

# Modern Intellectual History

<http://journals.cambridge.org/MIH>

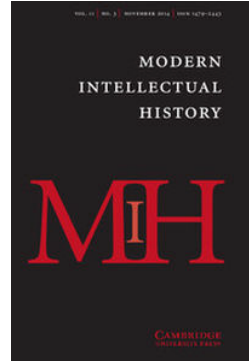
Additional services for *Modern Intellectual History*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



---

## REWORDING THE PAST: THE POSTWAR PUBLICATION OF A 1938 LECTURE BY MARTIN HEIDEGGER

SIDONIE KELLERER

Modern Intellectual History / Volume 11 / Issue 03 / November 2014, pp 575 - 602  
DOI: 10.1017/S1479244314000195, Published online: 10 October 2014

**Link to this article:** [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S1479244314000195](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S1479244314000195)

### How to cite this article:

SIDONIE KELLERER (2014). REWORDING THE PAST: THE POSTWAR PUBLICATION OF A 1938 LECTURE BY MARTIN HEIDEGGER. *Modern Intellectual History*, 11, pp 575-602 doi:10.1017/S1479244314000195

**Request Permissions :** [Click here](#)

## REWORDING THE PAST: THE POSTWAR PUBLICATION OF A 1938 LECTURE BY MARTIN HEIDEGGER\*

SIDONIE KELLERER

Universität Siegen, Germany

E-mail: [sidonie.kellerer@philosophie.uni-siegen.de](mailto:sidonie.kellerer@philosophie.uni-siegen.de)

---

*In 1950 Martin Heidegger published his 1938 lecture “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” in the essay collection Holzwege. He did so in order to document his “inner resistance” after the mid-1930s against the Nazi regime. This text has since been seen as evidence for Heidegger’s early rejection of National Socialism and his refusal of a modern ideology that culminated in the totalitarian system. In spite of its influence, the published text has never been compared to the original lecture delivered in 1938. The assessment has now been made, and the differences between the two documents are a striking testimony to the artful falsifications that Heidegger used to re-establish his reputation and philosophical standing after the collapse of the Nazi system.*

### HEIDEGGER’S SELF-DESCRIPTION AFTER THE WAR

After World War II, Heidegger insisted that many of his texts written after the notorious “rectorate address” in 1933, “The Self-Assertion of the German University”—the inaugural talk he delivered as rector of the University of Freiburg—were confrontations with the modern age in the context of his adverse response to technology, and especially to the age’s founder, Descartes, and that

---

\* This study has been made possible by a 2010 grant by the German Literary Archive in Marbach in order to study some of its Heidegger documents, a grant which resulted in a first report in German: Sidonie Kellerer, “Heideggers Maske: ‘Die Zeit des Weltbildes’, Metamorphose eines Textes,” *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte*, 5/2 (2011), 109–20. I am also much indebted to Till van Rahden for numerous discussions on the topic and for his helpful advice. To Gaëtan Pégny and Cynthia Miller-Idriss I am grateful for their thorough reading of the text and various improvements and for useful suggestions.

these confrontations were critical of the Nazi regime.<sup>1</sup> To demonstrate this he referred especially to the talk “Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik”—“The Founding of the Modern World Picture through Metaphysics”—which he had delivered on 9 June 1938 as part of a Freiburg lecture series. He published this text in 1950 in his essay collection *Holzwege* under the title “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” an allusion to the double connotation of *Weltbild*, conception of the world and picture of the world.<sup>2</sup> The lecture had not been published before 1950, but the original manuscript is preserved among the Heidegger papers at the German Literary Archives, Marbach am Neckar.<sup>3</sup> It is roughly twenty pages long, accompanied by fifteen “appendices,” about equally long, that are commentaries on various passages of the text.

As early as December 1945, Heidegger wrote to his Freiburg colleague Constantin von Dietze, chairman of the committee for purging the university of Nazis, that in the years after 1934 he had repeatedly pointed to the danger of an abandonment of “science” to technology.<sup>4</sup> The term “science” was understood as *Wissenschaft* in the German sense, which, depending on context, comprises both the natural sciences and the humanistic disciplines, often with a semantic resonance of “true knowing” in the sense of Fichte and Hegel.<sup>5</sup> Heidegger explained that in the 1938 talk he did so with special urgency: “In the years 1935 ff., I repeatedly warned—and in summer 1938 described the process in a talk, “The Founding of the Modern World Picture through Metaphysics”—that the sciences [*die Wissenschaften*] were increasingly abandoning themselves to technology. The party understood these attacks *very precisely*.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität,” in Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* (henceforth *GA*), vol. 16 (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), 107–17. For English versions, see Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (New York, 1990), 5–; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 29–.

<sup>2</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” in Heidegger, *Holzwege (1935–1946)*, *GA*, vol. 5 (Frankfurt a. M., 1977; first published 1950), 75–113. The text has appeared twice in English. See Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” in Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge, 2002) 57–86; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” in Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York 1977), 115–54. Quotations in the subsequent text are based on the 2002 publication.

<sup>3</sup> Heidegger, “Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik,” in Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar: A Heid: B 83 (hereafter BnWM). For a transcription see access number A Heid: 2 HS.2004.0052. The documents are publicly accessible at the Marbach.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this discussion, the word “science” and variants are meant to be understood in this broader sense of the German word *Wissenschaft*.

<sup>5</sup> I am thankful to Joel Golb for this note.

<sup>6</sup> Heidegger to Constantin Dietze, 15 Dec. 1945, in Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, ed. Hermann Heidegger, *GA*, vol. 16, 409–15, 412.

To reinforce this account, he pointed out that the day after the talk “a nasty report” had appeared in the Freiburg daily *Der Alemanne*—a *völkisch* publication subtitled, in English translation, “Fighting Paper of the Upper Baden National Socialists.” Following this, Heidegger indicated, nothing was done “on the part of the university against the disparaging of a faculty member.” “At the time I accepted the matter, because I knew from my experience of the rectorate that in such cases nothing could be achieved against the will of the party offices.”<sup>7</sup> If we follow Heidegger’s explanation, then in the waning 1930s he had criticized the regime with the means he knew best, his philosophy. The facts tell a different story.

In the summer of 1937, a year before the Freiburg lecture, a large international Descartes congress was held to commemorate the three-hundredth anniversary of the French philosopher’s *Discours de la méthode*. The Reich Ministry for Science and Education sent a delegation organized in “quasi-military” fashion as, in its words, a “deployment of the German spirit” (*deutscher geistiger Einsatz*).<sup>8</sup> The delegation’s mission was, as its organizer Hans Heyse explained to the Reich Ministry of Education, to assert “the German National Socialist will . . . in and by virtue of the inner confrontation with the prevailing scientific ideology.”<sup>9</sup> This ideological–political mission was reflected a year later in a text written by Franz Böhm, a student of Nazi educator Ernst Krieck, entitled “Anti-Cartesianism: German Philosophy in Resistance.”<sup>10</sup> In his 1933 summer semester seminar on “The Fundamental Question of Philosophy,” Heidegger expressed allegiance to this motto when he disqualified the teaching of Descartes’s philosophy at German universities as “spiritual deprivation.”<sup>11</sup> As in the letter to Dietze, Heidegger paints an entirely different picture in his postwar self-representation: His anti-Cartesian critique of technology is now to be understood as a critique of Nazi Cartesianism. The anti-Cartesianism loudly propagated by the Nazis is turned into its diametrical opposite: a kind of hyper-Cartesianism.

This seeming philosophical turnabout is striking enough to call for a careful second look at “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” and for a thorough comparison of the

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 413.

<sup>8</sup> Víctor Fariás, *Heidegger and Nazism*, ed. Joseph Margolis and Tom Rockmore, trans. from the German by Paul Burrell with the advice of Dominic di Bernardi and from the French by Gabriel R. Ricci (Philadelphia, 1989), 249, 248. Fariás, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989), 331. For the letter see Central State Archives, Potsdam, 70 Re 8.

<sup>9</sup> Fariás, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, 331; Fariás, *Heidegger and Nazism*, 248.

<sup>10</sup> Franz Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus: Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand* (Leipzig, 1938).

<sup>11</sup> Heidegger, *Die Grundfrage der Philosophie*, GA, vol. 36–7 (Frankfurt am Main, 2001), 3–82, 39; *geistige Verlotterung*. English translation in Heidegger, “The Fundamental Question of Philosophy,” in Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington 2010), 3–66, 31, translation modified.

1950 text with the manuscript of Heidegger's 1938 talk. Only such a comparison will permit an answer to the question whether any indication of the change was present, or implicitly present, in the original text of the talk and can clarify the still highly controversial issue of Heidegger's relation to the Nazi movement.

The Freiburg talk is particularly informative not only because Heidegger accorded it special importance for his self-defense after the war but also because it had been a public statement of position in front of hundreds of listeners, giving it more weight in Nazi Germany of the late 1930s than would have been the case with a publication in a philosophical journal. In addition, the talk as it appeared after the war constitutes, in its claims and intention, one of Heidegger's most influential texts. When Otto Pöggeler wrote that "the age of totalitarianism is for Heidegger the age of the last days of metaphysics," he accepted and took over Heidegger's insistence that in his years as Freiburg rector he recognized his political error and understood the Nazi regime as the apogee of the modern age's development.<sup>12</sup> Pöggeler's assessment is in line with the still prevailing perception of Heidegger's critique of technology as the presumed foundation of his "secret resistance" against Nazism.<sup>13</sup>

Our investigation will demonstrate how Heidegger inserted a multitude of subtle but essential changes in the post-war version of his 1938 lecture, and how he managed thus in 1950 to repaint his *Weltbild* and reword what he had propagated during the Nazi era. This may not entirely unmask the master of enigmatic messages, but it will certainly provide new perspectives at a time when discussion of Heidegger is reaching a new climax with the recent publication and current examination of the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger's *Schwarze Hefte*.

## PRE-DATING THE CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY AND THE STATUS OF THE "FINAL EDITION"

It is striking that few questions were raised after Heidegger brought forward his critique of technology in order to demonstrate that he had distanced himself from the regime. Even in its postwar version the 1938 lecture can hardly be seen as a critique of the modern concept of "science," *Wissenschaft*, and of its technologization: the text is anything but clear-cut in this respect. Heidegger sees the human existence rooted on levels deep below scientific rationalism but, central as this message was to his thinking, it did not lead him to reject science and technology when these were serving the nationalist emphasis on blood and soil, and German people's mythical mission. On the contrary, his vehement

<sup>12</sup> Otto Pöggeler, *Philosophie und Politik bei Heidegger* (Freiburg and Munich, 1974), 32.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Polt, *Jenseits von Kampf und Macht: Heideggers heimlicher Widerstand*, in Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, eds., *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 2, *Interpretationen* (*Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, 5) (Munich 2009), 155–86.

anti-Cartesianism in the 1930s—a reduction of the French philosopher to superficial rationality—had been perfectly tuned to the Nazi ideology and its aims and actions. To present it after the war as a critique of Nazism’s hyper-Cartesianism was more than bold. But the turnaround created no major outcry. Even more remarkably, the texts edited by Heidegger after the war were hardly ever compared with their original versions from the Nazi period.

Even a first and superficial comparison shows a striking discrepancy between the original manuscript of 1938 and the published version of 1950: the last and longest of all the nine “appendices” (*Zusätze*) included in *Holzwege* after the main text is absent in the original manuscript.<sup>14</sup> Its insertion into *Holzwege* is crucial—it is in fact a decisive falsification—because only here, and nowhere else in the text, is there an explicit political distancing from Nazism. In all earlier writings Heidegger applied the label “subject,” his characterization of those who lost their deeper roots of existence, to the adherents of the Enlightenment. Now, in this postwar implant he suddenly pairs them with their exact opposites, the followers of Nazi ideology:

The human being as the rational being of the Enlightenment period is no less a subject than the human being who grasps himself as nation, wills himself as a *Volk*,<sup>15</sup> breeds [*züchtet*] himself as a race and, finally, empowers himself as lord of the earth . . . In the planetary imperialism of the technically organized human beings, the subjectivism of human beings reaches its highest point, from which it will descend to the flatness of organized uniformity and establish itself there. This uniformity becomes the surest instrument for total, namely technological, dominion over the earth.<sup>16</sup>

In view of the manifestly later insertion of this passage, a passage central for Heidegger’s postwar exculpation, it is striking to read the explanatory comment in *Holzwege* on “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” that the “appendices were written *at the same time* but not delivered” in the lecture.<sup>17</sup> This is a notable parallel to the debate that the young Jürgen Habermas set off in 1953 after Heidegger’s 1935 lecture course “Introduction to Metaphysics” was first published. The question then arose whether a parenthetical addition qualifying the NS movement as

<sup>14</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 106–11; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 81–4.

<sup>15</sup> The German word *Volk* has a broad semantic range, extending from what in English can be translated simply as “people” or “nation” to the *Volk* of *völkisch* ethnic nationalism, which can in turn be imbued with a “blood-and-soil,” biological–racist tenor. In this essay Heidegger’s term *Volk* will be consistently retained, so that readers can exercise their own judgment as to where it falls within that semantic range. (I am thankful to Joel Golb for this note).

<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 111; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 84. Translation modified.

<sup>17</sup> Heidegger, *GA*, vol. 5, 344; Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 87, my italics.

“encounter of the planetarily determined technique and the man of the modern age” had figured in the course lecture in 1935. Heidegger affirmed this, but his assistant Rainer Marten disagreed.<sup>18</sup> The pattern of Heidegger’s manipulation is evident.

Heidegger’s postwar alteration of his own text is in line with the other, less momentous falsification, the above-cited assertion that nothing had been undertaken “on the part of the university against the disparaging of a faculty member.” Hugo Ott has shown that this assertion was false.<sup>19</sup> In fact, the Freiburg League of National Socialist University Lecturers (NSD-Dozentenbund), of which Heidegger was a member, vehemently and repeatedly protested against the article in question, as had the university’s press office, and they did everything to assure that such attacks against “a party comrade and pioneer of National Socialism” would be refrained from in the future.<sup>20</sup> The interventions belie Heidegger’s postwar explanation to Constantin von Dietze. Moreover, it is remarkable that the article in *Der Alemanne* involved nothing more than an ironically formulated but still mild critique of philosophical arguments that seemed trivial to the writer. Deviations from the party line were not at issue. The fact that dismissive irony was enough, in itself, to spark considerable protest suggests that Heidegger remained a privileged “party comrade” in June 1938. It also shows how necessary it is, despite the now abundant literature on the theme of Heidegger and Nazism, to carefully scrutinize his statements and explanations.

---

<sup>18</sup> See Heidegger, “‘Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten’: Der Philosoph Martin Heidegger über sich und sein Denken,” in *Spiegel*, 23 (1976), 280–7, 284 (the interview took place in 1966). Also published as “Spiegel-Gespräch mit Martin Heidegger (23 September 1966),” in *GA*, vol. 16, 652–83. To be compared to Rainer Marten, “Ein rassistisches Konzept von Humanität,” *Badische Zeitung*, 14/293 (Dec. 1987), 19–20. With regard to this debate see Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), 186–8; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven and London 2000).

<sup>19</sup> See Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life* (New York, 1993; first published 1988), 289–92.

<sup>20</sup> The Dozentenbund was founded in July 1935 on the initiative of Rudolf Hess. See Anne Nagel, “‘Er ist der Schrecken überhaupt der Hochschule’: Der Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Dozentenbund in der Wissenschaftspolitik des Dritten Reichs,” in Joachim Scholtyseck and Christoph Studt, eds., *Universitäten und Studenten im Dritten Reich: Bejahung, Anpassung, Widerstand* (Berlin, 2008), 115–32: “It came into being . . . as an independent branch of the party and comprised all professors, instructors, and assistants at the university who were Nazi Party members” (at 119) and stood alongside the SA and SS in the Nazi hierarchy. The Dozentenbund served “the party’s goal to develop a teaching staff oriented toward Nazism” after the “revolutionary phase at the universities had been completed and the party was striving for further enlargement of its sphere of influence” (at 131). This was realized concretely through “observation and support of younger academics” and “influence on appointments” (at 120).

Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann has underscored in the afterword to *Holzwege* in the *Gesamtausgabe* that this is “no elaborately prepared philological edition,” but a “final” or “last-hand” edition—an “Ausgabe *letzter Hand*.”<sup>21</sup> In line with this statement Petra Jaeger emphasizes in Volume 40 of the *Gesamtausgabe* “the author’s right . . . to add improvements and clarifications in an edition of a lecture.”<sup>22</sup> Heidegger’s opting for a “last-hand” edition is indeed acceptable, but it is admissible only if such an edition does not deceive the reader about the historical facts. Heidegger was seemingly aware of this imperative. The double Volume 36–7 of the edition, entitled *Being and Truth, Sein und Wahrheit*, contains the lectures given in Freiburg in the 1933–4 academic year, and in his afterword the volume’s editor Hartmut Tietjen evokes the “duty of historical truthfulness” in Heidegger’s name.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, in a commemorative text written after Heidegger’s death, Hartmut Buchner explains that when in 1953 the philosopher was preparing *Einführung in die Metaphysik*—a text that was to become the subject of intense controversy—he declined Buchner’s suggestion to offer an explanation of the notorious passage on the “inner greatness and truth” of the Nazi movement by responding, “I can’t do that; it would be historical falsification.”<sup>24</sup>

Heidegger’s own, as well as the editor’s, alleged adherence to historical truth is by itself sufficient reason for a close comparison of the 1938 manuscript and the published version of 1950 and for a careful assessment of the differences. In a comment after the notes on the individual essays in *Holzwege*, Heidegger explains that they “[i]n the meantime . . . have been revised several times and, in places, clarified,” but that “[t]heir structure and respective levels of reflection have been preserved and with them, the differing uses of language.”<sup>25</sup> This simultaneous claim for living thought and historical truthfulness is laudable and it gives added weight to the question: are the divergences between the original manuscript and its 1950 publication just formal or stylistic alterations, or are essential statements being altered?

In the Marbach archives there are first and second handwritten drafts of the 1938 lecture, denoted as such by Heidegger on two folders. The second draft appears to be the talk’s final version, since the date of the talk is written on the manuscript and, beyond this, numerous colored markings appear to have served

<sup>21</sup> Heidegger, *GA*, vol. 5, 381, Von Herrmann’s emphasis.

<sup>22</sup> Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1935), in *GA*, vol. 40 (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), 233–4. See Heidegger’s “preliminary note” (*Vorbemerkung*) preceding page 1; for an English translation, see Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

<sup>23</sup> Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, *GA*, vol. 36–7, 300.

<sup>24</sup> Hartmut Buchner, “Fragmentarisches,” in Günther Neske, ed., *Erinnerung an Martin Heidegger* (Pfullingen, 1977), 47–51, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Heidegger, *GA*, vol. 5, 376; Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, 286.



as intonation aids.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, the second draft is taken as chief reference for the text of the 1938 talk.

Final changes in a philosopher's work may be an important matter. For this very reason they must be identified and need to be compared to earlier statements. There has been an animated, often polemical, discussion of the development and the implications of Heidegger's thinking, which makes the absence of a historical-critical edition of his collected works a serious matter and necessitates a careful comparative analysis.

### REFLECTION ON MODERNITY AND "THE SUPREME REALIZATION OF GENUINE PRACTICE"

As background for the subsequent comparison of the original and the postwar version, this section outlines the structure of the 1938 lecture. Heidegger's discourse is offered as an exercise in "meditation" or "mindfulness," *Besinnung*, on the "essence of modernity."<sup>27</sup> It is focused on "research" as one of five enumerated "essential manifestations" of the modern age.<sup>28</sup> To grasp the essence of the age one must, as he states, uncover the "conception of beings [*Seiende*] and of truth" on which modern science is based.<sup>29</sup> The consideration of science leads then to the central question, that of the "essential ground of modernity." In a gradual move to deeper contemplations, Heidegger proceeds from the "manifestations" of the modern age to its "metaphysical ground."<sup>30</sup>

He anchors the "completion of [the] modern essence" of "science" in the present and indicates thereby that he is speaking at a crucial historical moment.<sup>31</sup> At the outset of the talk he states calmly that modern science has begun "to enter the decisive phase of its history"; but then the ominous accents accumulate.<sup>32</sup> We read that "modernity is racing towards the fulfillment of its essence with a speed unrecognized by its participants."<sup>33</sup> Finally, near the lecture's end, the increasing

---

<sup>26</sup> I thank Ulrich von Bülow, director of the manuscript division of the German Literary Archives, for this information.

<sup>27</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 96; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 73, translation modified.

<sup>28</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 77; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 59, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 75; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 57, translation modified.

<sup>29</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 76; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 58.

<sup>30</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 87; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 66.

<sup>31</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 86; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 65.

<sup>32</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 84; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 64.

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 94; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 71.

pathos of Heidegger's diction is accompanied by an unmistakable evocation of the deed, struggle and battle.

The linkage between science and practice is, as will be seen, a central argument of the lecture. As in his rectoral address, Heidegger sees his consideration of the age's essence "as the highest realization of genuine practice."<sup>34</sup> Confrontation with this particular era, the modern age, is for him—other than his meditative *Besinnung* would seem to suggest—not a theoretical but a practical task. As he notes in the first appendix, "in the future" the modern age must finally "be resisted in its essence."<sup>35</sup> The call for action is already manifest in the terminology Heidegger uses to characterize this meditation. He declares that "courage" is required to contemplate the metaphysical ground of the modern age and that this is not "bearable . . . by everyone."<sup>36</sup> The philosopher emphasizes—and he makes this clear at the very beginning of the lecture—that the age's ontological study is closely bound to action, that "thinking" and "deciding" must balance each other.<sup>37</sup> Towards the end his message turns into glaring emphasis on action. In line with his rectoral address, Heidegger understands the age's essence as "the highest realization of genuine practice," the relationship between science and practice emerges thus as the lectures decisive point.<sup>38</sup>

Although he approaches the age's essence by way of the character of modern science, Heidegger does not mention the human being in the first half of the talk. Rather than starting out with the implications for man of the advance of modern science, he moves towards them in a crescendo. Until the middle of his talk his aim remains concealed as he waits to substantiate the argument. But then he declares that at a certain stage in modern science "a human being of another stamp" comes forward.<sup>39</sup> This points to the consequences for man of the understanding of modern science on a level far beyond the essence of science itself. Indeed, and this is "decisive," "the original basis" of the modern age rests

---

<sup>34</sup> Heidegger, "Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933)," *GA*, vol. 16, 107–17, 110; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 32; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (New York, 1990), 7, translation modified.

<sup>35</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 89; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 73.

<sup>36</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 75, 96; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 57, 73.

<sup>37</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 96; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 73, translation modified.

<sup>38</sup> Heidegger, "Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933)," 100; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 32, translation modified.

<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 85; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 64.

on the fact that “man’s essence altogether transforms itself in that he becomes a subject.”<sup>40</sup>

Heidegger aims at this anthropological shift, crucial to the modern age, and at a new, closely related “conception of what is.”<sup>41</sup> This shift is entwined with the “world picture” formula which gives it the sharpest terminological acuity.<sup>42</sup> When he mentions the “human being” first, the power-related terminology surges and piles up: “mastery” “disposability,” “being armed,” “conquest,” “rule.”<sup>43</sup>

In this climax the lecture leads into Heidegger’s investigation of the “human being,” and, with the human being, the dimension of power in the modern attitude towards the world. “Action” is at the center of this thematic complex, while it remains implicit in the talk. The young listeners in 1938 may have had little premonition of their impending fate, but they will hardly have failed to hear the call to arms in Heidegger’s meditation. The divergences between the lecture and its 1950 version will throw added light upon this matter.

#### THE AFFIRMATION IN 1938 OF THE RECTORATE ADDRESS

That Heidegger would pass off a postwar addition, the critical reference to the self-breeding race and planetary imperialism, as written at the time is remarkable enough (see p. 579 above). Yet another divergence is equally notable: the fourth appendix to the original manuscript contains an affirmative reference to the 1933 rectorate address and it was omitted in the *Holzwege* volume without comment.

Silvio Vietta, who had access to the original text of the 1938 lecture and had been close to Heidegger even before becoming one of his students, referred in 1989 to the fourth appendix and argued that it should be read as a critique of the dominance of calculating thought and that in the end it represented a “remarkable self-critique.”<sup>44</sup> If this is so, why did Heidegger eliminate it when in the immediate postwar years he tried to free himself from the stigma of National Socialism and in doing so focused on the 1938 lecture?

Ultimately the appendix was made accessible, fifty years later in Document 166 of Volume 16 of the *Gesamtausgabe* titled “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft

---

<sup>40</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 88; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 66, translation modified.

<sup>41</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 88; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 67: *Auffassung des Seienden*.

<sup>42</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 88; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 67.

<sup>43</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 85, *Beherrschung* at 86, *Verfügbarkeit* at 89, *Gerüstetsein* at 94, *Herrschaft* at 101; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 64, 65, 67, 71, 76.

<sup>44</sup> Silvio Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen, 1989), 32.

(9. Juni 1938)” —“Meditation on Science (June 1938).”<sup>45</sup> Even then—sixty-two years after the talk was delivered—readers were given no explanation why this part of the manuscript was left out in 1950. Moreover, as the comparison to the original shows, the text published in the year 2000 differs from the original in details which defused the original message somewhat and brought it into line with Vietta’s judgment. Certain underlines in the manuscript were not—as should be expected—reproduced, and the last two sentences were additions not present in the original version: “The political concept of science is only a coarse and self-misunderstanding mutation [*Abart*; in the Nazi period this biologicistic term had profoundly racist connotations] of the essential character of modern science [*Wesenscharakter der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft*]. This is namely a mode [*Weise*] of technology.”<sup>46</sup>

Heidegger’s claim to historical truth is here abandoned. The title of Document 166 is misleading in that it places the entire text in 1938, and the addition of the two sentences is no merely formal change, it is substantive in suggesting a rejection of technology that is also critical of the Nazi regime. The very volume of the *Gesamtausgabe* meant to place the “controversy on a new textual basis”<sup>47</sup> does not reflect the historical truth.

The appendix contains the statement that the “[rectorate] address is a *conscious* [*wissentlich*] leap over the modern age” and not, as Vietta transcribed it, a “*scientific* [*wissenschaftlich*] leap.”<sup>48</sup> Heidegger’s characterization agrees with his statement in the preceding sentence that the 1938 talk “does not contradict what ‘The Self-Assertion of the German University’ (1933) says and calls for.”<sup>49</sup> The statement is confirmed again a few lines down when the philosopher states that the “metaphysical basic position” of the rectorate address “is the same . . . position from which the present meditation . . . is carried out.”<sup>50</sup> The underline in the manuscript emphasizes the identity of the basic approach in the two talks, and it is likewise absent in Volume 16 of the *Gesamtausgabe*.

A careful reading of the fourth appendix, as formulated in 1938, thus reveals no distance from the position of 1933. The fact that the “talk . . . is not concerned with the essence of modern science, and that means Descartes,” is no retrospectively acknowledged oversight. Indeed the central concern of the rectorate address has

---

<sup>45</sup> Heidegger, “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft (9. Juni 1938),” in Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA, vol. 16, 349. See the appendix to this essay.

<sup>46</sup> Heidegger, “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft (9. Juni 1938).”

<sup>47</sup> S. Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus*, 32.

<sup>48</sup> Heidegger, “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft (9. Juni 1938),” added emphases. Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus*, 32.

<sup>49</sup> Heidegger, “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft (9. Juni 1938).”

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*; and Heidegger, “Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik,” 10.

been “a future science . . . that again becomes a [form of] knowing [*ein Wissen*].”<sup>51</sup> In contrast, “here,” i.e. in the talk of 1938, “a [form of] science is understood that evidently will be with us for a long time—a science that has dissolved the knowing in science.”<sup>52</sup> In 1938, why did Heidegger prefer placing his emphasis on “present science”? Had he understood that the future science for the German *Volk* which he envisaged in 1933 had by now become impossible in a Germany of ubiquitous persecution, racism, and terror, as he repeatedly insisted after the war? Certainly not, for in the rectorate address, Heidegger had underscored that “configuration [*Ausgestaltung*] . . . of the original essence of science” was not impending.<sup>53</sup> On the contrary,

if . . . the Greeks needed three centuries just to put the *question* of what knowledge is on a proper footing and secure path, then *we* certainly cannot think that the elucidation and unfolding of the essence of the German university can occur in the present or in the coming semester.<sup>54</sup>

In short, not removing the fourth appendix in 1950 would have belied the then central assertion that in 1938 Heidegger had abandoned his earlier stance. When the appendix was finally published, in the year 2000, the reference to the rectorate address was toned down and two extra sentences were inserted to provide the semblance of disaffection with the Nazi regime.

#### FROM THE WORKER AND THE SOLDIER IN 1938 TO THE TECHNOLOGIST IN 1950

The important fourth appendix confirms that—contrary to the postwar claim and contrary to the still prevalent opinion—the convictions of the rectoral address remained unchanged in Heidegger’s thinking five years later. This is equally borne out by another, less conspicuous but no less characteristic, distortion of the 1938 text. In “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” and in the original we read that modern science “produces . . . men of another stamp [*einen anderen Schlag von Menschen*].” “The scholar” (*der Gelehrte*), Heidegger indicates, now disappears

<sup>51</sup> Heidegger, “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft (9. Juni 1938)”; and Heidegger, “Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik,” 10.

<sup>52</sup> Heidegger, *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*; and Heidegger, *Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik*, 10.

<sup>53</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 115; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 37; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 12, translation modified.

<sup>54</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 115; Heidegger’s emphasis; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 37; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 12.

and he is replaced by “the researcher” (*Forscher*), engaged in “research projects.”<sup>55</sup> “These . . . give his work its cutting atmosphere [*scharfe Luft*].” A sequence of antitheses demonstrates the replacement: “scientists” versus “scholars,” “conferences” and “congresses” versus the “library,” the “cutting atmosphere” versus “an increasingly thinner and emptier romanticism of scholarship and the university.”<sup>56</sup> In this manner, Heidegger describes the arrival of a new type of man: the researcher “of his own accord [*von sich aus*]” presses “necessarily into the sphere of the essential figure of the worker and of the soldier, in the essential sense.”<sup>57</sup> But here is the alteration: the worker and the soldier are absent in the *Holzwege*, where we now read that “of his own accord, the researcher necessarily presses into the sphere of the essential figure of the technologist [*Techniker*] in the essential sense.”<sup>58</sup>

Silvio Vietta, who knew the original manuscript, argued that the original formulation and its divergence from the postwar text can be understood in terms of Heidegger’s critique of “Fascism’s tendency toward forced conformity [*Gleichschaltung*],” as manifest in “continuous uniformization and militarization, and the definition, implemented in fascism, of man as a ‘worker’.”<sup>59</sup> But then again, why should Heidegger have eliminated the worker and the soldier after the war? Everybody knew that he had extolled them as the pillars of the regime and its mythical mission, and in the 1938 lecture he endorsed emphatically the message of the rectorate address, the message that labor service, military service, and “knowledge service” (*Wissensdienst*) constitute “one formative force.”<sup>60</sup> According to Heidegger, the unity of these three *Volksdienste*, i.e. national services, results from the definition of the “essence of science” in a presumed ancient Greek sense—first and foremost as an acceptance of fate.<sup>61</sup> Heidegger knew what he was doing when, after the war, he replaced his former heroes by the villain of the modern age, the technologist. It was a roundabout reversal of the facts.

Few understood then, and few recognize now, that the same Heidegger who expressed deep reservations against inauthentic rationality, accepted science and

---

<sup>55</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 85; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 64.

<sup>56</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 85; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 64, translation modified.

<sup>57</sup> BnWM, 15, left side; the underline is Heidegger’s. The manuscript pages are large and folded in the middle with left and right sides used as separate pages.

<sup>58</sup> GA, vol. 5, 85; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 64, translation modified.

<sup>59</sup> Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus*, 36.

<sup>60</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 116, Heidegger’s emphasis; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 37; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 12.

<sup>61</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 115; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 37; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 12, translation modified.

technology once it was subservient to *Volk* and *Führer*.<sup>62</sup> His very conception of *Wissenschaft* rests on the propagated acceptance of *völkisch* fate, and of the fact that in the end the “ultimate necessities and afflictions of *völkisch* and state existence [*völklich-staatlichen Dasein*] are the same for all members of the *Volk*.”<sup>63</sup> Because no one is meant to separate himself from “the historical–spiritual world of the *Volk*,” “knowledge service” is not separable from either military or labor service (*Arbeitsdienst*).<sup>64</sup> Labor service furthers the bond with what Heidegger refers to as the *Volksgemeinschaft*—a central Nazi term designating the unified racial–national community—as does military service, which assures “the honor and the destiny [*Geschick*] of the nation in the midst of the other peoples [*Völker*].”<sup>65</sup> Refusal of military service is rejection of the nation’s “destiny,” it is “inauthentic” behavior. For Heidegger in the year 1940, the alignment of the researcher with the worker and soldier is supreme national duty, so much that the motorization of the German army “becomes a metaphysical act.”<sup>66</sup>

#### AUTHENTIC VERSUS INAUTHENTIC MODERNITY

“Research,” the form of knowledge Heidegger views as specifically modern, is distinguished, he states, by its objectifying approach to nature. Modern man, “the calculating man,” strives for certainty.<sup>67</sup> He objectifies nature through a process of “re-presenting” it (*Vor-stellen*), creating an “image,” an “idea,” in order to control it.<sup>68</sup> Turning nature into an object makes it usable or disposable. He describes this form of knowledge, this typically modern “representing,” as taking

---

<sup>62</sup> See Emmanuel Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars of 1933–1935*, trans. M. B. Smith (New Haven and London, 2009; first published 2005), 270.

<sup>63</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 115; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 37; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 12, translation modified.

<sup>64</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 114; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 36; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 11, translation modified.

<sup>65</sup> Heidegger, “Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität (27. Mai 1933),” 113; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1993), 35; Heidegger, *The Self-Assertion of the German University* (1990), 10, translation modified.

<sup>66</sup> Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Der Europäische Nihilismus*, GA, vol. 48, ed. Petra Jaeger (Frankfurt am Main, 1986; lecture dating from 1940), 333. See Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, 271.

<sup>67</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 87; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 66, translation modified.

<sup>68</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 87; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 66, translation modified.

a stance of power against nature. While the talk progresses the term “the conquest of the world as picture” permeates it with increasing pathos of action.<sup>69</sup>

The transformation that makes man a subject results, as Heidegger explains, from his attitude of representing and objectifying the world, the conception that he terms “world picture.” Heidegger strives to elucidate this central term through what he calls “listening” to language. What truly matters is not the concept of reproduction or representation, but the perception of reality as a single entity, be it in listening to language or in viewing the world. Yet, he qualifies, the term also reveals something about the world’s meaning “as a system.”<sup>70</sup> In this context, in the sixth appendix Heidegger explores the relationship between “re-presentation”—again, *Vor-Stellung*, with its connotation of “placing before”—and the systematics that result from this for what is being “re-presented”: “When the world becomes a picture, the system takes over, and not only in thinking.”<sup>71</sup>

The argumentation suggests that Heidegger does not reject the modern system as such, but only “the possibility of its degeneration [*Entartung*] into the externality of a system that is merely fabricated and pieced together.”<sup>72</sup> This matches a similar statement in the second appendix, where we read that the “word ‘operation’ [or “enterprise,” “constant activity”; *Betrieb*] is not meant here in a pejorative sense,” since *Betrieb* must be distinguished from “mere *Betrieb*” and *Betriebsamkeit*—“bustle,” “stir,” or, as the official English translation would have it, “industrious activity.”<sup>73</sup> What must “at all times be combated [*bekämpft*]” is the latter possibility, not *Betrieb* as such.<sup>74</sup>

Evidently in his 1938 talk Heidegger does not reject per se the modern type of man, the researcher. The rejection emerges only in the postwar version of the text, and a brief alteration near the middle of “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” attests to the change. In a succinct summary of what is said up to this point Heidegger offers a concise self-reflection. He asks what, in fact, had triggered his consideration—why he, the speaker, had undertaken an examination of the modern age in the first place.<sup>75</sup> In 1938, the passage reads as follows:

But why is it that, in interpreting [*Auslegung*] a historical age, we inquire into its “world picture”? Is this, then, self-evident? Indeed it is—to the extent that we think in, precisely,

<sup>69</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 94; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 69.

<sup>70</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 89; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 67.

<sup>71</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 101; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 76, translation modified.

<sup>72</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 101; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 76.

<sup>73</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 97; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 73, 74, translation modified.

<sup>74</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 97; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 74.

<sup>75</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 88–9; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 67.



a modern way [*neuzeitlich*]. What, then, is it—a world picture? Obviously, a picture “of” the world.<sup>76</sup>

The same passage in “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” forms a notable contrast:

But why is it that, in interpreting a historical age, we inquire into its world picture? Does every historical epoch have its world picture—and indeed in such a way that each time it tries to gain that picture? Or is it, already and only, a modern kind of representing that inquires into a world picture?

What is it—a “world picture”? Obviously, a picture of the world.<sup>77</sup>

In the postwar version in the *Holzwege* the self-reference is removed. Instead of saying “we think,” he now speaks of the “modern kind of re-presenting,” which makes for a more objective, distanced form of description. He goes a step further and in the same part of the text blurs his earlier clear-cut avowal of the modern age and the new “type of being human.”<sup>78</sup>

The distinction between an authentic and an inauthentic modern age goes along with a chauvinistic argumentation. When, in 1938 and in the postwar text, Heidegger speaks of “the uniqueness of the systematics” and “greatness” at work in German idealism, he denies Descartes this greatness, and instead charges him with “degeneration [*Entartung*] into externality.”<sup>79</sup> Under Nazism, the term *Entartung* received, as Cornelia Schmitz-Berning observes, “its special emphasis . . . through the context of related actions.” Before the Nazi period, the “assessment of biological and cultural degeneration” referred to “more or less utopian reflections,” whereas “in the Nazi system it became the legitimation of laws and state measures,”<sup>80</sup> the ultimate, murderous condemnation.

Heidegger placed great value on the careful use of words, or, as Robert Minder formulated it, he “carries the word before him like a monstrosity.”<sup>81</sup> He was well aware of the Nazi laws concerning “racial hygiene” and the prevention of *Entartung*. These laws were passed early on, between 1933 and 1935. The Law for

<sup>76</sup> Heidegger, “Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik,” 15, left, underlining Heidegger’s.

<sup>77</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 88–9; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 67, translation modified.

<sup>78</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 92; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 69, translation modified.

<sup>79</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 101; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 76, translation modified.

<sup>80</sup> Cornelia Schmitz-Berning, *Vokabular des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin and New York, 2007), 181.

<sup>81</sup> See Robert Minder, “Heidegger und Hebel oder die Sprache von Meßkirch,” in Minder, *Dichter in der Gesellschaft: Erfahrungen mit deutscher und französischer Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983; first published 1968), 234–94, 234.

the Protection of German Blood and German Honor of September 1935 is the most notorious, but not the only such law. If he had turned away from the Nazi ideology by 1938, Heidegger would hardly have used the term *Entartung*, a term by then universally present in Germany, and a term fully pervaded by biological racist connotations. One cannot escape the conclusion that all his texts from the Nazi period remain suspended in the twilight of his attitude to “spirit”—*Geist*—and “sword” and of his philosophy’s subservience to the political power.<sup>82</sup>

## THE STRUGGLE AGAINST INAUTHENTIC FORMS OF SUBJECTIVITY

After clarifying the extent to which *Vor-stellen*, “re-presentation,” constitutes the essence of the modern age, Heidegger explains how to deal with that age, and this is evidently a central issue. Up to this point no evidence is found in the lecture—apart from the various postwar alterations—of what he had emphasized as his turning away from National Socialism and the totalitarian system. But one might expect to see such evidence when Heidegger defines his concept of modern man and his attitude to the new age.

Heidegger’s main concern is not rejection of modernity per se; he merely objects to “the possibility of sliding into the un-being [*Unwesen*] of subjectivism in the sense of individualism.”<sup>83</sup> The term *Unwesen* he uses in its double connotation of mischief and loss of essentiality. As subjects, human beings have a choice between being authentic and being inauthentic:

Only because and insofar as man has, absolutely and essentially, become a subject, must he arrive then at this explicit question: is it as the “I” limited to its arbitrariness and released to its caprice or as the “we” of society; is it man as an individual or as a community; is it as personality [*Persönlichkeit*] within the community or as a mere group member of the body corporate; is it as a state and nation **and** as Volk **or is it as the general humankind of the modern man** [*die allgemeine Menschheit des neuzeitlichen Menschen*], that the human being will and must be the subject that, *as the essence of modernity, he already is?*<sup>84</sup>

In this juxtaposition of the divergent attitudes, Heidegger offers the alternative: “I,” “individual,” “mere group member of the body corporate,” “the general humanity of the modern man” versus “the ‘we’ of society,” “community,” “personality within the community,” “state,” “nation,” and “Volk.” Not surprisingly in view of Heidegger’s attitude, “the general humanity of the modern

<sup>82</sup> Heidegger, *GA*, vol. 40, 51.

<sup>83</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 92; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 69–70.

<sup>84</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 92; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 69–70, translation modified, italics are Heidegger’s, later modification in bold.

man” is listed as one form of aberrant subjectivity. It is worthwhile to look at the second central issue, Heidegger’s appraisal of the technological character of the modern age. In the twelfth appendix of “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” he declares that the technocratic “giganticism,” *das Riesenhafte*, is symptomatic of the modern age, and he makes the following observations:<sup>85</sup>

Americanism is something European. It is that still non-understood mutation [*Abart*] of a giganticism still unbound and still in no way emerging from the complete and collected metaphysical essence of the modern age. The American interpretation of Americanism through pragmatism still remains outside the metaphysical realm.<sup>86</sup>

Given Heidegger’s attitude to Descartes and to technology, this is a remarkably restrained renunciation. Even more notably, it is rejection of something termed “European,” a characterization that includes—or does not explicitly exclude—the country that is extolled in 1938 by the Nazi regime as the epitome and the singular source of European values. Heidegger’s formulation appears, thus, as another intimation of secret dissent, in line with his professed turning away from the Nazi ideology and its subjection to technology. Everybody knew that dissent had to be subtle at the time, and it is, thus, understandable that Heidegger’s affirmations of his early dissociation from Nazism were made believable by such minor indications of disaffection. It is not too surprising that Silvio Vietta or Otto Pöggeler tended to accept what Heidegger must have told them repeatedly.

But this is the point of the present investigation: the quotations are part of “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” as published in 1950, yet they do not agree with the text of the original manuscript. In its original form the first passage reads as follow (the divergence is in bold):

Only because and insofar as the human being has, absolutely and essentially, become a subject, must he arrive then at this explicit question: is it as the “I” limited to its arbitrariness and released to its caprice or as the “we” of society; is it as an individual or as a community; is it as personality [*Persönlichkeit*] within the community or as a mere group member of the body corporate; is it as a state and nation **or** as a *Volk* that wants and must be the subject, that the human being already is as a modern being [*neuzeitliches Wesen*].<sup>87</sup>

The underlining is Heidegger’s, and exactly this underlined passage has been replaced in 1950 by a formulation that suggests dissent from the party line. In the original form in 1938, the alternative was not between “state,” “nation,” and

<sup>85</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 95; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 72.

<sup>86</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 112; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 85, translation modified.

<sup>87</sup> Heidegger, “Die Begründung des neuzeitlichen Weltbildes durch die Metaphysik,” 26, left. Here and below the underlining is Heidegger’s.

“*Volk*” on the one hand, and “the general mankind of the modern human being” on the other. Instead “state and nation” and *Volk* are set against each other, as fits the Nazi ideology. The “expressed battle [*Kampf*] against individualism” needs to be an effort “for the community as the target field [*Zielfeld*] of all achievement and benefit” *within the framework* of the modern age.<sup>88</sup> The confessional character of these lines is recognizable in the graphic marks (underlines) that are present in the manuscript, and are absent in the altered postwar passage.

But what about the statement that refers to technology as American gigantism? In the original manuscript one reads (divergences marked in bold):

“Americanism” is in fact itself only the **precipitous** [*voreilig*] mutation of a gigantism still unbound and still in no way emerging from the complete and collected metaphysical essence of modernity. And “pragmatism” is the even more precipitous and more superficial “**justification**” of this process. For this reason, even today “Americanism” needs to be combated [*bekämpft*], precisely to protect the pure unfolding of the essence of science as research [*die reine Wesensentfaltung der Wissenschaft als Forschung*] from “bustle” [*Betriebsamkeit*] and thus repel [*abwehren*] the threat posed to science by its own un-being [*Unwesen*].<sup>89</sup>

Here, again, there are no intimations of silent dissent. While the roots of unbounded technology are taken to be European in the 1950 publication, they are not related to the metaphysical essence of modernity and are explicitly distinguished from it in the original. Contrary to Heidegger’s postwar declarations, there is no indication of dissent with the regime’s use and misuse of technology and the applied sciences. Heidegger in 1938—personally disappointed, as he must have been by the official preference for technical schools rather than universities—remained in tune with the Nazi ideology, urging his students to struggle and fight against other forms of existence.

A decade ago Hans Ebeling diagnosed in Heidegger an increasing opposition to Nazism.<sup>90</sup> He might not have done so, if he had known the original text where Heidegger states that *Unwesen*—i.e. nefarious “un-being,” “degeneration,” “aberration”—does not designate the modern age as such, but merely a *specific* manifestation of modernity. There are still those who embody the opposite, the “complete and collected metaphysical essence of the modern age”;<sup>91</sup> they are the Germans and they form a clear-cut contrast to the Americans.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 26, left.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 38, right. Note: here the word *Unwesen*’s less literal, more commonplace, meaning as “mischief” would have the advantage of placing the accent on what, for Heidegger, is the menace of a modernity not founded in the *Volks-gemeinschaft*.

<sup>90</sup> Hans Ebeling, *Die Maske des Cartesius* (Würzburg, 2002), 37.

<sup>91</sup> Heidegger, “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” 112; Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture,” 85, translation modified.

The phraseology he uses here evokes another of Heidegger's seminars—"Nietzsche's Fundamental Metaphysical Position in Western Thought: The Eternal Return of the Same"—held in Freiburg in the summer semester of 1937.<sup>92</sup> Here Heidegger describes this "fundamental position" as the "end of metaphysics"—a process involving "the greatest and deepest collection, which is to say the completion, of all essential fundamental positions of Western philosophy since Plato." Heidegger sees as his own central concern the preservation of Nietzsche's final metaphysics as a "real, effective fundamental metaphysical position."<sup>93</sup>

For Heidegger the German *Volk* stands at the most advanced front of the modern age—a vanguard post from which it has to battle against all powers below the summit of modernity. The German mission is "the unfolding of new historically *spiritual* forces from the center."<sup>94</sup> The Americans for their part represent a premature or hasty mutation of modernity. This echoes the *Entartung*, "degeneration," which Heidegger assigns to Descartes a few paragraphs earlier. Just as in *Einführung in die Metaphysik* from 1935, "the prevailing dimension" has become "that of extension and number"; as such, Heidegger observes in the 1935 text, it is "no longer something inconsequential and merely barren" but simply "the demonic."<sup>95</sup> As *Amerikanismus* it needs to be "combated even today," he states in the 1938 lecture.

In 1938, Heidegger assigned "the further shaping of the modern age" to Nazi Germany in the struggle against "premature and more superficial 'justification'" of the process of modernity—the struggle of a *Volk* experiencing "the sharpest pincer-pressure, standing in the middle."<sup>96</sup> In 1950—in the twelfth appendix of "Die Zeit des Weltbildes"—the message is reversed, the "Americanism" is now "something European," a seeming nuance, but one of the elements of a successful distortion.

## THE STRATEGY OF DECEIT AND ITS IMPACT

The German *Volk* stands at the forefront of the new age that has come. Heidegger appeals to the Germans to be—in accord with Nietzsche and

<sup>92</sup> Heidegger, *Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung im abendländischen Denken: Die ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*, GA, vol. 44, ed. Marion Heinz (Frankfurt am Main, 1986 (lecture dating from 1937)).

<sup>93</sup> Heidegger, GA, vol. 44, 225.

<sup>94</sup> Heidegger, GA, vol. 40, 41–2, Heidegger's emphasis; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 41, translation modified.

<sup>95</sup> Heidegger, GA, vol. 40, 49, 50; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 48, 49.

<sup>96</sup> Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," 99; Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," 75, translation modified. Heidegger, GA, vol. 40, 42; *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 41, translation modified.

Hölderlin—the *Volk* of the National Socialist movement and to enter, in the spirit of the new age and in the essence of the true being, the service of armament and “force . . . of breeding.” This is the message pronounced in 1938 and it has little in common with Heidegger’s account after the war. Holger Zaborowski sees in “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” along with *Beiträge zur Philosophie* and *Besinnung*, a form of resistance against Nazism and a manifestation of his courage.<sup>97</sup> Nothing could contrast more clearly with this judgment than the original text of the lecture.

It is striking that after the war Heidegger succeeded in turning around, by seemingly small alterations, a text that had been true to party principles and then to advertise it as proof of dissent. This raises questions beyond “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” questions about interpretation and about Heidegger’s language, his self-staging, and about the history of his reception. Of most immediate interest is the significance of Heidegger’s critique of subjectivity and technology in relation to his repeatedly declared and almost universally accepted “turn”—the *Kehre*. In his famous letter to Richardson (1962), Heidegger dates the *Kehre* to the period around 1938, which is precisely the year of his lecture on the *Weltbild*.<sup>98</sup> This dating—prominently taken over, among others, by Hannah Arendt<sup>99</sup>—served to link the *Kehre* with the lecture which, as we have seen, Heidegger likewise presents as a document of secret resistance to the regime.<sup>100</sup> The game plan was to present the turn, implicitly but unmissably, as the result of the philosopher’s grappling with Nazism and of his insight gained into the modern, metaphysical will to power, and this strategy has been highly successful. The *Heidegger-Handbuch* speaks of “Heidegger’s interpretation of modern times and of its principle of subjectivity that he developed after the ‘turn’ in the 1930s,”<sup>101</sup> and hardly anybody has taken issue with this.

When Heidegger speaks of his distancing from National Socialism he refers mainly to his lectures on Nietzsche and the *Vorträge und Aufsätze*—“Lectures

<sup>97</sup> English translations: Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington, 1999); Heidegger, *Mindfulness*, trans. Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London and New York, 2006). Holger Zaborowski, “Eine Frage von Irre und Schuld?” *Martin Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010), 545.

<sup>98</sup> Heidegger, “Brief an Richardson,” in William J. Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague, 1974; first published 1963), XVIII–XXIII. Heidegger’s letter is dated to April 1962.

<sup>99</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Vom Leben des Geistes*, vol. 2 (Munich and Zürich, 1979), 164–5.

<sup>100</sup> Heidegger, “Erläuterungen und Grundsätzliches” (letter from 15 Dec. 1945 to Constantin von Dietze), in *GA*, vol. 16, 409–15, 412.

<sup>101</sup> Christoph Menke, “Subjekt: Zwischen Weltbemächtigung und Welterhaltung,” in Dieter Thomä, ed., *Heidegger-Handbuch: Leben-Werk-Wirkung* (Stuttgart, 2013), 320–28, 324.

and Essays”—both influential postwar essay collections.<sup>102</sup> Yet the problematic nature of “Die Zeit des Weltbildes,” with all its postwar changes and distortions, suggests that what has long been viewed, and is still viewed, as his radical “turn” and break with Nazism is, in fact, the result of Heidegger’s self-staging after the war. The famous *Kehre* appears to be a postwar creation.

What Heidegger actually taught, said, and wrote during the Nazi years is important because his presumed critique of modernity as critique of totalitarianism has stamped in enduring fashion the academic as well as the public perception of his thinking. For many authors, Heidegger passes as the philosopher who, to cite Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, “taught us to think philosophically, what fascism, plain and simple, is about.”<sup>103</sup> It is argued that he was able to tie so profoundly the question of the essence of Nazism to that of the “essence of modern politics” precisely because he had learned his lessons in the hard school of real politics, something that no philosopher could truly grasp who had chosen “external” emigration and thus had not dirtied his hands.<sup>104</sup> The argument would be insidious even if the claim of Heidegger’s inner emigration were true. But why was his claim accepted, and why is it still believed? Nazi ideology had rejected rationalism in order to support its mythical mission, but its anti-Cartesianism did not keep it from using all means of technology to reach its aims. Later, at the beginning of the Cold War, in a tormented Europe under the new threat of nuclear destruction, genuine distrust prevailed against technological progress, and this invited the former adherent of the Nazi system to redefine his wartime anti-Cartesianism as inner resistance against the regime. Strangely, it was Karl Jaspers, an untainted intellectual, who made anti-Cartesianism acceptable in postwar

---

<sup>102</sup> See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1 (Pfullingen, 1961), 10; and Heidegger, “Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten,” 282: “Alle die hören konnte, hörten, dass dies [i.e. the lectures on Nietzsche] eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus war.”

<sup>103</sup> Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner, Oxford, 1990; first published 1987), 110. Agamben and Vattimo would agree with this: see Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Post-modern Culture*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore, 1991; first published 1985); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, 1998; first published 1995). See also Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and “The Jews”* (Minneapolis, 1990; first published 1988). On Heidegger’s significance for postmodernism see, e.g., Gregory Bruce Smith, *Nietzsche, Heidegger and the Transition to Postmodernity* (Chicago 1995).

<sup>104</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, 107. As a recent example of this approach see the interview with Gianni Vattimo, 9 May 2012: “Heidegger, maestro nazista” published online in *Lettera 43*, at [www.lettera43.it/cultura/heidegger-maestro-nazista\\_4367549661.htm](http://www.lettera43.it/cultura/heidegger-maestro-nazista_4367549661.htm).

Germany or, at least strengthened it.<sup>105</sup> Heidegger utilized this unintended support and insisted that soon after his rectorate he had understood that modern metaphysics culminated in blindly rational technology and that the acceptance of this process by the party had led him into inner emigration. He made his political conduct seem more excusable by coquettishly playing with both his unworldliness and his lack of talent when it came to political matters.<sup>106</sup>

Heidegger knew how important his first book after his four-year teaching ban would be. The year 1949 was thus a turning point for him—one he used effectively. In the spring of that year he was classified as a “fellow traveler” [*Mitläufer*], hence as officially non-culpable. At the beginning of 1950, Carl Schmitt noted in his diary, not without malice and doubtless with a view to the publication of *Holzwege*, that his colleague had just passed “the comeback test with the grade ‘fully satisfactory.’”<sup>107</sup> If we then read Heidegger’s esoterics, in turn, as a reaction of defiant elitism, the success of his self-representation is complete.<sup>108</sup>

For Heidegger’s sixtieth birthday, Egon Vietta published in *Die Welt* on 26 September 1949 an article entitled “Freund der Weisheit,” “Friend of Wisdom.” This eulogy shows, in exemplary form, the philosopher’s skill at cultivating an impression of sovereign distance from the public while at the same time strategically using the media<sup>109</sup> and some of his adherents.<sup>110</sup> The text is nothing less than a piece of advertising using the milestone birthday as a basis for

<sup>105</sup> When Karl Jaspers republished—ten years after the original publication and without added comment—his fiercely anti-Cartesian essay from 1937 he did not say a word about the anti-Cartesianism that characterized the Nazi ideology. See Karl Jaspers, *Descartes und die Philosophie* (Berlin, 1948). This essay was first published in France at the occasion of the three-hundredth anniversary of the *Discours de la méthode*: Jaspers, “La pensée de Descartes et la philosophie,” *Revue philosophique*, 124/1 (1937), 39–148.

<sup>106</sup> Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, *Briefe 1925–1975 und andere Zeugnisse*, ed. Ursula Ludz (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), 95.

<sup>107</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Glossarium: Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947–1951*, ed. Eberhard Freiherr von Medem (Berlin, 1991), 297.

<sup>108</sup> This is the position taken by Daniel Morat, “No inner remigration: Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jünger, and the early Federal Republic of Germany,” *Modern Intellectual History*, 9/3 (2012), 661–79, 671: Heidegger and Jünger “felt that they were once again being persecuted in a public sphere subject to ‘coordination’ [sic] (*Gleichschaltung*), this time, as it were, from the left. . . . Their responses to this perceived persecution included withdrawing from the public sphere and cultivating nonpublic forms of communication.” It should be noted that Morat represents an exception in confronting Heidegger’s political stance in the West German state’s early period.

<sup>109</sup> See the so-called “*Spiegel* Interview”; see note 18 above.

<sup>110</sup> See Heidegger’s use of Jean Beaufret and François Fédier to secure his reputation in France: Tom Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy: Humanism, Antihumanism and Being* (London, 1995), 81–107.



mythically elevating the pending publication of *Holzwege*.<sup>111</sup> The journalist and close friend of Heidegger proclaims that where at present “metaphysics takes planetary command in the form of technology, something has erupted in thinking that moves human beings to another dimension, the dimension of truth.” Having thus become Heidegger’s mouthpiece, Vietta declares that since the thinker vacated the rector’s office after 1934, his philosophy, elevated over all power, has again “become wisdom . . . it is no longer dependent on the academic chair.” The reader, in case he is not yet completely convinced, is told in an editorial note, “The most recent book by Heidegger, entitled *Holzwege*, also contains the talk delivered in 1938. Heidegger here publicly rejects the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, which in 1933 still seemed to him to contain a historical possibility.”<sup>112</sup>

*Holzwege* was the milestone in Heidegger’s struggle for political and intellectual rehabilitation. The equally famous *Vorträge und Aufsätze* followed in 1954.<sup>113</sup> They contain an especially influential text, “The Overcoming of Metaphysics,” “Überwindung der Metaphysik,” of which Heidegger had already published excerpts in a 1953 Festschrift for Emil Preetorius. This contains the basic elements already of the critique of metaphysics which turned out to be essential to Heidegger’s postwar reception history:

What is metaphysics itself? . . . For Descartes the ego cogito is the already presented and manufactured [*das schon Vor- und Her-gestellte*] in all cogitations . . . “Cognitive theory” is the title of the increasing essential incapacity of modern metaphysics to know its own essence and its ground . . . In all its shapes and historical steps, metaphysics is a sole but perhaps also necessary fatality [*Verhängnis*] of the West and the precondition for its planetary rule . . . Everywhere power itself is what decides . . . This struggle [*Kampf*] is necessarily planetary and as such is undecidable in its essence, because it has nothing to decide.<sup>114</sup>

Thanks to Jean Beaufret’s dedicated effort and thanks to “Heidegger’s French Offensive,” as Tom Rockmore rightly put it, Heidegger’s *Vorträge und Aufsätze* were published in France as early as 1958.<sup>115</sup> Subsequently in 1961 the Nietzsche

---

<sup>111</sup> Egon Vietta, “Freund der Weisheit: Zu Martin Heideggers 60. Geburtstag am 26. September,” in *Die Welt*, 151 (2 September 1949), 3.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Stuttgart, 1997; first published 1954), 275. “*Die Überwindung der Metaphysik*” is around thirty pages long. Reprinted in the GA, vol. 7 (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), 2000.

<sup>114</sup> Heidegger, “Anmerkungen über die Metaphysik (Aus den Jahren 1936–1946),” in Fritz Hollwich, ed., *Im Umkreis der Kunst: Eine Festschrift für Emil Preetorius* (Stuttgart, 1953), 117–36, 120, 121, 123, 136.

<sup>115</sup> Rockmore, *Heidegger and French Philosophy*, 88. Heidegger, *Essais et conférences*, ed. with foreword by Jean Beaufret (Paris 1958).

lectures appeared in Germany and became equally influential regarding Heidegger's critique of metaphysics. As Heidegger himself declares in the foreword to the Nietzsche texts, they constitute talks and essays from the Nazi period—attestations of the “path of thinking . . . that I took from 1930 until the ‘Letter on Humanism’ (1947).”<sup>116</sup> It is not surprising that the intellectuals outside Germany's borders would be attracted by the critical thinking that had presumably emerged from the philosopher's “inner emigration.” For the young Jacques Derrida, working with these Nietzsche lectures was crucial—in fact his concept of *déconstruction* is largely based on Heidegger's description in the late 1930s and early 1940s of the overcoming of metaphysics. It was, thus, in accord with the actual history of reception when, in the 1990s, Gianni Vattimo called Heidegger the philosopher of postmodernism.<sup>117</sup>

### THE NEED FOR PHILOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

What are the implications, if Heidegger's *Kehre* is an invented tradition, a notion conceived to clear up his own past, and the perception of Heidegger's postwar thinking and his later work thus not only is based on misjudgment, but is also the result of actual deception? Clearly one must then cease to concur with Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht's opinion that “an engagement with Martin Heidegger's late philosophy” is “unavoidable” because his identification of truth with *aletheia* or disclosure, *Entbergung*, can help us to newly grasp a long-since fragile subject-object relationship—and to do so beyond any objectification of the world.<sup>118</sup> Instead one must take critical distance from Heidegger's self-referential discourse and must base philosophical interpretation on sober philological assessment. A philosophy that expects the reader to rely on the text itself can be transparent only if the view is nevertheless open to the immediate context, and beyond it to the entirety of the historical configuration and its formative factors. If we wish to understand totalitarianism in the modern age we must reject Heidegger's demand for a purely text-immanent approach to his work. The history of ideas cannot be grasped and transmitted apart from its social and political interconnections. It

<sup>116</sup> Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 10 (foreword by Heidegger). For a demonstration of the manipulation of the Nietzsche texts by Heidegger see Michael Fried, *Heidegger's Polemos. From Being to Politics* (New Haven and London, 2000), 257–61; and Faye, *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy*, chap. 9: “The Rewriting of the Courses on Nietzsche and the Appreciation of Baeumler,” 251–58 and 271.

<sup>117</sup> Gianni Vattimo, “Heideggers Verwindung der Moderne,” in F. W. Veauthier, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Denker der Post-Metaphysik* (Heidelberg, 1992), 49–66, 65.

<sup>118</sup> Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht, “Ist Heidegger unvermeidlich?,” Blog “Digital/Pausen,” at <http://faz-community.faz.net/blogs/digital/archive/2012/03/30/ist-heidegger-unvermeidlich.aspx>, accessed 17 Jan. 2014.

can only be comprehended through careful acknowledgment of its sources and implications.

It is important from a philosophical and philosophical-historical perspective that in the Nazi years Heidegger saw “unfettered technicism”<sup>119</sup> as contributing to a historical German mission; it is equally important that in the same period he contrasted “degenerate subjectivity” with authentic German “subjectivity.” Heidegger’s case makes it more than evident that philosophical thinking becomes intellectually empty and immune to critique once it is removed from its context. In exile in America in the 1940s, Leo Strauss referred to the “peculiar technique of writing . . . in which the truth about all crucial things is presented exclusively between the lines,”<sup>120</sup> a technique therefore that is useful to defend the truth against censorship. But as Heidegger knew, the same technique is equally applicable for spreading falsifications in a hardly refutable manner, and for gaining an aura of authority over the reader. On 30 December 1931, he wrote to Elisabeth Blochmann:

For us, who only educate by speaking, a special question is how and to what extent essential things should be said. This semester I am again learning something that repeatedly troubles me, that what is indirectly said is most certain to be driven home and that we continue to excessively underestimate the power of the model and work too little in the service of the true model.<sup>121</sup>

Heidegger professed unease at this technique, yet, as a master of cryptic formulation, he did use all its negative possibilities in the postwar period in order to obscure or reinterpret through textual falsification his past political and philosophical entanglements, and thus shield his work from critique and assure his continued influence. Theodore Kisiel saw in the intransparent editorial policies surrounding Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe* a “scandal of international scholarship”; for him, however, the scandal was not so much of Heidegger’s doing than of his family’s, and especially of his son Hermann’s.<sup>122</sup> The fact that “something . . . has seriously gone awry” in the transmission of Heidegger’s thought is due to the fact that “the mind of the author is now preempted by the mentality of the author’s family,” a “mentality of forgery.”<sup>123</sup> This assessment that Heidegger essentially became a victim of his own family may sound plausible, but

<sup>119</sup> Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics*, 110, translation modified.

<sup>120</sup> Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Westport, 1973; first published 1941), 25.

<sup>121</sup> Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim W. Storck (Marbach am Neckar 1989), 46.

<sup>122</sup> Theodore Kisiel, “Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*: An International Scandal of Scholarship,” *Philosophy Today*, 39/1 (Spring 1995), 3–15. See also Kisiel, “In response to my overwrought critics,” *Studia phaenomenologica*, 7 (2007), 545–52.

<sup>123</sup> Kisiel, “Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*,” 4, 3.

is contradicted both by our analysis of the crucial postwar text of “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” and by the above-mentioned debate in 1953 around *Introduction to Metaphysics* (see p. 579 above). It was Heidegger himself who decided to deceive his readers by his affirmations that the 1950 text was essentially the same as the one read in 1938. It is striking, if not shocking, that Heidegger’s textual manipulations were promptly forgotten by most of his readers after they had been noted and addressed in the 1950s.

In light of the discussions and controversies about Heidegger’s relationship with National Socialism, it is surprising how little archival work has been done on his texts. As early as 1953 Jürgen Habermas, then aged twenty-five, called for a careful philological analysis.<sup>124</sup> But little was done in this direction. In fact, it has become clear that faced with the numinous texts by the master, many Heidegger readers consider textual analysis “positivist” and small-minded. Theodore Kisiel rightly expressed astonishment in 1992 at a “polemical tendency” in Heidegger research to “scornfully badmouth philology, as if ‘philology’ were a swear-word.”<sup>125</sup>

That critical scrutiny of Heidegger’s philosophical texts has been consistently—implicitly or otherwise—disparaged is in line with the editorial policy for Heidegger’s works that argues against philological scrutiny in the name of “thinking.” In his afterword to *Holzwege*, the volume’s editor, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Hermann, invokes Heidegger himself: “The philosopher expressly rejected” a “predominantly philologically oriented” approach to his work because that would pose “the danger of leading away from thinking.”<sup>126</sup> When Heidegger “disciplined” his students “through the correcting of reports and transcripts,” he did this as their teacher in direct presence.<sup>127</sup> It is far less authentic when a vague reference to historical truth serves to justify the lack of a critical edition. But exactly this is done in Siegfried Blasche’s description of the “philosophical program” behind the *Gesamtausgabe*: the texts were meant to have the same effect that they had had when “published, written, or spoken in their time.”<sup>128</sup> On the surface this suggests textual fidelity, but the alterations that have here been identified in “Die Zeit des Weltbildes” tell a different story; they distort and

<sup>124</sup> See Wolin, *The Heidegger Controversy*, 86–97.

<sup>125</sup> Theodore Kisiel, “Edition and Übersetzung: Unterwegs von Tatsachen zu Gedanken, von Werken zu Wegen,” in D. Pappenfuss and O. Pöggeler, eds., *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers*, vol. 3: *Im Spiegel der Welt: Sprache, Übersetzung, Auseinandersetzung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 89–107, 99.

<sup>126</sup> Heidegger, *GA*, vol. 5, 381.

<sup>127</sup> Reinhard Mehring, *Heideggers Überlieferungsgeschick: Eine dionysische Selbstinszenierung* (Würzburg 1992), 152.

<sup>128</sup> Siegfried Blasche, “Das philosophische Programm,” in E. V. Klostermann, ed., *Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 1930–2000* (Frankfurt am Main 2000), 19–43, 28.

invert what was written and spoken at the time. Only a historical–critical edition will make the policies behind the *Gesamtausgabe* believable.

“According to the promise of the *Gesamtausgabe*, the ‘future human being’ will be a Heideggerian,” observes Reinhard Mehring, not without irony.<sup>129</sup> A better promise will be to give all readers access to the original texts. The current publication of the *Black Notebooks*, the still unknown diaries from 1931 to 1975, is an acid test of such openness. For the readers it can be a chance to come closer to the man behind his mask. Seeing how he controlled his stature, how he expressed and rewrote his messages, they may find out themselves whether or not they are Heideggerians.

## APPENDIX

*Translation of the Fourth Appendix of Heidegger’s “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft” (1938)*

Published in Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 16 (Frankfurt am Main, 2000), as Document 166, “Besinnung auf die Wissenschaft (Juni 1938)” (“Meditation on Science, June 1938”), 349.

The meditation on science carried out [*vollzogen*] here does not contradict what “The Self-Assertion of the German University” (1933) says and calls for. For every talk is a conscious leap [*wissentliches Überspringen*] over the modern age and “all-too present-day science” [*allzuheutige Wissenschaft*] (p. 7), in order to have the essence of science spring from a more original knowledge [*ursprünglicheres Wissen*]. But this knowledge can only be grounded in a confrontation with the first beginning of Western thinking and in a taking seriously of Nietzsche’s question posed at the end of this thinking and as its end (p. 12). That talk is not concerned with the essence of modern science, and this means Descartes. But the “metaphysical” basic position from which “self-mindfulness” [*Selbstbesinnung*] is consummated [*vollzogen*] for a “Volk that knows itself” [*ein “sich selbst wissendes Volk”*] (p. 6) is the same position from which the present meditation [*Besinnung*] on “modern science” is carried out. There a future science is meant that again becomes a form of knowing [*eine künftige Wissenschaft . . . die wieder ein Wissen wird*]; here a form of science is understood that evidently will be with us for a long time—a science that has dissolved the knowing in science [*die das Wissen in Wissenschaft aufgelöst hat*] and in place of this loss must allow a *Weltanschauung* to appear, from which it receives the driving force of its operation [*die Stoßkraft ihres Betriebes*]. But the sentence pronounced in that talk remains valid for modern science as well: “All science is philosophy, whether or not it knows it and wishes it.” Modern science *is* philosophy in the very denial that this is the case.

[The political concept of science is only a coarse and self-misunderstanding mutation of the essential character of modern science [*Wesenscharakters der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft*]. This is namely a mode [*Weise*] of technology.]<sup>130</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Mehring, *Heideggers Überlieferungsgeschick*, 12.

<sup>130</sup> The last two sentences are absent in the 1938 manuscript.