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and partially false? It is because a philosophy can never be refuted! Why not? Because it contains nothing refutable; for, what in it is actually philosophy is the opening up of being—world-projection; such can never be refuted, but only replaced and altered—; i.e., every philosophy remains and has a corresponding recurrence which can never be immediately established and calculated.

The truth of a philosophy is measured according to the originality of its opening up of the essence of truth.

102

The “last human being” is raging through Europe.

103

In the midst of the forgottenness of beyng and the destruction of truth, it must not be expected that the leap into Da-sein would happen—and be intelligible—immediately. On the contrary: the supreme alienation. Therefore, the task is to raise this alienation even more—but in such a way that in it at the same time bridges are slung for a taking hold of steadfastness (cf. above, p. 3.).

104

The long preliminaries for the second beginning. It is essential to maintain this preliminary character—and not become weak in the sense of a false strength for a supposedly actual and immediate second beginning. Yet how in all this at the same time a lack of knowledge is operative.

Questioning—Why is there at all something rather than nothing?—as the running start into what is alienating in the alien character of the “there.”

Not to give a reassuring-theological “proof” that explains God—not to eliminate the alienation as something extraneous—instead, to make even everything familiar seem alien.

Where is God? The prior and more proper question: do we have a “where”? And do we stand within it, such that we can ask about God? The alien character of the “there” as perseverance of the “where.” (Cf. p. 4, 8.)

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6. [Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, Also sprach Zarathustra: Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen, Werke, vol. 6 (Leipzig: Naumann, 1904), 19: “Thus I want to speak to them of what is most contemptible: but that is the last human being.”]
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is always only what was earlier that is spoken of, although the complete otherness of the second beginning is thought—

*or* the gift of immediately proceeding on the indicated course.

Each of these has its own greatness and its own smallness. And all who here stand under these provisions must know they have no choice, but rather the distinction, to belong to their respective ineluctable course and remain faithful to it.

43

We never grasp the *inceptual*; in order not to become something present at hand and thereby forfeit itself, the inceptual must constantly withdraw. Therefore, the beginning can never present itself; it can only be carried out, namely, in the downgoing of recession, such that the withdrawal truly *remains* a withdrawal.

(Cf. lecture on the work of art\(^2\) and w.s. 37–8, p. 12.\(^3\))

44

*Who is the future human being* (cf. p. 34, 47), assuming he would still ground a history? Answer: the steward of the stillness of the passing by of the last god—the grounding preserver of the truth of beyng.

But where and how are these stewards of the stillness to come forth? Can we “breed” them? No! The steward must be able to remain awake and also be the most watchful and the most alert. Stewardship for this stillness, however, is not a mere state in a present-at-hand human being; instead, the stewardship of the truth of being requires a transformation of humanity such that humans in their highest possibilities become nothing less than the grounding of truth, and this grounding happens as Da-sein.

In addition, the concealed relation to beyng itself already belongs to the essence of this transformation—; the attack of beyng must strike deep into Da-sein. Therefore, the coming forth of the stewards depends on a preparation, perhaps a very long one, whose goals will be largely misunderstood. This preparation must think in advance both beyng and Da-sein in their reciprocal relation and so attain the place

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The end result of the impotence of “metaphysics” against itself: the most complete obliviousness regarding what must happen shows itself in the very honest expedient, yet one already lacking any creative power in craft, the expedient of degrading “metaphysics” to a toy for “lived experience.”

Jaspers—indeed the most extreme example of what could at present appear in opposition to my unique endeavor (the question of beyng). The fact that his as well as my “philosophy” are accounted instances of the “philosophy of existence” offers the most vivid proof of the thoughtlessness of the age.

Astonishing—that one possesses so little knowledge of style that one cannot surmise the abyssal disparity in our entire attitude toward the history of philosophy. But the small-mindedness of today’s literature shows itself once again in the fact that even if this unbridgeable oppositionality could be made visible to it, such literature would still never be capable of recognizing that between Jaspers and me something “common” does indeed persist: decisive thinking in contrast to all mere philosophical erudition on the one side and to “zealous” scholasticism of worldviews on the other—since both of these, before they began, already renounced thinking. But this “commonality” is such a broad—indeed the broadest—condition for thinking that it allows extreme opposites, so that Jaspers’s thinking belongs entirely to the running out of the end of “metaphysics.” Jaspers, as no thinker before him, requires “metaphysics”—for the sake of “existence.” Without “metaphysics” everything would decompose into empty “psychology”—which it nevertheless is perhaps. For my endeavors, the basic postulate is the overcoming of “metaphysics” as such—a questioning in the direction of this overcoming.

Where in Jaspers’s first work, Psychology of Worldviews, which still determines what “philosophy” is, can there be found even only a trace of the question of being? Jaspers merely rejects “ontology”; he does not overcome it and does not at all understand that “fundamental ontology” must be the first deliberate step toward this overcoming—though saddled with all the questionableness that must inhere in such an attempt.

The sharpest objection against his “thinking” is the comprehensiveness of his publications, where not one single essential thoughtful question can be found—where rather the concern is only with the historically given answers and positions as something finished, for the mere purpose of “appealing” to them. And yet—the seriousness of his

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12. [Karl Jaspers, Psychologie der Weltanschauungen (Berlin: Springer, 1919).]
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Editor’s Afterword

The first series of what Martin Heidegger himself called the “Black Notebooks” [“Schwarze Hefte”] is here published in section IV of his Complete Works [Gesamtausgabe] as volume 94.

“Ponderings X,” included in volume 95, contains a remark on the character of these “ponderings” that unfold in fifteen notebooks. They are not a matter of “aphorisms” as “adages” but of “inconspicuous advance outposts—and rearguard positions—within the whole of an attempt at a still ineffable meditation toward the conquest of a way for the newly inceptual questioning which is called, in distinction from metaphysical thinking, the thinking of the history of beyng.”¹ “Not decisive” is “what is represented and compiled into a representational edifice,” but “only how the questioning takes place and the fact that being is questioned at all.”

Heidegger also refers in a similar vein, in his “backward glance over the way,” to “especially notebooks II, IV, and V,” i.e., to the respective Ponderings. They are to capture “in part ever the basic dispositions of questioning and the directives into the extreme horizons of attempts at thinking.”² The emphasis on the “basic dispositions of questioning” reinforces the indication that the Ponderings are a matter of “attempts at thinking.”

Following this up, I have inserted as an exergue to these first published Black Notebooks a later remark (presumably from the early 1970s) to the effect that at issue in the “black notebooks” are not “notes for a planned system,” but rather “at their core” “attempts at simple designation.” It is striking that in all three characterizations of the Black Notebooks, the word “attempt” claims an essential significance.

As “inconspicuous advance outposts—and rearguard positions,” that is, as pre-ponderings and post-considerations in the confrontational thinking of being, the Black Notebooks assume a form not yet seen in Heidegger’s many already published writings. If what is indeed “decisive” is “how the questioning takes place,” thus how the question of the “meaning of being” finds expression, then we are en-

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¹. Martin Heidegger, “Ponderings X,” a, in Ponderings VII–XI, Gesamtausgabe (GA)95. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2014. The page references correspond to the pagination of the original manuscripts, which is printed in the margins of the published volumes.

countering in these notebooks a new writing “style,” a concept often mulled over in the “notes.”

Besides the published work of the 1920s, the courses, seminars, essays, lectures, and treatises on the history of being, we become acquainted in the Black Notebooks with a further way of expression on the part of Heidegger. The question of how all these various modes of speech cohere does perhaps belong to the most important tasks of a thinking which would seek to understand Heidegger’s thought as a whole.

The Black Notebooks present a form which in style and method is possibly unique not only for Heidegger but also for all of twentieth-century philosophy. Compared to generally known sorts of texts, it comes closest to an “idea diary.” Yet if this designation thrusts the writings that come under it mostly to the margin of the total work, the significance of the Black Notebooks in the context of Heidegger’s “way for conceptual questioning” will still need to be examined.

According to the literary executor, Hermann Heidegger, and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Heidegger’s private assistants between 1972 and 1976, the Black Notebooks were brought to the German Literature Archive in Marbach around the middle of the 1970s. On the occasion of the shipment, Heidegger stated that they were to be published only at the very end of the Complete Works. Until then, they were to be kept “doubly secret, so to speak” (von Herrmann). No one was to read them or look them over. The literary executor has decided against this directive, because delays in bringing out the still-unpublished volumes of the full project of letting Martin Heidegger’s thought appear in due form should not prevent the publication of the Black Notebooks at this time.

Why did the philosopher want to have the Black Notebooks published only as the last volumes of the Complete Works? The answer might very well be related to an already familiar stricture according to which the treatises concerned with the history of being were to be published only after all the lecture courses. For these courses, which intentionally do not speak about what is contained in the writings on the history of being, prepare for what these latter are saying in a language not accommodated to public lectures.

The Black Notebooks are thirty-four in number. Fourteen bear the title “Ponderings,” nine are called “Annotations,” two “Four Notebooks,” two “Vigilae,” one “Notturno,” two “Intimations,” and four are named “Provisional Remarks.” In addition, two further notebooks with the respective titles “Megiston” and “Basic Words” have come to light. Whether and how these belong to the Black Notebooks must still be clarified. Volumes 94 to 102 of the Complete Works will in the
The present volume 94 brings together the following texts:

“Intimations x Ponderings (II) and Directives,” 141 pages;
“Ponderings and Intimations III,” 144 pages;
“Ponderings IV,” 124 pages;
“Ponderings V,” 154 pages;
“Ponderings VI,” 157 pages.

Added to these pages are indexes Heidegger provided at times for the notebooks. When available, they are published at the end of the respective text.

The manuscripts are fully worked out. They display hardly any slips of the pen. There are no inserted sheets.

Luise Michaelsen prepared a typed transcription of “Intimations x Ponderings (II) and Directives” and of “Ponderings and Intimations III”; Detlev Heidegger did the same for “Ponderings” IV, V, and VI. Hermann Heidegger proofread the typescripts.

I transcribed everything once again from the manuscripts, while constantly looking at the already prepared typescripts. Then I proofread the typescripts. Finally, the galleys and page proofs were checked both by me and by my collaborator and student, Sophia Heiden.

Heidegger numbered the individual entries in the “Ponderings,” perhaps imitating his own treatises on the history of being, perhaps following the example of certain writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. This changes, however, beginning with “Ponderings XIV”; it and all further Black Notebooks no longer display such numbering.

Letters (“a,” “b,” “c”) with which Heidegger sometimes designated the first pages of a notebook, as well as the numbers that begin thereafter, are reproduced here in the margin of the text. The vertical stroke in the middle of a line indicates a page break. A question mark within braces (“{?}”) flags an uncertain reading. All cross-references in the text are to notebook page numbers. Heidegger uses the symbol “☐” for “manuscript.” All underlinings found in Heidegger’s own text have been changed to italics; underlings in cited texts, which would be italicized on their own, have been printed in bold.

More than in other volumes of the Complete Works, certain of Heidegger’s remarks, especially ones referring to historical events, were supplied with an editorial explanation. Thereby the reader can see at which time Heidegger composed which of the “Ponderings.” Also, with regard to persons and institutions, ones which might be unfamiliar to younger readers, I have attached concise clarifications.