



MARTIN HEIDEGGER
Critical Assessments

Edited by Christopher Macann

VOLUME IV: REVERBERATIONS



London and New York 1992

Fundamental ontology and political interlude: Heidegger as Rector of the University of Freiburg

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In April 1933 Heidegger assumed the rectorate of the University of Freiburg. The months following constitute the only period of his life – one which did not abound in dramatic events or spectacular changes – which gave rise to vehement reactions and sharp criticisms for reasons other than the philosophical views which Heidegger put forward. A university professor's getting elected rector is, to be sure, not an event which requires special attention: it is well within the limits of a normal academic career. It was, however, at an extremely delicate moment, a few months after Hitler's appointment as chancellor, that Heidegger took over this office – and this, of course, is not without importance. What are the reasons which led Heidegger to assume this office, and what prior judgments about the era underlie his decision? And more akin to the concerns of this book, is this decision connected with his philosophy, and if so, how?

In what follows, an attempt will be made, first, to sketch Heidegger's basic philosophical outlook leading up to, and as elaborated in, *Being and Time*, concentrating on those tenets which can be shown to have some bearing upon his political involvement. This preliminary analysis will be followed by a reconstruction of Heidegger's conduct during his period as rector. I think that his activity as rector should be explored against the background of his philosophical outlook and of concrete historical circumstances, rather than stripped of (both philosophical and historical) context and judged by extrinsic criteria – that is, mainly by reference to what the social movement (national socialism) to which he temporarily committed himself subsequently became.

I Heidegger's philosophical outlook by the end of the 1920s

I.i

One might briefly characterize Heidegger's fundamental philosophical efforts leading up, after more than ten years' silence, to the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927 – as found, e.g., in his lectures of the period, now gradually appearing in the *Gesamtausgabe* – as an attempt to unify the so-called irrationalistic or 'existentialist' or 'historicist' problematic which permeated post-war European culture (and was represented by thinkers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Spengler, Dilthey, and Simmel) with the Husserlian ideal of 'philosophy as strict science' (and, thereby, through Husserl, with the whole epistemological-metaphysical tradition going back to Aristotle and the Greeks).

Brought up in the scholastic tradition, but extremely responsive to the contemporary logical-epistemological ways of philosophizing represented by neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, Heidegger had as early as his doctoral dissertation and his *Habilitationsschrift* (published in 1914 and 1916, respectively) hoped to pose the Being-question, viz., to renew the metaphysical tradition.¹ His appropriation of the modern logical-epistemological tradition is conditioned from the very beginning by his endeavor to arrive at metaphysical conclusions; doing pure logic, epistemology or methodology, indispensable though it may be as a preparatory step, is seen by him as futile when conceived as an aim in itself.² His gradually deepening acquaintance with Husserl's phenomenological method provides him, in addition to theoretical insights, with a new access to classical philosophical texts, especially those of Aristotle and the Greeks.³ His intense studies of the philosophical tradition as well as of modern philosophical trends thus become fused within a perspective which does not separate systematic and historical points of view. From this perspective, traditional doctrines no longer appear as mere relics worthy of only antiquarian interest, as opposed to the theoretical validity possessed by contemporary doctrines. Rather, traditional tenets are seen both as illuminating modern theories and as illuminated by them, and contemporary positions as proceeding from earlier ones.⁴ Historical interest, in this sense, is strictly connected to systematic interest – indeed is at the service of it. Only if history is not 'pure history' – that is, a heap of past and dead facts – will the history of philosophy regain its relevance for systematic thinking (cf. *GA* 1: 195ff., and later *GA* 61: 110f., *GA* 24: 31f.).

This point is important for our present purposes, not only because it sheds light on some of the presuppositions of Heidegger's first philosophical attempts, but because we need to realize that the *systematic* positing and working out of the Being-question proposed in *Being and Time*⁵ rests upon a preliminary confrontation with the tradition. This point has

become clearer since the publication of some of Heidegger's Marburg lectures. Further, Heidegger's way of approaching the history of philosophy already contains a conception of history implicitly – one to be thematized explicitly in *Being and Time*, and particularly relevant to his engagement with politics. Studying modern logical or epistemological theories in order to use them for metaphysical purposes meant, for Heidegger, recognizing the fact that such theories are not exempt from metaphysical presuppositions.⁶ Nor, inversely, can metaphysical or ontological theories be exempt from logical or epistemological presuppositions; that is, from more or less explicit assumptions concerning human thinking or knowing – in short, from a theory of man as a rational animal (see e.g., *GA* 20: 174). The insights into the metaphysic-ladenness of the logical-epistemological tradition and into the logic-ladenness of traditional ontology may be said to be the two basic, and reciprocal, results of Heidegger's early confrontation with, and appropriation of, Western philosophy. The necessity of positing the Being-question as the question to be asked first and foremost is derived, for Heidegger, from the highly paradoxical result of his confrontation with Husserl's phenomenology (the most advanced transcendently oriented epistemology of the day). Indeed, Husserl, though claiming to suspend or bracket 'assertions concerning being', cannot help committing himself to certain prior ontological distinctions, in particular, that between Being as consciousness and transcendent being – which Husserl himself called, symptomatically, 'the most radical of all distinctions of Being' (Husserl 1976: 159). This prior commitment is left completely unthematized, having been antiphenomenologically (that is, dogmatically) assumed (see *GA* 20: 157f., 178). If the claim to dispense with the Being-question is thus shown to be a pure illusion, necessarily presupposing a dogmatic prior answer to it, exempt from and unsusceptible to any kind of critical examination (or, in other words, if dispensing with it turns out to be equivalent to answering it without first posing it), then the situation seems simple enough: what is needed is to explicitly pose or thematize this first and foremost question of all philosophy. In the light of the recognition, however, that traditional ontology is from its very beginning grounded in, or centered around, the doctrine of *logos*, i.e. logic,⁷ an uncritical natural recourse to any kind of traditional ontological perspective must be out of the question. It even remains uncertain if the Being-question, lacking a prior ground in which to be embedded, can be posed at all.⁸

The way out of this impasse was suggested to Heidegger by his insight into the strict correlation between being and *logos* in Western philosophy – more concretely, by an ontological thematization of logic, of the theoretical-cognitive attitude or comportment (*Einstellung*) in the broadest sense. Heidegger's starting points were (1) the correlation of being and *logos* in the history of philosophy; (2) the functioning of the *logos* of

the 'subject' as the 'ground' or 'place' of the ontological problematic properly so-called; and (3) logic as the theoretical comportment *par excellence*. Thus he was able to thematize the *being* of the subject in a deeper way than that provided by the tradition – one capable of showing the very epistemological comportment as a derived mode of being. This offered a possible operative basis for the positing and working out of the Being-question. The metaphysical tradition from Aristotle onward had gained its access to Being from within the conceptual horizon provided by the theoretical attitude, giving thereby rise to theories of Being in terms of objective presence. That this comportment was far from being *the* original mode of being of human existence was, however, an insight which required the prior unification of the Husserlian perspective of philosophy 'as strict science' with the 'anti-metaphysical', 'existentialist' tradition.⁹ Contrary, however, to the tendency of thinkers like Pascal, Kierkegaard, Dilthey, and Nietzsche to combine a turning to factual-historical human existence with a turning *away from* metaphysics, and thus totally to reject systematic thinking, Heidegger's appropriation of the problematic of factual-historical life was conceived from the very beginning as a starting point *for* the renewal of metaphysics. The posing and working out of the Being-question pertains to what Heidegger calls fundamental ontology. As the above considerations suggest, this becomes embedded in, and begins with, a thematization of the *being* of the subject – a discipline named existential analytic.¹⁰ The immanent critique and internal radicalization of phenomenology and epistemology, and the attempt at a radical re-examination of the whole metaphysical tradition through the assimilation of the 'irrationalistic' problematic, are fused in Heidegger's effort to gain a new ground for the Being-question.¹¹

I.ii

Man's¹² fundamental mode of being, Heidegger claims in *Being and Time*, is Being-in-the-world. His original relation to things emerging in his environment is one of using, handling, employing, arranging rather than 'knowing' them. These are modes which presuppose antecedent acquaintance, familiarity, with the world. Even 'knowing' things is one way of having to do with or caring about the world – a comportment which comes about as a modification of man's original relating himself to things. A phenomenological description of man's primary way of being should, therefore, suspend, i.e., 'put into brackets', scientific or epistemological concepts and strategies of description. Only thus will it be sufficiently original, sufficiently unaffected by traditional theories concerning the issue, and able to *derive* scientific comportment from man's primordial way of relating himself to his world. If, apart from and prior to any kind of self-description such as 'the totality of foundational connections of true statements',¹³ science is primarily one of man's modes

of being – 'not the only and not the first possible mode of being' at that (SZ-11) – then existential analytic must not resort to the conceptual framework provided by science. To do so would imply losing the possibility of gaining a perspective upon it.

Without going into the details of Heidegger's description of Being-in-the-world, it may be relevant to see how the epistemological problematic, with which Heidegger had first engaged himself on his way to *Being and Time* and whose insufficiencies led him to assume an explicit ontological standpoint, is treated within the framework of the new ontological perspective.

Given his thesis that man's primordial mode of being is Being-in-the-world, Heidegger's treatment of the epistemological tradition from Descartes on has two major aspects: a negative, or polemic, one and a positive, or 'integrating', one. As to the first, he shows that the epistemological perspective properly so-called (with its typical questions concerning the relation of the subject to the object, of mind to the world, the way the knower can acquire knowledge about the object) is not meaningful without a prior ontological dualism such that knower and known, subjects and objects are assumed to be two separate entities, their relation being one of mutual exclusion (subject is what is not object and vice versa). However, if man and world are not two independent entities, and human *Dasein* is not the worldless (*weltlos*) 'subject' characteristic of modern philosophy, but is in itself worldly (*weltlich*), having always already committed itself to the world, then the ontological ground underlying the epistemological perspective becomes untenable.¹⁴ Heidegger's attitude is negative or polemic in that he elaborates his concept of *Dasein* and Being-in-the-world by opposing them to, and challenging, the traditional concepts of 'subject' and 'object'. He insists that Being-in-the-world, as *Dasein*'s fundamental mode of being, must not be conceived of as an epistemological relation between subject and object.

Having developed his concept of Being-in-the-world through a contrast with the subject-object relation, he is in a position to show how, in virtue of what modifications of Being-in-the-world as an all-encompassing phenomenon, man's *knowing* relation to the world springs. This may be called the positive, or integrating, aspect. Heidegger shows, in a series of analyses, that in order for a thing to become an object of knowledge or scientific research, our preliminary access to it, that is, our way of having to do with it, must have undergone a specific modification. Only as a result of this will the thing as tool originally made use of, or handled, reveal itself as a neutral substance, simply 'out there', susceptible of being determined by what traditional philosophical theories have come to call 'qualities' and 'properties'.

Heidegger illustrates his point with critiques of Descartes's conception of the world and of Kant's Refutation of Idealism. He shows that

Descartes's definition of world in terms of *res extensa*, that is, a neutral, indifferent space filled up with equally neutral, homogeneous substances, fails, in the light of Heidegger's own analyses of 'world', to do justice to the genuine phenomenon of world met with in everyday experience – indeed, is based upon losing sight of and forgetting it. This is the negative aspect of his treatment of Descartes. However, that definition of world reflects a theoretical-intellectual comportment to the world (itself one way of Being-in-the-world), one which presupposes that what the glance characteristic of mathematical knowledge discovers in things constitutes their *real* being (see SZ 95f.). This is the positive, or integrating, aspect.

As far as Kant's Refutation of Idealism is concerned, Heidegger first shows some of the inconsistencies inherent in Kant's proof of the existence of the outer world. Then, more significantly, he proceeds to undercut the very bases of Kant's undertaking, insisting that the quest for a proof of this sort is not meaningful unless one assumes the Cartesian standpoint of the isolated subject. Indeed, once man is assumed to be basically Being-in-the-world, the question of how a knowing subject can get out of its interiority in order to ascertain the existence of, and establish a contact with, the outside world – the major epistemological problem of modern philosophy – loses its legitimacy. Attempts to demonstrate the 'reality' of the outer world, or, for lack of such a demonstration, the mere 'belief' in or presupposition of such a world (comportments which are themselves definite ways of Being-in-the-world), do not make sense without the prior assumption of a subject closed in itself – a subject which, uncertain about its world, should begin by acquiring certainty about it. The question of whether or not there is a world, and whether its being can be proven, Heidegger remarks significantly, is without sense for human *Dasein* conceived as Being-in-the-world – and who else could pose it (SZ 202)? If there is a legitimate question, it concerns rather the reasons why *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world tends to sink, *erkenntnistheoretisch*, the 'reality' of the outer world into nothing in order to produce, after splitting up the unified phenomenon, infinite hopeless attempts to put together the two wrecks left: the isolated subject and the outer 'world' (SZ 206).¹⁵

The aspects of Heidegger's existential analytic singled out thus far show how Heidegger's own ontological perspective enables him to make visible the implicit ontological framework latent in traditional epistemological-metaphysical thinking. Traditional ontologies are shown to be rooted in *Dasein*'s ways of relating itself to its world. The analytic of *Dasein*, by proposing to illuminate deeper and more original dimensions of *Dasein*'s being, both criticizes or dismisses and integrates or 'justifies' them (in the specific sense of revealing their condition of possibility).

I.iii

What remains to be seen is the way in which the irrationalistic or existentialist or historicist problematic, accompanied by a strong anti-metaphysical bias in the thinkers who gave rise to and defended it, joins in, and becomes an integral part of, Heidegger's systematic ontological perspective.

The question of how Heidegger's ontological treatment of the epistemological perspective within a neutral analysis of *Dasein* relates to a Kierkegaardian problematic of authenticity is not easy to answer. Arguing along the lines elaborated by Richard Rorty (see Rorty 1979: Ch. 8, especially 360ff.), it might be claimed that knowing the world is just one among many human projects of edification (not the primary one, Heidegger would add). It might then be suggested that it is because the project of knowing the world has traditionally been assumed to be *the* proper path to authenticity (an assumption congruent with the prevailing conception of man as a rational animal¹⁶) that authenticity, for the epistemological-metaphysical tradition from Descartes on, was not, and could not be, a problem. (It became a problem, symptomatically, only for non-metaphysical thinkers like Kierkegaard.) Because Heidegger sets out to get behind the view of man as a rational animal, it is natural that the problem of authenticity will become an explicit problem for him, one distinct from the problematic concerned with knowing. We might also say, using the terms of our previous description of Heidegger's way to the Being-question, that the neglect of the question of authenticity by the epistemological-metaphysical tradition is a matter of answering it without first having posed it.

The question concerning *Dasein*'s inclination to dissolve the outer world into nothing is answered by Heidegger by reference to man's basic tendency to *Verfallen*. This is an encompassing concept of inauthenticity, characterizing a tendency inherent in everyday *Dasein* to interpret the world and itself within the horizon of what turns up *within* the world, thus taking itself to be one among the entities existing alongside others in the world (cf. SZ 58). The possibility of *Verfallen* lies in the fact that *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world is always already alongside (bei) beings in the world. Indeed, because, as early as the Greeks, Being was interpreted in terms of beings in the world (cf. SZ 44), the concept of inauthenticity provides what we have been calling an integrating aspect. It does so by accounting for the failure of traditional ontologies to seize upon the ontological problematic proper – a major reason why Heidegger names his investigation 'fundamental ontology'.

Considerations concerning authenticity emerge basically in connection with the concept of *Being-with* (*Mitsein*). The 'existence' of other human beings is for Heidegger as unquestionable as that of the 'outer' world.

Dasein's way of relating itself to others is called (parallel with, and contrary to, man's *Besorgen* with the things of his environment) *Fürsorge*, care for. This has, apart from the deficient and negative modes characteristic of everyday Being-with, two positive modes: 'leaping in' and 'leaping ahead' (Einspringen, Vorausspringen). The first is characterized by taking the 'care' over and away from the other, 'leaping in' for him in order to do what constitutes the other's concern *for* him. The other may thereby become dependent and dominated. The second, by contrast, does not refer to the other's *Besorgen* with things. One 'leaps ahead', not in order to disburden the other, but rather to give him back his authentic and primordial care, that is, his existence, thereby helping the other to become conscious of it and free for it (cf. *SZ* 122; for a fuller analysis see Elliston 1978: 66ff.). Everyday Being-with, however, is characterized by *Dasein's* losing itself in the faceless amorphous anonymity of the 'One' (das Man). Only therefrom can it pass to the authentic way of existing.

The full concept of authenticity is developed in the second division of *Being and Time*. Living originally in an inauthentic way, *Dasein* can reach authenticity only in Being-toward-death (Sein zum Tode) and resoluteness (Entschlossenheit). The concept of authentic existence is often explained very crudely as something denoting an aristocratic detachment from, and a scornful contempt of, everyday life. A closer examination of the Heideggerian texts lets one dismiss this reading as wholly unfounded. Deriving as it does from inauthenticity, authentic existence remains forever bound to it: it is but the constant transition or passage from the inauthentic existence to the authentic, and not a kind of independent realm opposed to it. Authenticity, to put it briefly, consists in consciously setting a limit to one's manifold possibilities – seeing them against the background of one's ultimate possibility, that is, death. This resolution, once taken, is capable of transforming one's life into a whole and giving oneself selfhood (Ganzheit, Selbstheit). The authentic project of Being-toward-death is then confirmed, on the part of the factually existing *Dasein*, by the phenomenon of conscience. *Dasein's* proper response to the call is, first, to make itself ready for it, that is, to-want-to-have-conscience (Gewissen-haben-wollen), and second, resoluteness. Rather than eluding death by escaping into the anonymity of everydayness, authentic *Dasein* anticipates it; rather than averting the call of conscience, thereby precluding becoming *itself* and being responsible for what it is, *Dasein* resolutely assumes it. Both ways enable *Dasein* to be authentic (eigentlich), that is, to appropriate the being it already is. On a closer look, resolution turns out to be not only compatible with, but even requires, authentic Being-toward-death. If resolution arbitrarily varied, without a view to death as *Dasein's* ultimate possibility, there could be no question of resolution being authentic (*SZ* 302, 305ff.; see Gelven

1970: 176; Demske 1963: 48f.; Ugazio 1976: 48). The unified concept of authenticity is therefore anticipatory resoluteness (vorlaufende Entschlossenheit). Resoluteness in its turn gives rise to 'situation'. The latter does not mean a set of conditions given in advance, but rather being revealed and disclosed only by and in resolute *Dasein* (cf. *SZ* 299f.). Authentic *Dasein* should nevertheless not persist rigidly in any one situation; it has to leave itself open for the possible, and indeed necessary, re-appropriation of itself. Since the relapse into the existential irresolution of *das Man* remains a constant possibility, it is only in repeating, retrieving itself that resolution is what it is (*SZ* 307f.).

For the full concept of authenticity to be arrived at, however, a further addition is needed. The question of what should fill in the 'content' of resolution is, Heidegger repeatedly claims, no part of the existential analytic. It may be answered only by resolution itself. However, it is legitimate to ask whence such possibilities may arise (*SZ* 294, 383). This origin is history. Resolute *Dasein* opens up its possibilities by taking upon itself a given heritage of the past – a heritage in which it resolutely hands itself down. Grasping its innermost finitude in anticipating death, *Dasein* is driven back to itself. In handing itself resolutely down in a freely chosen tradition, it acquires destiny (Schicksal). Seen from the perspective of Being-with, authentic historicity reveals itself as the common destiny of a community (Geschick) – a community in which the destinies of individuals are preliminarily assigned their role (*SZ* 384). It is not necessary, Heidegger remarks, that *Dasein* should explicitly be aware of the origins of the possibilities upon which it projects itself. But there lies in it the possibility to derive its project (the 'content' of its resolution) explicitly from a tradition. Resoluteness, coming back upon itself from fallenness and handing itself down consciously, becomes then the repetition, or retrieval (Wiederholung) of an inherited possibility of existence.¹⁷ To 'repeat' in this sense does not amount to 'make a piece of the past actual again', 'bringing it back', but rather 'retorting', 'replying' to a past possibility of existence (*SZ* 385f.).

II Heidegger the Rector and his philosophy

This short sketch of Heidegger's philosophical development, together with a quick survey of the basic philosophical outlook of *Being and Time*,¹⁸ puts us in a position to proceed to our proper theme. We can now set about answering our initial questions – above all, the question of how Heidegger's assuming the office of the rectorate can be connected to his philosophy. In doing so, we shall return to and single out some of the themes previously touched upon, and occasionally thematize them in more detail.

II.i

Authentic existence, as we have seen, was explained in *Being and Time* in terms of anticipatory resoluteness. Coming back upon itself from the world of inauthenticity characterized by the anonymity of *das Man*, resolute *Dasein* does not become detached from the world. This would be impossible, for *Dasein* is and remains Being-in-the-world all along (cf. SZ 298). Resoluteness implies, on the contrary, entering fully into the world, opening up and projecting oneself upon the (finite) possibilities which offer themselves in a given situation. It is in anticipating death, in becoming aware of what it means *not* to be, that the awareness of what it means to be becomes accessible. Although in anticipation and conscience *Dasein* becomes isolated, deprived of all its (inauthentic) links (that is, it becomes precisely its own self), nevertheless, in choosing itself, *Dasein* not only chooses itself 'out of' the world (to use Kierkegaard's illuminating terms), but at the same time and in the fullest sense, chooses itself 'back into' it (cf. Kierkegaard 1957: 265; see Chiodi 1965: 107; Guignon 1984: 337f.). It is also resoluteness that makes authentic Being-with possible, permitting *Dasein* to let the others 'be' in and for their own being. Once free for its own possibilities, *Dasein* is both free of the danger (inherent in its tendency to fallenness) of losing sight of or ignoring others' possibilities – possibilities which may supersede its own – and of the temptation to reduce them to, and thus take them to be identical with, its own.¹⁹ 'Leaping ahead', as the authentic positive form of Being-with, gains its full concreteness only in and by resoluteness. As opposed to inauthentic *Dasein*'s tendency to disburdening (Entlastung), only the willingness-to-have-conscience, the assumption of one's own being, makes responsibility for oneself and others possible. Only resolute *Dasein* can become the 'conscience' of others (cf. SZ 122, 127f., 288, 298; see also Demske, 1963: 66). The thesis that *Dasein* is always its own, that it exists for its own sake, Heidegger says, does not imply egoism; the concept of *Dasein* is not 'equivalent to that of the isolated, egoistic subject. Because only in relating to itself can *Dasein* understand something like 'self' (selbst), only thereby can it listen to a 'you-self' (Du-selbst), and thus make something like human community (Gemeinschaft) possible (GA 26: 244f.).

Anticipatory resoluteness, therefore, points to something like social activity, or engagement. However, the analysis of authenticity is not yet complete. The concept of resoluteness, as we have seen, attains its ultimate form as a result of the analysis of historicity. If resoluteness, at an earlier level, meant keeping itself free to retrieve itself (Wiederholen), then authentic existence appears now, at the level of historicity, as the retrieval of a historical heritage that has been both handed down and freely assumed – a heritage in which *Dasein* hands itself over (SZ 308,

383ff.). By freely and resolutely taking over a historical heritage, authentic existence acquires its destiny (Schicksal). Authentic Being-with thereby becomes, at the level of history, a common fate (Geschick), a community of authentic people (SZ 384f.). It may even be said that it is only in and by *Wiederholung* that its own history reveals itself to *Dasein* (SZ 386).

II.ii

If the existential analytic (moving, according to its hermeneutic character, in a circle) is guided by a 'presupposed' idea of existence, and if philosophy, for Heidegger, must not deny its own 'presuppositions', but rather elaborate them together with that for which they are presuppositions (SZ 310), then it seems legitimate to examine whether, and to what extent, such an idea may be brought to bear upon the author of *Being and Time* himself.

If authentic existence consists in retrieving a historical heritage, then the philosopher's activity as one possible human activity, one way among others to relate oneself to the world, is authentic insofar as it aims at retrieving his own historical heritage – that is, the tradition of philosophy itself. It is easy to see that *Being and Time* should be understood from its very first pages in terms of an explicit attempt at bringing back the most original of all the traditions of philosophy, that is, the Being-question. (This retrieval of ontology – the latter being at the time a 'condemned term' (SD 47) – is also a retrieval of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.)²⁰ *Being and Time* tries to retrieve, to revive, the Being-question (or since the question itself has long sunk into oblivion, 'awaken' an understanding of its meaning (SZ 1)) by inquiring into the horizon of traditional philosophies' access to Being (time, presence), and by showing this access to be rooted in and dependent upon *Dasein*'s theoretical comportment. Authentic retrieval is, therefore, not a blind attachment to the tradition, but rather the unfolding of a horizon within which the re-appropriation of traditional concepts becomes possible; the ontological transformation of phenomenology claims to be nothing less than 'the retrieval . . . of the origins of our scientific philosophy' (cf. GA 20: 184, 187f.). When the early Heidegger speaks of the oblivion of the Being-question, of the forgottenness of being, what he has in mind is not the claim that the history of philosophy has completely ignored this most original of all its questions, but rather the contention that the tradition blindly took over and tied itself to the Greeks, taking up their concepts and then building them into petrified systems. These concepts were conserved and dragged along through the centuries without any effort at an original re-appropriation or renewal – concepts whose roots in lived experience (from which they once emerged) have indeed long withered away. The 'destruction' proclaimed by Heidegger does not propose to

set the tradition aside, to rule it out, but rather to re-appropriate it into a conceptual framework able to respond to today's lived experience.²¹

A retrieval or revival of the tradition must go back as far as the Greeks because the perspective of modern philosophy appears, taken by itself, rootless. Heidegger does not see modern philosophy as having brought about a decisive change or development, for its basic concepts are wholly penetrated by the structural elements of the traditional Greek-Christian outlook – an outlook that itself had by then become rootless (see e.g., *SZ* 22, 93, 96; *GA* 20: 179; *GA* 21: 13; *GA* 29/30: 52f., 64). These 'presuppositions' underlying Heidegger's access to the history of philosophy, and his fundamental problem, are hardly conceivable without resting upon his direct experience of the ever more intensifying crisis of European culture and civilization.²² The initial contention of *Being and Time* that traditional metaphysical concepts of man like 'subject', 'ego', 'reason', 'spirit', and 'person' are ontologically unthematized and thus obscure (*SZ* 22) implies that these concepts have become vacant for everyday life, worn out and empty. Indeed, the concept of an 'ideal subject', characteristic of transcendently oriented epistemologies, is, as Heidegger unequivocally says later in the book, a '*phantastically idealized subject*'. Such a subject fails to do justice to nothing less than the 'a priori' of the "factual" subject, that is, *Dasein* (*SZ* 229).²³ We are not, to be sure, provided with anything that might properly be called Heidegger's 'criticism of society'. Nevertheless, his occasional remarks, in the course of lectures, about the culture and philosophy of the age – remarks often amounting to informal quips – are very effective. It is worthwhile to dwell upon them in some detail.²⁴

II.iii

First of all, as far as developments in German culture and philosophy during the second half of the nineteenth century are concerned, Heidegger is highly critical of the epistemological-*wissenschaftstheoretisch* turn typified by neo-Kantianism, considering it to be a sign of going astray, of perplexity and, in a sense, even of decadence (see *GA* 20: 17f., 20f.). The same judgment is expressed in even stronger terms during his debate with Cassirer in Davos, when he remarks that the genesis of neo-Kantianism is to be sought only 'in the perplexity of philosophy concerning the question of what it properly is that in the whole of knowledge has been left for it' (*KPM* 246). After the human and natural sciences, around 1850, had monopolized the totality of what can be known (*die Allheit des Erkennbaren*), all that was left for philosophy was knowledge of science, not of beings. Neo-Kantianism then re-interpreted Kant too, transforming him into an epistemologist of the mathematical-physical sciences, and 'between 1900 and 1910 Husserl himself in a certain sense fell victim to Neo-Kantianism' (*KPM* 247). The breakdown of German

Idealism is considered by Heidegger to be an undisputable fact; but, as he puts it in 1935, the very expression 'breakdown' (*Zusammenbruch*) amounts to a kind of shield, behind which the rise of superficiality (*die schon anbrechende Geistlosigkeit*) and the dissolution of the original spiritual forces are taking shelter. For it is not so much German Idealism that broke down, but rather it was the age that was no more able to be equal to the greatness and originality of its predecessors' achievements (*EM* 34f.; see also *GA* 32: 57; *SA* 7).

The following excursus in Heidegger's 1925–6 lectures is characteristic. When neo-Kantianism, taking up Lotze's obscure and incoherent notion of validity (*Geltung*),²⁵ became a philosophy of values (*Wertphilosophie*),

it was soon discovered that Kant had written three Critiques, which were supposed to have discussed the theoretical, the practical, and the aesthetic attitudes, and to refer respectively to these three kinds of values. Kant had, of course, had something to say about religion too, but unfortunately not in the form of a Critique; nevertheless, religion must also be secured a place within the system, so the value of the 'sacred' was discovered. This, for Windelband, is of course no autonomous value; to put forward a claim of this sort *circa* 1900 would be too risky. As the world, however, has become very religious since the war, and as with international associations of chemists and meteorologists, even world congresses are being organized, one might now run the risk of claiming that religion is also a value. Or, since it is impossible to leave it at that (the insights presumably grow deeper and deeper), one must say that God is also a value, and, for that matter the highest one. The latter thesis is an obvious blasphemy, surely not mitigated by the fact that theologians assert it as an utmost truth. All this would be highly comical, were it not deeply sad, showing as it does that philosophy no longer reflects upon the things and problems themselves [man nicht mehr aus den Sachen philosophiert], but upon the books of colleagues.²⁶

It is not difficult to see that this cultural decadence and shallowness affected Heidegger deeply. Someone committed to the appropriation and creative transformation of the problems of the philosophical tradition would naturally be repelled by the 'self-conceited modernity, fallen into barbarity', which pretends that Plato's questions 'are settled' once for all (*GA* 24: 157; see also *GA* 29/30: 48). Husserl had already complained about 'the sort of pseudo-philosophical literature [philosophische Scheinliteratur] . . . which nowadays pullulates so abundantly' (Husserl 1965: 47). He had also described the extent to which the social changes taking place in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and

the consequent prevalence of positivistic culture, were transforming the framework of academic life:

The natural science departments of the philosophical faculties – he wrote in 1910 – are now very persistent in their efforts to acquire professorships in philosophy for researchers who may perhaps be very eminent in their own fields, but have no more sense of philosophy than, say, chemists or physicists.

(Husserl 1965: 47)

The idea of renewing philosophy emerged in connection with considerations pertaining to *Weltanschauung* as early as Heidegger's *Habilitationschrift* (cf. *GA* 1: 406ff.). Although the term 'Weltanschauung', because of abuse made of it at that time, does not turn up in his vocabulary,²⁷ it is clear that, from the 1920s onward, his retrieval and reformulation of the Being-question acquired its specific outlines against the background of more or less explicit expectations of a social-spiritual regeneration. Husserl's observations had shown the extent to which the development of science and philosophy cannot be viewed as a simple linear unfolding of their allegedly intrinsic character and potentialities, but is, instead, dependent upon extrinsic circumstances, rooted in the historical-intellectual climate of the age. Heidegger, much more susceptible to the central importance of historicity than Husserl, had already remarked in the 1920s: 'each philosophy and each science has its own destiny, and it would be petty-minded (*kleinlich und bürgerlich*) to think that we can abstract from the conditions which direct the questions . . . of philosophy' (*GA* 21: 53; see also 280 and *GA* 20: 182). Awakening the Being-question in an attempt to retrieve the philosophical tradition and to clarify the meaning of the question itself was however just a preparatory step, and Heidegger was very early aware of its limited (finite) possibilities.

In the inaugural lecture at Freiburg in 1929 Heidegger explicitly formulated his view of the situation of the sciences:

The fields of the sciences lie far apart. Their ways of treating their objects are fundamentally different. This disintegrated multiplicity of disciplines is held together only by the technical organization of universities and faculties, and through the practical direction of the disciplines. . . . The roots of the sciences in their essential ground have, however, withered away.

(*WM* in *GA* 9: 104)

II.iv

Heidegger's taking over the rectorate in 1933 must thus be seen as connected to his hope of finding a way out of the spiritual decadence, the deep crisis convulsing the whole country. (It may be sufficient to think of the economic crisis between 1929 and 1932, and of the masses of unemployed whose number increased from two to six million during these years). He hoped for a popular-national revival, perhaps giving rise to a philosophical renewal, that of the Being-question. Such a renewal would open up a new historical epoch, no longer characterized by the forgottenness of being. Was not such a hope unfounded, and indeed illusory? This (slightly pedantic) question – to adopt a Heideggerian phrase – arrives too late. That certain features of the renewal were from the very beginning critically assessed by Heidegger is, as will immediately be seen, beyond doubt. As soon as these features gain momentum and prove to have the upper hand, Heidegger will resign, and finally pass into opposition.²⁸

For many different sorts of intellectuals who had been critical of developments in Germany during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – such as the malignant growth of industrial-technological civilization, the springing into being of big cities with their slums, as well as the growing commercialization, fragmentation, and instrumentalization of science and culture – the idea of 'national socialism' was pregnant with significance.²⁹ Since Germany's decadence could well be seen partly as a result of its being fitted into 'international capitalism', the structure created in Europe by the Versailles pact (the source of a continuous sense of national humiliation in Germany), the attempt to find a national solution of the crisis was coupled, for good reasons, with strong anticapitalist feelings. 'If Heidegger' – writes Bernard Willms –

had made more public his political attitude before 1933 . . . he would sooner and more unambiguously have been considered as a representative of the kind of thinking which may be defined as that of the 'Conservative revolution'. . . . This reference to the 'Conservative revolution' is of course meaningful only if it is taken to mean something different from the 'preparation of National Socialism'. . . . It was no less typical of the 'Conservative revolution' that its representatives, for a short time and with hesitation, joined the National Socialists, than that the latter, simultaneously or very soon, pushed them aside, and finally even persecuted them.

(Willms 1977: 17f.)³⁰

II.v

In April 1933, after holding office for less than one week, Rector Wilhelm von Möllendorf, professor of anatomy and a Social Democrat, resigned. Immediately after, he and other colleagues approached Heidegger, urging him to be a candidate in the new election. After some hesitation Heidegger gave his consent to his election – mainly because of the danger that otherwise a functionary would be named rector. One of his first measures as rector, taken a few days after having been elected by the university senate, was to prohibit the hanging of the so-called Jewish poster in the university – a prohibition which, in spite of repeated urgings put through from Berlin, he did not cancel later. He also forbade the book burning planned by Nazi students, seeing to it personally that the University Library remained untouched (cf. Fédier 1966: 899ff.; Allemann 1969: 252f.; Palmier 1968: 74f.; Moehling 1981: 33; GR 193ff.; SUR 23, 31f.).

These were but defensive steps. As for his constructive ideas, Heidegger repeatedly pointed to the above-quoted passage of his inaugural lecture in 1929 – namely, to his view of the situation of the sciences and the university (see GR 196; SUR 22). Heidegger's ideas about a cultural renewal, when reconstructed on the basis of his activity as a rector, may be summed up as having centered around the reciprocal coming together of the university (science) and the folk or nation (*Volk*). On the level of concrete measures, as will be seen, they took the form of accommodating students' lives to that of the nation or folk, on the one hand, and attempting to raise the *Volk* to science (university), on the other. But how is the awakening to take place? Who is to direct whom – should science lead the people or vice versa?

Given the premise that the decline of science and philosophy was but a reflection of a general social disintegration ensuing in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and the idea that even science and philosophy have their own destinies, it is obvious that spiritual life could not be revived from and by itself. A comprehensive social renewal was required. Heidegger was well aware of this, as is shown by his quips connecting neo-Kantianism, and the state of German philosophy in general, to all-encompassing social developments. But there can be no question of the university and the sciences being renewed from 'outside', as it were. For the university would then run the risk of total subjection (a possibility that was to become painfully true later) – a risk that the renewal will *not* be a *spiritual* one. Heidegger's rectorial address treated the theme of the *self-assertion* of the university (a title no other rectorial address bore at the time) because he wanted to actively anticipate the possibility that the reshaping of the university would be determined by social transformations from 'above'. At the same time, he was attempting to re-define and give a new sense to the concept of learning and its role

in social renewal (see GR 193, 196, 198; SUR 25f.; Moehling 1981: 33). Inconceivable as the renewal of the university may be without an overall social awakening, still, the renewing of the university must nevertheless be carried through and achieved by the university itself – specifically, by way of a radical rethinking of its essence and tasks, a reappropriation and a retrieval of the original meaning of science and of its vocation. Were *that* to come about, science would have been re-united with and accommodated to the nation's life, not by some external force, but by itself (for as we know from *Being and Time*, science is but one of man's modes of being, and not the primary one (cf. SZ 11; SU 7). It is thus no mere accident – although it might well have seemed somewhat strange at the moment – that Heidegger should have begun his rectorial address in May with an analysis of the notion of science, and that, after tracing it back to the Greeks, should have linked it to the historical destiny of a people, claiming: 'a spiritual world alone is the guarantee of the greatness of the people' (SU 13).³¹

A new aspect of the notion of retrieval thus comes to the fore. The Being-question, the original meaning of philosophy. Heidegger says at the beginning of his address, was rooted in the Greek people's historical-national existence (*Dasein*); science was not for them a so-called cultural good, nor was it pure contemplation, that is, 'theory' conceived in opposition to 'praxis'. On the contrary, it was 'the highest realization of authentic praxis', a force encompassing the whole of their existence as a state and as a folk (cf. SU 9f.). If science was the Greeks' original mode of being, toward which all their efforts pointed, then it is very much a question of retrieving *that* world, of '*re-cuperating* [wieder-holen] the origin of our historical spiritual *Dasein*' (EM 29).³²

But how is the relation between leaders and followers within the university to be reshaped, once the university re-appropriated its original essence? What are the implications of the retrieval of the original notion of science? What difference will its rootedness in the historical-spiritual world of the people make for the task, mission, and internal life of the university? When we hear Heidegger saying at one point that 'the much celebrated "academic freedom" is driven out of the German university' (a statement that was to raise no little astonishment in decades to come), we should be aware of the precise context of this statement. The essence of the university, Heidegger says at the beginning of the address, is usually found in its 'self-direction', but that is a purely formal way of putting the matter. If 'self-direction' is taken to mean simply exemption from external influences and interventions, there will be a danger of increasing isolation, fragmentation, and disintegration. This would compromise the very notion of science, for, pushing this logic to its extremes, science is no longer science if any one university, faculty, or individual scholar can pursue, as it were, a science all on its (or his)

own. If one calls an arrangement for the interconnection of the various disciplines (Fachwissenschaften) a 'university' – Heidegger says in 1935 – then 'university' becomes an empty name. 'It no longer signifies a primordially unificatory and authoritative spiritual force' (EM 37). Such putative self-direction can be seen, in the light of Heidegger's diagnosis of Germany's spiritual decline, to be no more than 'the *Verkapselung* of the sciences into isolated branches [Fächer]',³³ 'an unhindered and senseless dispersion' (SU 12), a boundless activity of research which – as he formulates it in another lecture – 'hid its own uncertainty under [the mask of] the idea of an [alleged] international progress of sciences' (Schneeberger 1962: 74). If this 'much celebrated "academic freedom"' is now rejected by Heidegger, the reason is given by the words immediately following, namely, that 'being merely negative, this freedom was inauthentic', because 'it meant predominantly lack of concern, arbitrariness of aims and inclinations, licence [Ungebundenheit] in acting and not acting' (SU 15; see also GR 196).³⁴

Heidegger, however, as we have seen, is concerned with retaining the idea of a university's self-direction, and with doing so precisely by attempting to explore its deeper dimensions. A closer reflection upon the idea of self-direction, that is, of autonomy, freedom, shows it to mean 'giving the law to oneself' – a very Kantian view. The university is, accordingly, 'the place of spiritual legislation' (SU 15, 21).³⁵ If self-direction is possible only on the basis of reflection upon or awareness of what one is (Selbstbesinnung, SU 6), and if science's gaining awareness of itself consists in retrieving its original sense, meaning, and roots, by committing itself to shaping and reshaping the spiritual world of a people, then the task of the university cannot be confined to a 'dull and quick schooling [of the students] for an "elegant" profession' (SU 16). Such a conception of the university's task is, in Heidegger's eyes, the correlate of an otherwise unconstrained academic freedom; both are interpretations of the university imposed upon it from 'outside'. The university may not aim at providing whatever specialized professional training may be asked for. Rather, it is because the different professions of 'the statesman and the teacher, the physician and the judge, the priest and the architect lead and guard the existence of the people as a state [das volklich-staatliche Dasein]' that education in these professions is the task of the university. That the university is to shape the spiritual world of a people cannot imply domination over the nation, but rather that those educated and released by it will take care of and enrich the whole people's knowledge of its *Dasein* (SU 17).

The relation of leaders and followers is described by Heidegger in terms of *authentic existence*. Self-direction (Selbstverwaltung) based upon prior awareness of one's self (Selbstbesinnung) presupposes *resoluteness*, and the latter presupposes autonomy. What matters in leadership is not

so much the will to lead the way (Vorangehen) as the strength to walk alone (Alleingehenkönnen) (SU 14). The leaders should concede autonomous initiatives to the followers, and, conversely, the latter should not blindly yield to the leaders. 'Every following carries resistance with it. This essential tension inherent in leading and following must not be obscured, let alone eliminated' (SU 21; cf. De Waehlens 1947: 119; Harries 1976: 654; Guzzoni 1986: 76f.). Only thus will self-awareness be turned by self-assertion into authentic self-direction (SU 21).

Autonomy, as giving the law to oneself, is for Heidegger not so much obedience to the authority of pure reason, unaffected by sensibility, as it is rootedness in an effort to retrieve a historical heritage freely and resolutely assumed. If science for the Greeks meant taking a stand in the midst of beings which are constantly hiding themselves, this persistence is nevertheless well aware of its powerlessness in face of destiny. Indeed, this amounts to what may be called the 'creative powerlessness of knowledge' (SU 9f.).³⁶ For resoluteness, striving for the retrieval of the tradition, the future is open and indefinite. Taking over a heritage can never be compelled, but only free.³⁷ It is never unconditionally necessary that science as such should *be* at all, Heidegger says at the beginning of the address. In his conclusion he restates the same point. It is up to us, he says there, whether and how intensely we dedicate ourselves to the work of the renewal, whether we commit ourselves entirely to it, or merely change old rules and measures, replacing them by new ones. Nobody will prevent us from doing the latter. But neither will anybody ask about our approval or disapproval, if Western culture, well on its way to decline, ultimately collapses, thereby sweeping everything into confusion and madness. Whether that will come about or not is solely a question of whether we as a historical-spiritual people still want to be ourselves – but the young forces of our people have already taken their decision. 'The greatness and splendor of the renewal', he says in the last words of the address, 'will however be fully understood only if we assume that . . . soberness which the old Greek wisdom expressed this way: "Every greatness stands in the storm"' (SU 21f.; Plato, *The Republic*, 497d, 9).³⁸

II.vi

The rectorial address may, in the last analysis, be seen as a dramatic call for the rescue of a declining culture, for the building up of a new spiritual world. However, not only the concluding words, but also the remarks about the powerlessness of knowledge warned against an ardent zeal and excessive enthusiasm. The breakdown of a culture makes the building up of a new world no more than possible – and *that* requires long and patient work. If the Greeks needed three centuries – Heidegger significantly said – in order merely to formulate meaningfully the very

question of what knowledge was, then we must not expect the complete clarification and realization of the German university to be carried out during the present or the following semester (*SU* 19f.). That Heidegger entertained few illusions about the tempo of the renewal becomes clear from a remark of his, made during the 1925/6 semester. Aristotle's logic has but one single child of the same rank, Hegel's, Heidegger said. No other descendants are possible; what is required is a new species.

When that species will come into existence cannot be known, but we, men of today, are certainly not of that species . . . our efforts may only be directed toward effecting the transition: what we can do [here Heidegger changes his tone] is no more than making the past alive for a future for which we yearn, but we shall not reach.

(*GA* 21: 14)

In keeping with his claim that real progress in science and philosophy is brought about only in and by a revision of fundamental concepts, a change in our access to the object or area of research,³⁹ Heidegger envisaged the renewal of the metaphysical tradition, the new elaboration of the Being-question, as attainable only after a laborious and careful re-appropriation of the basic metaphysical concepts of Western philosophy. (The previous quotation may help explain why external pressure was needed to make Heidegger publish *Being and Time*.)⁴⁰ So it is no accident that he saw European culture and civilization, the development of which had underlain the unfolding of Western philosophy and which was now in a deep crisis, as something not to be renewed overnight.

Heidegger's recognition that the renewal, both of the philosophical tradition and of the social-national framework, is a long process requiring the refoundation of the bases may shed new light upon a statement he made in his debate with Cassirer in Davos – a statement which has an odd ring: 'philosophy has the task . . . to push man back into the hardness of his destiny' (*KPM* 263; see also *GA* 29/30: 248). And if in his lectures in 1935 Heidegger once more emphasizes that 'philosophy, according to its essence, never makes things easier, but only harder' (*EM* 9), his underlying view is not a gloomy pessimism, but rather the conviction that the recovery from the decline, the creation of a new world, is dependent primarily upon a full and inexorable awareness of the extent, depth, and scope of the crisis. To suggest quick and random solutions is to mask the real character of the crisis. If the *Selbstbesinnung* remains blocked half-way, only pseudo-solutions will emerge, thus deepening the crisis even further.⁴¹

Given that his critical appraisal of *international* liberalism and its culture had left Heidegger susceptible to the idea of *national* socialism, does it follow that he remained insensitive to the condition of other nations,

or that he thought Europe's spiritual reorganization should be performed under German hegemony? That Heidegger approved of Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations in November 1933 cannot, in the light of what we have said above, be a surprise. But it is important that in the very address in which he defended this step he emphasized:

Our will to the self-responsibility of the nation [völkische Selbstverantwortung] wills that each nation [Volk] shall find and guard the greatness and truth of its own determination. This will is the highest guarantee for peace among the nations, for it is tied to the fundamental law of manly respect and unconditional honor.

(Schneeberger 1962: 150)

And in another address he put it even more clearly: 'The will to build a genuine community of nations [Völkergemeinschaft] is equally far from the desire for a lame and unconcerned world-fraternity [Weltverbrüderung] and from the desire for a blind despotism. That will is operative at a higher level than this contrast' (Schneeberger 1962: 145).⁴²

Further, in 1937, long after he had detached himself from political developments in Germany and had retreated from public activity into inner emigration and nearly complete silence, he once again took up this theme – presumably because of the ever more aggressive and military character which nazism had adopted. 'A genuine reciprocal understanding between the nations', he wrote, 'may be achieved only in that creative dialogue in which each nation commits itself to gaining full awareness of its historical endowments and of the possibilities that history assigns it.' The rescue of European culture may be carried out only if each nation gathers itself unto a responsibility for its own historical traditions and heritage. Renewal must be effected by each nation one by one. 'Understanding in the genuine sense is possible only . . . through acknowledgment of what belongs properly to the other from out of an all-encompassing necessity' – its traditions and tasks. 'Genuine reciprocal understanding is not reciprocal reassurance [Beruhigung]⁴³ which soon leads to mutual indifference, but rather a constant and intensive questioning of each other [die Unruhe des gegenseitigen Sich-in-die-Frage-Stellens] – a questioning that springs out of concern for common historical tasks. . . . One of the most German thinkers of all, Leibniz', Heidegger observes, 'was inspired throughout his philosophical effort by a confrontation with Descartes.' The renewal of the spiritual world has, from this point of view, two necessary conditions: 'the persistent will to listen to or hear the other, and the resolute fidelity [der verhaltene Mut] to one's own determination' (*WA* in *DE* 15ff.). A creative historical commitment – he says in his lectures on Nietzsche in 1936/7 – 'cannot be limited either to particular groups, classes or sects, nor even to particular states and

nations, but must be at least European in scope.' The fact that this commitment must be accomplished by each nation separately does not imply 'separation from the other nations or, still less, their oppression', but rather the rise of the nations through and in a confrontation in which they develop, each by itself, the strength of rising one above the other (*N I*: 185). The question of who man really is (the main problem of Europe in the present and the next century) 'may only find an answer in an exemplary . . . history-shaping [Geschichtsgestaltung] brought about by the nations competing with each other' (*N I*: 361).

Heidegger's attempt at an original renewal of the essence of the university, or science, trying to tie these to and root them in a people's historical existence, was only one aspect of his activity. On the level of concrete measures, as we have said, there was the problem, not only of reconciling the students with, and making them participate in, the life and work of the people, but also, and of equal importance, of raising the people up to science. The program of national awakening included the project of procuring the unemployed not only work but also education. So we should look at the address that Heidegger gave to several hundred unemployed people who had been admitted to Freiburg University.

Heidegger spoke as rector in the assembly hall of the university. His speech starts out from the thesis that the end of unemployment should not be understood purely as the fact that one has now finally a job to do and is able to improve one's conditions of living. One should view it also as entering into the national community. Those given a job now belong to the whole of the nation, and are molding its future. It is from out of this lived experience that the formerly unemployed are supposed to recover their dignity *for themselves*, as well as appropriate security and resoluteness in relating themselves *to others*. Supplying with work is also supplying with knowledge [Arbeitsbeschaffung, Wissenbeschaffung]. If younger colleagues are ready now to transmit knowledge, Heidegger points out, it is not as 'learned' men belonging to the 'upper' classes, or as 'educated' people over against a stratum (a 'lower stratum') of the 'uneducated'. Rather, they do so as comrades, as members of the same national community (Schneeberger 1962: 200). The new common will is directed toward bridging the gap between manual and intellectual workers, and this bridge building (Brückenschlagen) is today no mere illusion.⁴⁴ For science is, he goes on to say, not the privileged property of the bourgeoisie to be utilized for the exploitation of the laboring people. Rather, it is a more rigorous and more responsible form of that knowledge which the whole German nation requires and seeks for its historical-national existence (assuming that this nation is to secure and guard its life and greatness at all). 'Knowledge had by genuine science is essentially no different from knowledge had by peasants, woodmen,

navvies, miners. . . . For to know means: *to know one's way* [sich auskennen] in the world, in which we all and each find ourselves'; to know means to master the situation, to be equal to it, to come up to the task. 'We do not make a distinction between those "educated" and those "uneducated" . . . not because there is no difference, but because our evaluation does not depend upon this distinction. Genuine knowledge is possessed by the peasant and the manual worker, each in his own way and in his own field.' A learned man may, for all his learning, go astray with his pseudo-knowledge (Scheinwissen). Not only the concept of science, but also that of labor is to be transformed. Spiritual labor is not exclusively that done by scholars: 'every labor *as* labor is something spiritual', for it is based upon competence, freely appropriated skills, and an intelligent understanding of the rules to come by – that is, upon authentic knowledge. The performance of the navy is fundamentally no less spiritual than the achievement of the scholar. There is no real contrast between the 'workers' and those having knowledge peculiar to the sciences. 'Every worker, each in his own way, is a knower, and it is as a knower that he can work at all' (Schneeberger 1962: 201f.). Such an understanding of knowledge and of labor is the condition of the possibility of a 'bridge building' which is no longer extrinsic and artificial.⁴⁵

II.vii

It was thus within the framework of a general spiritual awakening that the National Socialist revolution was meaningful for Heidegger. What mattered was not to 'politicize' science and university but rather to lend spiritual content to society and politics – that is, to help shape an already existing movement, a movement born out of crisis, into a force capable of creating a genuine spiritual world.⁴⁶ Insofar as a renewal basing itself upon self-awareness presupposes resolute retrieval of and rootedness in one's own being, such a renewal is opposed to a radical subversion of factual conditions. (Philosophy, it may be remembered, has precisely the task of pushing men back into the hardness of their destiny). The universities' gaining awareness of their original meaning and mission by bringing themselves back to the national-historical community does not, therefore, imply in the least that the universities should, as it were, 'march into' the sphere of politics, taking over the role of the politicians. This mistake would lead, indirectly, to the same 'politicizing' of the university against which its *self-assertion* had tried to defend it. Its own 'political' function may be performed by the university only *as* university, that is, as a given, bounded domain within the national-historical community.⁴⁷ These considerations, which are in keeping with the main line of thought found in *Being and Time*, and with Heidegger's whole outlook, may account for the fact that Heidegger wanted to partake in the revival precisely

from his own place. He did not desire to assume another, perhaps higher, position.

He might, however, have had a chance to do so. In September 1933, as the German press of the day reported in detail, Heidegger was offered the chair of philosophy at the University of Berlin, upon an initiative of the Prussian minister of culture. Scarcely one month later, the Bavarian minister of culture invited him to accept the premier chair of philosophy at the University of Munich. In neither of the cases did the newspapers leave much doubt that the calls carried no little political weight with them.⁴⁸ However, Heidegger refused both calls. The reasons for his refusal are made explicit, and put in a particular light, in a radio lecture Heidegger gave in the autumn of 1933 – a lecture bearing the title ‘Why do we stay in the provinces?’ It offers no plausible arguments, but, once again, a meditation.

On the steep slope of a wide mountain valley in the Southern Black Forest [Heidegger begins the lecture] there stands a small ski hut; scattered throughout the base of the valley lie farmhouses, higher up the slope the meadows lead to woods with fir trees. This is my world. When the young farmboy drags his heavy sledge up the slope and guides it, piled high with beech logs, down to his house, when the herdsman drives his cattle up the slope, when the farmer in his shed gets the shingles ready for his roof, my work is of the same sort. A city-dweller thinks that in condescending to have a longer conversation with a peasant, he has gone ‘out among the people’. But when in the evening during a work-break I sit with the peasants at the chimney-corner, we mostly do not speak at all. We just smoke our pipes in silence. City-dwellers are ‘livened up’ by a so-called ‘outing in the country’. My work is however sustained and guided by the world of the mountains and peasants – a work of which I am not at all the master. City-dwellers are often amazed by such long monotonous periods of loneliness. But in large cities one can easily be lonelier than anywhere else. In the public world one can be made a ‘celebrity’ overnight by the newspapers and journals. That is the surest way to have one’s intentions misinterpreted and quickly forgotten. In contrast, the memory of the peasant has its simple fidelity which never forgets. Recently an old peasant woman died up there. She used to chat with me frequently, telling me many old stories of the village. Even in the past year, with her eighty-three years, she would still come climbing up the slope to see whether I was still there or whether ‘someone’ had stolen me off. The night of her death, not long before the end, she sent one more greeting to the ‘Professor’. Such a memory is worth incomparably more than the most astute ‘report’ of any international newspaper about my alleged philosophy. – Lately a very loud and

active obtrusiveness has been emerging, passing itself off as a concern for the world of the peasant. Men of letters chatter about ‘folk-character’ and ‘rootedness in the soil’. What the peasant wants is however no such citified officiousness, but solely quiet reserve with regard to his own way of being. – Recently I got a second invitation to teach at the University of Berlin. On that occasion I left the city, and withdrew to the hut, where I listened to what the mountains, the forests and the farmlands were saying. I went to see my old friend, a seventy-five-year-old peasant. What would he say? He had read about the call in the newspapers. Slowly he fixed the sure gaze of his eyes on mine. Keeping his mouth tightly shut, he thoughtfully put his hand on my shoulder – and ever so slightly shook his head. That means: inexorably no!⁴⁹

II.viii

The hope for a spiritual reorganization of the nation, for the university’s self-renewal and for its becoming rooted in an organic national community was soon to become untenable, thanks to the ever faster and wilder politicization of the society, the conversion of efforts to control the anarchy into those making for a totalitarian system, and the consequent solidification of a state-ideology, namely, racism. In the second half of 1933 Heidegger was already facing increasing difficulties. His ideas concerning renewal met pronounced resistance on the part of both ‘the old’ and ‘the new’. The ‘new’ was represented by the idea of ‘politicized’ science – an idea that Heidegger looked upon as a falsification of the essence of truth. The ‘old’, by contrast, was the idea that everybody should be concerned with his own discipline and its progress – thereby dismissing general philosophical reflection upon fundamentals as mere ‘abstraction’, or admitting them as, at best, extrinsic ornaments (cf. *SUR* 22f.; *GR* 196).

In the winter semester of 1933/4 Heidegger intended to nominate outstanding young scholars as deans of the faculties, without any regard to their relation to the Nazi party (cf. *GR* 201; *SUR* 35).⁵⁰ By Christmas it had become clear that his planned renewal could not be carried through. Within the university there emerged objections to his idea of introducing students into responsible positions in the administration of the university. At the ‘Todtnauberg camp’, held by Heidegger to discuss impending tasks for the winter semester and to explain his ideas about science and about the university, some government functionaries, as well as some visitors from Heidelberg, introduced the theme of racial thought, thereby attempting to exercise pressure upon Heidegger and upon Freiburg University. In October 1933 the German rectors held a conference in Berlin to establish the new legal framework for subordinating the universities to the state. Freiburg University boycotted this conference:

Heidegger did not go, nor did he send a representative. In February 1934 Heidegger was called to Karlsruhe by the minister, who demanded that he dismiss, and replace with colleagues more acceptable to the party, Wilhelm von Möllendorf, dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Erik Wolf, dean of the Faculty of Law. Heidegger refused the request, and offered his resignation, should the minister persist in his demand. This is precisely what happened. At the end of the winter semester 1933/4 Heidegger resigned. He tendered his resignation about a year after assuming office, and several months before the concentration of all power, subsequent to the death of President Hindenburg in August, in the hands of Hitler.⁵¹

In 1934 the orthodox Nazis started an open attack against the 'Jacobinical', plebeian wing of national socialism. At the end of June Hitler destroyed the faction of the party which was demanding fulfillment of its social promises. There would be no more talk about the 'spiritual revolution' of the workers, no more use of other ideas inspired by German Idealism. Their place would inexorably be taken over by a concept of the people defined in terms of race. By the time this new course prevailed, Heidegger had withdrawn from the movement.⁵²

The certainty peculiar to resoluteness – we read in *Being and Time* – must open itself to what is disclosed in resolution. That means: it may not stiffen itself in the situation, but should rather keep itself open for the possible, and indeed from time to time necessary, re-appropriation of itself. Resoluteness as fidelity to one's self, as destiny, is freedom for the *giving up* of a particular resolution – a giving up required by the possible situation (SZ 307f., 391).

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the editors for their comments and suggestions. I also wish to thank Richard Rorty for reading a first draft of this chapter, for commenting upon it, and – last but not least – for helping improve my style.

Notes

1 Cf. GA 1: 186f., 406, 410f. Heidegger's reading, at the age of eighteen, of Brentano's dissertation *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* may be considered to be the first and decisive incitement to formulate the Being-question. Cf. his Preface to Richardson 1963: xi; and GA 1: 36.

2 'The constant sharpening of the knife', Heidegger quotes significantly Lotze in his *Habilitationsschrift*, 'is boring if one has nothing to cut with it' (GA 1:

200). In a review written in 1912 on recent developments in logic, Heidegger even mentions Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* (see GA 1: 42).

3 Cf. SD 87. For the presence of Aristotle in the formation of the young Heidegger's thought see Sheehan 1975, and Volpi 1984b, chapters 1–3.

4 An example may be the *Habilitationsschrift* itself, in which Husserlian phenomenology is utilized to illuminate, and thus show the theoretical significance of, Scotus's thought – an accomplishment which enables Heidegger, conversely, to situate Husserlian phenomenology historically as a continuation of a traditional problematic.

5 To pose and elaborate (work out) a question means for Heidegger primarily to clarify the prior ground or horizon which lends meaning to the terms in question. To put it roughly, so as to be able to answer any question, we must have already understood its meaning (to the question, e.g., 'What color is the table?') the answer: 'Square' would fail to understand the *direction* of the question; that is, any question implies or carries with itself a pre-conceptual or – as Heidegger puts it – 'pre-ontological' understanding of its meaning. We are able to *take up* the Being-question, J. Sallis comments upon the first paragraphs of *Sein und Zeit*, 'only to the extent that we can *pose* it; to pose it appropriately . . . is to let the structure which belongs to the question unfold *from the question itself*' (Sallis 1978: 28f.). See SZ par. 2, 32; Gadamer 1975: 250ff.; Herrmann 1987: 51ff.

6 The metaphysic-ladenness of epistemological or logical theories is, however, of a peculiar sort – one which those moving within the theory cannot become aware of. Incapable of being thematized, it is not susceptible of critical discussion or examination. See e.g., Heidegger's discussion of the latent, 'dogmatic' metaphysical presuppositions inherent in Husserlian phenomenology (GA 20: 140ff., in particular 147, 155, 158, 178). Concerning Heidegger's confrontation with Husserl, see Volpi, 1984a; for the concept of phenomenology in Husserl and Heidegger see Herrmann 1981, in particular, 37ff.

7 Cf. GA 20: 200f.; GA 24: 103f., 154f., 172, 444; GA 25: 167; GA 26: 19ff., 109; SZ 154, 183, 212; later e.g., EM 78. In Heidegger's perspective it is no mere accident that Hegel's ontology, as the offspring of a long development, is symptomatically called *Logic* (cf. GA 25: 167; see also GA 21: 311).

8 For Heidegger's discussion of the logic of questioning in his dissertation, see GA 1: 160.

9 I borrow the term 'anti-metaphysical' from Otto Pöggeler (1963: 28).

10 Existential analytic might be seen as a polemic radicalization of Kant's replacement for traditional ontology, namely, a transcendental analytic of the pure intellect ('blosse Analytik des reinen Verstandes': *Critique of Pure Reason* A 304 = B 247). Heidegger, writes Richardson, 'shifts the emphasis from an investigation of man's reason . . . to an investigation of man in his totality' (Richardson 1963: 31).

11 Existential analytic, so conceived, is not anthropology. For to elaborate a theory of man as one being among others already presupposes a prior clarification of the different domains of Being – a task not to be accomplished until after the Being-question is answered; cf. SZ 17, 45ff.; KPM 202ff., 227.

12 The term used by Heidegger for man is *Dasein*, which will be left untranslated in the text. The reason why Heidegger does not use the term 'man' is, negatively, that this term is laden with traditional metaphysical presuppositions, suggesting as it does a 'rational animal', a being 'endowed with reason' (a conception Heidegger intends to criticize). The positive reason is that man, for Heidegger, has an intrinsic relation to *Sein*, and possesses a pre-conceptual

understanding of Being. Man is indeed the very being which poses the Being-question. The term *Dasein* is apt to suggest all these connections with *Sein*. Concerning the term *Dasein* see King 1964: 65ff.; Richardson 1963: 44ff.; W. Marx 1961: 209ff.; Fell 1979: 31f.; Pöggeler 1983: 93; Biemel 1978: 111ff.

13 'Das Ganze eines Begründungszusammenhangs wahrer Sätze' (SZ 11). For the term 'Begründungszusammenhang' see Husserl 1980. What Husserl means by this central term of his *Wissenschaftslehre* is that *Wissenschaft* (as opposed to mere *Wissen*) consists not only in one's *knowing* particular perceptions, or having isolated knowing acts. Rather, it requires, if it is to be worthy of its name, some 'systematic connection in theoretical sense', that is, 'the founding of knowledge' (Begründung des Wissens) (cf. Husserl 1980: 15, 230ff.).

14 Concerning parallels between Heidegger's ontological refutation of the epistemological standpoint and the perspective of German Idealism see Gadamer 1976: 140f.

15 Heidegger's argument may be seen as amounting to a kind of 'refutation of skepticism'. Insofar as it shows that some prior knowledge must by necessity precede or underlie all sorts of doubt, rendering doubt possible, his strategy is analogous to that of the later Wittgenstein (see Wittgenstein 1984: 141, 143 (pars. 105, 111)).

16 This may be one of the reasons why Heidegger rejects the application of traditional categories to man (e.g., 'subject', 'ego', 'reason', 'spirit', etc.; see SZ 22). One can say, Gadamer writes, that 'it is *Dasein*'s inauthenticity from which metaphysics as the ontology of *Vorhandensein* developed itself' (Gadamer 1985: 19).

17 Cf. SZ 383f. For the variety of meanings and implications of the term *Wiederholung* see Caputo 1982: 343ff.

18 I should note that some basic issues – above all Heidegger's discussion of truth and time – have been neglected. Also the *vexata questio* of the incompleteness of *Sein und Zeit* cannot be discussed in the present context.

19 Cf. SZ 264, 298. Since finitude is the basic character of *Dasein*, gaining awareness of it by anticipating death helps it become conscious both of what possibilities are uniquely its own (that is, not the others'), and, vice versa, of those possibilities of others which are not – and perhaps necessarily cannot be – its own. Demske rightly speaks in this sense of a 'social aspect' of the anticipation of death (Demske 1963: 38).

20 The term 'Wiederholung' appears as early as the title of the first section ('Die Notwendigkeit einer ausdrücklichen Wiederholung der Frage nach dem Sein': SZ 2; see also KPM 232; Richardson 1963: 93). The notion of 'retrieval' is thus present and operative long before the analyses of authenticity are provided (for this notion in the young Heidegger see GA 61: 80). From another perspective, Heidegger intended to 'retrieve' the whole existential analytic from within the elaborated horizon of the Being-question. Because of the incompleteness of the work, this did not come about. But nevertheless the 'second' Heidegger may pertinently be held to be a retrieval of the 'first' Heidegger (cf. Richardson 1963: 625; Fehér 1984: 146). – All such attempts at retrieval must, however, be conscious of taking their starting points *from within* history (see SZ 20f.). So when Heidegger says in his lectures that his investigations too are determined by the historical situation, and thereby conditioned by traditional philosophies' access (Zugang) to beings (cf. GA 24: 31), this situation both characterizes *extrinsically* the moment of his positing the Being-question and emerges *intrinsically* as one of the main tenets of *Being and Time*: namely, that authenticity is only an existential modification of inauthenticity, always preceded by the latter, and that

Dasein can never remain unaffected by inherited everyday opinions (alltägliche Ausgelegtheit). It is in these opinions, for them and against them, that all genuine understanding, interpretation, communication, discourse and re-appropriation take place. It is likewise in them, against them, and at the same time for them, that resolute *Dasein* projects itself upon the chosen possibility (cf. SZ 169, 383). This view helps us understand why and how the history of philosophy constitutes an integral part of systematic philosophy.

21 Cf. GA 61: 21; GA 20: 179, 188; GA 21: 13f.; GA 26: 101, 196f.; SZ 21ff.; GA 29/30: 53ff.; EM 10. As to 'blind' traditionalism, see his critique of Husserl, his remarks upon Descartes's 'dogmatism', present also in Kant, and his observations on Descartes's own inauthentic traditionalism: GA 20: 147; GA 21: 291; GA 29/30: 30, 64, 84; GA 32: 196.

22 The point that the cultural crisis in Europe was felt most intensively in Germany is made in a lively and convincing manner by Gadamer (see Gadamer 1983: 9f.).

23 I do not, of course, wish to claim that in his critique of traditional notions of man, Heidegger did not employ eminently *theoretical* arguments. (Indeed, I attempt to show some of these above). What I do suggest is that, whatever the particular 'psychology of discovery' may have been, the starting intuitions of such a critique must have been provided by factual experience of life. (We do know that one of his early lectures bore the title 'Hemeneutik der Faktizität' [cf. Pöggeler 1963: 29 and the forthcoming GA 63; see also Gadamer 1986/7: 16].) Put in another way, the starting point of such a criticism must have been a prior dissatisfaction with commonly accepted notions of man.

24 We may refer first of all to his *Habilitationsschrift*, and in particular to those passages which offer critical reflections on the culture of the day (see GA 1: 200, 408f.).

25 Plato is claimed by Lotze to have remained captive to incoherence; however, Heidegger remarks, it is only in his interpreters that Plato turns out to be senseless (GA 21: 71).

26 GA 21: 83f. (The above passage is a close paraphrase rather than a translation.) – Not only has the Kant literature, he says on another occasion, become more important than Kant himself, but its effect will be that nobody will be able to get access to the thing (Sache) (GA 32: 41). To appropriate intentionality, he observes on yet another occasion, what one needs is not sharp intelligence (Scharfsinn), but only refraining from prejudice, concentration upon and disciplined description of what one has before one's eyes. Objectivity (Sachlichkeit) concerning what is evident, he adds, is nevertheless the most difficult thing one can achieve, for man is naturally at home in what is artificial, deceptive, what he picks up from idle talk with others (GA 20: 37). Finally, consider one last, interesting, series of observations, made in 1925: 'Today people decide about metaphysics or even higher things at congresses. Nowadays there are conferences to decide every question – that is, people come together, and keep coming together, and everybody expects the other to tell him what to do. If he is not told, it is also of no importance, for what really matters is that one has spoken [hat sich ja nun ausgesprochen]. Though all the speakers may have little understanding of the thing in question, nevertheless it is believed that some understanding *will* finally be derived from the accumulation of non-understanding [Unverstehen]. So there are people today who travel from one conference to the other, and get the feeling that something is really happening, as if they had been really doing something. But in fact they have just relieved themselves from work, and have tried to conceal their own helplessness under the cover of idle talk. . . . So

finally people think that everything is all right, and one should be present at every congress' (GA 20: 376f.). 'It is clear', he adds somewhat later, 'that research and science are also *Dasein's* possibilities, and are, therefore, susceptible to the modifications of *Dasein's* being . . . , and in particular to fallenness . . . : so philosophy contains, always and necessarily, a bit of sophistry' (GA 20: 416f.; see also GA 32: 41).

27 For a critique of the philosophy of *Weltanschauung*, see Husserl 1965, and Heidegger's analogous considerations in GA 24: 5ff., especially 13, and GA 61: 44. For Heidegger, however, the insistence upon 'scientific' philosophy in contrast to the philosophy of *Weltanschauung*, viz., rationalism in contrast to irrationalism, is simply beside the point. Cf. GA 1: 410; SZ 136; EM 136; N 2: 372, 531; BH in GA 9: 349; GA 32: 143; GA 52: 133; SD 79. See also Hogemann 1986/7: 56, 62; Kisiel 1986/7: 106f.; Rodi 1986/7: 168.

28 Heidegger, Karl A. Moehling writes, 'was both attracted to and repelled by Nazism. He was put in what he called a "middle position" of believing in the social and national ideas of the movement while rejecting the essential racism' (Moehling 1981: 36). At that time, Jaspers admits in his notes, 'neither he nor any of us could know what was going to become of it all' (Jaspers 1978: 180). For Adorno's analogous misinterpretation of the situation, see Pöggeler (1985: 28).

29 The idea goes some decades back. The attempt to bring together the two major intellectual trends of the past century, nationalism and socialism, dates as far back as the 1890s. Friedrich Meinecke, the great German historian, shows this convincingly in his memoirs, written immediately after World War II (see Meinecke 1949: 33ff.). There was first of all Friedrich Naumann's attempt, in the early 1890s, to fuse the nationalistic and the socialist trends (the former supported mainly by the middle class, the latter by workers). Naumann tried to quell the hostility between the two classes so as to mitigate the extremely anti-nationalist (that is, internationalistic) faith of the socialists by attending to the workers' material and spiritual needs. Had Naumann's attempt succeeded (an attempt Meinecke calls 'one of the noblest dreams of German history'), Meinecke thinks, Hitler could never have risen to power (Meinecke 1949: 34). It is significant that Naumann's name is mentioned by Heidegger in a positive sense in the *Spiegel*-Interview (GR 196; see also Pöggeler 1988: 27). As to differences between the forms of early national socialism and the subsequent totalitarian regime, see also Palmier 1968: 193; Pöggeler 1983: 392; Pöggeler 1984: 234.

30 Hermann Rauschning, a Conservative and one of the founding members of the Nazi party, who in 1934 went into exile and became a bitter enemy of the regime, spoke in 1938 about the 'National Socialist usurpation' of the idea of the Third Reich. This was originally 'a slogan of the Young Conservatives, the title of a book published in 1922 by Moeller van den Bruck', - an idea which in its author's 'original conception was not a German idea', but 'a political idea of European scope'. 'In spite of its manifest defects', writes Rauschning, 'National Socialism offered opportunities of pursuing initiatives in which the Young Conservatives were interested. . . . Many conservatives . . . found their way into the ranks of National Socialism from the very best of motives and in perfect good faith.' ' . . . ten years before the National Socialist seizure of power, the Young Conservatives of Germany had a home and foreign policy immeasurably superior to that of the present regime of violence, and envisaged Germany's recovery only in connexion with a universal idea of right, with a "European solution". Nothing was more horrifying to the Conservatives than the gradual recognition that the "national rising", with which they had associated themselves to that

end, was in reality a cynical nihilist revolution, the negation of their own ideals.' (Rauschning 1939: 121, 119, 309; see Stern 1984: 12ff., 18). Heide Gerstenberger characterizes revolutionary Conservatives by the attempt 'to revolutionize spiritually the society [Gesellschaft] by transforming it into a community of the people [Volksgemeinschaft]' (Gerstenberger 1972: 343). That conservative thinkers cannot be taken as simple precursors of nazism is also stressed by Palmier (1968: 172; see also Pöggeler 1974: 109). For a sense of the general historical atmosphere, Alan Bullock's analyses are useful: '1933, like other revolutionary years, produced great hopes, a sense of new possibilities, the end of frustration, the beginning of action, a feeling of exhilaration and anticipation after years of hopelessness. Hitler recognized this mood when he told the German people to hold up their heads and re-discover their old pride and self-confidence. Germany, united and strong, would end the crippling divisions which had held her back, and recover the place that was her due in the world. Many people believed this in 1933 and thought that a new era had begun. Hitler succeeded in releasing pent-up energies in the nation, and in creating a belief in the future of the German people. It is wrong to lay stress only on the element of coercion, and to ignore the degree to which Hitler commanded a genuine popular support in Germany' (Bullock 1952: 253; concerning the last statement, see also Picht's memoir of Felix Jacoby, quoted in note 46, *infra*).

31 It is not without significance that at this point Heidegger makes use of the term *Geist*, which he had primarily put in quotation marks and treated as an ontologically obscure concept. The fact that he takes it up now by re-defining it in terms of his own notion of authenticity ('Spirit is primordially attuned, knowing resolution towards the essence of being' (SU 14)) supports the assumption that retrieval of the philosophical tradition was for Heidegger not a merely intellectual project, and that his objections to traditional ontological concepts should be seen in the context of his dissatisfaction with lived experience which was linked to those concepts. 'Heidegger's insistence on the autonomy of the university', writes Karsten Harries, 'challenged those who wanted to make it into a tool of the movement and reduce it to a vocational school, while his emphasis on the spiritual opposed Rosenberg's subordination of spirit to race and biology.' ('For Heidegger', writes Lucien Goldmann, 'anti-semitism must have been but a serious and unfortunate error, for the biological has no place in ontology, and can, therefore, neither limit, nor increase *Dasein's* possibilities of choice between the authentic and the inauthentic.') 'This is not to suggest', Harries goes on, 'that Heidegger's commitment to the Nazis was less than genuine. He appears to have been convinced at the time that in spite of the threat posed by party functionaries and ideologues, the engagement of people like himself could help to shape the Nazi movement in such a way that it would become a force which could rescue Germany from crisis and confusion' (Harries 1976: 653; Goldmann 1973: 78; see also Palmier 1968: 63). 'Fatal though the impression of some Heideggerian texts of the time may be upon us today', writes Hermann Mörchen, 'it is equally remarkable that in those very texts no concessions to anti-semitism can be found' (Mörchen 1981: 254; see also to the same effect Ott 1984b: 122; Pöggeler 1985: 62, 44). Moehling rightly makes the point that the rectorial address 'was a revolutionary appeal in that he argued that the time had come in German history when an examination of the relationship between the university and the nation was not only desirable but an absolute necessity. He urged the re-assertion of the university and learning in the life of the nation so that pressing and urgent spiritual issues could be confronted' (Moehling 1981: 33f.).

32 Heidegger, writes Harries, 'calls for a thinking which, no longer content

with the splintering of science into sciences, will help to establish the "spiritual world" of the German people and thus help to overcome the disintegrating tendencies of the age' (Harries 1976: 654). 'Clearly', writes Moehling, 'Heidegger's thinking in 1933 on learning and the German university demonstrates a serious departure from the Nazis' understanding of the University as a place for training a racial elite subservient to the state' (Moehling 1981: 34; see also Richardson 1963: 257; the title of the rectorial address, as Michael E. Zimmermann points out, was 'a daring title during the time when Hitler expected the universities to submit to what he asserted to be the demand of *das Volk*' (Zimmermann, 1981: 171). Seen in the context of other rectorial addresses of the time, writes Bernd Martin, Heidegger's was an exception; it was not at all in line with what the Nazis had expected (Martin 1986: 52; see also Schmidt 1986: 88). Obviously, this departure could not remain hidden. As Heidegger recorded in his recently published memoir, Minister Wacker immediately let him know his view of the rectorial address. In the minister's judgment, the address represented a sort of 'private National Socialism', which circumvented the perspectives of the party program, failed to be based upon 'racial thought', and rejected the idea of the 'politicized science' (cf. *SUR* 30f.).

33 The expression 'Verkapselung' is applied also technically by Heidegger to denote the 'worldless' subject characteristic of modern philosophy (see *SZ* 62).

34 Heidegger's rejection of 'academic freedom', writes Palmier, is not equivalent to the repudiation of the liberty of teaching or of the expression of thought (cf. Palmier 1968: 83). 'In Heidegger's understanding', Moehling writes, 'academic freedom in the modern age had come to mean academic specialization and the fragmentation of learning into distinct and isolated areas. It was the modern trend towards specialization, relativism, and irrelevancy which molded the university into a corporate entity which took pride in its autonomy but failed to recognize its isolation from the spiritual needs of the nation' (Moehling 1981: 34). That *Gebundenheit* in the positive sense is not synonymous with lack of freedom or subjection is a point made already in Heidegger's *Habilitationsschrift* (cf. *GA* 1: 199; see also *SZ* 122: 'Authentic Verbundenheit alone renders proper objectivity [Sachlichkeit] possible'; and *WW* in *GA* 9: 189: 'Freedom is not the *Ungebundenheit des Tun- und Nichttunkönnens*').

35 Concerning the Kantian concept of freedom as *Selbstgesetzgebung* see *GA* 31: 24 (where it is called 'the positive concept of freedom') and *passim*. The notion of the university as 'the place of spiritual legislation' shows many parallels with similar views characteristic of German Idealism (see Moehling 1981: 35). The most relevant text in the writings of German Idealists is perhaps Schelling's *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (1802). See Schelling 1977: 251, 254, 257 (Universities are defined here as 'Verbindungen für die Wissenschaften', and Heidegger claims, in like manner, that the commitment to the essence of the university is the commitment to science (*SU* 7: 281f., 284, 299, 304f; see also Fichte 1971: 110)). Here we touch upon a further aspect of the concept of *Wiederholung* – namely, in the sense of a retrieval of German Idealism's understanding of the cultural role of philosophy in the national awakening, and in the nation's life in general (see also Hegel 1970: 402ff.). It must be added that one of Heidegger's constant philosophical concerns was the *essence of the university*: he repeatedly gave lecture courses on it, the first as early as 1919 (see Richardson 1963: 663, 666; Pöggeler 1988: 21f.; see also *GA* 61: 62ff.).

36 See also the remark, quoted in section II.iii, on the destiny of science and philosophy.

37 For a Kantian parallel, cf. Kant 1982: 704.

38 Werner Jäger, who was soon to leave Germany because of his Jewish wife, had the intention of publishing the rectorial address in the review *Die Antike*, for he held it to be an outstanding example of how the classical heritage was alive in the present (see Retzet 1983: 34). Karl Jaspers wrote to Heidegger on Sept. 23, 1933, that the rectorial address 'is up to now the only document of a present academic will . . . that will be lasting [bisher einzige Dokument eines gegenwärtigen akademischen Willens . . . , das bleiben wird]' (Jaspers 1978: 13).

39 A view which has significant parallels with Kuhn's. See *GA* 1: 419; *GA* 20: 4; *GA* 21: 16f.; *GA* 25: 30ff.; *SZ* 9ff.; *FD* 50ff.

40 Cf. *SD* 87f. For the details of the publication of Heidegger's *magnum opus* see Sheehan 1981: 15; Sheehan 1984: 181ff.

41 Heidegger's critique of Nazism from 1934 on will be based upon the insight that Nazism, instead of offering a genuine solution to Europe's spiritual crisis, is, with its racial ideology, rather a continuation, and indeed a consummation, of the decline of the West, predicted by Spengler (see e.g., his critique of Rosenberg and Kolbenheyer in his lectures of 1934/5 (*GA* 39: 27f.; see also Schmidt 1986: 86). It is only too natural that those who were offering such pseudo-solutions were the first to accuse him of 'pessimism' and 'nihilism'. 'The meaning of this philosophy' – we can read in the journal *Volk im Werden* in 1934 – 'is outspoken atheism and metaphysical nihilism, as it formerly had been primarily represented by Jewish authors in Germany; therefore, a ferment of decay and dissolution for the German people. In *Being and Time* Heidegger philosophizes consciously and deliberately about "everydayness" – there is nothing in it about nation, state, race, and all the values of our National Socialist world-view' (Kriek 1934: 247, reprinted in Schneeberger 1962: 225; see Moehling 1981: 36f., whose translation, with slight modifications, I adopted).

42 It is important to see that Heidegger's description of the passage from inauthenticity is now transposed to the level of history: just as *Dasein*, in effecting the passage, first becomes isolated by anticipating death and harkening to the call of conscience, in order to open itself newly and genuinely for the world, and to render authentic Being-with possible, a nation is now seen as stripping itself of the inauthentic international *Mitsein*, conceived in terms of *das Man*, in order to set an example for other nations' possible retrieval of themselves, and to open up for them, in authentic 'leaping ahead', their own and genuine care (the term 'Verbrüderung' is characteristically adopted in *Being and Time* to denote inauthentic *Mitsein* [*SZ* 298]).

43 The term 'Beruhigung' also denotes inauthenticity: it is in fact a category of fallenness (see *SZ* 177).

44 It should be noted that the expression *Brückenschlagen* is also part of Heidegger's philosophical vocabulary, denoting as it does the (mostly hopeless) attempts made by modern philosophy to mediate between the subject-object dualism, viz., the self-autonomous egos (cf. *SZ* 124; *GA* 21: 91ff.). Heidegger's application of the term in a different context should not, I think, be taken as a mere extrinsic analogy. It should rather be seen as an aspect of the previously mentioned connection between the renewal of the Being-question, of the metaphysical tradition (of which the subject-object dualism is, after Descartes, an integral part), and the reshaping of the historical-factual grounds underlying the tradition. A new access to Being is, after all, not a purely intellectual operation. Heidegger may legitimately be said to have expected the national awakening to provide a new experience of Being (for hints to this effect see *SU* 10, 14; *GA* 26: 23).

45 The notion that labor is not equivalent to physical labor – a notion that

goes back to Hegel and was elaborated in detail by Ernst Jünger in his *Der Arbeiter*, published in 1932 (see Jünger 1959: 74, 84, 223, 283, *et passim*) – is stressed by Heidegger on other occasions too. He explains thereby why animals, properly speaking, cannot work (see Schneeberger 1962: 180; on Jünger's influence upon Heidegger cf. Petzet 1983: 37f.; concerning Jünger's rejection of racism see e.g., Jünger 1959: 160; on Jünger's becoming an opponent of the regime see Krockow 1958: 112, who mentions that Jünger's *Auf den Marmorklippen*, published in 1939, was generally understood as a *Widerstandsschrift*). Given this conception of labor and knowledge, the students' *Arbeitsdienst* can no longer be seen as 'condescension' from a higher world to a lower one. 'The so-called "spiritual work" is not such because it concerns "higher spiritual things", but because as work it reaches deeper into the necessity of a people's historical Dasein' (Schneeberger 1962: 181; see Schwan 1965: 182).

46 Cf. *SU* 8, 14; *GR* 198; *SUR* 23; Schmidt 1986: 90. Concerning the way Heidegger conceived of the revival of the university, and particularly of what should not be part of the revival, Georg Picht relates an interesting story. To give the first lecture within the framework of 'political education' – a measure introduced at the German universities by the Nazis – Heidegger invited a man, Victor von Weizsäcker, who was known not to be a Nazi. After interrupting abruptly the introductory words on national socialist revolution, pronounced by the leader of philosophy students, Heidegger let von Weizsäcker speak about Freud. Picht also relates the words with which Felix Jacoby opened his university lectures on Horace in Kiel, in 1933. It is perhaps worthwhile to quote them, to illustrate the general atmosphere of the day: 'As a Jew, I find myself in a difficult position. But as a historian, I have learnt that historical events are not to be assessed from a personal perspective. From 1927 onwards I have made my option for Adolf Hitler, and consider it an honor to be able, in the year of the nation's rise, to lecture on Augustus' poet. For Augustus is the only figure of world history whom one can compare to Adolf Hitler.' Jacoby, as Picht writes, later emigrated to Oxford (Picht 1977: 198ff.; see also Petzet 1983: 37; Stern 1984: 39f.).

47 Heidegger did not elaborate anything like a 'political theory', for, as will have become clear by now, the 'theoretical-practical' distinction was one of the traditional metaphysical distinctions he wanted to overcome (see e.g., *SZ* 193; *SU* 10). The elaboration of a 'political theory' requires conceding some autonomy to the political sphere – a concession which, given his critical attitude toward the fragmentation characteristic of modern societies, Heidegger obviously could not make (see Pöggeler's objection to this effect in Pöggeler 1982: 50). Nevertheless, it may be said that Heidegger's philosophy, in a certain precise sense, is very political – namely, in a sense of the term associated with the Greek *polis* (cf. Palmier 1968: 159). The rejection of the autonomy of the 'political', and the consequent lack of a 'political philosophy' in his thought is explicit in his lectures in 1943. Commenting upon Heraclitus, Heidegger asks: 'And what, if, thought in the manner of the Greeks, the concern for the emerging presence [Anwesenheit] of the Gods were the highest concern for the *polis*? . . . If such is the case, then . . . the thinker, in his concern for the essential proximity of the Gods, is the authentically "political" man' (*GA* 55: 11f.).

48 Cf. Schneeberger 1962: 123, 132f. Heidegger received a previous call to Berlin in 1930 (Schneeberger 1962: 12).

49 'Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?' *Der Alemanne*, 2 March 1934, reprinted in *DE* 9ff. English translation by Thomas Sheehan (see Sheehan 1981: 27ff.). I adopted this translation, with slight modifications, in the above paraphrase.

50 Heidegger himself was by then a member of the party. He entered on May 1, 1933, in order primarily to facilitate his relations with the ministry, and to be thus in a better position to put his ideas through – that is, as he wrote in a letter to the de-Nazification committee at Freiburg University after the war, 'to attempt from within National Socialism and while having a point of reference to it, to bring about a spiritual change in its development'. But it caused no little astonishment in the ministry that none of the deans appointed by him in the autumn were party members (Heidegger's letter is quoted by Moehling (1981: 33); see also Fédier 1966: 900; Allemann 1969: 252; Palmier 1968: 9, 89; Pöggeler 1974: 18f.; *SUR* 33, 37). Erik Wolf, dean of the Faculty of Law, later to become a bitter enemy of the regime, wrote in 1945 that what he found fascinating in Heidegger's ideas was the hope in a 'regeneration of the university' (see Hollerbach 1986: 39f.).

51 Cf. *GR* 201; *SUR* 37; Fédier 1966: 901; Allemann 1969: 253; Moehling 1981: 37; Palmier 1968: 159; Martin 1986: 67. His successor was appointed by the ministry, and Heidegger refused to be present at the public celebration of his successor's assumption of office (see also Wisser 1977: 264). The final events took place at the end of April (see Ott 1984a: 357). Although Ott is critical of Heidegger, he admits that 'the accord between National Socialism and Heidegger could not last long, provided that Heidegger was to remain true to his own convictions, and the Nazis to theirs' (Ott 1984a: 353).

52 Cf. Youssef Ishaghpour's Introduction in Goldmann 1973: 44f. See also Picht 1977: 198. The tendency to overlook such changes in the concrete historical situation surrounding Heidegger's activities as rector is illustrated by Farias (1987), a book which appeared after the completion of this paper. A critic with strong anti-Heideggerian inclinations admitted that from Farias's book 'nothing decisively new had come to light' (Augstein 1987: 215). It remains to be seen whether the German edition of this book, now in preparation, will contain substantive documentary support for its claims, as urged, among others, by Aubenque (1988) and Rorty (1988: 32). Some like Aubenque (1988) and Rorty (1988: 32) urged for more substantive documentary support. For more detailed remarks on the recent discussion raised by Farias's and Ott's books, together with a critical evaluation of the a priori notions inherent in them as well as an attempt to enlarge the context of those approaches, see now my paper 'Fakten und Apriori in der neueren Beschäftigung mit Heideggers politischem Engagement' in *Zur philosophischen Aktualität Heideggers. Symposium der Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung vom 24-8. April 1989 in Bonn-Bad Godesberg*, ed. by D. Papenfuss and O. Pöggeler, vol. 1: *Philosophie und Politik* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1991), 380-408.

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