

MARTIN HEIDEGGER
ON THE PUBLICATION OF LECTURES
FROM THE YEAR 1935*

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We are concerned here with the philosopher Martin Heidegger not as philosopher, but as a political personality, and with his influence not upon the internal discussion of scholars, but upon the development of excitable and easily enthused students. The genius is an ambiguous character, and perhaps Hegel is right that world historical individuals cannot be measured by moral standards. But when this ambiguity allows and even fosters an interpretation of genius that has the consequence of political destruction, then, with right, may the guardians of public criticism come upon the scene. However, this criticism does not intend to contest that over which it has no competence. As concerns the goings-on in the intimate sphere of decision making of private existence, criticism must content itself with clarifying the conditions under which public disturbances come to be, conditions which can be changed to prevent such

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disturbances in the future. Since 1945 Heidegger's fascism has been approached in various manners. These discussions have been centered around Heidegger's rectoral address of 1933, in which Heidegger praises the "revolutionary change [*Umwälzung*] [upheaval] of German existence." To base one's criticism on this remark is to over-simplify. Noteworthy, however, is rather how the author of *Sein und Zeit* (the most significant philosophical event since Hegel's *Phenomenology*), how a thinker of this stature could fall into such an obvious primitivism as, upon nobler examination, the hectic lack of style in that call for the self-determination of the German university proved to be.

The problem of a fascist intelligentsia is hidden in these proceedings. It is more acute and more demanding when one considers that there was no fascist intelligentsia as such only because the mediocrity of the fascist leadership ranks could not accept the offer of the intellectuals. Thinkers whose motives and mentality corresponded to the fascist model were there. To name names today would lead to misunderstandings. These forces were there. Only the low caliber of the political functionaries drove such people into the opposition. Thus the "movement" could create the impression that without those bearers of the cultural inheritance of sound mind, National Socialism was merely driftwood washed ashore from the universal currents of the century, and hence not rooted in, foreign to and merely grafted upon the German tradition. That it was no inevitable outgrowth of the German tradition is beyond question. But one cannot therefore conclude that all attempts are false and reprehensible which probe, in the sense of Thomas Mann's Faust novel, just this rooting of the fascist motives in the core of the German tradition and which seek to explore those dispositions which could lead, in a period of decay, to fascism. The problem of a fascist intelligentsia poses itself as a problem of the prehistory of fascism.

The German situation since 1945 is characterized by its constant avoidance of this problem. For both, for the justification of the problem and for the avoidance of it, we now recently have a significant literary testimony: Heidegger has published lectures from the year 1935 under the title *Introduction to Metaphysics*. As we learn from the preface, the additions in parentheses were [actually] written at the same time [but are published now for the first time.] On page 152 Heidegger concerns himself with National Socialism, “with the inner truth and greatness of this movement (namely with the encounter of planetarily determined technology and modern man). . . .” Since these sentences were published for the first time without any remarks, one may assume that they represent, without alteration, Heidegger’s position today.

It would be superfluous [for Heidegger] to quote the phrase concerning the inner truth and greatness of National Socialism if it did not result from the context of the address. Heidegger explicitly brings together the question of all questions, the question of Being with the historical movement of those days.

As is well known, the present for Heidegger stands under the fate of the forgetfulness-of-Being. Nations do have a relation to objects in their wide-ranging activities and productions, but they have long since fallen from Being itself. Therefore we are “reeling,” when seen metaphysically. This reeling shows itself concretely in the manifestations of technology [*Technik*] where however technology has not unfolded itself equally extensively in all places. Rather it is the case that Europe is caught in a giant pincers between Russia and America. Both of them being in essence the same: “The same desolate frenzy of unbound technology and groundless organization of the normal man [*Normalmenschen*]” for whom time still only means speed. The darkening of the world is spreading over Europe from both sides,

the curse of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the loss of human individuality, and the hate, the suspicion of all that is creative and free. Thus the fate of the world will be decided in Europe, or more precisely, in the heart of the people who constitute its center and who experience "the severest pressure" [*Zangen-druck*], "the people with the most neighbors and therefore the most endangered people and, all in all, the metaphysical people." But it will only then forge a great destiny out of this vocation when it creatively appropriates its own tradition. Let us understand this correctly: Heidegger sees in the political situation of 1935, in the formation of the double front against East and West, the reflex of a being-historical situation which has been in preparation for over two thousand years and which now entrusts to the German people a world historical mission. In order to properly understand the physiognomy and therefrom the eschatological impact of this address, one must get control of the dialectic of that against which and towards which Heidegger calls the attention of his listeners in 1935 and his readers in 1953. He demands heroic existence as opposed to the insipid decay of the average man. The actual bias of these postulates can be sketched from three points of view.

1) It is "strength" which raises the aristocratic individuals above the common many. The noble who chooses glory is ennobled by rank and rule, which belong to Being itself; whereas, the many are satisfied like cows (as is approvingly quoted from Heraclitus). The many are the dogs and the jack-asses. Those who sustain their rank, are the stronger, which is why Being withdraws from he who is bent on equalization, relaxation, leveling. "The true is not for everyone, only for the strong." 2) Further, it is "spirit" which distinguishes the thinker from the intellectual. Calculating reason is oriented towards objects over which it seeks dominion. All things fall into one plane in such reasoning's leveling grip; extension and number are the predominating

dimensions. “Capability” for such thinking no longer means squandering from an elevated surfeit, but rather the sweating exercising of a routine. This thinking, which follows the laws of traditional logic, cannot understand the question of Being nor ever develop it because logic itself is grounded in an answer to the question of beings, one which Being delivers from the start. The students learn that the consideration, calculation and observation of pre-given objects is a matter of mere talent and practice and is distributed en masse. Superficial and deep, empty and rich in content, non-obligatory and convincing [*zeugend*], playful and serious are the opposed attributes of intelligence and spirit, and, by the way, of a spirit which Heidegger undeniably expressly defends against all mere fanaticizing [*Schwärmerei*]. Only intelligence, not spirit, is to be subordinated—with an eye towards the official party eugenics—to sound and bodily industriousness and to character because the degeneration of thought to intelligence can only be overcome by more originary thinking.

3) Finally, “courage” is complemented by strength and spirituality. This is that ambiguous courage that does not shrink from violence and error. Appearance, deceit [*Trug*], deception (illusion) [*Täuschung*] and madness are powers that are bought about by Being itself. It is only the mundane understanding that no longer experiences its numinous force, which then degenerates to mere error. The courageous one repeats that beginning of our spiritual historical existence as once lived by the pre-Platonic Greeks with a Yes to all that is strange, dark, and unsure in the true beginning. The heroic individual is finally revealed as the one who dares his entire essence. He is the mighty one, the creator who subdues Being by bringing under himself the unseen in his glance, the unspoken in his speech and the undone in his act. Power, however, does not simply imply the banality of a “raw will.” The counter-

part is the timid one who seeks agreement, compromise, and mutual support [*Versorgung*] and who accordingly perceives violence only as a disruption of his life. "That is why the violent one [*Gewaltttätiger*] does not recognize kindness [*Güte*] and soothing [*Begütigung*] (in the usual sense), no appeasement [*Beschwichtigung*] and reassurance [*Beruhigung*] through success or recognition [*Geltung*]. He despises the mere appearance of completeness. The violent-one opposes this mediocre execution [*Besorgung*] with thoughtful proposals [*denkerische Entwurf*], constructive formation, action to create a state. The violent-one is a towering [*Hochragender*] one, the terribly lonely one, and finally the one without escape, for whom non-existence stands as the greatest victory over Being, for whom existence is tragically complete in the "profoundest and most far reaching yes to decline," who discards all help in his desire for the extraordinary.

We pose to Heidegger's address the following questions: to what do you appeal, for what do you call and against what are you campaigning? And without difficulty we perceive that Heidegger, pursuant to his encounter with Hölderlin and Nietzsche and with the excessive pathos of the 20th century and the immoderate self-consciousness of a personal and national mission, plays the chosen one against the bourgeois. Originary thought against common sense, and the exceptional one's courage before death against the ordinariness of the secure one. He praises the one while damning the other. Needless to say, such a man has the impact of an ideological whip [*Einpeitscher*] and given the conditions of the 20th century, given the exalted conditions of 1935, the impact of a prophet.

Our manner of proceeding is non-objective in the sense that it focuses not upon the objective context but rather upon the physiognomy of the address. This procedure is legitimate as long as it is concerned with

the educative act of shaping political consciousness. The physiognomy of the speech directly alters the situation; it is the hearth of incitement. For style is lived behavior [*gelebte Haltung*] (pose) from which spreads the spark of spontaneous behavior formation. Style is the perennial birth of existential motivations; out of style the appeal is ignited. It is indicative of the historical orientation of Heidegger's philosophizing that though the appeal changes, the meaning structures maintain their continuity over the decades of his development. It is not our task to demonstrate the stability of fundamental categories from *Sein und Zeit* through the *Letter on Humanism*. On the other hand, the variability of the quality of the appeal comes to the fore on its own. Thus today Heidegger speaks of care [*Hut*], remembrance [*Andenken*], guardianship [*Wächterschaft*], grace [*Huld*], love, intimation [*Vernehmen*], resignation [*Ergeben*], where in 1935 he demanded the violent act. Another eight years earlier it was the quasi-religious choice of the private, self-individuated existence that he cherished as finite autonomy in the middle of the godless world. The appeal was colored at least twice according to the political situation, whereas the thought structure of the appeal to authenticity and the polemic against fallenness remained constants. The address of 1935 shamelessly unmasks the fascistic tendency of that time. But this orientation was not entirely externally motivated, but also from sources within the context of [Heidegger's thinking] [*Sache*].

Following the being-historical conception, western philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche is the progressive development of the oblivion of Being. This history is marked by three great epochs [*Schübe*]: by the transformation of pre-Socratic into Platonic-Aristotelian thought; of Greek into Roman-Christian thought; and finally of medieval into modern thought. Heidegger questions radically and uncovers the ordinary. The connection discovered is fascinating; nevertheless, the

conception as a whole is one-sided. This one-sidedness is grounded in a double deficiency. Heidegger does not consider the fact that his particular line of questioning is in no way original. In fact, it arose in connection with that peculiar German thinking that goes back over Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel to Böhme. In addition, he no longer wishes to recognize his theological origins, to recognize that the historical being of *Sein und Zeit* marks out a specific range of Christian experience that reaches back over Kierkegaard to Augustine. For our purposes it is important to note that with the suppressions of both these circumstances we lose two important control cases. If Christianity, with its consolidation of the two-world view, is integrated with the degeneration process of the western world as a mere stage, then the (even for Hegel so central) idea of the equality of all before God and the freedom of each and everyone can no longer offer an effective counterweight to it. Neither can individual egalitarianism counterbalance the natural privileges of the stronger, nor can cosmopolitanism counterbalance this impulse of the German people as the historically chosen. And secondly, if it is not recognized that since Descartes there has run alongside the line of calculative—manipulative [*verfügbar machen-den*] thinking a line of meaning, understanding, receptive thought [*Vernehmenden*], then the dialectical plasticity of the modern development is not brought forward. Here we have a dialectic that gives its creative legitimation to that thinking that aims at domination through objectification thus preventing a one-sided identification with common opinion. From this viewpoint, the practical-rational corrective is also lacking. The feeding of anti-Christian and anti-western attitudes [*Affekte*] would have alone been sufficient to further the irrational psychosis which Heidegger himself did not want. To this is added Heidegger's elementary illusion about his insights. Intended as they were to combat the worldwide technology of modern man, as presented in

1935 under the then dominant conditions of precisely this technologically determined situation, they almost necessarily had to unleash that automation of misunderstanding. His intent to overcome technologized life was falsified in its actual execution.

Did it not also seem to be the case that this philosophical appeal to the students coincided with that one which would later be addressed to them as officers. The illusoriness [*Scheinbarkeit*] of this coincidence is not in the least altered by the fact that its initiator, Heidegger himself, also suffered under it. Even so, in the end two questions remain: How is this—if even merely illusory—coincidence explained? Does fascism perhaps have more to do with the German tradition than one generally is willing to admit? And second, why does Heidegger publish this address today, in 1953, without qualifications? This is significant, however only for an attitude that precisely does not question the past repeatedly (as Heidegger demands), as something still yet to come, but rather gets stuck in repetition. This is significant for an appraisal which, instead of giving a moral clarification, grounds not only its own error, but also the “error” of the Nazi leadership in a being-historical manner.

In view of the fact that students today are again exposed to misunderstanding this address, we unwillingly write this easily misinterpretable essay. It addresses this question alone: can the planned murder of millions of people, of which we all know today, be made being-historically comprehensible as a madness dictated by fate? Is it not the factual crime of those of sound mind who committed it—and the bad conscience of an entire people? Must we not risk eight years later the confrontation with that which was, which we were? Is it not the prime task of thoughtful persons to clarify the responsible acts of the past and to keep awake the knowledge as to why they happened? Instead, the great majority of the population carries out a continual re-

habilitation with those in responsible positions, then and now, in the lead. Instead, Heidegger meanwhile publishes words (already) eighteen years old on the 'greatness and inner truth of national socialism,' words which have grown too old and which certainly do not belong to those whose comprehensibility is contemporary. It appears to be time to think with Heidegger against Heidegger.

THE GREAT INFLUENCE

"The shepherds live unseen beyond the wasteland of the desolated earth, which now is meant only to serve the protection of the domination of mankind..." This speech gesture [*Sprachgestus*] of the writer Heidegger betrays something coolly distant. True, the reader is challenged by the author, is even forced to see the view that reaches across world epochs. But he is directed rather towards following impassable paths than towards the community which communication guarantees. Such a peculiar reserve is not the respectful distance maintained by a great thinker. Here a prophetic thinker is respecting a difference in rank. Communication is not one of the fundamental terms of this philosophy. In the meantime we avail ourselves of the favor which gives us access to a very difficult speaker, and we speak in order to "correspond" to him, to be chronologically at his side. We look back from the vantage point of the jubilee upon a powerful history of influence—the greatest of any philosopher in the university since Hegel.

Certainly Heidegger's influence is not limited to the universities; indeed, the most devoted rather assemble outside its gates. These small circles, sometimes formed into sects, are scattered across the country and it is difficult to get an overview of them. In one respect they are appropriate to the appearances of a thinker who avoids the conventions of his colleagues and prefers to place himself at the disposal of seminars of

lay disciples. (Among them are the captains of industry who have already achieved proverbial fame seeking relaxation at *Bühler Höhe*.) Perhaps here we have the other side of Heidegger's contact with reality, the one which is, is, contrasted with Being, here in these charming attempts to interest managers in "Feldwege." Detractors see in all this a mysticism interwoven with fadishness."

The scholastic influence is however, more reliably ascertainable. A great number of junior faculty members and those who aspire to such positions regard Heidegger as the inspiration of their own philosophizing. Many have taken up his themes and elaborated upon them. Most have been taken up by and driven about by his impetus. Admittedly the manners of appropriation have varied widely. They range, for example, from the attempt to return to the path which Heidegger once travelled as a young Jesuit pupil—from Thomas via Brentano to Husserl—in order to arrive at a revitalized Christian philosophy (Max Müller), through further positions to that of a knowing modesty that descends from the head of metaphysics to the sole of a fragile, cautiously tracked ancient skepticism (Oskar Becker). Or, again, from the resolve to leave behind the metaphysics of philosophizing in general as mere propaedeutics for "Heidegger's mythology" (Walter Bröcker) to the beginning of reincorporating Heidegger's philosophy within the horizon of the grand tradition, and reconciling the former to the latter (Eugen Fink). Some, basing themselves on a cosmological trust in an unchanging nature, have completely departed from the dialectic of history (Karl Löwith). Other paths lead back to Hegel, though they hold on equally to Heidegger (Bruno Liebruchs). Indeed, older pupils have found entrance to Marx through *Sein und Zeit*, which seems peculiar only at first glance. Such an entrance is admittedly sought in order to translate the concepts of existential analysis [*Dasein-analytik*] into those of an historical philosophy of human drives (Herbert Marcuse).¹

Such positions however mark out Heidegger's scholastic influence from its borders. Not less prominent than the outsiders are the actual pupils, partly argumentative "Orthodoxists," and partly—more gently termed—"pedagogues" to whom the doctrine appears to be so dear not as much for its purity but for its introduction [*Anleitung*] to thought. Out of this circle have come sensible interpretive investigations on the history of the problems of philosophy. These often center around Plato or Descartes, whose testaments serve as caesuras in the history of that, even to our day, pervasive "oblivion" of Being. They always refer to a process of "self-mastery of the subject," wherein the evil of the age is said to lie.

Heidegger's doctrine reached abroad, all the way to Latin America and Japan. As is well known, Paris was above all receptive to his impact. The feedback from beyond the Rhine almost made a re-import of Heidegger. At that time *Sein und Zeit* came to most students by the detour of *Being and Nothingness*, via Sartre's *Flies*. A Heidegger renaissance out of the spirit of the resistance—what a wellspring of misunderstandings!

Admittedly Heidegger feels himself not properly understood in the midst of this swelling literature on and about him. Among the noteworthy exceptions to this rule apparently belongs in fact to an outstanding work by the Tübingen philosopher Walter Schulz. It is above all noteworthy because it specifies the flow of Heideggerian thinking in an almost positivistic attitude, as within a context reconstructable by everyone. It is not the interpretation as such, but rather its level-headed underplayed ductus that surprises. The existential hierarchy falls away. Thought patterns emerge with greater clarity. A certain amount of room is won for the refining of scholastic distinctions—and thereby for the continually disdained acumen of the understanding—rather than for thoughtful remembrance.

Schulz gives an analysis of the important dialectic of “correspondence”: we can think Being only to that extent and bring it to speech insofar as Being itself makes our thinking possible and lets us dwell in the house of language. My sense of Being, which I cannot control [*verfügbar*], orients me towards the possibility in which I can “correspond” to it.

Considered formally, the identical figure of thought is found in entirely different constellations, e.g. in Marx, who drives Hegel’s dialectic of reflection onto that of theory and practice. Admittedly this dialectic of correspondence secures for itself a sense opposed to the Heideggerian one by virtue of its continuous reference to Hegel’s dialectic. The indirect power of society over men is to be dissolved and in its place the power of “Being,” in men and through men, is first fully released. In any case, this indication should serve for an example that in the uncovered “figures” of Heideggerian thought one can easily recognize those so familiar to the tradition. Their analysis therefore mediates an historically distanced reconstruction of this thinking, one which remarkably escapes from its totalistic claim. It appears then that to the degree that Heidegger treats the adroit correspondence to Being as a privilege, that he alone extends the field of being-historical experience, determines the authors of relevance and creates the key terms. To this extent the descendant will escape only with great difficulty from an enforced epigonic position and the consequences that arise from a predetermined formalism.

In *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger joined the essential themes of Dilthey and Husserl. The former experienced cultures historically as objectifications of a “life” that is always comprehended by the preunderstanding of its totality. The latter, by returning to the acts of consciousness, raised as a theme for pure description the “constitution of the world,” namely the sense of every type of

beings [*Seienden*]. Heidegger tries to ground human existence simultaneously in its historicity and its totality from its own self. Among all beings human existence enjoys the advantage of being that which understands the meaning of Being. Because man working produces and preserves himself, a being [*das Seiende*] reveals itself to him in its significance. It attains this Being only in the world of men, and its essence in turn consists of finding itself in a world that it simultaneously projects. From this attempt Heidegger squeezes out the analytic of existence in powerful spirals, with a driving intensity and truly revealing facility. It is till now the last great attempt at *prima philosophia*. The “totality of *Dasein*” is to assure a first beginning out of which Being could ground all Beings, hence the name fundamental ontology. And if one will permit a gross abbreviation, then this attempt reaps its first actual success with the insight into its suppressed failure. The second half of *Sein und Zeit* never appeared because the first ran into a double barrier. Insofar as it exists, human existence is not at all capable of giving the ontological grounding of itself. Hence at the same time the thoroughly historical character of truth reveals itself, coming forth as the open horizon from the world of mankind. One could say that truth has a core of time. Thus, philosophy as originary philosophy then became impossible also for Heidegger.

At this juncture, since philosophy has seen through the frailty of its originary pretension and renounced self-grounding, the pregnant question poses itself: whence then, if not from itself, does philosophy claim its origin? Heidegger could have drawn back from the ontologically determined structures of human existence, the so-called existentials, to factual experience drawn from the concrete situation, to the so-called existentiells. He could have thereby brought together ideologico-critical philosophy with the history of this situation, with the development of the social life-context. Instead,

he undertakes the famous “turn” to the history of existentials themselves, to the history of Being.

At first sight this “turn” seems to be recognizable through an alteration of language. *Sein und Zeit* was deeply initiated into the intellectual climate of the twenties from which one could understand the contagion of this philosophy far beyond the field of philosophy itself. Thus Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker candidly admits on Heidegger’s 60th birthday that, “. . . I began to read *Sein und Zeit*, which had just recently appeared, while I was still a student. Today I can assert with a clear conscience that, strictly speaking, I understood none of it. But I could not escape the feeling, and would still concede today that here and here alone are those tasks of thought attacked which I divined in the background of modern theoretical physics.”

Such pre-philosophic “transferals” came to be in the milieu of a *Zeitgeist* which Paul Hünherfeld recently portrayed in his Heidegger biography. The mundane modes of being of the “they,” the prevalent concepts of the cultural criticism from Oswald Spengler to Alfred Weber found their ontological legitimation here. To this corresponded the Lutheran radicality in the projection of “authentic” human existence which secured its wholeness in the anticipation of death. Meanwhile this Protestantism at the zero point of secularization yields at the beginning of the thirties to a decisionism which struts on in antique garb, purified of Kierkegaard and theological remnants. Even in 1935, on the occasion of an explication of Sophocles, the terminology is the same: “The mighty one, the creator, who marches out into the un-said, breaks open the un-thought, who forces the un-done and makes the unseen appear, this violent one is continuously in jeopardy.” If the subject which would ground itself already experiences its own impotence there, then henceforth “Being” completely wins its precedence. From its own hands human existence

must receive its own fate. Mankind's name is now shepherd and guardian of Being. He may dwell in language as in the house of Being and is called to the protection of the self-granting, [*Sich-Gewährenden*] and so forth.

If one approaches the "turn" as it were from without, following the guidance of the self-transforming qualities of language then the "turn" is shown as a procedure for which parallels to the spiritual life history of his contemporaries practically jump forward. Gottfried Benn travels the path from the cultivation of the new German man for the expressive world of art as pure form to the "denial of history." Ernst Jünger moves from the total mobilization of the workers to the hidden freedom of the forest wanderer who knows himself free "from the technical-political foregrounds and their groupings." Even with the likes of a Carl Schmitt one can observe a similar withdrawal from involvement, the sublimation of original positions onto a higher and at the same time more unsettled level. This internalization occurs with Heidegger in the name of an "overcoming of metaphysics." This is also the title of writings from the years 1936 to 1946 which testify to the temporal-historical motives for the "turn;" namely, the disappointment with that which at first promised to be the German awakening, the invasion of the violent one onto the unthought. In the meantime another act of violence, above all the totality of the world war in the vanguard, unmasked the new order as an accomplice of that which it originally claimed it would overcome. "Some claim that the leaders on their own had arrogated everything to themselves in a blind frenzy of egotistic selfishness and aligned themselves according to their own willfulness. In truth they are the necessary consequences of the fact that the beings [*das Seiende*] have passed over into the mode of madness in which the void [*Leere*] spreads itself..."

Even the change in his own philosophy would therefore have been an occasion for turning around the still dominating transcendental direction of questioning attained after the crossroads of *Sein und Zeit*. Fundamental ontology for its part would then have to have been understood and derived out of the history of the concrete life situation [*Zusammenhang*] for which fundamental ontology was originally intended to create the conditions of possibility. However, Heidegger relativizes philosophy and the subject which futilely attempts to ground itself in a completely different manner—that of the deep-history [*Hintergeschichte*] of the reigning destiny of Being. This history is to be thoughtfully birthed by the poetic word. Heidegger turns to Hölderlin for that dialogue of thinker and poet. Above the mortals (earlier called “human existence”) appear the gods. Under the heavens (earlier called “world”) now rests the earth. The “thing” is now that being which ascends in this “four-fold” [*Vierung*]. The thinker gets involved with “simple things.” In this way exclusively he works against the “subjectivism” of contemporary mankind, against its pernicious will to domination as manifested in “technics” [*Technik*]. Along with the subjective hardening of inherited thought, he, of course, also leaves behind its binding character. The evocation of myth legitimates itself as an exercise. Heidegger wants his thinking understood as “never binding as a statement,” “rather only as a possible occasion to walk the path of correspondence.” Qualifying further, he adds, “The thinking of Being as correspondence is a very confused and very wretched affair.” And yet seldom has the pretention of a thinker been greater.

The fate of the “completed metaphysic” consummates itself in public as technics (objectified nature and reified society are here comprehended together in one term). Meanwhile, metaphysics is already distorted, in secret, into a new salvation among the thinkers. What

is for one is not for the others. Greek tragedy mixes with Breugel's hell to create a vision: "Before Being comes to pass [*sich ereignen*] in its original truth, Being as Will must be broken, the world must be brought to a collapse, the earth laid waste and mankind reduced to mere labor. Only after this decline and then after a long while, does the abrupt moment of the beginning come to pass [*sich ereignen*]. . . . The decline has already occurred. The consequences of this occurrence are the events of the world history of this century. They are only the discharges of that which has already ended. Its course is ordered historico-technically in accordance with the meaning of the last stage of metaphysics. The apocalypse gives signs of atomic catastrophe. "The laboring animal is given over to the sway of its genitals in order that it tear itself to pieces and nullifies the nullity of nothingness [*das nichtige Nichts vernichten*]."

Since the 18th century, the force of criticism has been summoned against the crisis. Criticism is also opposed to metaphysics. And from Kant up till Husserl criticism in philosophy has, just as in the theater from Schiller up till Brecht, remained determined according to the model of the court of law. In the conflict of contesting parties, the truth is separated from mere allegation. Heidegger, however appoints myth, not criticism, to the role of counter weight to the crisis, and counter-concept to metaphysics. Also, his stance is not critical as regards the source of all his experience. Linguistic criticism is as alien to him as the query of Karl Kraus: "Is there a stronger protection imaginable in moral questions than linguistic doubt?" (Incidentally, Karl Korn chose this question as the motto to an investigation that subjects Heidegger's speech itself to linguistic criticism.)

Heidegger's thought can perhaps be indirectly characterized by what it does not perform. As little as it concerns itself with social praxis, just so little does it agree with the interpretation of the results of science. Instead, his thought establishes the metaphysical restrictedness of their foundations and abandons them, together with "technics" in general, to "madness." For the shepherds dwell beyond the wasteland of the desolated earth. . . .

The category of greatness is in a peculiar situation these days. Its fragility is reflected in our inability to erect monuments, not even for the truest passion of our age. As Rett Butler's trial of the "unknown political prisoners" shows. The history of Heidegger's influence is great, and many say the work itself is great. Perhaps precisely because of Heidegger, can we understand why our relations to greatness are so troubled.

ANOTHER MYTH OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY²

One has become accustomed to the fact that philosophy no longer represents the knowledge of the time, as the ancients still would have had it. Philosophy has acclimated itself, as it were, to less lofty altitudes. In the shape of logical positivism, philosophy has dedicated itself primarily to logic and philosophy of science, taking as its task the grounding of the most advanced type of science. On the other hand, philosophy limits itself, in the shape of historical humanism, to the communication of tradition [*Vermittlung von Bildung*] with the skeptical qualification that truth escapes systematization. In the first shape, truth is sought in calculation, in the second, in the pedagogical efficacy of comprehensible inherited truths. It is more or less in this manner that philosophy comports itself in the daily workings of the university. Philosophy is founded as one discipline among many, as an academic institution possessing that unquestioned

respectability appropriate to any institutional entity. However, this tranquility is disturbed when out of the midst of this competent and sincere effort a voice is heard that flatly declares that henceforth philosophy must consume itself in the preparation of "mythical poeticizing." Certainly, this is nothing new. What is new, however, is that it is so brusquely called by its proper name. Walter Bröcker develops the thesis—with as much skill as scholarliness in a small, generally comprehensible paper—that in the place formerly held by philosophy there must now enter a new mythology; the preamble of a future mythos that will deliver the world from all evil.

Bröcker works from the assumption that scientific experience, even on the level of methodological perfection, will never be able to achieve more than mere fragmentary knowledge. Fragmentary because, though able to appropriate one piece of the world after the other, it can never have the world as a whole for its object.

The sciences are concerned with actual events in the world, natural as well as historical, but not, however, with the world as such. The torso of its sequences of knowledge must be complemented by something other than science as such. Again—for once did myth reflect this totality. It was first with the development of sciences in early Greece, initially with mathematics, grammar, medicine and music, that the world immediately grasped in mythical events was shattered into the world-fragments of methodical objectification. The need remains as well to grasp the world as a whole, at least through concepts, if not intuitively—and to be grasped by it: the need for metaphysics. For "metaphysics is the attempt at compensating for the damage arising from the transition from myth to physics." Positivism discovered, however, that this attempt was a failed one. This is the central discovery that Bröcker builds upon in the elegant philosophical-historical excursus in his two

chapters on dialectics and positivism. In the end, all chains of thought lead to the same point; namely, that the contradiction is irresolvable between the fragmentary experience of the sciences and that philosophical dialectic that wants to piece together the fragments by means of concepts into a totality. On this contradiction metaphysics and philosophy in general run a-ground. "The dialectic complements the fragment of experience and makes a totality. But the continuing experience is just as well a complement of the fragment—of course not to [create] a totality, but to [create] a new fragment. Precisely because they both complement the same thing but do not create the same thing they must necessarily come into contradiction with one another."

Admittedly, this positivistic discovery does not change Bröcker himself into a positivist. He does not contest philosophy's claim to secure the world as a whole; he only contests the possibility of doing so in a rational manner. Precisely because the need is justified to somehow find out what the world actually is, and because it cannot be satisfied scientifically or, in Bröcker's opinion, philosophically, there remains only the return to myth—to just that fundamental shape of an immediate and intuitable presence of the cosmos. The essence of things is no longer to be known, it is to be celebrated. And philosophy is now only entertained to complete its own liquidation.

The presupposition of positivism is that no truth be attributed to metaphysics. But since this assertion is itself metaphysical, positivism cannot ground itself either. If metaphysics is untrue, then there is no possibility for proving this equally metaphysical thesis that only the sciences make true statements.

This argumentation of Bröcker may be successful against the positivism of a Comte, but it does not touch logical positivism in its contemporary form. The latter abstains from any judgment on the validity of non-

scientific statements. It only counters the accord to name only those statements "correct" which follow from determinate, precisely established procedures. Objections against this kind of positivism should rather be pointed in the opposite direction, that is, against the fact that it fails to reflect upon its own foundations thereby prematurely immobilizing the business of rationalization on mere "resolve." The arbitrary self-limitation of positivistic thinking demands its price. It possesses the usefulness of an excellent instrument, but pays for this usefulness by being able to be employed only as an instrument. Meanwhile the decisions as to when, on what and for what one should employ this scientific apparatus—decisions which to begin with are of greatest import in the human and social sciences—remain given for the positivist. Therefore, they must be made blindly and precisely without that convincing rationality upon which positivism lays utmost significance. The positivistic clarification which reflects upon itself inevitably leads to dialectical clarification. It is just this positivism which Bröcker needs to undermine.

Therefore Bröcker stays with the older positivism and proves that which no positivist today would deny; namely, that there can be other modes of experience in addition to the experience of the sciences. To this he attaches a conclusion which is as opaque as it is consequential: if the sciences open only *one* path of true experience beside others, and if the metaphysics that was to merely complement the inadequacy of these sciences is invalid, then the path is clear for an experience that requires no metaphysical complement—"but here ends not only metaphysics, but also philosophy. Philosophy can demonstrate the possibility of such experience, but it cannot bring it about. That must rather be left to poetry." It neither follows, however, that out of the inner contradictions of metaphysical thinking comes the end of philosophy as such, nor that from the possibility of an experience outside of the scientific, empirical

realm arises the inevitability of an experience within poetic mythology.

The chain of proof just breaks accidentally. The expulsion from the temple of the arduously attained autonomy of rational thinking is not to be enforced by rational means, the abdication of philosophy not forced by philosophical means. In the end, philosophy bows only to its opposite, the dictate, rational autonomy only to blind authority.

The demand of authority is of a three-fold kind. Because the last great attempt to rationally secure the world as a whole, the Hegelian, failed, philosophy as such is supposed to have come to an end. The world as whole is now supposed to open itself, but only through the mythical insight [*Blick*] wherein the reigning gods are revealed. That is the first demand. It is determined by referring to the authority of Homer. Not just any myth should return, but rather the Greek, that mythical world from the poetry of Homer. But since when is Homer binding for us? Bröcker himself asks this question and determines the second demand by reference to a further authority, namely, that Hölderlin also says so. In Homer, Hölderlin finds the holy soberness of the myth developed in exemplary fashion, therefore, he invokes the redeeming gods of Greece. One asks, if one already has Homer, then why Hölderlin? Nonetheless, the third demand is also determined by reference to authority. For Heidegger says so. Because “contemporary thinker of the stature of a Heidegger dare accept such poetic experiences not as inconsequential aesthetic play, but rather as a statement on the true world,” for this reason there must surely be something eschatologically serious in Hölderlin’s poets’ words. Heidegger makes use of these without inhibition and names the world the “four-fold” of earth and heaven, the divine and the mortal. He makes his own thought over into poetry in order that the presence of gods and

the unscathed [*Heile*] world also comes to be for the rest of mankind as they supposedly were as reality for Hölderlin from the beginning.

The last chapter of the work at hand bears the noteworthy title of "Heidegger's Mythology" and not that, as even with Schelling, of Philosophy of Mythology. The book admittedly closes with some faint doubt about the guarantee of deliverance, a guarantee which appeals exclusively to the notion that where danger is, the deliverance grows. Heidegger has not actually properly demonstrated the necessity with which the promised turn of the shameful oblivion of Being is to be executed—"but he has not yet spoken his final word." The trustworthiness of a coming myth will be guaranteed by Homer, the trustworthiness of Homer by Hölderlin, the trustworthiness of Hölderlin by Heidegger, and Heidegger's trustworthiness, in the end, by the fact that we believe in him.

Yet this meta-philosophical orthodoxy appeals not to mankind's faith but to his thinking. Yet, it wants to change the world through "remembrance" and overcome the plight of humanity. In making this claim, this orthodoxy challenges itself to be judged reasonable. But what then becomes apparent?

According to this teaching, myth will reestablish that whole which the sciences once had to disintegrate in order to do their work. Myth is earmarked for this task because it precedes all science and philosophy and thereby spares us the effort of raising the world philosophically to the concept through the results of the sciences at hand: "The fragmentariness of the eternally incomplete process of scientific experience can then no longer be disturbing. For this progress can teach nothing new with regard to that which is truly important." But how can a knowledge, introduced for the advantage of dispensing with the progress of scientific experience,

a knowledge which artificially keeps itself ignorant of all scientific findings in any way circumvent the ills of a world which so obviously fails when faced with just these results of science? Consider: on the one hand our world is so extremely rationalized that it must almost completely disintegrate natural relations under penalty of a regression into barbarism. On the other hand, our society is not rationalized enough to authenticate the rationality of the whole and to retrieve those casualties who fall victim to the half-rationalization of a managed world. How is such thinking to be able to counter this world? This thinking not only does not go beyond the threshold of scientific experience, the point of entry of rationalization, but does not even cross it. It may overcome positivism of the old style, namely, that kind in which the sciences as such understood themselves metaphysically; meanwhile, however, the sciences remain as they are. What follows from them also remains unchanged, namely, the circumstances in which we concretely just manage to exist. How can this teaching change our lives—which is what it promises to do?

One need not be a sceptic to see the menacing indication that Christian theology henceforth should accept the heathen Christianity of the mythologising religion of a Hölderlin. One need not be a sceptic to recall to mind what political consequences can follow from such myths given the social conditions of the twentieth century. Ever since Sorel recommended the admittedly earth-bound myth of the general strike in order to achieve the unchaining of the masses and the development of their *elan vital*, ever since his recommendation later spilled over in no small way into political praxis, it has been demonstrated historically that the apparent originality of the counterfeited myths of manipulation of the powerful are decaying and that their promise of salvation can be realized [only] in terrible perversions. Certainly, the actualized myth's meaning is distorted. So one says

afterwards. But one also knows this beforehand; or one should have known it. The re-mythification of a society whose institutions are dependent upon extreme rationality measurably raises the dangers already existing.

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NOTES

1. See *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, Volume 6, Number 1, Winter 1977 for an interview between Herbert Marcuse and Frederick Olafson regarding Heidegger's politics, pp. 28—40.—Editor.
2. A Treatise by Walter Bröcker, "Dialektik, Positivismus, Mythologie," Frankfurt/Main 1958.