Zeitschrift: Colloquium Helveticum : cahiers suisses de littérature générale et comparée = Schweizer Hefte für allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft = quaderni svizzeri di letteratura generale e comparata

Herausgeber: Association suisse de littérature générale et comparée

Band: - (1990)

Heft: 11-12

Artikel: A stereotype of aesthetic ideology : Paul de Man, Ernst Jünger

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-1006651

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Ortwin de Graef

A STEREOTYPE OF AESTHETIC IDEOLOGY: PAUL DE MAN, ERNST JÜNGER

> Contrary to common belief, literature is not the place where the unstable epistemology of metaphor is suspended by aesthetic pleasure, although this attempt is a constitutive moment of its system.
>
> Paul de Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor"

> En dat voert ons tot een der diepste problemen van de kennis in het algemeen, probleem dat wij hier niet kunnen stellen.
>
> Paul de Man, "Literatuur en sociologie"[1]

Paul de Man and Ernst Jünger: what of this "and"? If it may still seem slightly eccentric to center an essay on de Man on a juxtaposition of his name and that of a writer whose name is never mentioned in what we might still call, all too hastily, but not therefore illegitimately, his critical writings proper, the reflection on that possible eccentricity is not, nor does it have to be. What of this "and", then? Is it the "and" of, for instance, "Madame de Staël et Jean-Jacques Rousseau", "Wordsworth und Hölderlin", "Keats and Hölderlin" – that is to say, an "and", "und", or "et" suggesting an exercise in comparative literature particularly tuned – at least initially – to the identification and interpretation of correspondences where the very project of comparative literature (or comparative ideology) has already ordered us to expect them? Or is it the perhaps rather more wilful "negative" version of the generic conjunction of comparative reading, announcing an investigation of differences rather than convergences, at least to the informed reader – in an essay, say, on "Kant and Schiller"? Or is this "and" perhaps really the apparently more enigmatic "with", the "with" of "Kant avec Sade" (or the reverse), for instance? And is it at all possible to uphold such intuitive differentiations between various modes of conjunction?

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1 "And this leads to one of the deepest problems of knowledge in general, a problem we cannot pose here" (*Het Vlaamsche Land*, 27-28 September 1942).

In the conception of this essay, these heavily programmed questions have figured – and still figure – prominently. The juxta-position suggested itself, of course, in the course of a study of Paul de Man's wartime journalism; more precisely, in response to the unmistakable emphasis on the epochal exemplariness of Jünger's work that marks this journalism[2].

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2 From March 1942 through March 1943, 14 texts by de Man mention or review Jünger's work: 2 reviews of average length of (translations of) *Auf den Marmorklippen (M)* and *Gärten und Strassen (GS)*; one short essay on Jünger's work in general; 2 more one-paragraph reviews each of *M* and *GS*, plus another one-paragraph review of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz (AH)*; and finally, six mentions of Jünger in different contexts (usually as contrasting example of how literature should be written). All these texts are available in Paul de Man, *Wartime Journalism, 1939-1943*, ed. by Werner Hamacher, Neil Hertz and Thomas Keenan, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1988. For convenient reference, I will here list these 14 pieces in their order of appearance in the above volume (i.e. according to source and date) – the texts will be identified in the body of this paper by means of the abbreviation *WJ*, plus page number:

Le Soir

- "Chronique littéraire. 'Sur les Falaises de Marbre', par Ernst Jünger. Deux ouvrages d'actualité", 31 March 1942 (*WJ*, pp. 216-17).
- "Les possibilités du récit de guerre: 'Le Chemin des Errants' par Louis Fonsny", 30 April 1942 (*WJ*, pp. 228-229).
- "Chronique littéraire. 'Jardins et Routes', par Ernst Jünger", 23 June 1942 (*WJ*, pp. 244-45).
- "Chronique littéraire, Aspects de la pensée allemande: 'Le Livre du souvenir', de R. Kassner", 15 September 1942 (*WJ*, p. 269).
- "Chronique littéraire. A propos d'un concours littéraire", 22 Septembre 1942 (*WJ*, p. 270).
- "Chronique littéraire. Technique du roman: 'Cadavre exquis', par Louis Carette. – 'L'Herbe qui tremble', par Paul Willems", 24 October 1942 (*WJ*, pp. 275-76).

Het Vlaamsche Land

- "Duitsche Letteren. Een groot schrijver: Ernst Jünger", 26-27 July 1942 (*WJ*, pp. 319-20; trans. pp. 321-22).
- "Menschen en Boeken. Blik op de huidige Duitsche roman-literatuur", 20 August 1942 (*WJ*, pp. 323-24; trans. pp. 325-26).
- "Literatuur en sociologie", 27-28 September 1942 (*WJ*, p. 331; trans. p. 332).

Bibliographie Dechenne

- "Jünger, Ernst: *Sur les Falaises de Marbre*", May 1942 (*WJ*, p. 349).
- "Jünger, Ernst: *Jardins et Routes* (Pages de Journal 1939-1940)", July 1942 (*WJ*, p. 361).
- "Jünger, Ernst: *Op de Marmerklippen*", January 1943 (*WJ*, p. 376; trans. p. 377).
- "Jünger, Ernst: *Le Coeur aventureux*", January 1943 (*WJ*, p. 376).
- "Jünger, Ernst: *Gärten und Strassen*", March 1943 (*WJ*, p. 384).

But once this suggestion was made, it proved to be far from clear exactly how one should go about pursuing it, even while it became more and more evident that such a pursuit was necessary. The promise the conjunction contained could not be seriously dismissed, but neither could it be easily circumscribed – and this, presumably, not exclusively due to the bad infinity of comparability which everyone engaged in the practice of comparative reading is more than familiar with.

In the present essay, the systematic articulation of the possibilities of the conjunctional promise will only receive a very preliminary treatment. The best part of our attention will be devoted to an attempt to trace the contours, in Jünger's work, of a particularly powerful version of what de Man in his later work explicitly and critically began to address as "the aesthetic ideology". Needless to say that this selective reading cannot claim to adequately render a profile of the entirety of Jünger's massive (and massively repetitive) work – but the profile that will be traced should invite renewed recourse to that work in order to question (it is hoped) the validity of my insistent implicit claim that the monumental "wrongness" of Jünger's aesthetics has an obvious, important, complex and negative rapport with de Man's rhetorical reading. Only towards the end of this reading shall I explicitly suggest some contrapuntal resonances of this aesthetic ideology with de Man's critical undertaking. These suggestions, it should perhaps be added, will hardly come as a surprise – which is precisely why they should be prepared for.

* * *

After the completion of a first version of the present essay, the companion volume to *Wartime Journalism* was published: Werner Hamacher, Neil Hertz and Thomas Keenan (eds.), *Responses: On Paul de Man's Wartime Journalism,* Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1989. A number of the essays in this volume contain remarks or reflections on Jünger that may be useful here – e.g. Ian Balfour, "'Difficult Reading', De Man's Itineraries" (pp. 6-20; p. 9); Cynthia Chase, "Trappings of an Education" (pp. 44-79; p. 50); S. Heidi Krueger, "Opting to Know" (pp. 298-313; *passim*); and Allan Stoekl, "De Man and Guilt" (pp. 375-85; pp. 376-77, p. 384). See also, in the same volume, Rodolphe Gasché's perhaps slightly over-confident but nonetheless arguable observation that Jünger, of all the German writers de Man reviewed, was "the only one he admired" ("Edges of Understanding", pp. 208-20; p. 220).

One of de Man's first references to Jünger, in a review of the French translation of the first of his Second World War diaries, *Gärten und Strassen,* offers a convenient passage through which we can enter our matter. In this review, de Man casts Jünger as a universal nature, whose principal goal it is to merge (*se confondre*) with the world surrounding him, to find equilibrium and harmony in a complete participation in nature. To illustrate this point, he then refers to a passage in which Jünger records what de Man calls his *extase* in the face of a shell:

> Objet pur, sorti de la nuit des temps, d'une finesse de structure parfaite – rien ne pouvait parler plus directement à son être profond. [...] c'est toute la magie de la création que Jünger y retrouve, dans tout ce qu'elle a d'éphémère et de merveilleux. (*WJ,* p. 244)

The passage in question – dated June 19th 1940 – is densely suggestive. Walking through the badly damaged park of the Castle of Montmirail, where he and his staff have taken temporary residence at that stage of the French campaign, Jünger, in search of a souvenir (*Andenken*), finds the petrified shell of a *Wendelschnecke* (a wentletrap), "[...] der durch die Explosion der Tiefe des Kreidegrundes entrissen war." His diary then records, as usual, his reading of the object, of this "persönliches Geschenk" – *à la recherche du fond pierreux*:

> Sogleich begriff ich, den die Nähe der Vernichtung in diesen schönen Tagen doch gleich einem Schatten begleitet hatte, die Belehrung: der Mont Mirail war einst eine Klippe im Kreidemeer, und unzerstörbar ruht das Wunderbare in ihm, von dem auch dieses Schloss mit seinen Gärten nur eine Bildung, ein flüchtiges Gleichnis wie das Gehäuse dieser Muschel ist[3].

Notwithstanding its obvious and specific stereotypicality (and we shall have the occasion to judge this qualification more accurately later on),

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3 Ernst Jünger, *Gärten und Strassen* (first published 1942), in: *id., Werke.* Band 2: *Tagebücher II, Strahlungen, Erster Teil,* Stuttgart, Klett, s.d. [1963], pp. 25-230; p. 187. All quotes from Jünger in the present essay are from this edition of the *Werke.* Henceforth, references to *Gärten and Strassen* will be given in the body of the text (*GS,* plus page number).

this lesson, this *Belehrung,* deserves to be spelled out attentively. The marvellous or wondrous (*das Wunderbare*) is that which is *unzerstörbar,* that which, in the proximity of annihilation, challenges and foils that annihilation – but the lesson itself is only arrived at in *die Nähe der Vernichtung,* as a result of an explosion that has violently ripped out the lesson's object from the inner depth of the cliff. It is important to note that the lesson does not teach that the shell is *unzerstörbar,* or the cliff, but only that *das Wunderbare,* which reposes *in* the cliff and which is intimated to the observer *through* the shell, is indestructible. In addition to this, the *Belehrung* Jünger so instantly grasps also identifies its own generative principle – alluding, perhaps, to the *Chorus Mysticus* in *Faust* – as a process of moulding; the shell is "nur eine Bildung ein flüchtiges Gleichnis" of the indestructible, as are, importantly, the castle and its gardens, which, in this respect, resemble *(wie)* the "house" of the mollusc. The didactic purport of the passage, then, is to drive home a concatenation that runs from the woundrous over the natural object to the cultural object via the formative process of *Bildung* as it is contained *(begriffen)* by the subject.

We have underscored that this insight into a universal figuration – this *analogia* (or *genealogia*) *entis*[4] – is arrived at the expense of consid-

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4 "Insofern es zu den Aufgaben des Verstandes gehört, die Dinge nach ihrer Verwandtschaft zu ordnen, zeigt sich der kombinatorische Schluss dadurch überlegen, dass er die Genealogie der Dinge beherrscht und ihre Ähnlichkeit in der Tiefe aufzuspüren weiss. Der einfache Schluss dagegen sieht sich auf die Feststellung der Oberflächenähnlichkeit beschränkt und plagt sich damit ab, am Stammbaum der Dinge die Blätter zu messen, deren Grundmass jedoch im Keimpunkt der Wurzel verborgen liegt." Jünger, *Das Abenteuerliche Herz. Zweite Fassung: Figuren und Capriccios* (first published 1938), in: *Werke.* Band 7: *Essays III, Das Abenteuerliche Herz,* pp. 177-338; pp. 195-96. Henceforth, this work will be referred to in the body of the text (*AH2,* plus page number). Cf. also, of course, and running ahead a little: "Ainsi, toute la Philosophie est comme un arbre, dont les racines sont la Métaphysique, le tronc est la Physique, et les branches qui sortent de ce tronc sont toutes les autres sciences [...]", Martin Heidegger, "Einleitung zu 'Was ist Metaphysik?': Der Rückgang in den Grund der Metaphysik", in: *id., Wegmarken,* Frankfurt am Main, Klostermann, 1978, pp. 361-77, pp. 361. For a succinct commentary on the opposition between the *kombinatorische* and the *einfache Schluss* in Jünger, more particularly as these relate to the relation of science to metaphysics, see Christian Graf von Krockow, *Die Entscheidung: Eine Untersuchung über Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger,* Stuttgart, Enke, 1958, pp. 110-12. Jünger's own perception of this relation in the short essay "Der kombinatorische Schluss" which we have just quoted from, deserves to be mentioned here: "Wo es aber dem Genius auch immer beliebt, das Feld der Wissenschaften zu betreten, da liefert er den Leuten vom

erable violence. Still, if this violence were "only" (and this adverbial slight is of crucial significance) the empirical violence of an explosion, of a real bomb which, as a matter of historical, accidental fact, did conjure up the wentletrap from the interior of the Mount Mirail, it could be argued that the *Belehrung* of *das Wunderbare* is in essence independent from this violence, that the insight into the tropological unity of the universe – for that is what Jünger adumbrates here, in the shadow of annihilation – is only accidentally, only in this particular and contingent case, due to the exercise of violence. A closer examination of Jünger's aesthetics, however, can reveal that the link between violence and understanding (*Begriff*) as it operates in the most confidently articulated parts of that aesthetics is by no means as tenuous as such an interpretation would suggest. (But prior to embarking upon such an examination, we should perhaps already point out that the easily discernible fact that this examination will remain implicated in the very tropological processes it seeks to uncover, while forcing us to remain alert, cannot in itself invalidate this examination's opposition to that tropology. What concerns us is the tropological *thrust* of Jünger's aesthetics, and it is one of the principal features of that thrust that it does not exhaust itself explicitly in the recorded actualisation of its potential, which is also why it appears to succeed in getting away with just about everything (in fact, that is exactly what it is intended to do). To read this tropology, therefore, is to participate, up to a point, in its impetus, to be gathered in its momentum, and it is only in this complicity with its programme that the import of the mechanics of these aesthetics can be measured with a margin of adequacy. This measurement, as I will try to demonstrate, is what will allow us to gauge some of the quasi-determinative processes connecting the aesthetic ideology with its critique[5].)

Fach ein kurzes, entscheidendes Gefecht, indem er sie, die gewissermassen in der geraden Linie gegen ihn anrücken, mit Leichtigkeit zu überflügeln und aus den Flanken zu erschüttern vermag. Am schönsten und schnellsten tritt seine Überlegenheit in der Kriegskunst hervor." (*AH2*, p. 195) This realisation of truth's metaphorical army of tropes into the "real" army of the (military) *Genius* obeys a principle which we shall try to demonstrate as fundamental to Jünger's thought.

5 One of the crucial problems here is the fragmentary nature of Jünger's work, which for the most part consists of diaries and short essays. While fragmentariness is in itself by no means incompatible with systematicity (see, for instance, Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1986, e.g. pp. 178ff.), Jünger's fragmentary exposition does contain incompatibilities which may not be "merely" blind moments of

> Es lag in diesem Funde auch ein Zug von Alchimie – vom Stein der Weisen, der die Dinge verwandelt durch ein Wunder, das sich in unserm Innern vollzieht. So wäre mir, auch wenn man mich aufgefordert hätte, mir unter den alten Bildern, Büchern oder Schätzen des Schlosses ein Erinnerungsstück zu wählen, doch nichts begehrenswerter erschienen als dieses Schneckenhaus. Wir müssen einen Stand erreichen, wie er dem Überfluss der Erde angemessen ist, in dem sich in Gold verwandelt, was unsere Hand berührt. (*GS*, p. 187)

At first sight, we appear to be in a very familiar plea for modesty and renunciation here[6]: those who have grasped the lesson have no need for literal wealth, as the lesson teaches them, precisely, that such literal wealth is only the ephemeral figure of the real wealth resting in everything their hands can touch (and not, it should be recalled, although this particular passage does not emphasize this, as yet *identical* to everything their hands can touch, for what is touched is itself, too, but a *Bildung* of the wealth)[7]. Yet, the sad tale of King Midas the passage also alludes to already traces a rather less benign reading of this same doctrine of transformation (*Verwandlung:* the *Wendelschnecke* is a suspiciously appropriate object of this demonstrative didactics; as appropriate, in fact, as Jünger well realises, as the setting of the lesson – Mount Marvel), and the continuation of the diary entry responds to that trace with implacable, be it unacknowledged, rigour.

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the potential system itself, but may point to a different mode of thinking that prefigures the critique of the system. Such incompatibilities, however, and this is the fundamental but strategic flaw of the following exposition, will not be rigourously investigated here.

6 Similar passages occur throughout Jünger's work: thus, for instance, the narrator of *Auf den Marmorklippen*: "Wenn wir zufrieden sind, genügen unseren Sinnen auch die kargsten Spenden dieser Welt. Von jeher hatte ich das Pflanzenreich verehrt und seinen Wundern in vielen Wanderjahren nachgespürt. Und wohl war mir der Augenblick vertraut, in dem der Herzschlag stockt, wenn wir in der Entfaltung der Geheimnisse erahnen, die jedes Samenkorn in sich verbirgt." Jünger, *Auf den Marmorklippen* (first published 1939), in: *Werke*. Band 9: *Erzählende Schriften*, pp. 187-298; p. 199.

7 A survey of the etymology of the word "weal(th)", the literal meaning of which "now" is a metonymy for its "original" meaning ("the state of being well") could bear this lesson out; a critical reading of such a survey could then question the metaphysics of the trope/lesson (see, as always, Jacques Derrida, "La mythologie blanche: la métaphore dans le texte philosophique", in: *id., Marges de la philosophie*, Paris, Minuit, 1972, pp. 247-324.

The reading of the shell concluded with the reflection we have just quoted, and the diary then goes on to register another event that occurred later on the same day. At sunset, Jünger and his men set out to go hunting in the valley. They chance upon a big and prosperous-looking farm, whose owners appear to have fled, having left behind "a dark gnome" to tend to the cattle. The encounter with this singular (and totally inebriated) character soon modulates from the comical into the eerie:

> Dann schien ein Freudenrausch sich seiner zu bemächtigen, er fasste den Herd, die Stühle und Tische, ja selbst die Wände an: "Das gehört mir, das auch, das auch", und endlich – ich fand die Steigerung nicht übel – zeigte er noch eine zerschlissene Mütze vor: "Das gehört *auch* mir, alles gehört mir." Dann wieder, ein langes Messer wetzend und sich scheu umsehend: "Die Patronin ist nicht da, wartet, ich werde euch eine Gans abschlachten, nicht das Weibchen, weil es jetzt Junge hat, sondern das Männchen, das schmeckt sehr gut. Alles gehört jetzt mir." Zuletzt wurde uns grausig zumute, und wir verliessen den Ort. Der Gnom verfolgte uns noch eine Weile um uns zurückzurufen; wir sahen, wie er Hühner ergriff und in die Luft schleuderte, so dass sie kreischend davonflogen. (*GS*, p. 188)

This time there appears to be no *Belehrung* to be gained – at least none that the text cares to explicitate. The juxtaposition of this little narrative with that of the wentletrap does, however, prompt some remarkable (but not therefore extra-ordinary) propositions. Thus, it could be argued that what is *grausig* in this scene is not so much the grotesque quality of the scene it refers to but rather the fact that it allows for a peculiarly consistent specular identification of classical *Unheimlichkeit*. As a rule, Jünger is anything but slow in elaborating such (specular) potential, and the fact that he does not do so here is perhaps not insignificant: the possible parable here is indeed very different from the reassuring little *Bildungsgeschichte* the shell had in store. Even on a first simple referential level, it could already be remarked that the analogy suggesting that the violence of war has procured Hauptmann Jünger possession of Montmirail in much the same way as it has procured the dark gnome possession of the farm is considerably less flattering to this former than the wentletrap's praise for his noble renunciation of literal wealth. A more interesting correspondence, which elaborates on this contrast, is yielded in the gnome's somewhat absurd pride in his worn cap, in the *Steigerung* which Jünger tellingly judges to be "nicht übel": for just like the wentletrap is transformed into gold by the touch of the initiate's hand, so the cap the gnome imperiously holds up for inspection has become an object

of proud possession – the pattern that leads from the paintings, the books, and the treasures of Montmirail to the petrified shell in the first narrative is accurately mirrored in the *Steigerung* from hearth, chairs, tables and walls to "eine zerschlissene Mütze". The affective difference in *Angemessenheit* between the gnome and the Hauptmann, between the inner *Wunder* and the overpowering *Freudenrausch*, between *berühren* and *anfassen*, or *begreifen* and *ergreifen*, cannot suppress the truly gnomic and by far more fundamental *Belehrung* of the later passage: "Das gehört auch mir, alles gehört mir" – or, and more crucially, "Das *gehorcht* mir, alles gehorcht mir": everything listens to me, obeys my voice, my touch, my gaze, my *Geist*[8]. *Angemessenheit*, it should be recalled, can work either way; more accurately: it works one way only, according to the measure of obedience enforced by the alchemy of possession and property. Let us repeat this by turning to another trope.

* * *

> ("La pensée rêve des choses et d'elle-même dans un miroir où les images la représentent telle qu'elle est dans son froid sommeil. Elle se donne un regard qui juxtapose à la chose sa signification et à cette signification une nouvelle réalité qui en est comme le prolongement dans le néant. L'au-delà de l'esprit est figuré par ce monde qui nous est ouvert." –
>
> Maurice Blanchot, "Une oeuvre d'Ernst Jünger")

In a fragment of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, a diary of ideas which de Man also reviewed, Jünger introduces an image that is interestingly similar to that of the wentletrap: "In den Sammlungen des Leipziger mineralogischen Instituts sah ich einen fusshohen Bergkristall, der bei der Tunnelbohrung aus dem innersten Stock des Sankt Gotthard gebrochen war – einen sehr einsamen und exklusiven Traum der Materie." (*AH2*, p. 189)[9]. To all appearances, the image functions as the objective correla-

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8 And, perhaps, proleptically, my (Jünger's) name: cf. the section in the bibliography of Jünger's work that is devoted to "Ernst Jünger zubenannte Insekten, Schmetterlinge, Molllusken und ein Moor" (Hans Peter des Coudres & Horst Mühleisen, *Bibliographie der Werke Ernst Jüngers*, Stuttgart, Cotta, 1985, pp. 135-36). Particularly interesting here is the (modest) wentletrap-like *Chilostoma (Cingulifera) cingulatum juengeri* which Jünger discovered/described/claimed in 1983.

9 The translation de Man reviewd is presumably based on the second version of the book (see note 3) which Jünger published in 1938. The first version was published in 1929 under a different subtitle (*Aufzeichnungen bei Tag und Nacht*); it is reprinted

tive of an immediately preceding thesis which is aimed, with some little scorn, at Swedenborg's condemnation of those who jealously hoard their dreams and cognitions ("Träume und Erkenntnisse"):

> Wie aber ist es mit der Verachtung des Geistes davor, sich auszumünzen und in Kurs zu bringen – mit seiner aristokratischen Abgeschlossenheit in den Zauberschlössern Ariosts? Das Unaussprechliche entwürdigt sich, indem es sich ausspricht und mitteilsam macht; es gleicht dem Golde, das man mit Kupfer versetzen muss, wenn man es kursfähig machen will. (*AH2*, p. 189)

It will be noticed that the appropriateness and the power of the image of the crystal (its private, exclusive answer to Jünger's question: "*So* ist es mit der Verachtung des Geistes") hinges on its hiddenness, which is also its purity; but it is not difficult to bring to light the paradox this entails. For the image, because it functions as an image, has already been "contamined", in that it has been made *kursfähig*, in that it has been extracted from the desired seclusion of the ineffable and has been uttered as image – as an image, moreover, of "something" which had already suffered an equally incongruous circulation before, as (unalloyed) gold. The point being that if the ineffable were to be allowed for in its ineffability, it would not be relayed through a tropological chain which, moreover, pretends to denounce just such a tropological subsumption. The crystal, through the alchemy of Jünger's discourse, has been turned into gold and is thus already *versetzt* with copper, *gesetzt* as image, and *entsetzt* of its purity, and this because, as an image, it obeys, and is possessed by, the pre-existent universalising discursive intent of the anti-discursive principle it serves to imagine. Jünger's reluctance to establish the crystal *explicitly* as an image of his thesis may perhaps signal an awareness of the paradox, but it by no means resolves it. In fact, the paradox is even more deeply embedded in the logic of the passage than

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alongside the second version in the same volume of the *Werke* (pp. 25-176). As a rule, we shall refer to the second version only – otherwise the reference will be identified as *AH1*. For an admirable appraisal of the numerous and substantial differences between both versions (which exceeds our present scope), see Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Die Ästhetik des Schreckens: Die pessimistische Romantik und Ernst Jüngers Frühwerk*, München, Hanser, 1978 (succinctly, for instance, on pp. 264-66, 269 and 424ff.).

we have suggested: indeed, the text does not rest satisfied in its impossible troping of the unfigurable, it also tropes the "carrier" of this untenable image beyond its limits, thus admirably crystallising its own inconsistency.

In the first version of this fragment, Jünger posed a question which he deleted from the second version, and which goes to the core of the problem the passage slips into: "Welche Sprache ist frei vom Arbeitsgeruche des Gefühlstransports?" (*AH1*, p. 33). The answer can certainly not be the language in which the crystal is cast: the image, in effect, *is* only this *Gefühlstransport*. The wishful projection of the allegedly ineffable products of the sensitive and aristocratic *Geist* into the crystal occurs by means of the classical crossing of properties which endows matter with consciousness: matter "dreams" the crystal in loneliness and exclusivity, just like mind produces its "Träume und Erkenntnisse" in aristocratic seclusion. In one and the same exchange, the "products" of the mind mimick the solidity of material objects, while these latter receive the properties of dreams and cognitions – or at least, that is what the chiasm attempts to install[10]. Under closer scrutiny, however, the pat-

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10 This chiasmic reversal is one of the key tropes in most (of Jünger's) writings. A striking example occurs in another piece in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*, "Fortuna's Unkraut". Jünger has just described a particular "argument" that visited him like a flash in the course of a dream about a game of cards: "Durch solche Bilder leuchtet uns zuweilen ein, dass es eine besondere Art, vielleicht eine Kurzschrift, des Denkens gibt, die das Element der Ähnlichkeiten und Anklänge im Grunde erfasst und spielend beherrscht. Da genügt uns der Klang eines Wortes, eine unbekannte Sprache zu verstehen. In die harmonische Ordnung einbezogen, wandelt sich der erstbeste Gegenstand, den wir erblicken, zum Universalschlüssel um. / Dies und nichts anders begründet auch den eigentlichen Reiz aller Glücksspiele. Die rote Serie gibt dem Spieler mehr als Geld; sie schenkt ihm jenen Glauben, dessen wir im Innersten bedürfen – nämlich mit der Welt verschworen, mit ihr im Einverständnis zu sein. Wenn die Kugel für uns rollt, das Blatt sich für uns wendet, kosten wir einen erlesenen Genuss – den Genuss einer geheimsten, *materiellen Intelligenz*. In der Tat ist das Glück nichts anderes als *die Elementarform der Intelligenz* – im Glück *denken die Dinge, denkt die Welt für uns mit*." (*AH2*, pp. 241-42; emphasis added). The apparent oscillation in this passage, between a (possibly mistaken) belief (*Glauben*) and a certainty of a present or future harmony (*harmonische Ordnung*, "In der Tat ..."), is highly typical of Jünger's musings and can usually be shown to be indeed only apparent – in the final analysis (which is what Jünger avowedly strives for, a *final* analysis), the element of certainty typically prevails. – On the chiasmic reversal of properties of matter and consciousness, see de Man, *passim*. (An early instance which is particularly interesting here, as it involves a shell, is de Man, "Image and Emblem in Yeats" (excerpt from 1960 Ph.D.

tem cannot but break down, for in its very production the *Geist* that claims it as its product cannot but render null and void its alternate claim to splendid ineffability, which was the rationale for its assumption of the solidity of matter in the first place. It is only as a consequence of the mind's refusal to allow for the material that matter can be said to dream at all, and it is in this utterance that the mind misses the purpose of its trope by doing exactly that which it pretends to contemn: "Was aber ist es mit der Verachtung des Geistes davor, sich auszumünzen und in Kurs zu bringen?" Rather than being the subjective genitive it appeared to be, the *Traum der Materie* turns out to be minted as an objective one: the image of the crystal is the mind's dream of matter, and it only succeeds in recuperating and transforming matter into mind, the ineffable into the discursive, even while and *because* it intends to do exactly the opposite.

Again we encounter the figural and universalist ontology we saw operative in the previous passage: the object is made to undergo a *Verwandlung* at the discretion of the subject and consequently disappears, or, more accurately, appears only insofar as it has shed the alterity of matter that escapes the phenomenal reduction to objectivity. As this definition suggests, in its tracing of the transformation from one object into another, the difficulty of thinking *against* this transformation is not to be lightly dismissed. In order to think (about) it at all, it is necessary to recognize the epistemological thrust of the transformation: the obedience of the object to the image imposed on it is indeed an opening up of the object to cognition, but the crucial element in this process is that this cognition is presented as a cognition of matter measured as the source of the object. We will return to this difficulty by reading yet another fragment in a similar vein, but before we do so we may want to touch briefly upon Paul de Man's awareness, in his 1943 review of *Das Abenteuerliche Herz,* of the epistemological stakes involved – as witness the following praise:

> On y retrouve en effet cette vision étonnemment cosmique qui caractérise Jünger, capable de découvrir l'universel dans le plus minime objet. Il se penche sur une pierre, sur un insecte avec le regard de celui qui perçoit les mystères les

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dissertation), in: *id., The Rhetoric of Romanticism,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1984, pp. 145-238; pp. 152-60, pp. 192-93, p. 197. On this shell, see also Andrzej Warminski's "Epigraphs", preceding his "Terrible Reading", in: *Responses,* cit., pp. 386-96; p. 397.)

> plus cachés de la matière. Et ce n'est pas là une fausse profondeur, qui ne se manifeste que par un verbiage délicat donnant une superficielle impression de poésie. Bien au contraire, on atteint par cette voie à une réelle connaissance, non pas celle qu'apporte la raison, mais celle plus rare, qui naît d'un contact avec les sources mêmes des êtres et des choses. (*WJ*, p. 376)

Let us turn to another trope in order to repeat this.

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> ("'We have a machine down there,' the Sergeant continued, 'that splits up any smell into its sub- and inter-smells the way you can split up a beam of light with a glass instrument. It is very interesting and edifying, you would not believe the dirty smells that are inside the perfume of a lovely lily-of-the-mountain.'" –
> Flann O'Brian, *The Third Policeman*)

In the short essay on "Der Stereoskopische Genuss" in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz,* Jünger expounds his own special theory of aesthetic perception, which centers on the concept of the split sense: "Stereoskopisch wahrnehmen heisst, ein und demselben Tone gleichzeitig zwei Sinnesqualitäten abgewinnen, und zwar durch ein einziges Sinnesorgan" (*AH2*, p. 198). If the coercive mode of this kind of perception is already present in the verb *abgewinnen,* it comes fully to the fore in a further explanation of "stereoscopy": "[...] ihre Wirkung liegt darin, dass man die Dinge mit der inneren Zange fasst. Dass dies durch nur *einen* Sinn, der sich gleichsam spaltet, geschieht, macht die Feinheit des Zugriffes gross" (*AH2*, p. 200). After this very graphic description of sense-splitting and inner pliers (or forceps), the following lines are somewhat surprising:

> Die wahre Sprache, die Sprache des Dichters, zeichnet sich durch Worte und Bilder aus, die so ergriffen sind, Worte, die, obwohl uns seit langem bekannt, sich wie Blüten entfalten und denen ein unberührter Glanz, eine farbige Musik zu entströmen scheint. Es ist die verborgene Harmonie der Dinge, die hier zum Klingen kommt [...] (*AH2*, p. 200)

The true language, then, is a language of words and images that (not unlike the chickens snatched up by the drunken dark gnome) have been *ergriffen* by *der inneren Zange* and that are said to subsequently blossom forth like flowers. Notwithstanding its apparent sophistication and its (slightly deceitful) appropriation of Hölderlin's notoriously enigmatic

verse[11], the structure of the aesthetics and epistemology of the passage remains the same as before: mind extracts, more or less violently, something from reality which turns out to be, or into, a word or image which then, in turn, obediently intimates the *réelle connaissance* that measures the music of "die verborgene Harmonie der Dinge". In this particular case, however, a slight swerve from this basic pattern lights up an important feature that in other cases is easily glossed over; for here it is said not that an object is *ergriffen* but that *words* and *images* are extracted from language in the same way as objects of stereoscopic perception are abducted from reality, and that these extracts themselves become objects

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11 The nearly obsessive concern with flowers is one of the most characteristic surface features of Jünger's aesthetics – a particularly instructive example is the fragment "In den Treibhäusern" (the German word for the hothouse is very velicitous here), which forms part of what the author proudly refers to as his *Kritik der Orchideen* (Kant is never far away here – or perhaps rather the contrary, as I shall suggest later on): "Am Nachmittag tat ich den gewohnten Rundgang durch die Treibhäuser, um meine Kritik der Orchideen zu bereichern, der ich die Spielregel zugrunde gelegt habe, dass diese Blumen als Schauspielerinnen zu besprechen sind. Meine Übung besteht darin, sie lange und mit gedankenloser Starre zu betrachten, bis sich gleichsam durch Urzeugung das Wort einstellt, das ihnen angemessen ist." (*AH2*, p. 219). The duplicity of Jünger's aethetics is quite conspicuous here, notably in the opposition between his *Spielregel*, which is blatantly anthropomorphic, and the pretense to *Urzeugung* of the adequate work. Again, we may remark that *Angemessenheit* works both ways: one way only, and it is not that which Jünger's floral hypnosis pretends to follow. – For a reading of "Worte, wie Blumen", see, of course, de Man, "Structure intentionnelle de l'image romantique", in: *Revue Internationale de philosophie*, 14, 1960, pp. 68-84 (a revised translation made by de Man in 1970 is reprinted as Chapter 1 of *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*). For a further reading of de Man's reading, especially interesting here as it specifically engages an opposition between flowers and stones (which would appear not to hold for Jünger), see Dirk De Schutter, "Words like Stones" (forthcoming in the proceedings of the June 24-25 1988 Antwerp conference on de Man). – "Worte, die, obwohl uns seit langem bekannt, sich wie Blüten entfalten" – this implies that the words were already part of the economic system of circulation of coinage, that they were already *kursfähig*. A sustained reading of this trope will have to take into account the *Satz* from Goethe on which Heidegger somewhat enigmatically concludes his letter to Jünger, and which revolves around the conception of words and expressions as *heilige Zeugnisse* and *wahres Äquivalent* or as *Scheidemünze oder Papiergeld* (see Heidegger, "Zur Seinsfrage", in: *Wegmarken*, cit., pp. 379-419; p. 419), especially as the same letter also relays the same Hölderlin verse alluded to here (p. 417). No such reading can be undertaken here, but its future possibility deserves to be pointed out as proof of the dense and determined (but how?) grafting our initial conjunction invites (cf. note 28). See also note 14 for "Zur Seinsfrage" and note 12 for a further excursion on coins.

(flowers) rather than the other way about. Now, one could say that this hardly matters, as the net effect of the operation – an insight into the hidden unity of everything that is – remains the same, but that is precisely the point: the net effect is indeed always the same, for the simple reason that it is not an effect but a precept which the typical tropology Jünger employs (and borrows from a powerful tradition) transforms into a quasi-effect by circulating it in a figural system whose potential is never fully actualised "on the page", so to speak. It matters little to this tropology whether one takes one's cue from a natural object or from a linguistic construct: in the uncritical reading of Hölderlin's enigmatic verse in which the system is founded, there simply is no *real* difference between, say, words and flowers, and to circulate the one is always already to activate the other (which is also to say that to circulate the One is always already to obliterate the Other), but what exactly is the process of this stereoscopic language?

Stereoscopic language is language that sees – and seizes, with *der inneren Zange – stereotès,* solidity, and *imprints* itself, as cognition, in this solidity, reading its own imprint as the truth of Being. This stereotyped truth of Being is rarely called "the truth of Being"; it figures as *das Wunderbare, das Ein und das Alles, die Harmonie der Dinge* which is purportedly read or perceived (the difference between them being immaterial, if not delusive, in this vision) in everything that is – the apparent modesty of refraining from *calling* this percept the truth of Being is part of the efficacy of the system, as is the temporality of perception and understanding it relies upon. This temporality – the path from perception to the apperception of the *Belehrung* of that perception – should not be taken to be a true temporal unfolding: the temporality of the stereotype is part of its self-justification, of its concealment of its own fundamental metaleptic neglect. In the aesthetics of the stereotype, which is also the epistemology of obedience, matter is *but* that in which a preconceived type is stamped, and the type is precisely that which purports to be formed by matter *in* the process of stamping, a process which Jünger also calls *ablesen,* and which is very different from reading as de Man, among others, has taught us to think (of) it. Indeed, *ablesen* is what one does when one reads a dial: it is a "reading" that only reads what the dial reads, and the dial only reads what it is read to read. *Das Ablesen,* so to speak, *lest ab:* it empties out, it reaps, it abstracts and extracts from that which it pretends to read, which is ever only the readable as what has already been read, its stereognosis seizes only what it has already typed

out, or carved out – in this sense, *Ablesen* recalls Heidegger's reading of *das Rechnen:* "Das Rechnen lässt anderes als das Zählbare nicht aufkommen"[12].

Thus, what remains categorically unthought and unallowed for throughout is the *un-typed stereotès*, the materiality that resists all typing because it "is" (but what is this "is"?) materiality (or, if you will, "the real thing", a "type" "qu'il faut mettre à la porte"). What remains also unthought – but it is the same oblivion – is the "true" object of the type's stereophronetic confirmation (Jünger speaks repeatedly of a *Bestätigung*)

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12 Heidegger, "Nachwort zu 'Was ist Metaphysik?'", in: *Wegmarken,* cit., pp. 301-310; p. 306. *Ablesen:* In a later text, first published in 1963, Jünger has considerably refined the stereotypology structuring his theories in the thirties and forties, without, however, succeeding in thinking back to the fundamental obfuscation inherent in that aesthetics. As we are not here concerned with a balanced and encompassing assessment of *Jünger's* aesthetics ("as much"), we may, for the time being, suffice by quoting a few lines that exemplify the persistence of the universal tropo-typology of everything that is in this later essay (Jünger, "Typus, Name, Gestalt", in: *Werke.* Band 8: *Essays IV, Fassungen,* pp. 383-473. "Die Schwierigkeit liegt darin, dass ein Geformtes leichter zu beschreiben ist als eine Form. Einen Bolzen, eine Schraube, eine Feder vermögen wir zu schildern, während sie vor uns auf dem Tisch oder auf unserer Hand liegen. Das gilt nicht für Typen und Gestalten: Der Typus kommt nicht in der Natur und die Gestalt nicht im Universum vor. Wir müssen beide, wie eine Kraft an ihrer Wirkung oder einen Text an seinen Zeichen, *an den Erscheinungen ablesen*" (p. 386; emphasis added). The fragment immediately following this one reworks an observation already made in the 1947 text "Sprache und Körperbau" (published in the same volume of the *Werke,* pp. 49-103). I first quote the 1964 version, then the 1947 one: "dass wir bei diesem Ablesen von einer sichtbaren auf eine unsichtbare Harmonie schliessen, deutet sich bereits in der Sprache an. 'Begreifen' bezeichnet eine reale und eine geistige Antastung. 'Form' ist sowohl das geformte Objekt als auch die Mater, in der es gegossen wird. 'Münze' ist sowohl das Geldstück, das von Hand zu Hand geht, als auch die Anstalt, in der es zu Tausenden geprägt wird: der Ort seiner Individuation. / Das betrifft unser Thema: Wir sehen die Prägung, aber nicht den Prägstock; wir sehen die Münzen, aber wir sehen die Münze nicht. Ob überhaupt eine solche Münze bestehe und wo sie zu vermuten sei: das war von jeher der schärfste Prüfstein der Urteilskraft. Das Thema stellt nicht nur Fragen, sondern es verändert den Menschen, der sie beantwortet." (p. 389). – "Die Sprache verfährt hier wie die Natur mit den Versteinerungen: sie gibt entweder Abdruck oder Kern, *die beide sich oft zum Verwechseln ähnlich sind.* Osmotisch dringen Äusseres und Inneres ineinander ein. Die Sprache wird nie hinreichend Aufklärung darüber geben, ob das Gesagte Kern oder Abdruck ist, *ob es dem Reich der Dinge oder der Vorstellung entstammt.* Ein Doppelsinn wohnt selbst einfachen Worten inne, wie *Eindruck und Form.* Ein Eindruck wird empfangen und geäussert; Form ist sowohl Type wie Mater, Geprägtes wie Prägendes." (p. 86; emphasis added, except for *Form* and *Eindruck*).

of the truth of Being in qualifications of harmony, unity and wonderfulness which bracket their object (Being) by installing themselves as cognitions (*Erkenntnisse*) of Being which are provided *by* Being and are as such fundamentally independent from the language in which they are postulated. Stereotypical language, in short, participating as it does in the (stereo)scopic-gnostic drive for immediacy, denies itself as language by rhetorically claiming its ground at the far side of rhetoricity, that is: in its claim to *perceive* the coincident originary coinage of *Geist, Materie,* and Being – in the postulate of a perception that would challenge Wordsworth's famous founding question: "Oh! Why hath not the mind / Some element to stamp her image on / In nature somewhat nearer to her own?" (*Prelude,* Book V, vv. 44-46):

> Der Sprachgeist ruht nicht in den Worten und Bildern; er ist in die Atome eingebettet, die ein unbekannter Strom belebt und zu magnetischen Figuren zwingt. So allein vermag er die Einheit der Welt zu erfassen, jenseits von Tag und Nacht, von Traum und Wirklichkeit, von Breitengraden und Zeiträumen, von Freund und Feind – in allen Zuständen des Geistes und der Materie. (*AH2,* p. 316)[13]

Now, the obvious objectionableness of such oracular judgements notwithstanding, the "experience" of the stereotype on which it relies should not be dismissed too hastily. We should be wary of conceiving of stereotypical language as "something" that can be replaced at will by some "other" language which would be the product of a higher awareness. The forgetfulness of this language – its oblivion to materiality and to that which it confirms to have read in its own impress "in" a solidity which is nothing but this impress, hence also its forgetfulness to itself – is not, to use the famous image of Heidegger's letter to Jünger, the forgetfulness of the philosopher who forgot his

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13 Cf. also: "Aber immer ist vom Autor zu verlangen, dass ihm die Dinge nicht vereinzelt erscheinen, nicht treibend und zufällig – ihm ist das Wort verliehen, damit es an das Ein und das Alles gerichtet wird." (*AH2*, p. 183); or, more intricately, "Am Stoff ist also kein Mangel, doch soll ihm die Sprache noch etwas hinzufügen. Sie hat das Wasser wieder herbeizuzaubern, das mit und über diesen Gebilden spielt – ein Wasser, das zugleich bewegt und durchsichtig ist." (*AH2,* p. 182). (The system is completed with the statement, from "Sprache und Körperbau", that "Wasser ist Erdvergeistigung" (p. 81) – this pattern of belated completion/actualisation is, as we suggested, part and parcel of Jünger's strategy.)

umbrella[14]. It is not something that can be remedied at the discretion of the will, by returning to the forgotten in order to retrieve it, for instance. But it can be kept at bay (by not retrieving "it", precisely – by *reading* it, perhaps), which is not what happens in the passages from Jünger the predecing schematics was abstracted from. For what structures these passages is not what they explicitly state in their intentness on a reality which they qualify as harmonious, wondrous, and one; to the contrary, rather, the harmonious, the wondrous, and the one are the rhetorical measures by which that reality is forced to shine forth (called into being) as, indeed, the truth of Being, irrespective of the text's refraining from *naming* this truth of Being by calling it such. Or, more accurately, as a result of that very refrain. A next and final trope will allow us to put this pattern into a somewhat broader perspective.

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In one of the "Strandstücke" in *Das Abenteuerliche Herz,* Jünger describes a spectacle (*Schauspiel*) he observed while standing on a cliff overlooking the sea: the comings and goings of a colony of birds nesting in the face of the cliff draw a pattern of "zauberhafte Regelmässigkeit" over the "blanke Scheibe" of the sea. Immediately, and as usual, Jünger grasps the lesson *Figuren* of this type provide: "In ihrer tellurischen Mathematik bieten sie eines der mächtigsten Schauspiele dar, in dem sich hüllenloser als sonst Gewalt und Ordnung dieser Erde offenbart" (*AH2*, p. 263)[15]. In these figures, moreover, "[...] fühlen wir, wie in einer

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14 Cf. Heidegger, "Zur Seinsfrage", p. 409. As is well-known, this text was first published in 1955 in a *Festschrift* for Jünger's sixtieth birthday; its original title, "Über 'Die Linie'", critically mirrored that of the essay Jünger wrote for Heidegger's sixtieth birthday in 1950 (Jünger, "Über die Linie", in: *Werke*. Band 5: *Essays I, Betrachtungen zur Zeit,* pp. 245-289). For a reading of this exchange, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typographie", in: Sylviane Agacinski et al., *Mimesis des articulations,* Paris, Flammarion, 1975, pp. 165-270; esp. pp. 180-84. See also Lacoue-Labarthe's further remarks on and rehearsals of the points made in this seminal text in "La transcendance fini$^{e}/_{t}$ dans la politique" (p. 168), "Poétique et politique" (p. 186), and "Oedipe comme figure" (pp. 203-05) – all three texts are collected in: Lacoue-Labarthe, *L'Imitation des modernes (Typographies 2)*, Paris, Galilée, 1986.

15 For the import of the notion of mathematics, cf. also "Der kombinatorische Schluss": "Das kombinatorische Vermögen unterscheidet sich vom nur logischen insofern, als es sich stets in Fühlung mit dem Ganzen bewegt und nie im Vereinzelten

Urmelodie, Verwandtes [...] anklingen –", to wit, "das kühne Doppelspiel des Geistes": "Auf die eine Seite strebt dieses Spiel der höchsten, metallischen Ausprägung des Bewusstseins zu, auf der anderen verliert es sich in die Zonen der elementaren Gewalt."
With this intimation of this doubleness, of this oscillation between the impress of consciousness and the realm of elementary violence, it might seem as if this passage, contrary to the schematics we sketched before, does acknowledge an otherness that escapes the typology (the type being that which impresses, or imprints the (metallic) *Ausprägung*). This, however, would neglect the fact that the oscillation itself is asserted as circumscribed or delimited by "das kühne Doppelspiel des Geistes" as it is mirrored in the mathematics of the figure which is in return said to represent it in its revelation of the "Gewalt und Ordnung dieser Erde" that is *verwandt* to the *Geist*. The continuation of the passage may help to clarify what is involved here; in the *Geist's* two "opposed" inclinations *(Neigungen)* is concealed the "Einheit und Mannigfaltigkeit unser so rätselhaften Welt", and this *unser* should be read very restrictively: "Nichts ist so sehr bezeichnend für *uns* wie dieses Nebeneinander von furchtbar entfesselter Kraft und der unbewegten Kühnheit der Anschauung – das ist *unser* Stil, ein Stil von vulkanischer Präzision, dessen Eigenart man vielleicht erst nach *uns* erkennt." (*AH2*, p. 264; emphasis added). Rather than being a stage beyond, or a retreat from, stereotypology, this passage confirms it in its fundamental thrust: it is the ontology of the type as it is enforced by a powerful "us", and thus bespeaks what Lacoue-Labarthe has rightly called, at several occasions and with curious insistence on his

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verliert. Wo es das Einzelne berührt, gleicht es einem Zirkel aus zweierlei Metall, dessen goldene Spitze im Zentrum fusst. Dabei ist es in weit geringerem Masse auf Daten angewiesen; es beherrscht eine überlegene Mathematik, die zu multiplizieren und zu potenzieren versteht, wo die gewöhnliche Rechenkunst sich mit einfachen Additionen behilft." (*AH2*, p. 195; see also note 4). – Indispensable readings of such mathematical totalisation are de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric" and "Aesthetic Formalization in Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*" (resp. chapter 9 and 10 in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*), as well as "Pascal's Allegory of Persuasion", in: Stepen Greenblatt (ed.), *Allegory and Representation,* Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981, pp. 1-25. For instance, in the first text, "If number can only be conquered by another number, if identity becomes enumeration, then there is no conquest at all, since the stated purpose of the passage was, like in Pascal, to restore the one, to escape the tyranny of number by dint of infinite multiplication." (p. 250).

baptismal performance. "[...] en toute rigueur, une *onto-typo-logy*"[16]. What must interest us now, in our limited perspective, is that the type, the *Prägung*, the *Gestalt*, is understood, in Jünger, as Lacoue-Labarthe, taking recourse to Heidegger, also explains, as "donation de sens", which is why it ultimately has to be "la figure d'une *humanité*" – the figure, in this case, of a – of *unser Stil*[17]. What is this type, or face, of (a) humanity? Has it already arrived or is it still in the process of becoming? Is it a totality or is it (still) (only) a fragmentation? The efficacy of Jünger's text, here as elsewhere, resides in its apparent ability to affirm *both* of these alternatives (and thus only one). For what does it say?

First, there is the bold (*kühn*) double game of the *Geist* between the highest metallic impressions of consciousness on the one hand, and the swerve into the realm of elementary violence on the other. This bold double game is then asserted to be a juxtaposition (*Nebeneinander*) of immobile bold (*Kühnheit*, again) *Anschauung* and terrible unleashed force, and this juxtaposition is called a style, "*unser* Stil". The bold game of the *Geist* is staged between consciousness and violence into a style that juxtaposes bold *Anschauung* and unleashed force. This pattern is further complicated by the next statement on the state of affairs:

> Wir fahren durch diese Welt wie durch eine titanische Stadt, die hier der Schein von schrecklichen Bränden erleuchtet, während dort die Werkleute an den Grundrissen gewaltiger Bauten beschäftigt sind. Es wechseln sich in schneller Folge Bilder eines tiefen und dumpfen Leidens, das sich wie in Träumen vollzieht, mit der dämonischen Unverletzbarkeit des Geistes, der das Chaos dem Bann seiner Lichter und Blitze und seiner kristallischen Figuren unterwirft. (*AH2*, p. 264)[18]

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16 Lacoue-Labarthe, "Typographie", cit., p. 181; see also the rehearsals referred to in note 14.

17 "Mais qui, nous?", Derrida, "Les fins de l'homme", in: *Marges de la philosophie*, cit., pp. 129-64; p. 164. We have amalgamated here, as does Lacoue-Labarthe, the notions of *Typus* and *Gestalt* (and *Prägung*) – as we have already pointed out (note 12), Jünger has later developed a distinction between *Typus* and *Gestalt*, to which we shall return later on (note 21).

18 This last sentence, it will be noticed, is syntactically ambiguous: "mit" can either be read as qualifying the alternation (*wechseln*) itself, or it can be seen as governing the second element in the alternation. In the first case, there would only be an alternation between *Bilder*, in the second the plurality of these *Bilder* would itself alternate with a unity of invulnerable *Geist*. For reasons that will become clear, the present reading opts for the second alternative, but the curious suggestion of the first (an interminable succession of images of suffering presided over, in some only vaguely articulate fashion, by the *Geist*) ought not to be ruled out.

What this passage, oddly establishes is that *Geist* has now taken in the subordinate position of *Bewusstsein* and *Anschauung* in the previous assertions: *Geist* is that which subjects a chaos to its figures in a larger alternation (*wechseln*) with something else (deep and mute suffering), which in fact pertains to the other pole of the *Nebeneinander* that was earlier asserted to *be* the style of *Geist*. Rather than being an element *in* the game of *Geist*, in which *Geist* tends to lose itself but which is still part of its style, the realm of elementary violence is now something which has yet to be *subjected* but which escapes a total subjection in an itinerary of alternation. The conclusion of the passage, however, redistributes the components of the pattern yet again by rehearsing the initial specular/spectacular figure of *Geist* in order to project a resolution into the future of an *Aufgabe* in which this initial figure would become, in fact, the figure of *Geist* (which indeed it already was):

> Aber wie sich hier das Bild der Meeresfläche mit den scharfsinnigen Bewegungen der insektenhaften Vögel vereint, so sind auch Orte zu ahnen, an denen diese beiden grossen Motive sich nähern und ineinander einschmelzen, und es ist möglich, dass sich in dieser Deckung der metaphysische Teil unserer Aufgabe verbirgt. (*AH2*, p. 264).

The seductiveness of this passage stems from its prophetic projection into a possible future, in which the *Doppelspiel* of *Geist* between consciousness and violence, or the *Nebeneinander* of unleashed force and bold *Anschauung*, would no longer be the *wechseln* between *Geist* and chaos (which it never was), but the *Deckung* of both, of what is called somewhat earlier in the text "die Elementar- und die Ordnungsseite unserer Macht". To put this differently: the future *Deckung* would unify what is also unified (*vereint*) in the *Schauspiel* of the birds and the sea, but the important point is that this spectacle was *already* a revelation of the "Gewalt und Ordnung dieser Erde", itself *verwandt* to the bold *Doppelspiel* of the *Geist*. The *Aufgabe* would thus indeed be to accomplish a *Deckung* of "die Elementar- und die Ordnungsseite *unserer* Macht", of what is *already* proper to "us". This, then, is quite rightly the metaphysical part of the ontotypological project: it is the repetition of what the project had already accomplished, as stereotypology, as aesthetics of obedience, and as universal tropology. It is the stereotype of the stereotype of the *Geist*, which is both identical to *Bewusstsein* as *part* of everything that is ("diese *Erde*") and, through a process of synecdochal to-

talisation, *identical* to this everything ("unsere *Welt*")[19]. As such, "der metaphysische Teil unserer Aufgabe" *is* "our" already accomplished *Aufgabe* itself: it is the paroxysm of the constitutive and thoroughly metaphysical oblivion of the stereo-ontotypology.

What then, again, is the "type of (a) humanity" in this metaphysics? Heidegger, speaking of Jünger's *Arbeiter*, gives an elucidating answer:

> Die Gestalt ruht im Wesensgefüge eines Menschentums, das als Subiectum allem Seienden zugrundeliegt. Nicht die Ichheit eines vereinzelten Menschen, das Subjektive der Egoität, sondern die vorgeformte gestalthafte Präsenz eines Menschenschlages (Typus) bildet die äusserste Subjektivität, die in der Vollendung der neuzeitlichen Metaphysik hervorkommt und durch deren Denken dargestellt wird[20].

What this confirms most crucially to our preliminary purpose here – and thus abstracting from the "substance", but not the "form", of the question of technology and the *Arbeiter* – is that the metaphysical "part" of Jünger's self-assigned task is indeed that task itself. Insofar as it appropriates the transcendence of Being into the "Reszendenz" (or "Rücktritt") of the preconceived type of a humanity as "Quelle der Sinngebung" – which, as we have tried to demonstrate, is its fundamental prin-

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19 The instability of crucial terms such as *Geist* and *Bewusstsein* in Jünger's aesthetics is, as will have become clear, an indispensable principle in the construction of that aesthetics: it is the linguistic indeterminacy that always accounts for the erasure of the indeterminate linguisticity of the system. It is, in other words, the principle that makes it possible to transform incompatibilities into the only apparent doubleness of allegedly supra-rational poet-ontologies (like Jünger's) that propose to speak "das Ein und das Alles". – Synechdochal totalisation (such as that operation here between *Bewusstsein* as part of the earth and *Geist* as principle of the world) is another typical pattern in the type of system Jünger expounds – it is most strikingly elaborated in his "Historia in Nuce: Die Ergänzung": "Wenn wir eine bestimmte Farbe einige Zeit betrachten, bringt unsere Netzhaut die Ergänzung hervor. Wie jede sinnliche Erscheinung, so hat auch diese ihren geistigen Bezug; wir dürfen aus ihr schliessen, dass uns ein Verhältnis zur Welt als zu einem Ganzen gegeben ist. Wenn irgendeiner ihrer Teile unsere Aufmerksamkeit übermässig in Anspruch nimmt, so ruft der Geist wie ein Heilmittel das Fehlende herbei. [...] Und so wohnt uns auf allen Gebieten ein Hang zur Ergänzung inne, der heilende Wirkung besitzt. / Besonders schön tritt das in der Erscheinung des grossen Historikers hervor: unsere Geschichte, die eine Geschichte der Parteiungen ist, wird durch ein göttliches Auge ergänzt. Architektonisch gesprochen, zeichnet der Historiker in den babylonischen Plan unserer Anstrengungen die Bögen ein, deren Wahrnehmung sich den handelnden Mächten, die den tragenden Pfeilern gleichen, notwendig entzieht." (*AH2*, pp. 250-51).

20 Heidegger, "Zur Seinsfrage", cit., p. 390.

ciple throughout –, it marks the prefiguration of the completion of metaphysics in and of itself[21]. That this is an all-important and dangerous descent we shall presently, however briefly, try to illustrate.

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("Et insensiblement, une personnalité-type s'est trouvée découpée." –
Paul de Man, *Le Soir*, 28 octobre 1941)

The *Verwandlung* of *Transzendenz* into *Reszendenz* indeed implies a danger: the danger of the *Verwandlung* itself. That is to say: while the

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21 For "Reszendenz" and "Quelle der Sinngebung", see *ibid.*, p. 392. "Rücktritt" (not bo be confused with Heidegger's "Rückgang") is a term employed by Jünger in an interesting entry (March 21st 1943) in *Das Zweite Pariser Tagebuch*. The passage is remarkable for its expression of doubt as to the "rightness" of the totalizing thrust of the ontotypology and, more typically, for its subsequent demolition of that doubt. Jünger recounts a conversation he had with (again, typically) a one-eyed Jesuit of the *jenseits-persuasion*, and reflects: "Die Unterhaltung gemahnte mich an einen meiner frühen Zweifel: ob nicht beim Rücktritt in die Einheit uns ein Genuss verlorengehe, den nur die Zeit und nur die Mannigfaltigkeit gewähren kann, und ob sich nicht gerade darin der Grund zu unserer Existenz verberge, dass Gott der Individuation bedürftig sei. Ich hatte das Gefühl so oft beim Anblick der Insekten und Meerestiere und all der unerhörten Wunder der Lebensflut. Der Schmerz ist tief bei dem Gedanken, dass es eines Tages von all dem Abschied zu nehmen gilt. [Note the preparation of the refutation, already inscribed in the argument: the individuated (insects etc.) are part of an *all*, of a *Lebensflut*, a gathering continuity echoed in the gathering moment of *Schmerz* (*algos:* see Heidegger's "Zur Seinsfrage" on Jünger's "Über den Schmerz") – OdG.] / Demgegenüber ist zu sagen, dass wir beim Rücktritt Organe gewinnen werden, die wir nicht kennen, obwohl sie in uns angelegt und vorgebildet sind, so wie etwa die Lungen im Kind, das die Mutter im Schosse trägt. Die körperlichen Augen werden gleich unserer Nabelschnur verdorren; wir werden mit einer neuen Sehkraft ausgestattet sein. Und wie wir *hier* die Farben im Aufgeteilten sehen, so dort mit höherem Genuss ihr Wesen im ungeteilten Licht." (Jünger, *Das Zweite Pariser Tagebuch* (first published 1949), in: *Werke*. Band 3: *Tagebücher III, Strahlungen, Zweiter Teil*, pp. 9-304; p. 27.). – In a previous note we referred to Jünger's later sophistication of his typology in "Typus, Name, Gestalt". The following lines, which form the onset of that essay reveal both Jünger's pretense to a non-metaphysical part of his project *and* the inevitable contradiction of that pretense in its immediate relegation into the realm of human *Erfassung* and *Konzeption:* "Gestalt und Typus sind Formen der höheren Anschauung. Die Konzeption von Gestalten verleiht metaphysische, die Erfassung von Typen sichert geistige Macht. Beide beschäftigen daher zu allen Zeiten als grosse Themen das Denken und Nachdenken." (p. 385).

imposition of the type already entails the metaphysical oblivion of the ontological question, it also immediately furnishes a legitimation of the translation of *this* imposition (for there are others) onto the very mundane reality of, perhaps not merely for instance, war. This is not to suggest that the ontotypology is only ever coincident with the crudeness of propaganda – it is to suggest, though, that it all too easily can come to participate in such propaganda, even if it styles itself against the orthodoxy of that propaganda in a specific historical frame of reference. The possible oppositional mode of a particular elaboration of the ontotypological project is not to be discounted by any means – more concretely, in the present case, Jünger's complicated resistances to developments in Germany before and during the Second World War has to be credited to the full, as it appears in his stereotypology itself –, but the dangerous proximity of the formative processes, the *Bildung* of the ontotypology to the justificatory myths of totalitarian politics cannot be glossed over too lightly either.

A detailed treatment of this problem can clearly not be offered here, but at the same time sketchiness cannot be condoned in this particular matter, even if only because what is under consideration is precisely the sketch provided by the *Geist* in the ontotypology and its further transformation into a scheme for reality. Which is why we shall suffice here by pointing to Paul de Man's sketchy journalistic reading of *Gärten und Strassen,* a reading which admirably illustrates the *Verwandlung* of the allegedly inconceivable but heavily visible (stereotyped) primitive forces of Being into the "ordinariness" of what might perhaps be called the ontical:

> Les livres [...] de Jünger planent dans des sphères où seules les forces primitives agissent, créant la sérénité la plus pure vu le plus noir chaos. On y voit des hommes lancés par des puissances qui les dépassent infiniment et qu'ils ne pourraient ni connaître ni gouverner; on y goûte des félicités et des extases qui sont d'essence divine, des tourments d'une brutalité bestiale. Dans "Jardins et Routes" ces éléments apparaissent parfois, mais sous une forme plus modérée, domestiquée en quelque sorte par les brides de la réalité: les hommes déchainés sont des soldats, les monstres sanguinaires des tanks et des canons – choses somme toute assez ordinaires. (*WJ,* p. 244)

And again, around the same time (middle of 1942), in another brief characterisation of *Gärten und Strassen* that succeeds in juggling universality and particularity in exemplary fashion – according to the example set by the "conception du monde" of the metaphysics of obedience precisely:

> En effet, c'est moins l'image d'une grandiose opération militaire que l'aspect intérieur d'une âme d'artiste qui vit dans ces pages. Rarement Jünger s'élève au-dessus de sa destinée personnelle pour englober d'un vaste coup d'oeil la portée universelle de l'expérience unique à laquelle il a pris part; tel n'est pas le but de ce journal intime. Mais ce n'est pas là en diminuer l'intérêt, car les réactions, les réflexions et les méditations d'un être d'élite constituent un spectacle aussi riche en enseignements que le plus synthétique des tableaux historiques. Et c'est bien là ce qui fait l'attrait principal de ce livre: l'occasion de pénétrer dans la vie personnelle d'un des plus grands écrivains du moment et de puiser dans cette connaissance des enseignements précieux sur une conception du monde qui, même au contact des plus cruelles réalités, parvient à conserver une sérénité souriante mais d'une admirable élévation. (*WJ*, p. 361)[22]

Such is the sketch of smiling serenity – Jünger himself would probably speak of *désinvolture*[23] – with which the ontotypology succeeds in conceiving the world at war. And it is here that a responsible articulation of

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22 The oscillations of this passage, arguably overdetermined by those in Jünger's own writings, are characteristic of de Man's readings of Jünger in general: it allows him, for instance, to state both that Jünger's work offers a "réelle connaissance" (*WJ*, p. 376) and that "Jamais [Jünger] ne nous apprendra une chose concrète et il n'enrichira pas nos connaissances" (*WJ*, p. 216). Similarly, Jünger's thought is (indirectly) characterised as "[...] une pensée qui ne raisonne pas mais qui 'voit' avec une puissance et une pénétration incomparable" (*WJ*, p. 269). (Needless to add that this in-determinacy is precisely what is at stake in the primal scene (and Critique) of the aesthetic ideology.) The same vagueness also determines the concept of universal particularity central to the complementary nationalism in a European frame of which Jünger is, appropriately, de Man's favourite incarnation (alongside Rilke).

23 "Zur Désinvolture" (*AH2*, pp. 264-66): *Désinvolture*, a word which Jünger is particularly fond of, is variously defined as "d[ie] göttergleiche Überlegenheit", "die Unschuld der Macht", "Wuchs und freie Gabe und als solche dem Glück oder der Zauberei weit eher als dem Willen verwandt", "die unwiderstehliche Anmut der Macht", and "eine besondere Form der Heiterkeit" which is itself one of man's "gewaltige Waffen", which he carries as "göttliche Rüstung, in der er selbst die Schrecken der Vernichtung zu bestehen vermag". See also, in *Gärten und Strassen*, "Zur Désinvolture. Hier liesse sich noch erwähnen das Wort 'gracious', zu dem uns gleichfalls die Entsprechung fehlt. Die Paarung von Macht und Anmut ist bei uns zu selten, um eigene Worte hervorzubringen, und diese Sprödigkeit hat uns im Grunde im Lauf der Weltgeschichte den guten Anspruch oft verscherzt." (*GS*, p. 102). – The *sérénité souriante* de Man ascribes to Jünger in the passage just quoted "echoes" some of the phrases Maurice Blanchot uses to characterise this author ("Une oeuvre d'Ernst Jünger", in: *id.*, *Faux Pas*, Paris, Gallimard, 1943, pp. 296-301) – e.g. "sereine angoisse" (p. 300), "une hautaine et tranquille tristesse" (p. 300) and "dignité cruelle" (p. 301). – For the *Anmut* of power (*désinvolture*), see, once more, de Man, "Aesthetic Formalization in Kleist", p. 270; and the brilliant reading of this essay in Cynthia Chase, "Trappings of an Education" (in *Responses*, cit.).

the aesthetics of obedience with its attendant ideologies could seriously commence. (Perhaps. For "we" keep saying this, embarrassed by the facile narrative this suggestion grafts onto (not only) de Man's "critical career", and, at least up to now, largely unable to dispell this unease by effecting just this "responsible articulation" in a more than cursory fashion.) The present frame, however, urges us to circle back, and ahead, to the juxtaposition we set out from – the question we thus so symptomatically abandon here remains to be thought.

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What, then, is the import of this most rudimentary impression of Jünger's ontotypology in our conjunction? How does this sketch, which is itself evidently tributary to de Man's reading[24] (that, I will add, is the one crucial point not to be forgotten), resonate with, or perhaps even in, that reading? A very general remark supplementing this sketch will have to suffice to suggest some possible entries into this question (or, rather, to confirm some of the entries the sketch has already programmed). The immediate danger in tracing such entries is, as will also have been understood, that they tend to become all too easily implicated in what Derrida has so forbiddingly but indispensably called "the policeman's petty game"[25] – we can only be cautious.

The, to my knowledge, only reference to Jünger de Man made in print after the war occurs in a remarkable short essay "The Inward Generation", which he published in 1955, while a student at Harvard[26]. In

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24 It is, perhaps, slightly disturbing that de Man's "master concepts" have the ironical habit of leading their own predictable life in criticism following his work – in this, they all too often figure as literary criticism's answer to Holmes and Watson.

25 Derrida, "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep Within a Shell: Paul de Man's War", in: *Critical Inquiry,* 14, 3, Spring 1988, pp. 590-652; p. 642.

26 De Man, "The Inward Generation" – now reprinted in: *id., Critical Writings, 1953-78,* edited and introduced by Lindsay Waters, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, pp. 12-17 (henceforth *CW*). The essay begins with the following, excessively suggestive paragraph: "There always is a strange fascination about the bad verse which great poets write in their youth. They often seem more receptive than any to the mannerisms and clichés of their age, particularly to those which their later work will reject most forcibly. This early work, therefore, is often a very good place to discover the conventions of a certain period and to meet its problems from the inside, as they appeared to these writers themselves." (*CW*, p. 12).

this essay, de Man sketches the paths along which a "modern conservatism" tends to justify its defensive and passive retreat into a certain permanence: notably, by pointing to the failure of the "blend of revolutionary spirit and aesthetic refinement" (*CW*, p. 14) that was typical of the twenties and thirties – and, more in particular, of "those near-great writers whose ability to catch the mood of the times always put them in the center of events". Characteristic of these writers, among them Jünger, is that they were "forcefully committed politically", but ended up "[...] writing off this part of their lives completely, as a momentary abberation, a step toward finding themselves", and that they were staunch defenders of certain aesthetic values inherited from their symbolist predecessors which in their own work, however, tended to whither into "banality and imitation". De Man then identifies the underlying principle of this failure, which, as he puts it, the catastrophe of the war as well as a "mounting mechanization and automaticism" served to expose:

> What happened is that the political as well as the aesthetic were being used, not for what they represented in themselves, but as a protection which shielded them from their real problems. Political systems of the left and the right, and literary experimentations which had originated before them, provided an organized framework within which they could fit and act, without really returning to the questions out of which these systems and experiments had arisen. (*CW*, p. 14)

De Man does not explicitate just how this judgement would apply to Jünger, but that is, as we have repeatedly tried to underscore, not our main concern here[27]. What matters to us now is the use to which de Man puts this judgement in his larger argument.

Jünger's failure, it is argued, was due to the fact that he did not return to the questions out of which the tradition in which he had installed himself had arisen, but rather used that tradition to fend off its originary problems. These questions and problems, it then transpires, are in fact those that became prominent in the "ontological crisis" (*CW*, p. 15) de Man aligns with the advent of romanticism: they are, in fact, appurtenant to the ontological question itself. Importantly, though, this does *not* mean that the "modern conservatism" which would decry the failure of com-

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27 Reference should once again be made to Bohrer, *op. cit.*, which is (among other things) the indispensable starting point for any analysis of Jünger's evolution. A very different study of this evolution, the *project* of which is particularly interesting here is Von Krockow, *op. cit.*.

mitments like Jünger's is any more attentive to the causes of this failure: first "[...] it should be proven [...]", de Man ordains, that "today's conservatism" is "[...] not just doing the same thing, in a more vicious and destructive way". Which is, of course, the opposite of what will be "proven": indeed, not only is "modern conservatism" – which de Man suspects of being "just another form of nihilism" (*CW*, p. 13)[28] – guilty of forgetting the ontological question, but it does so in a way which is much more insiduous than that of the unquestioning assumption of traditions arising from this question which writers like Jünger chose: "modern conservatism" in fact *represses* the question by giving in to a "desire for serenity" (*CW*, p. 15), to the temptation of permanence[29], which is the denial of nothing less than history. The essay's subsequent reference to Heidegger as the philosopher who can offer an alternative for this repression was only to be expected.

What this last explicit appraisal of Jünger by de Man teaches us on the preliminary level of this sketch is fairly obvious: in the larger question of the assessment of de Man's wartime journalism, it can provide a number of difficulties the investigation of which may contribute to what Jacques Derrida has outlined as the "*articulation*" of de Man's "'early writings'" with "the work to come"[30]. While trying not to fall prey ("if possible") to either of the "two more or less symmetrical errors" such an investigation is highly vulnerable to, this articulation could be conducted along the following (well-worn) lines: a sketch, yet again, crudely.

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28 The question of nihilism is, of course, *the* question of Being in "Über 'Die Linie'" and in "Über die Linie".

29 "Serenity" – Jünger, too, possessed a "sérénité souriante". For the issue of permanence, see the roughly contemporaneous de Man, "Tentation de la permanence", in: *Monde Nouveau*, 93, Octobre 1955, pp. 49-61 (trans. *CW*, pp. 30-40). "The Inward Generation" uses the same example for the author who has fallen prey to this temptation as "Tentation" does: Malraux and his eponymous *Noyers de l'Altenbourg*. Malraux is, moreover, listed alongside Jünger (and Pound and Hemingway) as one of the "near-great writers" who failed in their political activism and aesthetic formalism and subsequently embraced a "nihilistic conservatism" (*CW*, p. 16). We might underscore here that Jünger's aesthetics as we have read it in the present paper is equally susceptible to the allegations de Man here levels at Malraux. For the sake of completeness, we may add that in another text from the same period ("Le devenir, la poésie", in: *Monde Nouveau*, 105, Novembre 1956, pp. 110-24; trans. *CW*, pp. 64-75), de Man also launches an attack on the "ambiance de sérénité dont on peut demander si elle a vraiment été méritée" (p. 111) that characterises the thought of those tempted by permanence.

30 Derrida, "Like the Sound of the Sea ...", cit., pp. 640-41.

The ontotypology our reading of Jünger has drawn out could arguably be identified as one of the principal targets of de Man's critical enterprise. If so, however, it would have to be categorically distinguished from the justificatory target it forms for the "modern conservatist" (nihilist) denunciation: on the contrary, de Man's critique is precisely aimed at an analysis of the forgetfulness that is constitutive of, for instance, Jünger's thought and consequently also envisages the *repression* of the question that aesthetics "only" forgets. In other words, de Man's reading could be said to be an attempt to critically think again the questions the ontotypology forgot – which are the originary questions of what he calls romanticism[31] – by approaching the systematicity of that oblivion as it was already inscribed in the romantic predicament from its very inception; that is to say: in the rhetoricity of, in the categorical crossings engendered by, that predicament.

Thus, far from being a wholesale and uncritical rejection/repetition of the aesthetic ideology he was implicated in – through Jünger, among others –, de Man's subsequent inquiry could be demonstrated to take seriously the problematics whose oblivion resulted in that ideology's constitution. His critical itinerary – which is an iteration, not an obsessed repetition, a "Schritt zurück"[32], not a "pacifying and diplomatic transla-

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31 The persistence of "romanticism" as a horizon for de Man's thought can be traced without too much difficulty throughout his work – some examples (which, evidently, stand in need of attentive comment): "We know all this; the characteristics of romanticism are now a part of literary history. But we do not generally realize that we are still living under the impact of exactly the same ontological crisis. Never have the truly great minds of romanticism, such as Rousseau, Hölderlin, or Hegel been more familiar and more directly concerned with our own situation" (*CW*, p. 15). – "Die Hauptpunkte, um welche die heutigen methodologischen und ideologischen Auseinandersetzungen kreisen, können fast immer direkt auf das romantische Erbe zurückgeführt werden" ("Wordsworth und Hölderlin", in: *Schweizer Monatshefte*, 45, 12, März 1966, pp. 1141-55; p. 1141), – "[...] the question of Romanticism can no longer be asked in the manner to which we are still accustomed and [...] the genetic and monumental patterns that are commonly associated with Romanticism have lost much of their authority." ("Introduction", in: *Studies in Romanticism*, 18, 4, Winter 1979, pp. 495-99; p. 499).

32 For another, and much more detailed, survey of de Man's work, from which this term is borrowed, see Werner Hamacher, "Unlesbarkeit", in: de Man, *Allegorien des Lesens*, Aus dem Amerikanischen von Werner Hamacher und Peter Krumm, Mit einer Einleitung von Werner Hamacher, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp (Neue Folge, Band 357), 1988, pp. 7-26; p. 8.

tion"[33] of themes already solidly in place from the outset – would then have to be followed attentively in its increasingly intricate encounter with the aesthetic ideology (ideologies), in a critique which, interestingly, gains in acumen to the extent that the rhetoric of Being (and Heidegger) gets to be less explicitly pronounced and a profound new encounter with the difficult narrative of metaphysical and transcendental principles in Kant is engaged in, all this "up until" the inevitable affirmation of the impossibility for thought to come to terms with itself, to terminate (with) itself in the system it can neither uphold nor resist. The affirmation, that is, of "the bottom line", of "the prosaic materiality of the letter" which "[...] no degree of obfuscation or ideology can transform [...] into the phenomenal cognition of aesthetic judgement"[34].

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33 Derrida, *art. cit.*, p. 641.

34 De Man, "Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant", in: Gary Shapiro and Alan Sica (eds.), *Hermeneutics: Questions and Prospects,* Amherst, University of Massachussets Press, 1984, pp. 121-44; p. 144. See also, in the same text, the challenging reflections on the interplay of metaphysical (ideological) and transcendental (critical) principles: "The possibility of maintaining the causal link between them is the controlling principle of rigorous philosophical discourse: philosophies that succumb to ideology lose their epistemological sense, whereas philosophies that try to by-pass or repress ideology lose all critical thrust and risk being repossessed by what they foreclose" (p. 123). – Our last instance and comparability: Kant, in the "Allgemeine Anmerkung" following § 29 of the *Third Critique* (which de Man here discusses): "[...] man muss den Ozean bloss, wie die Dichter es tun, nach dem, was der Augenschein zeigt, etwa, wenn er in Ruhe betrachtet wird, als einen klaren Wasserspiegel, der bloss vom Himmel begrenzt ist, aber ist er unruhig, wie einen alles zu verschlingen drohenden Abgrund, dennoch erhaben finden können." – Jünger, in the third "Strandstück": "Das Meer nahm das Aussehen einer blanken Scheibe an, von deren Umkreis das gefiederte Leben strahlenförmig zu einem geheimen Mittelpunkt zusammenschoss, um sich dann in der gleichen Ordnung wieder zu zerstreuen. Es schien den einschläfernden Glanz dieses Spiegels noch zu erhöhen, dass sich das feine Netz der Flugbahnen wie eine strenge Gradeinteilung auf ihm ausbreitete" (*AH2*, p. 263). – De Man, commenting on Kant's *Wasserspiegel:* "The 'mirror' of the sea surface is a mirror without depth, least of all the mirror in which the constellation would be reflected. In this mode of seeing, the eye is its own agent and not the specular echo of the sun. The sea is called a mirror, not because it is supposed to reflect anything, but to stress a flatness devoid of any suggestion of depth. In the same way and to the same extent that this vision is purely material, devoid of any reflexive or intellectual complication, it is also purely formal, devoid of any semantic depth and reducible to the formal mathematization or geometrization of pure optics" (p. 136). *Devoid of any reflexive or intellectual complication:* that is, "free" from ontotypological appropriations of, among other things, mathematics and optics as reservoirs of master tropes.

The thinking of this bottom line, which Rodolphe Gasché has so lucidly read as the "incontournable" impossibility "of" thinking[35], cannot, as this crude blueprint might have suggested, be grasped as an effect of an initial aberration into aesthetic ideology – it can, precisely and rigorously, not be grasped at all, which is ultimately the reason why it will nevertheless always be preserved in the narrative of the aberration that forgot it in the first place. The only thing the narrative can do, perhaps, for the time being, is, as was suggested before, to keep at bay the violence – the ontotypological, metaphysical, political violence which is always demanding the justification the aberration provides. Ultimately – if we can still say this – this means that the narrative of our conjunction, of the *Nebeneinander* with which we began, should not be allowed to turn into a *Deckung:* that is the critical part of *our* "Aufgabe", which assuredly has not yet been faced, has only, perhaps, been faced up to, in an imitation (and thus a betrayal) of "true mourning" such as the preceding.

This paper forms part of a Ph.D. project I am engaged in as research assistant of the National Fund for Scientific Research (Belgium) at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Thanks to Dominic Christiaans for technical support.

35 Gasché, "Apathetic Criticism" (lecture delivered at the conference on de Man referred to above, note 11) – a modified version of this lecture forms part of Rodolphe Gasché, "In-Difference to Philosophy: de Man on Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche", in: Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (eds.), *Reading de Man Reading*, Minneapolis, University of Massachussets Press, 1989, pp. 259-294.

Résumé

Cette communication prend son point de départ dans la constatation de l'importance singulière accordée à l'oeuvre d'Ernst Jünger dans les écrits journalistiques qu'a publiés Paul de Man pendant la guerre. La lecture de quelques passages plutôt programmatiques dans les oeuvres de Jünger qui ont été commentées par de Man sert à suggérer les contours d'une solidification spécifique de l'"idéologie esthétique" – qu'on pourrait appeler la "stéréo-onto-typology" – qu'élabore la pensée de Jünger. Ensuite, la réception de cette idéologie dans les chroniques littéraires de de Man est confrontée, de façon préliminaire, avec ses pensées ultérieures concernant l'idéologie esthétique.

En bref, le propos principal de ce texte est d'offrir un essai d'articulation entre, d'une part, le travail journalistique pendant la guerre de de Man et, d'autre part, la pensée critique qu'il a developpée dès les années 50, et ceci en lisant effectivement la littérature propagée dans ses chroniques à travers les leçons de lecture entamées dans son "oeuvre proprement dite". Le fait que ni la structure, ni les "conclusions" de cet essai ne méritent la qualification de sensationnel pourrait, peut-être, donner à penser.