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Know thyself

- That which is ontically closest, is ontologically farthest (what is obvious to us, is hardest to question and to understand)
 - We are quite bad at understanding ourselves
 - Not in psychological sense
 - quite bad at understanding human nature itself
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 - why?
 - Tradition:
 - Humans get their self-interpretation from culture
 - This has until recently in the west been religion
 - After death of god, naturalism/humanism/scientism have taken over

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- **Science**
- Rooted in the metaphysical tradition
- Considers human beings as just one thing among the other things in the world.
 - Nothing wrong with it, as long as kept in its place
 - Dawkins prime example of someone taking it out of its place
 - compare Hawking (garden of eden equally true with big bang)
 - Practically, technologically, science is an effective tool
 - But, we cannot allow it to determine our self understanding
 - Why? - category error
 - we're not the sort of being that science is designed to talk about
 - Letting science talk about the human being compare to tory economic policy

• Heidegger, Freedom, Science

- What is obvious is hard to understand
- Science is a human way of being
 - first seems wrong
 - then obvious
 - against the idea of science as some sort of disembodied source of knowledge
 - comparable to the internet
 - see this is students' essays (science says...)

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- **Free being**
- we are not determined in our essence
- trad idea of evil:
 - a volcano is determined by god, it behaves according to its essence
 - humanity can betray its “nature”
 - but not because it is evil, but because it has no nature of this sort in the first place
- We are an utterly pliable species, given over to fads and historical change
- What it is to be a cat only changes insofar as what it is to be a human changes (ie living in a flat block)
- back to beginning, our self-understanding changes all the time
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- **THE WORLD**

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- But also, our understanding of the world changes

- in science mode world is a bunch of dead objects that bump into each other
- in arndale centre on a saturday two weeks before christmas, the world is an infuriating obstacle between me and the stuff i need to do
- depressed, the world is a flat grey nothing demanding
- nothing of me

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- - **science is just one way of looking at things**, that we *choose* to adopt (more or less consciously)
 - the richest account of who we are will start from that fact of experience, rather than from an mri scanner