as *Gestell* (Enframing): a way of ordering the world that reduces all things to mere disposable resources.⁴

To be sure, other critical thinkers have diagnosed this "emptiness." George Ritzer, for

instance, identifies it as a feature of modern, unsatisfying consumer experiences within the "iron cage" of technological rationality.⁵ Likewise, Jean Baudrillard keenly observes how desire is manipulated by hyperreal simulations, where we purchase signs detached from reality.⁶ However, Heidegger invites us to dig deeper. The problem is not merely *what* we consume, but *how* reality itself is presented to us in the first place. The essence of technology, which he calls *Gestell* (Enframing), actively distances us from Being by reducing everything to a ready and available *Bestand* (standing-reserve).⁷ It is within this framework that the cart will always remain "empty," because algorithmic mediation fundamentally prevents an authentic encounter with Being as unconcealment (*aletheia*).⁸

The addictive nature of the "Empty Cart," then, is rooted in its function as an existential distraction. The act of filling it—a perpetual motion between the potential of 'full' and 'empty'—becomes an end in itself. It is a mechanism to flee from the sense of

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward S. Robinson (New York: HarperPerennial/Modern Thought, 2008), 21–24.

² Vili Lehdonvirta, *Digital Virtual Consumption*, ed. Janice Denegri-Knott and Mike Molesworth, Routledge Studies in Innovation, Organization and Technology 23 (New York: Routledge, 2012), 25.

³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 95–107.

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, Works (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1996), 21.

⁵ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* ([United States]: Merchant Books, 2013),

123; George Ritzer, *The Globalization of Nothing* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press [u.a.], 2004), 182.

⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, The Body, in Theory (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 12–13.

⁷ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–17.

⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, trans. William McNeill (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 122–30; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 219–24.

Unheimlichkeit (uncanniness), a fundamental anxiety arising from our condition of being "thrown" (*Geworfenheit*) into the world without our consent.⁹ This is the engine of what we call "metaphysical desire": a drive born from, and simultaneously deepening, the forgetting of Being. In online shopping, this desire finds its perfect outlet. Ultimately, the emptiness in the shopping cart is merely a reflection of the fundamental lack at the heart of human existence (*Dasein*), one which can never be overcome by any amount of accumulation.

To ground this ontological diagnosis in the concrete digital ecosystem, it is crucial to recognize that the "Empty Cart" is not merely a poetic metaphor, but a highly engineered behavioral outcome of contemporary UI/UX design. Cart abandonment is actively triggered by interface mechanics that manipulate cognitive load and exploit user hesitation. The deployment of infinite-scroll architectures, information-heavy product pages, and complex checkout funnels rapidly induces profound decision fatigue, overwhelming the user's cognitive capacity to finalize a transaction.¹⁰

Instead of facilitating a purchase, these interfaces trap the user in a cycle of dopamine mining and emotional ambivalence.¹¹ Empirical studies consistently confirm that information overload, poor mobile usability, and checkout friction are the primary technical determinants of this abandonment.¹² Within this algorithmic architecture, leaving the cart empty functions as a psychological condition—a temporary cognitive release from the manufactured desire orchestrated by the platform. However, these observable technical and psychological symptoms are ultimately anchored in a much deeper ontological condition.

These two mechanisms—dopamine mining and decision fatigue—warrant explicit clarification, as they form the psychological engine of the "Empty Cart." Digital platforms sustain engagement through dopamine mining: an interface architecture that combines variable reward reinforcement (such as infinite scrolling and personalized algorithmic recommendations) with constant retail stimuli to sensitize the brain's reward system, establishing compulsive and habit-forming browsing.¹³ As users are

⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 188–91.

¹⁰ M. Kukar-Kinney et al., "A model of online shopping cart abandonment: evidence from e-tail clickstream data," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 50 (2022): 961–980, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-022-00857-8>.

¹¹ A. K. Ong et al., "Utilizing SEM-RFC to predict factors affecting online shopping cart abandonment during the COVID-19 pandemic," *Heliyon* 8 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e11293>.

¹² A. Sundjaja et al., "The Determinant Factors of Shopping Cart Abandonment Among E-commerce Customers in Indonesia," *CommIT (Communication and Information Technology) Journal* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.21512/commit.v18i1.9308>

¹³ Sharpe. B and Spooner. R, "Dopamine-scrolling: a modern public health challenge requiring urgent attention," *Perspectives in Public Health* 145 (2025): 190–191.

trapped in this dopaminergic loop, the sheer volume of information and endless choice exposure rapidly induce decision fatigue. This is a state of profound cognitive overload that depletes self-control resources and overwhelms the user's capacity to make advantageous choices or finalize a transaction.¹⁴ The act of abandoning the cart, therefore, is a predictable psychological byproduct of an interface that amplifies craving and cue-reactivity over actual utility.¹⁵

The rapid expansion of Indonesia's e-commerce market—projected to reach \$95 billion by 2025 and contributing to ~75% of the

nation's digital economy,¹⁶ with an annual growth of 17-20%¹⁷—underscores the urgency of understanding its deeper implications. Yet, scholarly analysis of this digital revolution remains curiously superficial. Existing research is often confined to psychological or sociological frameworks, diagnosing symptoms like consumer addiction while neglecting the fundamental ontological disease.¹⁸ Even scholarship that touches upon existential themes stops short of engaging the radical depth of Heidegger's critique within the specific Indonesian context.¹⁹ Furthermore, while Heidegger's philosophies of technology,²⁰ and digital media are well-

¹⁴ Salathiyani, M., & Prathipa, S. M. "Decision Fatigue in Infinite-Scroll Shopping: Evidence from Meta's Report of 42% Abandonment Rates," *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.55041/ijsem52748>

¹⁵ Müller, A & Joshi, M, "Excessive shopping on the internet: recent trends in compulsive buying-shopping disorder," *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences* (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2022.101116>

¹⁶ Google, Temasek, and Bain, *e-Conomy SEA 2023, Report Insights* (Google, Temasek, Bain, 2023), 124, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.temasek.com.sg/content/dam/temasek-corporate/news-and-views/resources/reports/google-temasek-bain-e-conomy-sea-2023-report.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwiize-JwaCMAxXjxzgGHQQUK2MQFnoE-CAIQAQ&usg=AOv-Vaw07JvvgpuUW7cl4c6vuSxst>.

¹⁷ "Indonesia: E-Commerce Growth Rate 2016-2024," Statista, accessed March 23, 2025, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1235476/indonesia-e-commerce-growth-rate/>.

¹⁸ Li Jia, "Existentialism Conceptual Framework of Consumer Behavior in Music Product: Why Consumers Buy?," *Journal of Contemporary Issues and Thought* 11 (July 2021): 141-59, <https://doi.org/10.37134/jcit.vol11.12.2021>; S. Ket-

tleborough, "A Grounded Theory Study of Existential Psychotherapists' Experiences of Working with Clients with Shopping Addiction" (Thesis, Middlesex University, 2022), <https://repository.mdx.ac.uk/item/8q387>.

¹⁹ Billie Angus, "Existentialism, Authenticity, and Social Media" (Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 2024), [/articles/thesis/Existentialism_Authenticity_and_Social_Media/26815459/1](https://articles/thesis/Existentialism_Authenticity_and_Social_Media/26815459/1); Thomas Boysen Anker, "Meaningful Choice: Existential Consumer Theory," *Marketing Theory* 24, no. 4 (December 2024): 591-609, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14705931231207317>;

Noah Collins, *Online Ontology: A Phenomenology of Being Online* (2024), <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12588/6562>.

²⁰ Barbara Bolt, "Heidegger Reframed," *Heidegger Reframed: Interpreting Key Thinkers for the Arts*, I.B. Tauris, January 2010, 1-208; Iain Donald Thomson, *Heidegger, Art, and Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2011); Aaron James Wendland, Christopher Merwin, and Christos Hadjioannou, *Heidegger on Technology*, Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Philosophy (New York: Routledge, 2019); John Wyatt, "Technology: The Mastery of Human and Non-Human Nature," in *The Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al., The Scripture Collective Series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 141-56; Michael Zimmerman,

trodden,²¹ their application to the concrete phenomenon of online shopping—especially his crucial later concepts of *Gestell* and *Seinsvergessenheit*—remains conspicuously underdeveloped.

This article confronts this multilayered gap by proposing a more fundamental diagnosis: the crisis of meaning in Indonesian online shopping, epitomized by the "Empty Cart," is not mere consumer dissatisfaction but a symptom of *Seinsvergessenheit* (the forgetting of Being). Our thesis is that this condition is actively produced by the technological enframing of reality, a connection this article reveals by integrating Ritzer's "emptiness" within a Heideggerian framework. This analysis makes several novel contributions: it details Heidegger's later philosophy in the concrete context of online shopping, argues that art (*poiesis*, *Ereignis*) offers a radical response to "metaphysical desire," and presents an original interpretation of Heidegger's thought.

Based on this foundation, this article seeks to answer the following research question: How does Indonesian online shopping illuminate Heidegger's critique of technology,

metaphysics, and the forgetting of Being, and what pathways, particularly through art's transformative potential, might offer a response?

To answer this question, this article employs a Heideggerian hermeneutic method. It begins not with empirical data, but with the lived experience of Indonesian online shopping, treating it as a "hermeneutic situation" from which deeper structures can be accessed. The aim is to disclose how online shopping, as a manifestation of *Gestell*, shapes our very understanding of Being and contributes to *Seinsvergessenheit*. This approach is guided by the principle of "formal indication" (*formale Anzeige*), which functions as a "signpost" pointing towards underlying ontological structures without reifying them.²² The analysis thus proceeds from our pre-reflective engagement with the phenomenon (*Vorhabe*) towards its ultimate ontological meaning and transformative potential (*Vorgriff*).²³

Methodologically, this study operationalizes Heidegger's philosophy not merely as a theoretical lens, but as a rigorous analytical instrument to dissect the architecture of digital

"Beyond 'Humanism': Heidegger's Understanding of Technology," in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, ed. Thomas Sheehan (London: Routledge, 2017).

²¹ Patrick Walters and Rita Kop, "Heidegger, Digital Technology, and Postmodern Education," *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 29, no. 4 (August 2009): 278–86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0270467609336305>.

²² Martin Heidegger, ed., *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 12.

²³ Rifqi Khairul Anam, "HERMENEUTICS SITUATION AS THE PHILOSOPHIZING METHOD OF MARTIN HEIDEGGER AND ITS RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL RESEARCH," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 10, no. 2 (December 2024): 169–70, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjjpm.v10i2.343>.

technology. The research adopts Heidegger's "hermeneutics situation," which explicitly rejects the traditional subject-object division and value-free principles of scientism, positioning the researcher not as a detached observer but as an entity already engaged in the everyday context of the digital world. Within this framework, encounters with the digital interface are not mere observations of isolated social facts, but engagements with appropriate events (*Ereignis*) that are interpreted through the researcher's factual pre-understanding. To systematically dissect the "Empty Cart," this study employs a strict, three-tiered methodological mapping. First, it conducts a phenomenological analysis of the UI/UX architecture, utilizing the researcher's daily involvement with e-commerce as the foundational "being-in-the-world" to grasp the phenomena directly. Second, it tests the ontological status of the objects on the screen, analyzing whether interface elements like the cart and checkout funnel function seamlessly as "ready-to-hand" (*Zuhanden*) tools integrated into human practice, or whether the manipulative algorithmic friction of the design forces them to break down and appear as calculative, "present-at-hand" (*Vorhanden*) objects. This shift serves as a "formal indication," highlighting the determining

character of the technology without reducing it to a fixed empirical scheme. Third, the methodology deconstructs how these specific screen-level disruptions, and the resulting user cognitive overload, are systematically organized under the umbrella of Gestell (*enframing*). Through this structured sequence, Heidegger's ontology is deployed as a diagnostic scalpel, moving from the concrete technical anomalies of the digital cart to the fundamental metaphysical machinery that reduces the user to standing-reserve.²⁴

This method is fundamentally phenomenological; it seeks to articulate what is present in experience, bringing the question of Being into language.²⁵ Crucially, we maintain the "ontological difference": the distinction between *ontic* facts (e.g., the number of items sold) and the *ontological* understanding of how Being is revealed through these facts. For Heidegger, meaning (*Sinn*) is not an objective property but is derived from a pre-understanding that first allows facts to be interpreted at all.²⁶ It is *Seinsvergessenheit*, the forgetting of this deeper ontological dimension, that serves as the key to unlocking the true meaning of the "Empty Cart."

Therefore, the subsequent sections will unfold this critique. We will first trace the

²⁴ R. K. Anam, "Hermeneutics Situation as the Philosophizing Method of Martin Heidegger and Its Relevance to Social Research," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 10, no. 2 (2024): 161-182, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v10i2.343>.

²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 2. ed, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard F. H. Polt (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2014), 43.

²⁶ Heidegger, 13-14.

metaphysical roots of the "Empty Cart," then dissect how concepts such as *Gestell* and *aletheia* are concretely manifested in the online shopping experience, before finally considering art (*poiesis*, *Ereignis*) as a counter-movement to technological enframing. This is not a condemnation of technology, but an attempt to understand its powerful allure. Ultimately, the aim is to illuminate the philosophical implications of this everyday act, revealing it as a microcosm of the modern crisis of meaning and, perhaps, as a site for rediscovering Being.

THE METAPHYSICAL ROOTS OF THE EMPTY CART

How did a seemingly banal feature of online commerce, the "Empty Cart," become a manifestation of a profound metaphysical crisis? To answer this, we must conduct a forensic investigation into the history of Western metaphysics, from its inception with Plato to its culmination in Nietzsche. The driving force behind this long trajectory, as Heidegger's critique spanning his entire corpus reveals,²⁷ is a specific way of thinking: *Vorstellen*, or representation. This is not merely a way of describing the world; it is a way of

constituting it, a world-formation.²⁸ *Vorstellen* means "to set before oneself," an aggressive act that establishes a fundamental split between an observing subject and a world of objects. This posture contrasts sharply with the earlier Greek experience of *Vernehmen* (apprehending), a more receptive letting-be that allowed things to show themselves prior to any categorization.²⁹ *Vorstellen*, however, is an "objectifying that goes forward and masters,"³⁰ transforming the rich world of beings into a collection of inert, present-at-hand (*Vorhanden*) entities, available for calculation, manipulation, and control.³¹

This shift towards representational thinking finds its decisive, irreversible expression in René Descartes' *ego cogito*.³² With Descartes, the thinking subject—the "I"—becomes the sole foundation of certainty, demoting all other beings to mere objects whose truth is determined by their clarity of representation. As Heidegger explains, to represent (*vorstellen*) is to "force [the world] back into this relationship to oneself as the normative realm."³³ This Cartesian framework, which positions the online shopper as a sovereign subject confronting a world of commodities, directly engenders what we term "metaphysical

²⁷ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 26.

²⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 1. publ, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57–60.

²⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 199–200.

³⁰ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 20–21.

³¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 95–107.

³² René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies; a Latin-English Edition*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Pr, 2013), 17.

³³ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 58.

desire": a desperate yearning for a secure ground (*fundamentum absolutum*) born from the loss of experiencing truth as an unfolding event (*aletheia*). This desire, in turn, inevitably fuels a new obsession: *Rechnen*, or calculation.³⁴ Once beings become objects, they become quantifiable and manipulable. This calculative thinking is the very essence of modern science,³⁵ but it quickly escapes the laboratory, permeating all aspects of modern life. It is a process that reduces the world to a collection of controllable properties, a process that reaches its apotheosis in the digital realm of the "Empty Cart."

This metaphysical trajectory unfolds with the force of an inescapable logic. The project is initiated by Plato, who defines Being as the unchanging *idea* (*eidos*).³⁶ His Allegory of the Cave devalues the sensible world in favor of perfectly representable Forms,³⁷ introducing a valuative dimension into metaphysics with "the Good" (*agathon*) as the ultimate source of reality.³⁸ His student, Aristotle, though more

grounded in the sensible world, reinforces this framework by seeking to capture Being within a conceptual net of substance (*ousia*) and categories.³⁹ The decisive turn, however, comes with Descartes, who radicalizes the subject-object split.⁴⁰ By establishing the *cogito* as the unshakeable foundation of certainty,⁴¹ the world is reduced to mere *res extensa*—a quantifiable resource ripe for the mathematization of nature.⁴² This logic is further internalized by Kant, who grounds knowledge in the *a priori* structures of the transcendental subject,⁴³ and is arguably consummated by Hegel, whose dialectic still aims for a complete and exhaustive representation of Being in the Absolute Idea.⁴⁴

This entire metaphysical trajectory reaches its dramatic climax in Friedrich Nietzsche. His famous proclamation of the "death of God"⁴⁵ is not, as Heidegger shows, a statement of personal atheism but a profound metaphysical diagnosis of Western civilization's condition.⁴⁶ "God," in this context, was merely the placeholder for the entire "suprasensory

³⁴ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 115–18.

³⁵ Heidegger, 134–35.

³⁶ Plato, *The Republic*, Second edition., ed. M S. Lane, trans. H D P. Lee and Rachana Kamtekar, Penguin Classics (London, England: Penguin Books, 2007), 507a–21.

³⁷ Plato, 514a–21.

³⁸ Plato, 508e–9.

³⁹ Aristoteles, *The Categories*, trans. EM Edghill (Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 2a11–4b19.

⁴⁰ Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 12–13.

⁴¹ Descartes, 17.

⁴² Descartes, 52–55.

⁴³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. Marcus Weigelt, trans. Friedrich Max Müller, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin Books, 2007), A50/B74–A130/B169.

⁴⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Reprint., trans. A. V. Miller and John N. Findlay, Oxford Paperbacks (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2013), 802–8.

⁴⁵ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, 1st ed., trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 181–82.

⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV: Nihilism*, 1st ed., trans. David Farrell Krell, Nietzsche (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 4–9.

world"—the realm of Ideas and transcendent truths that had provided meaning since Plato.⁴⁷ Its collapse, therefore, signifies the loss of any ultimate ground for truth and value. The inevitable result is nihilism, a condition Heidegger identifies not as a philosophical choice, but as the logical and inescapable destiny of Western history itself.⁴⁸

Yet, Nietzsche's proposed cure—a "revaluation of all values" centered on the "will to power" (*Wille zur Macht*)⁴⁹—is paradoxically the disease in its final form. By failing to question value-thinking itself, he only consummates the metaphysical tradition. As Heidegger emphasizes, "The will to power is the basic trait of the Being of beings insofar as Being has become... the objectification of representing on the part of the subject."⁵⁰ In this, Nietzsche becomes metaphysics' "last metaphysician," trapping existence in a framework of human valuation. The implications are crucial: the "Empty Cart" is revealed as a prime arena for this will to power to play out. It becomes the perfect vessel for "metaphysical desire"—the relentless pursuit of control in a groundless world, offering a false promise of fulfillment through the endless valuation and acquisition of things.

⁴⁷ Heidegger, 202–7.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, 27.

⁴⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Vintage Books ed, trans. Walter Arnold Kaufmann and Reginald John Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 180.

TECHNOLOGICAL REVEALING: *GESTELL*

The metaphysical trajectory we have traced does not remain an abstract historical idea; it culminates and finds its concrete, worldwide expression in modern technology. To grasp the ontological significance of the "Empty Cart," we must therefore move beyond the common, superficial understanding of technology as a mere neutral tool. In his decisive essay, "The Question Concerning Technology," Heidegger unmasks this view, arguing that the essence of technology is not technological at all.⁵¹ It is, rather, a historically specific way of revealing Being (*Entbergen*), a mode of truth that radically transforms our relationship to the world. Heidegger names this modern mode of revealing *Gestell*, or Enframing.

But what, precisely, is *Gestell*? It is not a physical object, nor is it a simple human activity. It is the relentless way in which everything in our age is revealed. It is an aggressive "challenging-forth" (*Herausfordern*) that "sets upon" all beings, demanding that they present themselves as nothing more than *Bestand*, or standing-reserve—resources to be ordered, stored, and consumed on demand.⁵² This logic is total. A

⁵⁰ Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volume IV, 85.

⁵¹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 3–5.

⁵² Heidegger, 14.

hydroelectric dam, Heidegger famously illustrates, does not merely use the Rhine river; it transforms the river's very being into a component of an energy grid. A forester is no longer a caretaker of the woods but an administrator of timber resources for industrial production.⁵³ (GA 7, pp. 16–17; trans. p. 18). Ultimately, human beings themselves are not exempt; they too are challenged-forth, reduced to "human resources" within a vast system of calculation and control.⁵⁴

The most devastating consequence of *Gestell* is the destruction of "world." For Heidegger, "world" is not the sum of all objects but the rich horizon of meaning within which things can appear as meaningful.⁵⁵ A craftsman's hammer, for instance, is not merely an inert object (*Vorhandenheit*) but is "ready-to-hand" (*Zuhandenheit*), seamlessly integrated into a world of work and purpose.⁵⁶ *Gestell*, however, systematically dismantles this "worldhood."⁵⁷ It challenges everything to present itself not as

part of a world, but as interchangeable and disposable *Bestand* (standing-reserve).⁵⁸ The inevitable result is what Heidegger himself foreshadowed as a "worldless" mode of existence.⁵⁹

The evidence for this reduction to *Bestand* is overwhelming and readily apparent in the data. The top-selling products in Indonesian e-commerce are dominated by categories defined by disposability: Fashion & Beauty (32%) and Electronics & Gadgets (23%).⁶⁰ These are not goods meant to endure; they are hallmarks of a system that prioritizes rapid obsolescence and novelty. This system, however, does not run on its own. It is executed by an underlying logic Heidegger calls *Machenschaft* (machination): a relentless drive to plot, make, and order everything for maximum efficiency, a pursuit of "what can be made" (*das Machbare*) that overrides all other considerations.⁶¹ This is not an abstract force; it is the concrete logic of the algorithms that track our behavior and the "personalization" that is, in fact, a narrowing of our possibilities.

⁵³ Heidegger, 18.

⁵⁴ Rifqi Khairul Anam, *Filsafat Teknologi Martin Heidegger Membongkar Gestell, Menemukan Ereignis* (Bengkulu: EL-MARKAZI, 2025), 158–60, <https://elmarkazistore.com/filsafat-teknologi-martin-heidegger-membongkar-gestell-menemukan-ereignis/>.

⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, *Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy* (Bloomington (Ind.): Indiana university press, 1992), 166–67.

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 98.

⁵⁷ Heidegger, 169.

⁵⁸ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

⁵⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 210–11.

⁶⁰ *Digital Indonesia 2023, Analysis* (Indonesia: We Are Social, n.d.), 87, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://wearesocial.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Digital-2023-Indonesia.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwirqd6Ot6WMAx-UcTWwGHYHPLnsQFnoECBkQAQ&usg=AOv-Vaw35a38ulbfriya28bAjFNv->.

⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Studies in Continental Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 101–5.

The *modus operandi* of this *Machenschaft* is most clearly visible in the "flash sale" phenomenon. Here, artificial urgency and scarcity are manufactured to manipulate desire and drive impulse purchases. The proof of its effectiveness is undeniable: during major sales events like "Harbolnas," the number of items added to carts can nearly double.⁶² This is not a response to genuine need. As one Indonesian shopper confessed, they were often "impacted by the discounts offered by the online shop," leading to the compulsive purchase of unneeded items.⁶³ This is the ultimate triumph of *Machenschaft*: human desire itself is captured and transformed into an efficient force for the relentless acquisition of more *Bestand*.

The very architecture of the online shopping interface is designed to reinforce this enframing. Every element—from prices and delivery times to product descriptions and customer reviews—is presented as quantifiable data, engineered to manipulate perception and encourage a calculative (*Rechnen*) mindset.⁶⁴ This constant bombardment of information

distracts from the "thingly" character of the goods, cementing their status as disposable *Bestand*.⁶⁵ and trapping the user in a state of superficial, everyday "falling" (*Verfallen*).⁶⁶

It is here, within this weaponized architecture, that the "Empty Cart" reveals its insidious power—not as a mere feature, but as a crucial instrument of *Gestell*. It operates through a profound deception: it presents a perverse form of *Zuhandenheit*, or readiness-to-hand. Unlike the craftsman's hammer, which is embedded in a world of genuine need, the 'Empty Cart's' 'readiness' is a fiction. Its true purpose is not to serve the user, but to stimulate consumption, to transform the user into a 'human resource' within the system. Its very emptiness is not a passive state, but an active command that compels an action—an action channeled along pre-defined pathways of acquisition.

The "Empty Cart" operates through a profound deception: it presents a perverse form of *Zuhandenheit* (readiness-to-hand).⁶⁷ Unlike the craftsman's hammer, which is embedded in a world of genuine need,⁶⁸ the 'Empty Cart's'

⁶² Cucu Dina Mustika Ratu and M Oktaviannur, *The Effect of Free Shipping Promotion Strategy (Ongkir), Cash on Delivery (COD) Payment Method, and Flash Sale on Purchasing Decisions for Shopee Users in Bandar Lampung City*, 03, no. 02 (2024): 858–60.

⁶³ K. Rifqi Anam, "Makna Perilaku Belanja Daring Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Teknologi Martin Heidegger (Studi Kasus Di Kota Surabaya)" (Dissertation, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2021), 148, Perpustakaan Universitas Gadjah Mada, <http://etd.repository.ugm.ac.id/>.

⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 75–78; Mark S. Nadel, *The Consumer Product Selection Process in an Internet Age: Obstacles to Maximum Effectiveness*

& Policy Options, 2001, 192, <https://doi.org/10.48550/ARXIV.CS/0109114>;

Nirmalya Bandyopadhyay et al., "Immediate or Delayed! Whether Various Types of Consumer Sales Promotions Drive Impulse Buying?: An Empirical Investigation," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 61 (July 2021): 102532, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102532>.

⁶⁵ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 167–68.

⁶⁷ Heidegger, 97–102.

⁶⁸ Heidegger, 98.

'readiness' is a fiction, predetermined by the logic of *Gestell*.⁶⁹ Its true purpose is not to serve the user, but to stimulate consumption and transform them into a 'human resource.'⁷⁰ This is executed through its very design, a direct manifestation of *Machenschaft* in action. The "gamified" interface—with its icons and numerical indicators—creates a psychological pressure to 'fill' the score, turning shopping into a quantified activity. Even the seemingly neutral language of "Add to Cart" or "Your Cart is Empty" functions not as a suggestion, but as an imperative within *Gestell*. Its emptiness is thus not a passive state, but an active command that compels a single, pre-defined action: acquisition.

This constant pressure to acquire is amplified by the platform's entire algorithmic apparatus. "Recommendation engines" do not merely suggest; they steer choices, fueled by vast amounts of user data. This so-called "personalization" is another manifestation of *Gestell*, narrowing the field of possibilities and reinforcing consumption patterns. This steering is then executed through a 'frictionless' interface of one-click purchasing and streamlined checkouts, a design that makes the acquisition of more *Bestand* almost effortless while obscuring the real-world network of

labor and resources behind each purchase. The "Empty Cart," therefore, is revealed not as a passive recipient of these choices, but as an active participant in their shaping. Its very presence and emptiness exert a powerful influence, making it a concrete embodiment of *Gestell* and a key instrument in the forgetting of Being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), a diagnosis we will now explore.

SEINSVERGESSENHEIT AND THE NIHILISTIC IMPLICATIONS OF THE EMPTY CART

The relentless pursuit of *Bestand*, driven by the technological apparatus of online shopping, leads to its inevitable and most devastating consequence: *Seinsvergessenheit*, the forgetting of Being. This is not merely an intellectual lapse; it is a fundamental disorientation, a lived condition of "homelessness" in the world.⁷¹ For Heidegger, this is not a personal failing but our historical destiny, the final outcome of the metaphysical trajectory we have traced.⁷² The mechanism of this forgetting is the very dominance of representational thinking (*Vorstellen*) we have analyzed.⁷³ When beings are reduced to calculable objects for a subject,⁷⁴ their inherent

⁶⁹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 20–25.

⁷⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, Rev. and exp. ed., repr. ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 2007), 52.

⁷¹ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 258.

⁷² Heidegger, 266–67.

⁷³ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 127–34.

⁷⁴ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

presencing (*Anwesenheit*) is obscured.⁷⁵ We become fixated on the *what* of things—their properties, their utility, their price—and grow blind to the astonishing mystery *that* they are.⁷⁶ This is no abstract problem; it is a crisis with profound, practical implications, shaping our very sense of self.⁷⁷

The "Empty Cart" exemplifies this forgetting (*Seinsvergessenheit*) in a particularly vivid way. The endless stream of products, presented as mere images and data, compels a superficial, transactional engagement. We scroll and click, concerned only with utility and price, but we rarely *dwell* with the beings themselves—their origins, the labor of their creation, their place in the world. This superficiality actively reinforces their reduction to *Bestand*,⁷⁸ distancing us from their inherent presencing (*Anwesenheit*).⁷⁹ This entire process is amplified by the "digital veil" of mediated representations, which strengthens the grip of representational thinking (*Vorstellen*)⁸⁰ and makes it ever easier to forget the very being of the things we acquire.

The direct consequence of this *Seinsvergessenheit* is nihilism—not as a

philosophical doctrine, but as the lived experience of meaninglessness and groundlessness.⁸¹ When Being is forgotten and all things are reduced to mere resources,⁸² value itself becomes subjective and arbitrary.⁸³ We are left adrift in a world of constant stimulation and fleeting gratification, lacking any sense of enduring purpose.⁸⁴ The "Empty Cart," in this context, becomes the perfect metaphor for this existential void. The temporary pleasure of filling it, of receiving a package, quickly fades, leaving us once again to face the emptiness that no amount of acquisition can ever truly remedy.

The online shopping experience actively engineers this nihilism through a constant bombardment of promotions. This relentless pursuit of "the best price"—a perpetual striving fueled by the logic of *Machenschaft*⁸⁵—enforces a state of dissatisfaction that makes it impossible to ever truly dwell (*Wohnen*) in the present.⁸⁶ This is achieved through a multi-pronged ontological assault: the sheer volume of information overwhelms meaningful engagement, reducing us to a state of restless "curiosity" (*Neugier*) that hinders meditative thinking⁸⁷; the ephemeral nature of the content

⁷⁵ Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2002), 1–10.

⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 95–107.

⁷⁷ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 27–35.

⁷⁸ Heidegger, 14–19.

⁷⁹ Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 1–10.

⁸⁰ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 127–34.

⁸¹ Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*, 3–5.

⁸² Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

⁸³ Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume IV*, 48–50.

⁸⁴ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 27–30.

⁸⁵ Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, 100.

⁸⁶ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 151–54.

⁸⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 214.

reinforces the reduction of all things to disposable *Bestand*⁸⁸; and the lack of genuine human connection fosters alienation, trapping us in the anonymous "they-self" (*das Man*) rather than authentic "Being-with" (*Mitsein*).⁸⁹ The final, inevitable result is a profound sense of being adrift in a "worldless world."⁹⁰

This diagnosis of nihilism is not abstract; it is confirmed in the lived experience of Indonesian online shoppers. Testimonies reveal a recurring pattern: feelings of being "empty" and "dissatisfied" despite frequent purchases.⁹¹ Shopping becomes a temporary "escape from boredom" that paradoxically leads to a deeper emptiness, or an "addictive high" that quickly fades, leaving only a craving for more.⁹² These are not mere psychological quirks; they are concrete manifestations of *Seinsvergessenheit*, confessions from within an enframed world that has lost its sense of existential ground.⁹³ The allure of the cart is not for the goods themselves, but for the futile attempt to fill an ontological void with ontic objects.

This experience is part of a broader technological malaise. Psychological studies correlating heavy social media use with depression and anxiety,⁹⁴ for instance, can be read through a Heideggerian lens as a consequence of *Gestell*'s logic, which reduces individuals to quantifiable metrics of success and popularity.⁹⁵ The "Empty Cart," therefore, must be seen for what it is: a symptom of this deeper disease, a concrete manifestation of *Seinsvergessenheit* in the modern age, a condition exacerbated in the Indonesian context where consumer behavior is often entangled with values of pride.⁹⁶ The question, then, becomes inescapable: Is there any way to overcome this condition? It is here, at the height of this danger, that Heidegger points towards a potential "saving power" (*die rettende Macht*): the realm of art.⁹⁷

This technological commodification of the user is not a passive process; it is aggressively orchestrated through specific algorithmic architectures and "dark patterns" designed to manipulate consumer uncertainty. E-commerce

⁸⁸ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

⁸⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 167–68.

⁹⁰ Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, 164–69; Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 30–35.

⁹¹ Anam, "Makna Perilaku Belanja Daring Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Teknologi Martin Heidegger (Studi Kasus Di Kota Surabaya)," 146–47.

⁹² Anam, 158–59.

⁹³ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 258.

⁹⁴ Jean M. Twenge, "More Time on Technology, Less Happiness? Associations Between Digital-Media Use and Psychological Well-Being," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 28, no. 4 (August 2019): 377, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721419838244>.

⁹⁵ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 17–18.

⁹⁶ Anam, "Makna Perilaku Belanja Daring Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Teknologi Martin Heidegger (Studi Kasus Di Kota Surabaya)," 148.

⁹⁷ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 34–35.

platforms actively weaponize cognitive vulnerabilities through features like "dynamic scarcity timers" (such as countdowns during flash sales), which consistently increase impulsive buying by creating artificial time pressure and a fear of missing out (FOMO).⁹⁸ Rather than offering genuine value, these cues induce a state of urgency and emotional arousal, pushing the user toward faster, less rational decisions.⁹⁹ Furthermore, the deployment of push notifications and targeted AI recommendations acts as a constant trigger for impulse-oriented behavior, effectively transforming the user's psychological state into a manipulatable resource.¹⁰⁰ Studies reveal that these scarcity cues and algorithmic pressures not only increase impulse tendencies but also worsen the shopping experience by generating frustration-related negative emotions, ultimately exposing the user to post-purchase regret once the orchestrated urgency fades.¹⁰¹

The phenomenon of the "Empty Cart" should not be viewed solely as a symptom of existential emptiness, but also as an unconscious form of user resistance and a cognitive coping mechanism against these coercive algorithmic architectures. When subjected to severe choice overload and information saturation, users experience profound decision fatigue, consumer confusion, and emotional ambivalence.¹⁰² In this highly pressurized environment, cart abandonment emerges as a technical anomaly where the system's drive for total commodification overloads the subject. Empirical evidence suggests this abandonment functions as a self-protective withdrawal—a subconscious method for users to reclaim agency, retain control over commitment, and disengage from the overwhelming cognitive friction and manipulative tracking embedded in the platform's design.¹⁰³

ART AS A SAVING POWER IN THE AGE OF THE EMPTY CART

⁹⁸ Cengiz, H & Senel, H, "The effect of perceived scarcity on impulse-buying tendencies in a fast fashion context: A mediating and multigroup analysis," *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal* (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1108/jfmm-03-2023-0082>;

⁹⁹ Hao, H & Huang, L, "The persuasive effects of scarcity messages on impulsive buying in live-streaming e-commerce: the moderating role of time scarcity," *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-03-2024-0269>.

¹⁰⁰ Bhardwaj, S & Chopra, R, "From whims to wallets: navigating the maze of how technology impacts impulsive buying behavior—a systematic literature review," *Internet Research* (2026), <https://doi.org/10.1108/intr-09-2024-1430>.

¹⁰¹ Fernandes, R. S. "A Study on the Effects of Scarcity Marketing Tactics on Shoppers' Buying Behaviors in the Online Fashion Industry," *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Communication and Technology* (2025), <https://doi.org/10.48175/ijarsct-23374>.

¹⁰² S. Changani, S. Sahu, and R. Kumar, "Examining online shopping cart abandonment through the lens of consumer confusion," *Journal of Consumer Marketing* (2026), <https://doi.org/10.1108/jcm-11-2024-7352>.

¹⁰³ D. Jiang, G. Zhang, and L. Wang, "Empty the Shopping Cart? The Effect of Shopping Cart Item Sorting on Online Shopping Cart Abandonment Behavior," *J. Theor. Appl. Electron. Commer. Res.* 16 (2021): 1973-1996, <https://doi.org/10.3390/jtaer16060111>.

The relentless enframing of *Gestell* has brought us to a crisis point, with the "Empty Cart" standing as a stark symbol of *Seinsvergessenheit*. Yet, as Heidegger discerns, it is precisely at the height of this danger that a "saving power" (*die rettende Macht*) can emerge.¹⁰⁴ This is not a technological fix, but a fundamental "turning" (*Kehre*) in our way of being.¹⁰⁵ Such a turn requires a posture of *Gelassenheit* (releasement)—an active receptivity to Being that is the very antithesis of the restless, calculative mindset embodied by the "Empty Cart."¹⁰⁶ Paradoxically, the nagging dissatisfaction of the cart's perpetual emptiness might be the very catalyst that awakens us to our condition, to the *Not der Notlosigkeit* (the plight of the lack of a sense of plight).¹⁰⁷

Heidegger locates the privileged site for this "saving power" in the realm of art—not as mere decoration, but in its most originary sense as *poiesis*, a bringing-forth of truth. In "The Origin of the Work of Art," he argues that the artwork is not a representation of reality; it is a "setting-into-work of truth" (*aletheia*). It achieves this by staging a *Streit* (strife) between "world" (the open realm of meaning) and

"earth" (the self-concealing, material ground from which the world emerges). This dynamic tension between revealing and concealing is the artwork's eventful truth, an event (*Ereignis*) where Being itself can unconceal itself, offering a mode of revealing that directly counters the totalizing logic of *Gestell*.¹⁰⁸

Heidegger locates this "saving power" in the realm of art—understood not as mere decoration, a notion that itself falls prey to *Gestell*'s enframing,¹⁰⁹ but in its originary sense as *poiesis*, a bringing-forth of truth.¹¹⁰ Art, in this view, is an *Ereignis*, an event where Being itself can unconceal itself.¹¹¹ It achieves this not by representing reality, but by "setting-into-work of truth" (*aletheia*)¹¹² and opening up a world.¹¹³ Its core mechanism is a *Streit*, a strife or conflict, between "world" (the open horizon of meaning) and "earth" (the self-concealing material ground that resists total revelation).¹¹⁴ This dynamic tension between revealing and concealing *is* the artwork's eventful truth.¹¹⁵

This artistic "bringing-forth," *Hervorbringen*, stands in stark opposition to *Herstellen*—the mere production that characterizes the

¹⁰⁴ Heidegger, 34–35.

¹⁰⁵ Heidegger, 35.

¹⁰⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, Harper Torchbooks (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1969), 54–56.

¹⁰⁷ Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, 89–90.

¹⁰⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 26. [ed.], ed. Albert Hofstadter, *Works / Martin Heidegger*. Gen. Ed. J. Glenn Gray (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1994), 53.

¹⁰⁹ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 79–81.

¹¹⁰ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 12–13.

¹¹¹ Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, 398.

¹¹² Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 50–55.

¹¹³ Heidegger, 41–45.

¹¹⁴ Heidegger, 20–25.

¹¹⁵ Heidegger, 45–49.

technological realm and supplies the endless stream of commodities for the "Empty Cart."¹¹⁶ Because of this, the artwork possesses a "thingly" character, grounded in the "earth," which actively resists reduction to *Bestand*.¹¹⁷ It is not simply *there* for use; it *stands forth* demanding our attention.¹¹⁸ This is achieved through its *Riss* (rift-design)—not a flaw, but the very structure of its power, a dynamic interplay that gathers (*Logos*) and shapes the world it discloses.¹¹⁹

To witness art's saving power, consider Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. This is not a mere depiction; it is a revelation of a world.¹²⁰ The swirling brushstrokes and vibrant colors are not stylistic choices; they are the very elements of the *Streit* (strife) between the revealing power of "world" and the concealing power of "earth."¹²¹ The painting is a dynamic, unsettling event that does not offer information *about* the world but *opens up* a world for us.¹²² forcing us to confront fundamental questions. Its "language"—the thick impasto, the vividness of the color—is not a representation of reality; it *is* the work's reality, the site where truth is revealed.¹²³

This experience stands in stark opposition to the act of "browsing" an online store. The artwork demands active engagement and thoughtful contemplation, a posture of *Gelassenheit* (releasement) where we open ourselves to the mystery of Being.¹²⁴ The "Empty Cart," by contrast, actively fosters a passive, distracted engagement, a relentless pursuit of *Bestand*.¹²⁵ that makes thoughtful dwelling (*Wohnen*) impossible.¹²⁶ and blocks any genuine encounter with truth.¹²⁷ Its language—"Add to Cart," "Buy Now"—is purely instrumental. It does not reveal; it conceals. It is a language of manipulation designed to reinforce the logic of *Gestell*.¹²⁸

Artworks like those of Van Gogh or the unsettling poetry of Sylvia Plath stand in stark opposition to the "Empty Cart." They challenge, provoke, and force thinking. By confronting us with human finitude,¹²⁹ and the "abyss" (*Abgrund*) underlying our being,¹³⁰ they reveal a truth obscured by technological enframing. The online experience, by contrast, actively discourages thinking. Its entire apparatus—the constant stimuli, the gamified interface—is designed to bypass critical

¹¹⁶ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 12–13.

¹¹⁷ Heidegger, 14–19.

¹¹⁸ Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 63–65.

¹¹⁹ Heidegger, 38–40.

¹²⁰ Heidegger, 41–44.

¹²¹ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 47–49.

¹²² Heidegger, 41–45.

¹²³ Heidegger, 45–49.

¹²⁴ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 58–62.

¹²⁵ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

¹²⁶ Heidegger, 145–54.

¹²⁷ Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 50–55.

¹²⁸ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 30–35.

¹²⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 235.

¹³⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, 1st ed (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 105.

reflection and keep us trapped in a cycle of consumption. The "Empty Cart" thus becomes a symbol of the fundamental lack that the endless accumulation of *Bestand* can never satisfy.¹³¹

However, and this is where Heidegger's notion of the "saving power" becomes crucial, this power is not external to technology; it lies within the very danger of *Gestell*.¹³² Paradoxically, the very failure of the "Empty Cart" to provide satisfaction can become the starting point for a *Kehre*, a turning.¹³³ The nagging dissatisfaction it produces may awaken us to the "plight of the lack of a sense of plight" (*Not der Notlosigkeit*)—the inability to even recognize the *Seinsvergessenheit* that pervades our lives.¹³⁴ This awakening, however, is not guaranteed. It requires a conscious refusal of *Gestell*'s logic through the cultivation of *Gelassenheit* (releasement): not a passive resignation, but an active letting-be,¹³⁵ a relinquishing of control that opens us to the mystery of Being.¹³⁶ This can begin with seemingly simple acts: pausing before clicking "Add to Cart," questioning the source of a desire, maintaining a space for thinking. A step, however small, is a form of resistance that reclaims humanity

from technological enframing, allowing us to hear Being's "call"¹³⁷ and experience *Ereignis*.¹³⁸

CONCLUSION

This philosophical investigation culminates in a fundamental diagnosis: the crisis of meaning surrounding the "Empty Cart" is a direct consequence of *Gestell*, which produces *Seinsvergessenheit* by reducing users to disposable standing-reserve (*Bestand*). The algorithmic architecture of e-commerce is not a neutral tool, but an insidious instrument that enforces a calculative, impulse-driven mindset. Yet, within this danger lies a "saving power" (*die rettende Macht*). To prevent this solution from remaining abstract, the concept of art—understood as *poiesis* and *Ereignis*—must be operationalized directly into software design. In the digital ecosystem, authentic care (*Sorge*) requires a paradigm shift toward Value Sensitive Design: dismantling "dark patterns" and replacing dopamine mining with "positive friction." Instead of weaponizing uncertainty through scarcity timers, an ethical UI/UX architecture must intentionally design spaces for pause, hesitation, and reflection. By transforming interface design from a mechanism of *Gestell* into

¹³¹ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 14–19.

¹³² Heidegger, 34–35.

¹³³ Heidegger, 30–35.

¹³⁴ Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, 89–90.

¹³⁵ Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *Science and the Quest for Reality*, ed. Alfred

I. Tauber (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1977), 54–56, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-25249-7_3.

¹³⁶ Heidegger, 58–62.

¹³⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 312.

¹³⁸ Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, 372.

an act of *poiesis*, we fundamentally redesign the digital spaces that produce this emptiness. Only through this ethical reorientation can we recognize that the empty cart is not a void of metaphysical desire, but the very opening where authentic thinking—and authentic technological creation—can begin.

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